

REALITY PARADIGM / DIAGNOSTIC INQUIRY

The Institutional Absorption of Truth and the Loss of Self-Authority

Philosophical Reflexes That Delay the Recognition of the Reality Paradigm

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Abstract

This article does not reconstruct the Reality Paradigm or redefine the Onopticon. Its direct theoretical basis is Hakkı Tan's *The Imposed Reality of the State: Enclosure, Onopticon, and the Administrative Enclosure of Social Reproduction*, which examines the historically constructed technical-administrative conditions through which persons, claims, risks, payments and objections become visible, processable and actionable realities for institutions.

The present article addresses a different question: why is the pre-decisional field disclosed by the Reality Paradigm so readily displaced into more familiar vocabularies of surveillance, algorithmic bias, representation, legal procedure, governmentality, ideology or post-truth?

Its central distinction is that the Truth Paradigm tends to investigate the causes of visible symptoms, whereas the Reality Paradigm renders those symptoms intelligible as manifestations of a shared field of imposed reality. The Truth Paradigm asks what caused an exclusion, an inaccurate record or a rights violation. The Reality Paradigm asks what the simultaneous emergence of such apparently disconnected events reveals about the reality being institutionally produced.

The two paradigms are therefore not antagonistic. One investigates causation; the other discloses the field within which distinct symptoms acquire a common structural meaning. The problem is not that the Truth Paradigm is false or obsolete. Rather, while explaining the causes of particular harms, it may leave insufficiently visible the common technical-administrative reality of which those harms are symptoms.

The article argues that contemporary technical-administrative arrangements have not abolished truth, reason, representation, law or ideology. They have redistributed their institutional authority within decision chains through data formats, documentary standards, verification procedures, performance metrics, eligibility thresholds and claims of technical necessity. This process is termed *institutional absorption*.

The article further develops *self-dispossession* as a subjective consequence of this transformation. Self-dispossession denotes the institutional weakening of self-authority: the reduced capacity of persons to determine what their own lives, needs and experiences mean within the decision chains that act upon them.

Keywords: Reality Paradigm; Truth Paradigm; Onopticon; institutional absorption; self-dispossession; institutional shadowing; post-truth; imposed operational reason; Homovictimus.

1. Introduction: Invisible Manifestations

This article is not the founding text of the Reality Paradigm.

The historical-material genealogy, conceptual architecture, diagnostic logic of the Onopticon and empirical programme of the Reality Paradigm are developed in *The Imposed Reality of the State: Enclosure, Onopticon, and the Administrative Enclosure of Social Reproduction*. That work examines the field operating before visible institutional decisions: the conditions through which persons, claims, risks, payments and objections become realities that institutions can encounter, process and act upon.

Its central question is:

| *Before the state decides, who constructs the reality that enables the state to decide?*

This question does not reject enquiries into whether institutional decisions are lawful, discriminatory, ideological, inaccurate or arbitrary. It opens a prior field.

Before an institution can decide, it must first be able to recognise its object of decision.

A person must become a verifiable identity.

A claim must become an admissible form.

A lived experience must become a document, file or record.

A risk must become data, category and threshold.

An objection must enter a processable procedural channel.

A payment must become recognisable within systems of verification, compliance and account structure.

The Reality Paradigm examines the infrastructural conditions through which these transformations occur.

The concern of this article is different:

Why does the pre-decisional field disclosed by the Reality Paradigm remain difficult to recognise within established philosophical and theoretical languages?

This difficulty does not arise merely because the theory is new. It also arises from inherited intellectual reflexes.

Where visibility is present, the issue is read as surveillance.

Where classification is present, it is read as algorithmic bias.

Where access is lost, it is read as digital exclusion.

Where conduct is shaped, it is read as governmentality or control.

Where legal injury appears, it is read as procedure, rights violation or judicial review.

Where manipulation or falsehood appears, it is read as post-truth.

None of these readings is wholly mistaken.

Yet they often produce the same result: a reality constructed before the decision is translated into a more visible problem that appears after it.

The withdrawal of welfare support, the inability to open a bank account, the denial of healthcare, the failure to establish immigration status, or the practical loss of a legal entitlement may consequently appear as disconnected incidents within separate institutional domains.

The Reality Paradigm asks instead:

Are these genuinely separate events, or are they different symptoms of a transformation in the conditions under which persons become institutionally encounterable?

The term *symptom* is not used here in a clinical or pathological sense. It is an analytic term. It identifies the point at which apparently separate events may be understood as manifestations of a shared structural transformation.

2. Theoretical Position and Scope

The direct theoretical basis of this article is Tan's *The Imposed Reality of the State*.

That work develops, in conjunction:

- the Reality Paradigm;
- the concept of the *infrastructural a priori*;
- the logic of infrastructural imposition associated with the Onopticon;
- enclosure as a historical-material genealogy;
- the diagnostic conditions of mandatory legibility, material foreclosure, weak contestability and target production;
- differentiated empirical intensities across cases; and
- subjective consequences such as Homovictimus and self-dispossession.

The present article does not reconstruct that architecture. It does not repeat the analysis of enclosure, re-examine NIIMS, Aadhaar, Windrush or Universal Credit, or restate the diagnostic conditions of the Onopticon in detail.

Its function is meta-theoretical.

It asks why the decision-preceding reality field disclosed by the Reality Paradigm may be treated as secondary, technical or derivative by prevailing philosophical reflexes.

The question is therefore not:

| *How is reality imposed?*

It is:

| *Why do the symptoms of imposed reality appear as isolated errors, violations, failures or dysfunctions rather than as indications of a shared reality field?*

3. The Truth Paradigm and the Reality Paradigm: Cause and Symptom

The distinction between the Truth Paradigm and the Reality Paradigm is not a distinction between truth and falsehood.

It is a distinction between two analytical orientations.

The Truth Paradigm asks after the cause of the symptom.

The Reality Paradigm renders the symptom visible as an indication of a wider institutional condition.

The Truth Paradigm asks:

- Why is this record inaccurate?
- Which legal defect produced this administrative decision?
- Who is responsible for this discrimination?
- How did this data match fail?
- Which ideological or political preference shaped this representation?
- Which institution, rule, procedure or practice caused this rights violation?

The Reality Paradigm asks:

- What do inaccurate records, access losses, documentary pressures, exhausted appeals and self-dispossession reveal when considered together?
- Within what common reality field do these symptoms arise?
- Why does a person's lived account become institutionally weaker than a technical-administrative representation?

Why do comparable losses of institutional encounterability emerge across distinct institutions and through different justifications?

Analytical orientation	Truth Paradigm	Reality Paradigm
Fundamental question	What caused this symptom?	What do these symptoms make visible together?
Unit of analysis	Individual event, violation, error, cause or responsibility	Symptom constellation, shared manifestation, pre-decisional field
Primary task	Causal and explanatory analysis	Diagnostic disclosure
Principal risk	Treating events as isolated	Treating symptoms as substitutes for explanation
Principal contribution	Legal, political, technical and ideological causal analysis	Disclosure of the field of imposed reality

The two paradigms are not rivals.

The Truth Paradigm investigates the causes of visible symptoms. The Reality Paradigm allows phenomena that appear as isolated incidents to be read as symptoms of a shared structural transformation.

A symptom may be recognised, and its relation to other symptoms diagnosed, before all of its causes have been exhaustively established. Conversely, even where the causes of a particular harm are fully explained, that harm’s location within a wider field of imposed reality may remain unrecognised.

The Reality Paradigm does not reject causal enquiry. It insists only that causal enquiry should not obscure the common field of symptoms.

The Truth Paradigm asks what caused the symptom; the Reality Paradigm asks of what reality the symptom is an indication.

4. The Field Opened by the Reality Paradigm

The Reality Paradigm is not a theory of truth.

It does not reject truth, evidence, law, representation, ideology or normative judgement. It investigates the condition that precedes their institutional effectiveness.

Institutions do not encounter persons in the fullness of their human reality.

- They encounter records.
- They encounter identities.
- They encounter documents.
- They encounter files.
- They encounter biometric traces.
- They encounter applications.
- They encounter accounts.
- They encounter risk scores.
- They encounter categories.
- They encounter profiles and data trails.

The *infrastructural a priori* names the historically constructed technical and institutional conditions through which this encounter becomes possible.

This condition is neither transcendental nor immutable. It is built through legislation, procurement arrangements, technical standards, data architectures, engineering choices, markets and administrative routines.

In the source work, the Onopticon is developed as the logic through which these conditions become imposed. An Onoptic threshold emerges where technical mediation becomes the mandatory environment through which recognition, access, decision and action must pass.

The issue here is not to restate that framework. It is to ask why, once such a field has been identified, thought may continue to privilege truth, law, representation or ideology while treating the conditions of their institutional effectiveness as secondary.

The answer lies not in the absence of critical capacity within the Truth Paradigm, but in the historical institutionalisation of its principal reflexes.

5. The Truth Paradigm as a Historical Regime of Thought

The term *Truth Paradigm* does not refer to truth itself.

It refers to historically established modes of thought organised around truth and falsehood, evidence, representation, interpretation, ideology, legitimacy, legal justification and judgement.

These modes have produced major critical achievements.

They have enabled the questioning of whether power lies.

They have tied scientific claims to evidence.

They have made ideological distortion visible.

They have enabled the critique of representation.

They have required legal decisions to be justified.

They have disclosed the capacity of discourse to produce legitimacy.

The difficulty is not that these questions are mistaken.

The difficulty is that, while investigating the causes of particular symptoms, they may leave the field of symptoms insufficiently visible.

The Truth Paradigm asks:

Is this claim true?

Is this representation fair?

Is this knowledge reliable?

Is this legal decision legitimate?

Is this discourse ideological?

Has this institution distorted the truth?

The Reality Paradigm asks:

In what format can this claim enter institutional processing?

Under what technical conditions can this person be recognised?

At what threshold does this representation acquire material consequence?

Through which channel can this demand become institutionally real?

Why does this objection enter the record, or fail to enter it?

Under what conditions does this experience become credible, eligible or processable for the institution?

These questions are not opposed, but they do not operate at the same analytical level.

The Truth Paradigm concentrates on cause, responsibility and justification. The Reality Paradigm discloses the pre-decisional field that becomes visible through the shared emergence of symptoms.

This is why the Reality Paradigm may appear secondary within established intellectual reflexes. It refuses to stop at the question, “Why did this happen?”

It also asks:

| *What reality becomes visible through the convergence of these events?*

6. The Historical and Institutional Settlement of Four Philosophical Reflexes

The barriers to recognising the Reality Paradigm are not simple intellectual errors.

The reflexes of truth, representation, legal procedure and ideology are historically sedimented forms of enquiry. They have been institutionalised by modern knowledge, law, administration and critical thought.

Their force derives not only from philosophical inheritance, but also from institutional settlement.

Universities, laboratories, scientific academies and peer-review systems have stabilised the question of truth around evidence, method and expertise. Parliaments, censuses, registries and administrative files have shaped representation through electoral, documentary and recorded forms. Courts, public administrations and professional legal procedures have organised justice through evidence, authority, time limits and reason-giving. Public policy, management science, professional expertise and performance regimes have increasingly translated normative choices into the language of efficiency, objectivity and technical necessity.

These institutions are not inherently negative. They have, however, historically shaped which questions are treated as primary and which are treated as secondary.

6.1. The Reflex of Truth: Modern Knowledge and Expertise

Modern science institutionalised the examination of truth through evidence, method, observation, measurement and expertise.

This was a major achievement against arbitrary authority.

Yet modern knowledge institutions, while asking what is true, may treat the question of what counts as admissible evidence as a technical, methodological or administrative matter.

In digital technical-administrative arrangements, this distinction becomes decisive.

The issue is not merely whether data are accurate.

It is also:

Which experience counts as data?

Which account is regarded as verifiable?

Which life event can enter a record system?

Which knowledge can reach a decision chain?

A person's pain, fatigue or care requirement may be real. Yet if it does not become a recognised diagnosis code, approved document, insurance category or accepted medical record, it may fail to produce institutional consequence.

The Truth Paradigm asks:

Why was this experience not recognised as valid medical evidence?

The Reality Paradigm identifies something different:

Pain, exhaustion, care requirements and documentary pressure are symptoms of a condition in which lived bodily reality is recognised only when it enters particular technical-administrative formats.

6.2. The Reflex of Representation: Lived Reality and Institutional Form

Representation has long been central to philosophy and political theory.

Whether something is represented accurately, whether a subject's voice is heard, whether political representation is fair and whether discourse renders some realities visible while obscuring others are enduring critical questions.

In digital-administrative contexts, however, representation is not merely symbolic or discursive.

A file is a representation.

A score is a representation.

A profile is a representation.

An identity record is a representation.

A risk flag is a representation.

An automated summary is a representation.

These forms do not merely describe persons.

They may open or close access.

They may initiate or terminate assistance.

They may trigger review.

They may block payment.

They may restrict movement.

They may process persons as eligible, ineligible, safe, risky, compliant or suspicious.

In banking or insurance, for example, a person may explain a temporary income loss, debt burden or changing circumstances. Yet a credit score, automated risk profile or compliance record may override that explanation and shape access to credit, housing, insurance or payment services.

The Truth Paradigm asks:

Why is this score, profile or record inaccurate or unfair?

The Reality Paradigm identifies another symptom:

A person's account of their own economic condition has become institutionally weaker than the score, profile or record through which they are operationally represented.

6.3. The Reflex of Legal Procedure: The Force and Limit of Law

The modern rule of law developed procedure, authority, time limits, evidence, defence, reason-giving and judicial review in order to constrain arbitrary power.

These are not merely formal mechanisms. They remain genuine instruments of struggle.

Law may invalidate administrative decisions, correct records, expose discrimination and limit the use of technical systems. It should not therefore be treated as fully absorbed, exhausted or institutionally powerless.

Yet the formal existence of a legal procedure does not guarantee its material effectiveness.

Can the person see the decision?

Can they understand its reasons?

Can they correct the record?

Can they sustain themselves while an appeal proceeds?

Can they afford to challenge the outcome?

Can they access the basis of a technical classification?

Can they reach an institution capable of altering the system itself?

An application route may exist in law but remain materially inaccessible if it can be used only through a digital interface, within a strict period, in a prescribed format and with specific documentary standards.

The Truth Paradigm asks:

Which legal defect, procedural violation or administrative error occurred in this case?

The Reality Paradigm identifies another symptom:

The formal existence of a right may coexist with a person's inability to encounter that right institutionally. This is a symptom of the separation between the textual existence of law and its material operability.

6.4. The Reflex of Ideology: From Discourse to Technical Necessity

Ideology critique makes visible the beliefs, meanings and forms of legitimacy through which power operates.

This remains indispensable.

Yet ideology does not operate only through discourse, propaganda or explicit belief.

It may operate through eligibility criteria.

It may operate through risk thresholds.

It may operate through behavioural compliance requirements.

It may operate through performance metrics.

It may operate through security procedures.

It may operate through the language of scarcity.

It may operate through efficiency, objectivity, professionalism or technical necessity.

A student's economic conditions, care responsibilities, linguistic disadvantage or lived educational experience may become secondary to standardised measures of performance. The measurement system can present itself as objective while making particular forms of lived experience institutionally insignificant.

The Truth Paradigm asks:

Which ideological preference is concealed within the language of objectivity or merit?

The Reality Paradigm identifies a different symptom:

The organisation of institutional existence around measurement, ranking, eligibility and performance indicates that technical necessity has become reality-producing.

The limitation of these four reflexes is not that they fail to explain symptoms. They may explain them powerfully.

The limitation is that, where the shared reality field of symptoms is not separately diagnosed, the events remain fragmented.

7. Institutional Absorption: Re-coding and the Redistribution of Authority

Institutional absorption is not a replacement for the logic of the Onopticon.

The Onopticon explains the imposition of a reality field through technical-administrative conditions. Institutional absorption explains how that imposed field becomes normalised and rendered intelligible through truth, reason, representation, law and ideology.

Institutional absorption is not passive incorporation.

It is the selective re-coding of philosophical forms within technical-administrative operations. Their thresholds of authority are altered, their place within decision chains is reconfigured, and their capacity to produce material consequences is redistributed.

Philosophy did not produce the Onopticon. Arrangements that construct reality have re-coded philosophical forms within their own operational grammar.

Institutional absorption does not abolish the Truth Paradigm. It may, however, orient critical attention towards the causes of individual symptoms.

A data mismatch may be identified as an error.

A rights violation may be traced to a legal gap.

A discriminatory outcome may be linked to a rule, actor or institution.

An access loss may be explained as a procedural failure.

These explanations may be necessary. Yet they can leave obscure the field of imposed reality disclosed by the simultaneous presence of such symptoms.

Institutional absorption therefore does not destroy philosophical forms. It redistributes their authority and institutional effect within the decision chain.

Philosophical form	Historical-critical function	Form of re-coding	Visible symptom
Truth	Testing claims against evidence and reality	Data format, documentary standard, verification chain	Lived experience fails to count as processable evidence
Reason	Contextual judgement and reflection	Targets, metrics, performance, model compatibility	Human context is reduced to measurable output

Philosophical form	Historical-critical function	Form of re-coding	Visible symptom
Representation	Articulating lived and social reality	Files, profiles, scores, categories, data trails	Technical representation becomes more authoritative than personal account
Law	Reasoned limitation, objection and review	Time limits, authority, procedure, evidential format	A right exists formally but is materially ineffective
Ideology	Producing meaning, value and legitimacy	Eligibility criteria, technical necessity, behavioural compliance	Political choices appear as neutral technical requirements

This does not imply that philosophical forms were once pure and emancipatory, whereas contemporary systems are merely corrupt.

Truth has always been institutionally mediated. Law has always been entangled with material power. Representation has always been selective and unequal. Ideology has always operated through institutions.

What has changed is that technical-administrative arrangements increasingly operationalise these forms together through data, verification, eligibility thresholds and decision chains.

8. Post-Truth and Institutional Shadowing

Post-truth is often understood as the proliferation of falsehood, propaganda, emotional preference over evidence or political loyalty over fact.

This definition is not wholly wrong. It is, however, insufficient for the field opened by the Reality Paradigm.

Truth does not disappear.

Illness is real.

Poverty is real.

Debt is real.

Violence is real.

Care burdens are real.

Exclusion is real.

Lived experience is real.

A person may give a truthful account of their own life and still find that account institutionally ineffective.

This condition can be described as *institutional shadowing*. It occurs where four conditions converge:

- 1. Epistemic validity:** A person's account or evidence contains information that is reasonably verifiable, coherent or truthful.
- 2. Operational priority:** The institution gives priority to a technical-administrative representation, such as a profile, file, score, category, data match, automated summary or eligibility result.

3. Material decision effect: The representation produces consequences for assistance, payment, healthcare, mobility, status, housing, work or recognition.

4. Weak return path: The person cannot effectively reinsert their account or evidence into the decision chain, or cannot alter the priority of the record, category, threshold or model.

Truth is not eliminated under these conditions.

Its institutional authority is displaced.

A person may genuinely be ill, yet not be processed as ill within the relevant diagnostic code, document sequence, appointment pathway or insurance classification.

A person may genuinely be poor, yet not be recognised as poor by an eligibility formula.

A person may genuinely hold a right, yet not be institutionally encountered as a rights-holder because of failed identity verification, data mismatch or procedural exclusion.

Institutional shadowing is related to, but not reducible to, epistemic injustice. The issue is not merely that a person is disbelieved. It is that a technical-administrative representation acquires operational priority over the person’s own account and produces material consequences from that priority.

| *Post-truth is not the end of truth. It is the institutional shadowing of truth.*

8.1. Windrush: A Micro-Illustration

The Windrush context, discussed in the source work, offers a concise illustration of institutional shadowing.

Some individuals possessed lawful residence or employment rights in the United Kingdom. Their status was legally and epistemically valid. Yet the absence of required documentary proof, inadequate administrative records or document-centred institutional procedures rendered that reality institutionally ineffective.

A person’s lived and legally valid status became secondary to a document-based operational representation.

That representation produced material consequences for work, housing, banking and access to public services.

Condition of institutional shadowing	Windrush context
Epistemic validity	The person possessed lawful residence or employment rights
Operational priority	Missing documentation or inadequate administrative records became decisive
Material decision effect	Access to work, housing, banking and services was lost
Weak return path	Legal status could not be restored effectively within the relevant decision chain

The Truth Paradigm investigates documentary absence, administrative error, legal responsibility and political choice.

The Reality Paradigm identifies what the combined loss of work, housing, banking and services reveals:

A person's lived and legal existence has become institutionally ineffective before a document-based operational representation.

8.2. Synthetic Operational Reality

Synthetic operational reality is one possible technical-administrative form of institutional shadowing.

A technical system generates an operational account of a person, event or risk. An authorised institution adopts that account. It enters a decision chain and produces material consequence.

Consider a welfare system supported by generative artificial intelligence that condenses a complex case file into a judgement such as “risk of non-compliance with claimant obligations”. If an official treats this summary as the dominant operational account, the person's care responsibilities, illness, unstable work conditions or difficulties with the application process may become secondary details.

Artificial intelligence does not abolish truth in this situation.

It may, however, intensify institutional shadowing by accelerating the production of an operational narrative, giving it an appearance of coherence and increasing its institutional weight.

The Truth Paradigm may ask why the summary is inaccurate, incomplete or discriminatory.

The Reality Paradigm identifies the significance of a condition in which a person's life must first become an operational summary before it can be institutionally encountered.

Institutional shadowing does not depend on artificial intelligence, automation or synthetic outputs alone. Documentary thresholds, identity verification, data mismatches, eligibility formulas, application channels, procedures, existing records and classifications can also render lived accounts institutionally ineffective.

Post-truth is therefore not the centre of the Reality Paradigm. It is one public-epistemic manifestation of a deeper institutional process.

9. Imposed Operational Reason

Imposed operational reason is not wholly separate from instrumental reason.

The critique of instrumental reason has shown how reason may become confined to calculating the most efficient means to given ends, without questioning the ends themselves, and how it may reduce the world to measurable objects.

Imposed operational reason is the contemporary technical-administrative form of this tendency.

The issue is not simply that ends are externally determined.

Ends are connected to data fields.

Metrics are embedded in software systems.

Success conditions are translated into time-stamped performance measures.

Exceptions must become documents, codes or recognised categories.

Compliance becomes a condition of material access.

The subject remains human.

The subject has a body, history, illness, fear, care responsibilities, debt, exhaustion, trauma, relationships and unequal starting conditions.

Yet the system does not encounter the subject in that totality.

It encounters whether the target has been met.

- The target is set elsewhere.
- The metric is established elsewhere.
- The time of assessment is fixed elsewhere.
- The standard of success is authorised elsewhere.

The structural imperative is:

This is how the system operates. You must therefore become capable of operating in this way.

This imperative need not be stated directly. It may appear as efficiency, professionalism, merit, equal treatment, security, compliance, scarcity or technical necessity.

The underlying relation remains unchanged:

The historical and contingent design of the system becomes the measure of the subject's rationality.

Institutional condition	Subjective manifestation
Targets are externally set	The subject's own purposes are subordinated to a given target
Metrics are fixed in advance	Value is reduced to measurable performance
Time is externally allocated	Lived time is subordinated to institutional time
Outputs are assessed at a single point	Human process is reduced to a narrow result
Exceptions must be documented	Illness, care, crisis or poverty become effective only when translated into recognised categories

These conditions may produce self-instrumentalisation.

Self-instrumentalisation occurs where individuals reorganise their lives around externally imposed targets in order to preserve access, recognition, payment, work or eligibility.

- They optimise themselves in order not to lose access.
- They defer needs in order not to become non-compliant.
- They convert time into performance in order not to lose support or employment.
- They are compelled to carry the system's target as though it were their own.

The Truth Paradigm may investigate the source, legitimacy or justice of the performance criterion.

The Reality Paradigm identifies the condition in which a person must organise life around the capacity to conform to technically verifiable targets.

10. Foucault, Deleuze and Science and Technology Studies

The relationship between the Reality Paradigm and Foucault, Deleuze, science and technology studies, or critical theory is not one of exclusion.

These traditions are theoretical neighbours.

10.1. Foucault: Security Apparatuses and the Pre-Decisional Field

Foucault's analyses of security apparatuses, governmentality, population, statistics, risk and normalisation showed how power renders persons, events and populations governable.

Foucault did not ignore pre-decisional visibility and governability.

The claim here is not that he failed to analyse them.

The distinctive contribution of the Reality Paradigm is to establish another diagnostic focus:

At what threshold does technical-administrative mediation become the mandatory environment through which persons, claims, risks and objections can appear as realities for institutions?

This focus concerns not only knowledge production or population management, but the convergence of mandatory legibility, material foreclosure, weak contestability and target production within particular decision chains.

The difference is not that Foucault was wrong or incomplete. It is that the Onopticon provides a narrower, threshold-based and materially consequential diagnostic for the transition from modulation to imposition.

10.2. Deleuze: From Modulation to Imposition

Deleuze's account of societies of control offers a powerful framework for understanding continuous modulation, access codes, circulation and variable forms of control.

The Reality Paradigm is related to this insight.

Yet the question posed by the Onopticon is not simply how conduct is modulated.

It asks when the environment through which conduct, claims, risks, payments and objections can become institutionally visible is itself imposed.

Modulation may shape choice.

Imposition may render meaningful alternatives materially ineffective.

The Onopticon is therefore not a synonym for the society of control. It is a diagnostic logic that may emerge within such conditions but is distinguished by its threshold of imposed institutional encounterability.

10.3. Science and Technology Studies: From Infrastructure to the Threshold of Power

Science and technology studies have shown how infrastructures, standards, classifications and black-boxed systems shape social life.

The Reality Paradigm draws on these insights.

Its distinctive question is:

When does infrastructure cease merely to organise social life and become the mandatory environment of recognition, access and material existence?

The answer is not the same for every infrastructure.

The Onopticon does not describe infrastructure as such. It identifies the threshold at which infrastructure produces imposed reality.

10.4. Critical Theory: From Domination to Operational Conformity

Critical theory has long examined the relationship between reason, domination, calculation and instrumentalisation.

The Reality Paradigm relocates this critique within the contemporary technical-administrative decision environment.

It asks:

At what point does a person's lived history become institutionally meaningful only as measurable compliance with a target or as a documented exception?

This does not repeat the critique of instrumental reason. It examines its infrastructural form.

11. Self-Dispossession, Homovictimus and Compulsory Inclusion

The Reality Paradigm does not claim that the subject disappears.

The subject remains human.

The subject knows their life.

The subject experiences pain.

The subject recognises need.

The subject can narrate experience.

Yet lived accounts may become institutionally weaker than technical, documentary or administrative accounts.

This condition is termed *self-dispossession*.

Self-dispossession denotes the institutional weakening of self-authority: the reduced capacity of persons to determine what their own lives, needs and experiences mean within the decision chains that act upon them.

Self-dispossession does not mean that a person loses knowledge of themselves.

It means that their own understanding of illness, poverty, harm, care, entitlement or need may lose institutional force.

A person may know that they are ill, while the system does not process them as ill.

A person may know that they are poor, while the system does not recognise them as poor.

A person may know that they have been harmed, while the system does not record the harm in an acceptable form.

A person may know that they hold a right, while the system does not encounter them as a rights-holder.

These are not symptoms of the subject's ignorance.

They are symptoms of the authority gap between the subject's own knowledge and the institution's operational knowledge.

Self-dispossession is therefore not merely a representational error. It is the subordination of a person's account of their own life within the decision chain that acts upon that life.

The subject is not wholly ignorant of their circumstances. Their knowledge may simply become institutionally ineffective.

Homovictimus is the subjective figure produced under these conditions.

Homovictimus does not mean a passive victim.

Nor does it mean a person wholly expelled from the system.

Homovictimus is the subject who must remain technically legible, classifiable and processable in order to sustain social existence, yet whose capacity to make their own account, objection or alternative effective is weakened within that compulsory inclusion.

The issue is not exclusion alone.

| *It is compulsory inclusion under conditions of recognition determined elsewhere.*

12. Reflexive Position

This article is itself produced within a particular language, publication environment, academic culture and technical infrastructure of circulation.

It does not claim to stand outside all conditions of institutional legibility.

Nor does it claim absolute or invulnerable truth.

It offers a meta-theoretical diagnosis that remains open to correction, debate and counter-example.

Reflexivity does not invalidate diagnosis.

A theory may be historically and institutionally situated while still being more or less capable of explaining decision chains, technical thresholds, hierarchies of representation and material consequences.

The Reality Paradigm does not seek immunity from critique.

It seeks to make visible the conditions under which critique itself becomes institutionally effective.

Conclusion

This article has examined why the Reality Paradigm may be recognised only belatedly within established theoretical and philosophical vocabularies.

The difficulty does not arise because the Reality Paradigm is closed or unintelligible.

It arises because prevailing intellectual languages continue to operate through historically institutionalised reflexes of truth, representation, legal procedure and ideology.

These reflexes are not mistaken.

They are indispensable for explaining the causes of symptoms.

The Truth Paradigm investigates why an inaccurate record was produced, how a right was violated, or through which legal, political or ideological mechanism discrimination occurred.

Yet, while the causes of symptoms are explained, the reality field made visible by their convergence must also be diagnosed.

This is where the Reality Paradigm intervenes.

The loss of a right, the disappearance of a record, the inability to submit an application, or the institutional weakening of one's own account are not merely individual outcomes.

They may be symptoms of a transformation in the conditions through which persons encounter institutions and institutions encounter persons.

Institutional absorption does not destroy philosophical forms.

It redistributes their institutional authority within decision chains.

Truth may remain true while losing its capacity to affect the decision.

Reason may persist while being narrowed to targets, metrics and performance verification.

Representation may persist while becoming a profile, score, record or category that determines material access.

Law may remain formally valid while access to its protections becomes conditional upon time, documentation, technical eligibility and procedural capacity.

Ideology may persist while operating through thresholds, compliance and technical necessity rather than explicit discourse.

Post-truth is therefore not the disappearance of truth.

It is the institutional shadowing of truth.

The principal theoretical obstacle to the Reality Paradigm may be stated as follows:

Thought may recognise the causes of symptoms precisely because it has not yet recognised the imposed reality that those symptoms make visible together.

The Reality Paradigm does not move outside philosophy.

It makes visible the infrastructural conditions that precede the institutional effectiveness of philosophy's questions concerning truth, law, representation, ideology and reason.

The final question is therefore:

Before truth, law, objection or lived experience can become institutionally effective, under what infrastructural conditions are they permitted to appear as reality?

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