

A New Architecture of Engagement: Onopticon, the Reality Paradigm, and Symmetrical Ontology

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*"My paradigm is not a paradigm of the Truth; it is a
paradigm of Reality."*

ABSTRACT

While historical forms of domination operated through classic dichotomies (Self/Other, Center/Periphery), contemporary regimes of control have transformed into an "Onopticon" architecture that structurally imposes the infrastructures of everyday life. This study approaches the Onopticon not merely as an apparatus of political control, but as a "Reality Paradigm" that pre-processes the experiential material available to the subject. In this regime, the Kantian synthesis is inverted: the *infrastructural a priori* is no longer internal to the subject; it is placed before the subject. This infrastructural imposition produces the *Homovictimus* - a conditioned subject held accountable as a full agent yet deprived of the infrastructural conditions of agency. Under conditions of high infrastructural dependence, low substitutability, and rapid cost-feedback, classic acts of exclusion mutate into "autoimmune" crises that disrupt the center's own cycles of reality and legitimacy. In this context, the proposition "*If I am valuable, so are you*" ceases to be an act of moral compassion and becomes a structural necessity (symmetrical ontology) to prevent the collapse of the shared infrastructural reality. The theoretical limit of this paradigm is tested in the empirical conflict zone between the subject's "Right to Opacity" - a refusal of this pre-processed calculability - and the system's reflexive attempts to securitize this opacity.

Keywords: Reality Paradigm, Onopticon, *Homovictimus*, Infrastructural A Priori, Symmetrical Ontology, Autoimmunity, Right to Opacity, Securitization.

INTRODUCTION: The Ontological Split from Truth to Reality

Throughout history, political and social systems derived their constitutive force from classic dichotomies (Self/Other, Center/Periphery, Master/Slave), ontologically diminishing the other. However, contemporary regimes of technological and political control have evolved from structures that merely narrow the options of human agency into infrastructural systems that impose the conditions of vital and cognitive life itself.

This study argues that classical asymmetrical forms of domination have not disappeared; rather, in infrastructural reality regimes characterized by high conductivity, they have ceased to be sufficient on their own. To comprehend this new architecture, where the old rules of engagement have been destabilized, power must be reconceptualized not merely as a matter of "surveillance or data extraction," but as a **Reality Paradigm**.

It is crucial to note that this study aims to provide a structural diagnosis rather than a normative prescription. However, the diagnosis itself - particularly concerning the mechanism of autoimmune collapse - inherently yields practical consequences. These consequences, articulated in the final section, are framed not in the language of moral philosophy, but of systemic resilience.

SECTION I: The Reality Paradigm and the Onopticon as an Infrastructural *A Priori*

While the traditional truth paradigm focuses on the question "*What is true?*", the Reality Paradigm asks a preceding question: *Through which technical, algorithmic, and infrastructural conditions can the subject orient toward, perceive, and obtain answers regarding the truth?*

In this context, the **Onopticon** is not a Panopticon that observes behavior. While Shoshana Zuboff's analysis of *surveillance capitalism* (2019) outlines the data-extraction background of the Onopticon, the Onopticon transcends mere surveillance by moving into the pre-processing of the conditions of experience (Pasquale, 2015). Luciano Floridi's (2014) concept of the *infosphere* illustrates a similar ontological shift in the existential conditions of information; however, the Onopticon directly politicizes this space, focusing on how this informational environment is weaponized for control and structural imposition. Similarly, while Gilles Deleuze's *societies of control* (1992) operate through continuous modulation, the Onopticon structures the material of reality infrastructurally even before modulation occurs.

In Kantian philosophy, the subject synthesizes raw material from the world internally through time, space, and categories. In the Onopticon regime, however, the digital world no longer reaches the subject in its "raw" form. The most radical ontological maneuver of the Onopticon lies precisely here. The Kantian synthesis has been inverted: **The infrastructural *a priori* is no longer internal to the subject; it is placed before the subject.**^[1] Power no longer merely monitors behavior; it pre-processes the reality conditions that precede behavior.

SECTION II: *Homovictimus* as a Conditioned Agent

The structural subject produced by this pre-processed field of reality is the ***Homovictimus***. The *Homovictimus* is neither a passive victim rendered killable through exclusion (*Homo sacer*) nor an immobilized entity. On the contrary, it is a conditioned individual compelled to exercise agency within infrastructures (technical gateways) that it does not own.

The individual has been forced to outsource its capacity to learn, doubt, compare, and interpret to the infrastructure. The core tragedy of the *Homovictimus* is this: **It is the contemporary subject type that is held accountable by the system as a full agent, yet is structurally deprived of the infrastructural and epistemic conditions of true agency.**

SECTION III: Theoretical Collisions: The Boundaries of the Onopticon

To clarify the unique contours of the Reality Paradigm, it is necessary to demarcate the Onopticon against adjacent critical theories.

1. Nick Srnicek (From Property to Ontological Imposition): Srnicek (2016) deciphers platform capitalism through data expropriation and monopoly rent, locating the problem in the private ownership of digital intermediaries. The Onopticon framework, however, argues that the core issue is the *externalization of the conditions of experience*. Even if data ownership passed to the public, as long as the subject's capacity for interpretation remains outsourced to the network, the imposition of the infrastructural *a*

priori will persist.

2. Bruno Latour (From Interaction to Pre-Embedded Asymmetry): Latour's (2005) Actor-Network Theory (ANT) conceptualizes power as relational formations built through interactions. Conversely, the Onopticon posits that in contemporary infrastructures, asymmetries do not merely emerge during interaction; they are coded in advance and *pre-embedded* into the technical gateways of reality. The network is not a neutral negotiating ground, but a gravitational architecture where options are pre-narrowed.

3. Bernard Stiegler (From Proletarianization to Absorption): Stiegler's (2010) thesis on the delegation of human cognitive faculties to technology (*pharmakon*) intersects with the *Homovictimus*'s outsourced interpretative capacity. The Onopticon does not entirely reject Stiegler's possibility of a therapeutic use of technology; however, it emphasizes the profound risk that, under imposed infrastructural conditions, acts of therapeutic resistance are rapidly absorbed back into the regime of calculability.

4. Agamben (Camp vs. Infrastructure): For Agamben (1998), the camp is the juridico-political space of exception. Within the Reality Paradigm, this exception ceases to be a spatial camp. Instead, bare life and ontological vulnerability spread across the entire infrastructural regime of access, mutating into a generalized technique of inclusion.

5. Byung-Chul Han (From Voluntary Transparency to Pre-processed Imposition): Han (2015) argues that digital psychopolitics operates through voluntary self-exploitation and the imperative of transparency. The Onopticon, however, suggests that power operates even deeper than voluntary participation; it pre-processes the very field of choices before the subject can "voluntarily" submit to transparency.

6. Wendy Hui Kyong Chun (From Pattern Discrimination to the Infrastructural A Priori): Chun (2021) demonstrates how algorithms enforce homogenization by projecting past inequalities into the future. The Onopticon scales this insight, positioning algorithmic pattern discrimination not merely as a software bias, but as the foundational *a priori* of contemporary reality.

SECTION IV: The Reconstruction of Value and the Mechanics of Autoimmune Collapse

Under the conditions of the Onopticon, the center and the periphery no longer encounter one another in an unmediated form. This shift detaches the concept of "value" from moral elevation, reducing it to *the capacity to be recognized and processed within the shared infrastructure*.

The proposition "*If I am valuable, so are you*" is not an expression of moral compassion; it is a systemic imperative where the cost of the excluded actor is fed back to the center.^[2] Symmetrical Ontology emerges here not as a deterministic law, but as a **structural threshold under conditions of high infrastructural dependence, low substitutability, and rapid cost-feedback**.^[3] Low substitutability denotes a scenario where the excluded actor's function within the cycle of labor, data, or legitimacy cannot be compensated for in the short term.

When this threshold is crossed, the center's destruction of the other's reality conditions disrupts the center's own cycle. The center's representational and epistemological capacity degrades proportionally to its exclusion of the periphery. To put it simply: **as the center erases the periphery, it blinds its own reality**. This manifests as "**algorithmic feedback blindness**" (**epistemic model degradation**),^[4] causing the center's predictive capacity to lose both its normative legitimacy and its technical ability

to represent the external world.

SECTION V: Case Studies: Border Regimes and Platform Labor

The sociological equivalent of autoimmune collapse can be observed across disparate networks, prominently in contemporary border regimes and digital labor markets.

When the center attempts to keep the masses at its borders completely outside, this strategy produces structural vulnerabilities in the center's own systems of care, labor, and food supply (Mezzadra & Neilson, 2013; Sassen, 2014). For example, Frontex-centric border technologies do not entirely eradicate crossings; they reduce and redirect them, transforming migration into a security/coordination problem (Frontex, 2026). The greenhouse agriculture of Almería (Spain) offers an illustrative case. A CIDOB report (Garcés-Mascreñas, 2026) notes that 68.5% of the 74,674 workers registered with social security in Almería's agricultural sector in 2022 were foreign nationals, with irregular labor peaking during intensive harvest periods. This landscape reveals that excluded migrant labor has transformed into a load-bearing pillar of the center's agricultural supply architecture. Power's primary function is no longer to exclude, but to **coordinate** the malfunctions generated by this passage, managing undocumented labor as a "calculable risk" to prevent systemic collapse.

A parallel manifestation can be observed in algorithmically managed platform and warehouse labor. Studies of Uber drivers and algorithmically managed warehouse systems show how opaque performance metrics, automated evaluation, and data-driven disciplinary mechanisms can marginalize workers (Kellogg, Valentine, & Christin, 2020; Rosenblat & Stark, 2016). While workers continuously develop strategies to navigate, resist, or game these algorithmic systems to regain autonomy (Möhlmann & Zalmanson, 2018), the absolute algorithmic exclusion ultimately damages the center's own operational efficiency. By discarding human edge cases and contextual friction, the algorithmic system risks degrading the quality of the data from which it learns. This leads to a feedback loop where the ruthless pursuit of hyper-efficiency generates structural fragility, simultaneously weakening the system's capacity to learn from the very reality it seeks to manage.

SECTION VI: Counter-Objection and the Limit of the Theory: The Securitization of the "Right to Opacity"

The most radical limit at which the absolute siege of the Onopticon creates friction is the **Right to Opacity**. Originally formulated by Édouard Glissant (1997) in a postcolonial context as a defense against the Western imperative to render the colonized "transparent" and knowable, it is here transposed into digital ontology. For the *Homovictimus*, the sole ontological resistance is to refuse to become an input for the system. **The opaque subject is not merely a hiding subject; it is the subject that suspends the infrastructural *a priori*'s right to precondition.**

However, this right produces severe digital conflict in the field. The Onopticon immediately recodes opacity (unreadability) as a **risk and a security threat**. The subject's refusal of the system's data imposition is viewed by the system not as a civil right, but as an **anomaly**. The subject insisting on opacity is slowed down by CAPTCHA walls, excluded from financial scoring systems and thereby rendered unable to obtain credit, or deprived of essential public services for refusing biometric scanning.

This produces a tragic paradox: the pursuit of total opacity theoretically constitutes ultimate ontological resistance, but in practice, it condemns the subject to social and economic death. The individual is forced to choose between legible exploitation and opaque starvation. The dialectical clash between the system's attempt to draw opacity back into the calculable realm by "securitizing" it (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998) and the practical limits of the subject's disobedience delineates the actual conflict limit of the Onopticon theory.

CONCLUSION: Ethics as a Load-Bearing Column

Contemporary societies, characterized by high conductivity, find themselves in an interregnum where old rules of engagement have been destabilized. The fundamental conclusion of this structural diagnosis is as follows: **Ethics is no longer an abstract choice imposed from the outside; it is a load-bearing structural force that ensures the pre-processed architecture of reality remains standing without collapsing.** Here, ethics does not refer to the goodwill of the subject, but to the preservation of the systemic existence of actors to allow the network to function without failing. In networks that have reached the symmetrical ontology threshold, the center is obligated to protect the systemic value of the other in order to prevent its own autoimmune collapse. Domination attempts that violate this rule cease to be merely moral evils and are reproduced by the shared infrastructural reality as unsustainable malfunctions.

FOOTNOTES

[1] **Infrastructural *a priori*:** The redefinition of the Kantian conditions of perception (time, space, and categories) - which historically precede experience and are intrinsic to the subject - as algorithmic/technological gateways that operate outside of and prior to the subject in contemporary digital networks. Before the subject experiences the world, that world has already been filtered and structured by the infrastructure.

[2] **Feedback:** A concept borrowed from systems theory and cybernetics, denoting that the cost of an exclusionary act executed by a central power against the other will, due to the high conductivity of the network, eventually circulate and structurally reflect back onto the center's own balance sheet (as data loss, logistical malfunction, or a crisis of legitimacy).

[3] **Symmetrical Ontology Threshold:** Not an egalitarian moral philosophy or an abstract wish of goodwill, but a limit of systemic resilience. It is the critical point of density and non-substitutability where the vital interdependence of actors within a network is such that the destruction or exclusion of one will severely disrupt the operations of the other, or push it toward collapse.

[4] **Algorithmic Feedback Blindness:** A sociological condition akin to the discussions of performative prediction, data bias, feedback loops, and model degradation in artificial intelligence and machine learning literature. It refers to the system losing its capacity to represent the external world objectively and pluralistically as a result of being repeatedly trained on data recursively shaped by its own exclusionary outputs and interventions.

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