Alone Together in an Age of Social Distancing: What Becomes of Humanity When Most of Life Transpires Online?

Lecture IV:
From The Economy to Political and Beyond: The Algorithmic Architecture of Everyday Life

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Review and Preview

Review of Lecture II: What Digital Technology and Social Media Are Doing To Our Minds, Psychology and Relationship

I. Theoretic Background to Sherry Turkle’s *Alone Together*

II. What’s Driving Human Interaction On-Line: How Technology Conditions Its Use, Plus Social Factor and the Pandemic

III. New Technologies, New Subjectivities and Their Discontents

IV. The Transformation of Self and Society: Growing Up Tethered and the New Adolescence

V. Nicholas Carr’s Examination of What Digital Technology is Doing to Our Relationship to Knowledge—Especially Reading and Writing [Leftover]

Preview of Lecture III: The Political Economy of Surveillance Capitalism

I. Introducing Shoshana Zuboff and *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*

II. The Central Concepts of Zuboff’s Critical Political Economy of Technology

III. A Very Brief History of Surveillance Capitalism

IV. What Happens to Privacy and Autonomy When the Economy Depends for Profit on Surveilling and Manipulating Your Behavior
Introducing Shoshana Zuboff
Four Main Concluding Concerns

A. Are Digital Media Reconfiguring Human Attention From Sustained and Self-Directed to Transitory, Automatic and Distracted? (see Tim Wu, Attention Merchants)

B. The Shift from a Literary to a Networked Public and Its Implications for the Kinds of Culture and Politics Addressed to It and the Kinds of Subjectivity they Elicit

C. In Defense of Difficulty: The Significance of Grappling with Alterity and Repositories of Knowledge that Reflect the Thought Process of the Intelligent Mind (see Daniel Kahneman, Thinking Fast and Slow)

D. The Forces Driving the Spread of Digital Technology and Social Media Are Economic: The Discovery of a New Logic of Accumulation through Data Extraction
Google’s Evolved Surveillance Capital Model

The Discovery of Behavioral Surplus

Surveillance capitalism begins with the discovery of behavioral surplus. More behavioral data are rendered than required for service improvements. This surplus feeds machine intelligence - the new means of production - that fabricates predictions of user behavior. These products are sold to business customers in new behavioral futures markets. The Behavioral Value Reinvestment Cycle is subordinated to this new logic.
How the Surveillance Model Drives Technology

Figure 3: The Dynamic of Behavioral Surplus Accumulation
New Frontiers of Surveillance Capitalism: The Invasion of the Mind and Soul Snatchers

I. The Internet of Things and Ubiquitous Computing
II. Affective Or Emotional Computing
III. The “Outsourcing” of Decision-Making to Informationally Empowered Algorithms
The Transformation of Central Concepts Like Privacy and Instruments of Human Social Life as we Know It

I. The Meaning and Value of Privacy
   A. Privacy as Sheltering the Intimate
   B. Privacy as Protecting a Sphere of Autonomy

II. The Self-Surrender of Privacy in Social Media

III. The Invasion of Privacy by Data Extraction and Ubiquitous Computing

IV. A Notorious Example: Google’s Use of Street View to Capture Private Data

V. Some Less Notorious But Still Troubling Examples: Facebook’s Experiments with Behavioral Modification and Pokémon Go!

VI. The ‘Thingness’ of Things and the Humanization of the Fabricated World vs. Thinking Things That Monitor and Report on Us
What Happens to Autonomy
When the Economy Depends for Profit
On Surveilling and Manipulating Your Behavior

I. The Conditions for and Limits on Commercial Contracts: The Doctrine of Freely Given and Informed Consent and Its Limits

II. Surveillance Capitalism Seizure of Decision Rights and Claim on Personal Data through the Click Cover Contract (Margaret Radin)

III. The Threat to Autonomy from Technologically Enhanced, Data Rich Behavior Manipulation

IV. The Match Between Human Cognitive Power and the Nature and Range of Human Behavior Disposition and Emotions

V. Artificial Intelligence Disrupts this Balance and Opens Up Unprecedented Modalities for Manipulation and Control

VI. The Imperative of Asserting Democratic Control as we Anticipate the Age of Ubiquitous and Affective Computing

VII. Autonomy and Responsibility and the Requirements of Self-Direction
A Brief Introduction to Virginia Eubanks and Safiya Umoja Noble
Some Central Examples and Conclusions From These Works

I. The Problem of the ‘Black Box’ of Algorithmic Architecture (Pasquale)

II. Reinforcing Instead of Counteracting Bias—Both Conscious and Unconscious (Noble & Jennifer Eberhardt)
   A. The Increasing Displacement of Policy and Judgment by Algorithmic Decision-Making
   B. In Insurance Markets and Eligibility Decisions
   C. In Hiring and Firing Decisions (as well as college admission)
   D. In Determining Eligibility for Public Benefits
   E. In Criminal Sentencing
   F. In Child Custody Decisions
Another Course While You’re Waiting for Fromm to Come Back Online

Race and Justice in America in the 21st Century: Historical, Critical and Ethical Perspectives
Mondays from 1:00-3:00 pm EST (10:00 am- 12:00 pm PST) beginning July 6, 2020 through August 4, 2020

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Or See My Website:
https://www.minervaacademyoflifelonglearning.org/race-and-justice-webinar