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Marooned, Measured, and Mortified
The Subject in the Dystopia of Risk Society

Abstract: The concept of the risk society offers a critical perspective on modernity, wherein social life, politics, and culture are organized around uncertainties implicit in modernization processes. It is an inherently dystopian outlook that shifts our attention to the future, conceived primarily in terms of threats and civilizational crises. This article aims to explore subjectivity and its transformations in the face of a crisis in scientific and technological rationality, as well as the growing awareness of risks and uncertainties associated with it. In risk society, the subject is condemned to uncertainty and alienation as traditional methods of addressing threats collapse. The turn toward digital solutions further intensifies the precarious dependence of individuals on technology, leading to the emergence of terminal subjects.

Keywords: biomedicalization, risk, risk society, terminal identity

A Bug in the System

The Millennium Bug (also known as the Y2K Bug) was a computer error potentially causing difficulties with date processing after December 31, 1999. In the mid- to late 20th century, to simplify expensive and space-consuming data storage, computer programmers used the two-digit system to represent a year, omitting the introductory digits of '19'. This worked successfully for a number of years until the late 1990 when IT specialists started to point to potential operational risks where computers could misread the year '00' as '1900' instead of '2000'. This potential misinterpretation was perceived as a serious risk to the integrality of commercial, administrative, and military computer systems.

Narrated, dramatized, and eventually amplified by the media, the Y2K Bug was added to the mainstream political agenda as a grave threat to vital sectors of economy, public health, and defense, including banking systems, hospitals, power plants, mass transportation, and computerized systems of nuclear deterrence in the US and the UK. Due to its serious, high-consequence profile, the threat was perceived by the public in terms of an end-of-the-world event. Consequently, the bug's catastrophic potential motivated corporations and governments to urgently develop solutions to fix it by expanding the shortened code to the four-digit

number format. Ultimately, few incidents occurred. For instance, a nuclear facility in Ishikawa, Japan, experienced a minor equipment failure, which was swiftly managed without endangering public safety. At the same time, countries with minimal preparations, such as Italy and South Korea, did not face more significant technological issues than states that invested heavily to fix the problem.[1]

On the one hand, the case of the Y2K bug is yet another cautionary tale of technology that has been thrown out of joint. On the other hand, however, the issue is symptomatic of a greater category of ideas and academic conceptualizations that deploy concepts of risk and danger to narrate "a break within modernity, which is freeing itself from the contours of the classical industrial society […]."[2] In this latter sense, the late phase of modern civilization is viewed in terms of a crisis, which showcases our disillusionment with modernity's basic institutions, chief among which is science, education, and technology. We all live in the world of manufactured risks in which the Armageddon is hardwired into the very logic of day-to-day social existence as humanity has to face "global dangers like those that arise for all of humanity from nuclear fission or the storage of radioactive waste."[3]

Philosophically speaking, late modernity has become a dialectical battleground for opposing forces in which progress and rationalization, best epitomized by advanced systems of technology, are confronted with accumulated by-products of modernization whose delayed consequences make uncertainty management and planning utterly ineffective.

> The discourse of progress is slowly undermined by another perspective: the discourse of crisis. Several authors notice that major social change, developmental and progressive in some respects, may yet incur grave social costs. First, it is observed that otherwise progressive processes do not run in an smooth, linear fashion, but rather – to put it metaphorically – through "blood, sweat, and tears," temporary breakdowns, backlashes, even lasting intervals. Hegelian and Marxian dialectics are the prime examples of this view.[4]

Ulrich Beck's risk society theorem may serve as an example and exemplar of the discourse of crisis that deploys risk-talk to expresses our disillusionment with

1. "Y2K Bug," National Geographic, accessed September 6, 2024, https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/Y2K-bug/

2. Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society. Towards a New Modernity*, trans. Mark Ritter (London, Newbury Park, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1992), 9.

3. Beck, *Risk Society*, 21.

4. Piotr Sztompka, "The Trauma of Social Change. A Case of Postcommunist Societies," in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2004), 156.

modernity and modernization. The Y2K problem illustrates the idea of risk society in a nutshell. Advanced socio-technical systems are perceived to have lost their beneficial nature, and the social use of technology is being re-evaluated in terms of its negative consequences in the future. Yet, the nature of those consequences, their scope and timespan remain uncertain, which burdens scientific, educational, and political institutions with major cognitive shortcomings. Concurrently, the discomforting impact of perceived risks on the general public forces political authorities to invest considerable economic resources and authority to cope with problems that have not yet occurred, to prevent uncertain, often unpredictable future situations.

The concept of risk entered the lexicon of mainstream academic sociology and cultural studies with the groundbreaking publication of Ulrich Beck's *Risk Society. Towards a New Modernity*. With its original edition published in Germany shortly after the Chernobyl disaster, the publication paved the way for an outburst of research which focuses on interconnections between processes of modernization, technology use, and the public awareness of contingencies implicit in the late modern civilization:

> The term *risk society* which I coined and made the title of my book in 1986 epitomizes an era of modern society that no longer merely casts off traditional ways of life but rather wrestles with the side effects of successful modernization – with precarious biographies and inscrutable threats that affect everybody and against which nobody can adequately insure.[5]

Narratives of risk and uncertainty, needless to say, postulate an essentially catastrophic vision of social and economic changes. They teach us that the human civilization is a fragile construction, teetering at the edge of catastrophe. As opposed to the positivist utopia of linear and evolutionary progress, policies and philosophies based on risk calculation and management postulate that *a* future cannot be seen as a linear, straightforward consequence of present developmental processes.[6] It is rather a wholesale, unpredictable metamorphosis of all existential certitudes, chief among which is our concept of subjectivity.

> This turmoil cannot be conceptualized in terms of the notions of "change" available to social science – "evolution," "revolution" and "transformation." For we live in a world that is not just changing, it is metamorphosing. Change implies that some things change

5. Ulrich Beck, *World at Risk*, trans. Ciaran Cornin (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 8.

6. Tomasz Burzyński, "Between Continuity and Change. Trauma, Risk and Cultural Discourses of Modernization," in *Continuity and Change. Conflict or Agreement?*, ed. Elżbieta Krawczyk (Katowice: Wydawnictwo WSZOP, 2019).

> but other things remain the same – capitalism changes, but some aspects of capitalism remain as they have always been. Metamorphosis implies a much more radical transformation in which the old certainties of modern society are falling away and something quite new is emerging.[7]

Invoking Ziauddin Sardar's notion of "postnormal times,"[8] it may be argued that we live in the transitory era, an interregnum in which the foundational structures of the *ancien régime* have disintegrated, while the contours of a new sociopolitical and epistemic order remain nascent and unsettled. Metaphorically speaking, risk is a bug that devours the social tissue from inside. At the first glace, the system seems intact, but the bug has already drilled tunnels of doubt and uncertainty, threatening the whole structure with imminent collapse. Indeed, the concept of risk society is an academic dystopia that "demonstrates anger at the ever-hazardous nature of life in late modernity, presenting an apocalyptic vision of how hazards and dangers may destroy humankind and other living creatures."[9]

The Dystopia of Risk Society

The first phase of modernity was marked by a sense of stability guaranteed by the welfare state and the development of technology aimed at facilitating human life through continuous innovations and inventions. Globalization and informatization held a promise of "long boom"[10] (i.e., unrestrained growth due to digitalization and globalization), encouraging a forward-looking optimism that success was inevitable. However, the Chernobyl disaster shattered this utopian narrative, and the awareness of risk became a pivotal gamechanger. In the dystopia of risk society, time and space conspire against humanity. Time turns into a nervous countdown to the next catastrophe, while the space, compressed by globalization, serves as a reminder that no one is safe anywhere: "The most intimate – say, nursing a child – and the most distant, most general – say, a reactor accident in the Ukraine, energy politics – are now suddenly *directly* connected."[11]

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7. Ulrich Beck, *The Metamorphosis of the World. How Climate Change is Transforming Our Concept of the World* (Polity Press, 2016), 3.
8. Ziauddin Sardar, "Welcome to Postnormal Times," *Futures* 42, no. 5 (2010), 435–444.
9. Deborah Lupton, *Risk* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), 60.
10. Peter Schwartz, *The Long Boom. A Vision for the Coming Age of Prosperity* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).
11. Ulrich Beck, "The Anthropological Shock: Chernobyl and the Contours of the Risk Society," *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 32 (1987). Cited after: Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 121.

The overly dystopian tone of the risk society thesis seems to indicate that there is a kind of science-fiction, or cyberpunk, moment in the theory whose concepts and conceptualizations seem to blur the boundaries between fact and fantasy:

> There is simply no overstating the importance of science fiction to the present cultural moment, a moment that sees itself as science fiction: "The cyberpunks [science fiction writers] are perhaps the first SF generation to grow up not only within the literary tradition of science fiction but in a truly science-fictional world"; "We live science fiction"; "We have annexed the future into our own present."[12]

Dystopias are fictional representations of what happens when societies fail to manage risks responsibly. They serve as cultural critiques of the risk society, showing what could happen if today's threats are left unchecked. Dystopian, cyberpunk, or post-apocalyptic representations of social decay and disorganization prevail in a great number of works of culture, such as novels, graphic novels, board and computer games, films and TV shows. William Gibson's *Neuromancer*, blockbuster movies like *Bladerunner*, *Wall*E,* or *Matrix*, TV series like *Fallout* and *Walking Dead*, and, taking a glance at music industry, Nine Inch Nails' concept album *Year Zero* share a common fin-de-siècle spirit and a cyberpunk penchant for expressing rampaging pessimism with modernization and technology. The same spirit of dystopian disillusionment with modernity and modernization is also characteristic of non-fiction academic works in the fields of philosophy, sociology, and cultural studies. It is beyond the aim and scope of this paper to present a comprehensive list of academic publications sharing the underlying spirit of cyberpunk as their common interest (a possible bibliography would consist of dozens of monographs and hundreds of articles in periodicals). Unlike cyberpunk narratives of mass culture, which depict fictitious events and characters, scholarly texts are primarily interested in addressing real-life issues, thusly converting cyberpunk themes into real-life research problems.

Marooned

The core idea of the risk society thesis shows that the public perception of risk is a gamechanger when it comes to the re-organization of institutions (a macro-structural level of analysis) and individual identities (a micro-structural level of analysis). The institutional reorganization begins with the erosion of trust

12. Scott Bukatman, *Terminal Identity. The Virtual Subject in Post-Modern Science Fiction* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 6.

vested in the traditional engines of modernity. Contrary to the Marxist political economy, in which social progress inevitably leads to the collapse of capitalist societies by means of class struggle and revolution, Beck sees unintended effects of modernization as a pathway to self-destruction: "[…] 'reflexive modernization' means the self-confrontation with the effects of *risk society* that cannot be dealt with and assimilated in the system of industrial society – as measured by the latter's institutionalized standards."[13] Risk society is concerned with the institutionalized incapacity to cope with advanced technologies (e.g., artificial intelligence, virtual realities, and biotechnologies) whose potential consequences can go well beyond our imagination, threatening our very existence and the foundations of political order.

The institutionalized incapacity goes hand in hand with institutionalized ignorance. Risk society is a product of non-knowledge that has been introduced as a specific counter-value rendering a risk-burdened sense to individual life projects and societal processes of management and control:

> Talk of the "knowledge society" is a euphemism of the first modernity. World risk society is a non-knowledge society in a very precise sense. In contrast to the premodern era, it cannot be overcome by more and better knowledge, more and better science; rather precisely the opposite holds: it is the product of more and better science. Non-knowledge rules in the world risk society. Hence, living in the milieu of manufactured non-knowing means seeking unknown answers to questions that nobody can clearly formulate.[14]

Non-knowledge is not a matter of mere ignorance. On the contrary, it is derived from the probabilistic nature of innovations. The issue here is not the lack of appropriate science. Rather, the problem is that once a new piece of technology is implemented, predictions based on empirical knowledge (e.g., risk calculations based on a history of past accidents) are abandoned in favor of a counterfactual interpretations in which a future is composed of multiple scenarios, each burdened with its own volume uncertainty. For instance, no one can determine with precision the consequences of artificial intelligence development, its impact on society and economy, its potential for self-evolution, its effects on human psychology, and a range of other issues. As a consequence, the implementation of artificial intelligence has become a portal to a multitude of future scenarios.

13. Ulrich Beck, "The Reinvention of Politics: Toward a Theory of Reflexive Modernization," in *Reflexive Modernization. Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*, ed. Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens, and Scott Lash (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 6.

14. Beck, *World at Risk*, 115.

Institutionalized ignorance and incapacity place individuals in a position of isolation and vulnerability. In a way, risk society is an atomized society of marooned agents, where the absence of clear and reliable solutions motivates individuals to confront uncertainty on their own.[15] When risks can hardly be controlled and managed, individual biographies are emancipated from the usual constraints of tradition, religion, and science. Agents are lost in the maze of competitive, often contradictory, explanations whose mass production is only accelerated by the Internet: we all live in the times of self-appointed Internet gurus, fake news, conspiracy theories, and contradictory researches. Yet, this emancipation is far from being a happy pursuit of individual freedom and agency. Instead, structural individualization produces a culture of vulnerability which motivates individuals and whole communities to "regard fear as a default response to life itself."[16]

Structural individualization is symptomatic of discourses and practices surrounding health risks. The imperative of staying fit and healthy implies a tacit assumption that diseases are not beyond the affected individual's control. Sickness is not necessarily a matter of bad luck, or being poor and marginalized. On the contrary, the underlying moral discourse points toward irresponsibility, idleness, or simply unwillingness to follow a scheme of a healthy lifestyle:

> Health is no longer so much a gift of God but rather the task and duty of the responsible citizen. S/he has to safeguard, control, and care for it, or else s/he must accept the consequences. For if one's health is being impaired, one has fewer chances in the labor market, or even none at all.[17]

Contemporary conceptualisations addressing issues of health and illness (e.g., the theory of biomedicalization[18]) represent individuals in terms of empowered, individualized agents who deploy material resources, technological equipment, information, and skills to monitor their bodily functions in a pursuit of wellbeing and/or disease prevention. The tendency gained a new momentum with the increase of public awareness concerning lifestyle risk factors, which reoriented individual practices of disease prevention towards contingent future scenarios. Although it is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss this problem

15. Beck, *Risk Society*, passim.

16. Frank Furedi, *The Culture of Fear Revisited* (London: Continuum, 2006), ix.

17. Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, "Health and Responsibility: From Social Change to Technological Change and Vice Versa," in *The Risk Society and Beyond. Critical Issues for Social Theory*, ed. Barbara Adam (Sage Publications, 2005), 124.

18. Adele E. Clarke, Laura Mamo, Jennifer R. Fosket, Jennifer R. Fishman, and Janet K. Shim, eds., *Biomedicalization: Technoscience, Health, and Illness in the U.S.* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009).

in detail, one may refer to a number of structural underpinnings that paved the way for the individualization of personal health risks. A usual list comprises the ubiquity of information on health-related matters available via mass media, popularization of genetic diagnosis, institutional transformations of biomedicine (i.e., the doctrine of patient empowerment), and proliferation of health risks due to civilizational progress.[19]

Measured

It is widely acknowledged that medical students often suffer from a particular condition. After acquiring a certain level of theoretical knowledge in the field of medicine, but lacking the practical experience to contextualize it, they develop an anxiety rooted in the overinterpretation of their own everyday symptoms. From that point on, no headache is merely a simple migraine, and no stomach pain is just indigestion. In the age of digital technologies, when information is cheap and accessible 24/7, we all have become students of medicine, and our bodies have become an element of information networks.

Contemporary practices and discourses of health risk management are facilitated by a new model of self-embodiment in which "digital devices are incorporated into our everyday routines, entangled with our sense of the self, […] our acquisition of knowledge and meaning-making and our social relations."[20] Wearable digital devices (e.g., smartwatches and smartbands) are designed to monitor bodily functions and physical activities, providing their users with an instant feedback on motor performance, calorie consumption, blood pressure, oxygen saturation, stress level, or sleep quality. As wearable technology seamlessly integrates into our lives, the routine of self-tracking practices has become an integral aspect of self-embodiment, enabling individuals to understand and optimize various dimensions of their lives, including physical health, mental well-being, and overall productivity:

> The concept of the practices of the self is again evident in the discourses on digital self-quantification or life logging. Generating detailed data about oneself using digital devices is represented as an undeniable good as part of the ethos of working upon the self. Part of engaging in data collection using self-tracking devices is the idea that the self-knowledge that will eventuate will allow users to exert greater control over their destinies. It is assumed that the data and the knowledge contained therein will help

19. Clarke et.al., *Biomedicalization*, passim.

20. Deborah Lupton, *The Quantified Self. A Sociology of Self-Tracking* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2017), 38–39.

them achieve greater health, higher-quality sleep, greater control over mood swings, improved management of chronic conditions, less stress, increased work productivity, better relationships with others and so on.[21]

Self-tracking increases the social and cultural visibility of one's body and its internal functioning. The body-with-organs is no longer hidden comfortably at the hinterlands of everyday practice. Likewise, it is no longer veiled by discourse. The human organism has become a fully legitimate participant in routines of risk society. With the ever increasing somatization of social life, practices of self-tracking are a perfect realization of premises and postulates implicit in the risk society theorem. As a means of staying fit and healthy self-tracking promotes individualized management of health risks whereby quantifiable variables (e.g., food intake, number of steps per day, or sleep length) are all converted into quantifiable health risk factors that may potentially threaten one's wellness in a foreseeable future. Likewise, the very idea of self-tracking contains an implicit assumption that not being self-reflexive enough is a matter of being automatically subsumed within the category of "at risk" communities.

It is symptomatic for the theory of risk society that risk-related subject positions are seen as being able to override other individual subject positions, especially those formed on a basis of class position, gender, nationality, or cultural capital.[22] In this way, self-tracking permeates the Beckean dystopian vision of living with risks that cannot be effectively bracketed off. By the formation of risk-related subject positions, bodywork regimes – as opposed to early modern models of biomedicine – are based on the idea of empowering the patient,[23] which debunks the concept of the sick body that should be treated independently of the individual as such. As a result, concerns about the body are automatically ceded upon the individual's capacity for health vigilance and making informed choices with respect to one's present and future health risk factors.

Mortified

The imperative of staying healthy coerces individuals into activities of self-tracking and risk calculation which are deployed against a number of counterfactual future scenarios. Since the notion of risk may be defined in terms of a coping

21. Deborah Lupton, *Digital Sociology* (New York and London: Routledge, 2015), 182.
22. Beck, *Risk Society*, passim.
23. Rocco Palumbo, *The Bright Side and the Dark Side of Patient Empowerment. Co-creation and Co-destruction of Value in the Healthcare Environment* (Cham: Springer, 2017).

mechanism applied to "master time, to discipline the future,"[24] discourses focusing on health risks assume a critical role in the constitution of the subject as a nebular construct which exists discursively as an element of probabilistic assessments. Consequently, the subject becomes disembodied and dispersed across a variety of future embodiments in which the individual's present physical condition is only a starting point in an elaborate network of future-oriented subject positions. In this way, self-tracking is always an activity of envisaging better (i.e., thinner, healthier, more productive, more attractive) selves of the future. At the same time, one's inability to follow the routine of self-perfection results in a range of discomforting future projections in which one's gets ill, depressed, obese, and is ultimately marginalized in the society of successful self-tracking Others. In both scenarios, the subject's present state is irrelevant, and the coherent, here-and-now agent becomes effectively mortified.

In the reality of digital and wearable technologies, the disembodied subject becomes the "terminal identity." The concept delves into how the rise of digital technologies, cyberspace, and virtual realities reshapes our understanding of identity, subjectivity, and embodiment. As "an unmistakably doubled articulation in which we find both the end of the subject and a new subjectivity constructed at the computer station or television screen,"[25] the term "terminal" refers both to the idea of digitalized interfaces (i.e., terminals) and to the idea of an "end" with regard to the traditional notion of human identity. In this sense, terminal identity reflects the transformation of human subjectivity in response to digital technologies and virtual realities, suggesting a future where individual identity is no longer rooted in the body-self but rather in the fluid, ever-changing interactions between humans and machine equipment.

Bukatman argues that the emergence of advanced digital and cybernetic technologies challenges the traditional distinctions between human beings and machines. As people increasingly engage with virtual environments, digital identities become extensions or replacements for physical ones, leading to a hybridization of humans and machines:

> The interface has thus become a crucial site, a significantly ambiguous boundary between human and technology. The interface relocates the human, in fact redefines the human as part of a cybernetic system of information circulation and management. The more

24. François Ewald, "Insurance and Risks," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (London: Harvester/Wheatsheaf 1991), 207.

25. Bukatman, *Terminal Identity*, 9.

> invisible the interface, the more perfect the fiction of a total imbrication with the force fields of a new reality.[26]

In a very similar vein, self-tracing practices foster a technoscientific identity in which technological devices are perceived as a kind of "dashboard for your body."[27] As an interface, a self-tracking device converts biological parameters into raw data, effectively transforming the subject into its digital apparition. The digital representation is given a new mode of existence and becomes interwoven into networks of information exchange as biodata. Due to commercialization, when accumulated biodata is subject to monetary exchange, biodata becomes biocapital, which is observable especially in the context of incurrence companies and commercial health services:

> Health and life insurance companies are also beginning to encourage their clients to upload their self-tracking health and fitness data. For example, the insurance company AIA Australia offers a Vitality life insurance program in which, as its website puts it, "your healthy choices are financially rewarded."[28]

Of course, one can easily imagine a situation where one's unhealthy choices are financially penalized, which paves the way for a blatantly cyberpunk perspective of mass dataveillance and digitalized social Darwinism. In this way, when biodata is believed to represent the ultimate truth about the individual, one's digital identity takes the upper hand over more traditional, human-centric elements of identity as physical appearance, gender, personality, biographical experiences, or social position. The quantification of self mortifies the traditional identity as it represents a shift in how individuals perceive and define themselves in the digital age. The digital regime re-defines the subject as the Quantified Self (QS); that is, a person who exists in a form of elaborate statistical variables. As predicted by Neil Postman's idea of "Technopoly," this terminal phase of subjectivity conveys an essentially cyberpunk notion of our surrender to technology:

> […] the computer redefines humans as "information processors" and nature itself as information to be processed. The fundamental metaphorical message of the computer, in short, is that we are machines – thinking machines to be sure, but machines nonetheless. It is for this reason that the computer is the quintessential, incomparable, near-perfect

26. Bukatman, *Terminal Identity*, 192.
27. Lupton, *The Quantified Self*, 69.
28. Lupton, *The Quantified Self*, 122.

> machine for Technopoly. It subordinates the claims of our nature, our biology, our emotions, our spirituality.[29]

Bukatman situates terminal identity within the broader framework of postmodern thought, which emphasizes fragmentation, deconstruction, and the rejection of fixed, essential identities. The same applies to self-tracking environments in which identities are mutable and multiple, reflecting the impact of digital culture on how we think about ourselves. In the context of cyberspace and virtual reality, identity becomes fluid and fragmented. At the same time, the individual can project various versions of themselves in cyberspace, leading to a destabilized sense of a coherent self.

Conclusions

The normalization of fear, the erosion of trust in institutions, and the pervasive presence of unregulated technological threats contribute to the dystopian tenor of the risk society thesis. From a philosophical standpoint, the dystopia articulated within this framework illustrates a broader shift in late modern social theory – one that has largely abandoned the overtly utopian trajectories of linear societal progress in favor of more sobering and often foreboding conceptualizations. These new paradigms seek to explain contemporaneity through the lenses of systemic risk, crisis, and the lost opportunities.

Within the discursive terrain of the risk society, subjectivity is not merely destabilized but reconstituted as a transitory and precarious construct that is marooned, measured, and ultimately mortified by digital technologies of the self. In the absence of coherent and enduring social structures, individuals are compelled into regimes of perpetual self-monitoring and risk management; that is, the practices oriented toward mitigating existential insecurity in an increasingly uncertain world. This is perhaps most clearly manifested as the phenomenon of self-tracking, wherein subjectivity is rendered intelligible through biometric data and algorithmic representations. Here, the unified self is not only disarticulated and mortified but also projected across a series of probabilistic future embodiments, each shaped by data-driven anticipations rather than coherent ontological presence.

29. Neil Postman, *Technopoly. The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 111.

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