



Binge-Watching and the Theory of Desire: A Lacanian Perspective on Netflix Consumption Patterns

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Abstract: This paper explores the phenomenon of binge-watching on Netflix through the lens of Jacques Lacan's Theory of Desire. While this behavior is often viewed as a product of convenience or entertainment, it reflects a deeper psychological process rooted in the structure of desire. Lacan's theory posits that desire is not merely about satisfying needs but is fundamentally tied to the symbolic order and the endless pursuit of the unattainable. This study argues that Netflix's business model and content strategies are deeply aligned with Lacanian concepts, particularly the notion of desire as an unfulfilled and perpetual pursuit. By continuously providing new content, Netflix sustains and amplifies the viewer's desire, keeping them engaged in a cycle of consumption that mirrors Lacan's structure of desire.

Keywords: Jacques Lacan; Theory of Desire; Binge-Watching; Netflix; Psychoanalysis; Media Studies



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Binge-Watching and the Theory of Desire: A Lacanian Perspective on Netflix Consumption Patterns

Emrah Öztürk

Introduction

Media consumption in the digital age has undergone a significant transformation with the rise of streaming services like Netflix. Unlike traditional television, which offers fixed programming schedules and limited content, streaming platforms provide users with unlimited access, allowing them to reach a wide range of content whenever they want and in any order they choose. This change leads to the emergence of a new viewing habit known as "binge-watching," where audiences consume multiple episodes or even an entire series in one sitting. Mareike Jenner comments that this habit *encapsulates how control is offered to viewers in the TV IV era*. (2018; 109). The act of binge-watching, which can be defined as a marathon of content consumption, is often perceived as a modern convenience or entertainment trend. However, it can be examined from a psychoanalytic theory perspective due to the deeper psychological processes it reveals. Therefore, in this study, the concept of binge-watching will be examined in light of Lacanian terms.

Jacques Lacan, who made a significant contribution to the development of psychoanalytic theory, offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex structure of human desire. Based on the fundamental works of Sigmund Freud, Lacan reinterprets desire not merely

as the satisfaction of needs, but as a phenomenon that is identified with the symbolic order and the pursuit of the unattainable (Homer, 2005; 12). Lacan's theory emphasizes that desire is structured around a constant sense of lack; here, satisfaction is always postponed, and this quest becomes central to the individual's experience (Lacan, 2017; 295). This constant procrastination, combined with the Other's structuring role and the pursuit of *objet petit a* (the object that causes desire), can be directly applied to the binge-watching phenomenon, making it understandable why users feel compelled to engage in long viewing sessions without any real satisfaction.

Lacan defines desire as a concept that is always directed towards something lacking (Homer, 2005; 72), and in the context of Netflix, this lack manifests itself as an endless availability of content that promises constant satisfaction but never fully delivers (McDonald & Smith-Rowsey, 2016; 33). For this reason, the act of binge-watching a series can be seen as an expression of the user's unconscious desire to bridge a gap between themselves and the object of their desire; this desire is represented by the next episode, the next season, or the next recommended series. However, just as the *objet petit a* in Lacan's theory can never be attained, the satisfaction promised by the next piece of content remains perpetually out of reach, compelling the user to continue watching in an endless loop.

This study will assume that Netflix's recommendation algorithm functions as a modern manifestation of the Lacanian Other, shaping and guiding the user's desires. Netflix has been chosen among other streaming platforms because it is '*a dominant challenger to linear television, viewing practices, nationalized media systems, and established concepts of what television is*' (Jenner, 2018; 3)." The algorithm organizes content based on past viewing habits and influences what users want to watch next. This creates a scenario where the user's desires are not entirely self-determined, but rather guided by an external system that "knows" their preferences and directs them towards specific choices (McDonald & Smith-Rowsey, 2016; 70).

The structure of binge-watching reflects Lacan's concept of the pursuit of desire. Lacan argues that desire is never about achieving satisfaction; rather, it is a constant state of pursuit. "*The subject does not simply satisfy a desire, he derives enjoyment from desiring, and this is an essential dimension of his enjoyment*" (Lacan, 2017; 295). In binge-watching, this quest becomes evident in how users are drawn to watch "one more episode" or finish a series in one sitting; this phenomenon is driven by cliffhangers, unresolved narratives, and the promise of future enjoyment. However, each episode watched does not bring the desired closure; rather, it prolongs the desire even further. This is similar to Lacan's idea that the satisfaction of desire is always postponed to a future moment that never fully arrives.

In this study, first, the components of Lacan's concept of desire will be examined, and then the act of binge-watching on Netflix will be reinterpreted in light of these concepts. In the conclusion section, the contributions of such an interpretation to the literature will be evaluated.

*Desire, The Other, and *Objet Petite a**

Jacques Lacan, a central figure in the development of psychoanalysis in the 20th Century, made significant contributions to the field by reinterpreting and expanding upon Sigmund Freud's theories. Lacan's work stands out for its focus on the structures of language, the role of the unconscious, and the formation of desire. By reinterpreting Freudian theory, he revealed with a new understanding how desire is intricately connected to linguistic and symbolic systems, making him a transformative figure in psychoanalytic thought.

Lacan's approach diverges from classical Freudian psychoanalysis by emphasizing '*the unconscious as structured like a language*' (Homer, 2005; 66). This statement emphasizes Lacan's belief in the profound impact of symbolic systems —especially language— on human psychology. According to Lacan, the subject exists through language and other symbolic systems, and in this process, desire emerges as a central element. His theory deeply focuses on the idea that desire is never solely about the fulfillment of needs, but is always mediated by the structures of language

and symbolic order (p. 70). This situation creates a constant state of desire that defines human existence.

It would be appropriate to take a closer look at Lacan's three important concepts within this article, namely Desire, The Other, and *Objet petit a*.

Desire

In Lacan's theory, desire operates within the symbolic order, which is the realm of language and cultural structures that give meaning to human experience (Lacan, 2017; 335). The symbolic order is the place where the subject's identity and desires are shaped, but it is also the place where the impossibility of satisfaction becomes evident. In the symbolic realm, language functions as a tool for expressing desire; however, language is a system of signifiers that refers to other signifiers rather than a fixed reality, which creates a gap between the signifier and what it signifies. This void is the source of the lack that characterizes human desire. The desires of the subject are expressed within a symbolic order, but they are never fully satisfied because the signifiers that constitute desire can never fully encompass the Real—the pure being or realm of existence that lies beyond language (Homer, 2005; 71).

The relationship between desire and lack forms the foundation of Lacan's theory. In this context, "lack" refers to the absence or incompleteness that exists in the human condition due to

our entry into the symbolic order. When a child enters the symbolic order, they must give up the illusion of a complete and self-sufficient identity; this process creates a fundamental sense of lack (Fink, 1995; 177). This deficiency triggers desire; for the subject constantly tries to fill the void created by the loss of an imagined wholeness. However, the *objet petit a*, by its nature unreachable, is structured as an infinite quest for something that can never be fully attained. This desire structure allows the subject to remain in a constant state of wanting; it always chases after the next object or goal that promises but never fully delivers satisfaction (p. 61).

Lacan's theory of desire is shaped by the Other, directed towards the *objet petit a*, and operates within a symbolic order that constantly experiences a sense of lack. This framework reveals the impossibility of fulfilling desire; because the structures that give rise to desire also guarantee its non-fulfillment. Understanding this structure is essential for analyzing how digital platforms like Netflix influence user desires and keep them in a continuous cycle of consumption and longing.

The Other

The concept of the "Other" is of fundamental importance in understanding the formation and dynamics of human desire. The Other is not just another individual, but also a symbolic being or authority that plays a central role in structuring the subject's desires, identity, and social

interactions (Lacan, 2017; 451). Lacan's concept of the Other is intricately connected with language, culture, and social order; this makes it an important figure in psychoanalytic understanding regarding how desires are formed and organized.

In Lacan's framework, the Other functions as a repository of language and the symbolic order; it is the realm of cultural norms, laws, and social expectations (Fink, 1995: 92). Through the Other, the subject is introduced to the world of language and meaning; this shapes their desires and identities. When a child enters the symbolic level, he encounters the Other as an authority that imposes the rules of language and social interaction. The process of entering this symbolic level through the other is of vital importance in the formation of desire. Subject desires are not innate or entirely individual; rather, they are influenced and shaped by the desires of the Other. Lacan's famous statement "*desire is the desire of the Other*" summarizes this idea (Lacan, 2017; 456). Our desires are fundamentally intertwined; they are shaped by our perception of what the Other desires or expects from us.

The Other, as a symbolic authority, defines the rules and boundaries of desire by determining what is desirable or valuable within a specific cultural context. For this reason, the subject's desires are always mediated by the symbolic order; this order sets parameters regarding what can be desired and how those desires can be pursued. For example, social norms surrounding

success, beauty, or morality are all mediated by the Other and influence the individual's desires in a way that aligns with these norms or rebels against them. For this reason, the subject's desire is never entirely their own; it is always related to the Other and desire operates under the conditions set by the Other.

Moreover, the Other plays a critical role in maintaining the structure of desire by continuously instilling a sense of lack that directs the subject's quest for satisfaction. In Lacan's theory, entering the symbolic level requires the subject to give up the illusion of wholeness or completeness (Homer, 2005; 44); this creates a fundamental lack, which then becomes the source of desire. The Other reinforces this deficiency by constantly confronting the subject with ideals and norms that are always inaccessible, thus ensuring that desire remains unfulfilled. The unattainable nature of these ideals —whether it be social status, moral perfection, or romantic love— ensures that the subject remains in a constant state of desire; always in pursuit, yet never able to fully attain what the Other is thought to desire or value. Understanding the role of the Other is essential for grasping how desires are constructed and maintained within a socio-cultural context.

Objet petit a

In Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory, the concept of *objet petit a* holds central importance in understanding the structure and dynamics of human desire. The *objet petit a*, often referred to as the "object of desire," is a fundamental concept that encompasses the unattainable nature of desire. This is not a definable or attainable object; rather, it represents something that is always out of reach, triggering a continuous desire that can never be fully obtained or satisfied (Bailly, 2012,106).

The *objet petit a* can be understood as the symbolic placeholder for something that is missing or absent in the subject's life. This arises with the subject's entry into the symbolic order; here, it must sacrifice the illusion of completeness and wholeness. This sacrifice creates a fundamental deficiency within the subject; a sense of lacking something that can never be completely filled. The *objet petit a* thus emerges as the object that the subject unconsciously believes will restore this lost wholeness, yet this object remains forever unattainable (Homer, 2005; 85). The *objet petit a* is not a concrete object in the traditional sense; it is a conceptual entity that represents the driving force behind all desires, something that the subject continuously seeks but can never truly possess. Lacan's theory suggests that desire is structured around this unattainable object, resulting in what he describes as an infinite cycle of pursuit. Since the *objet petit a* is

inherently unattainable, this satisfaction is always postponed. A person may believe they have found the object of their temporary desire, but when this object is obtained, it turns out to be insufficient, leading to a resurgence of desire for something else. This dynamic creates a continuous cycle of desire in which the subject is always chasing the next object, the next goal, or the next ideal; this ultimately carries the hope of satisfying their aspirations (Bailly, 2012; 113).

This endless quest is a fundamental characteristic of human desire within Lacan's framework. In this sense, desire is never about the object itself; it is more about the process of desire. The object petit a keeps the subject in a constant state of desire, always searching for something to complete them, but finding that completion is always challenging. This desire structure keeps the subject in a constant cycle of pursuit.

Lacan explains this concept with various examples such as the unattainable object of love, the perfect job, or the idealized version of the self. In his case, the subject acts believing that obtaining this object will alleviate the feeling of lack, but when they achieve it, the feeling of lack persists and the desire shifts to another object. This mechanism explains that desires are never fully satisfied and that people are generally restless, always searching for more or something different; this holds true even when urgent needs are met.

The *objet petit a* plays an important role in the formation of fantasies. Fantasies are constructed around the *objet petit a* by presenting an imaginary scenario in which the subject's desires are fulfilled (Homer, 2005; 82). However, these dreams have always been marked by a fundamental tension between the imagined satisfaction and the unattainability of the *objet petit a*. This tension sustains the cycle of desire; for the subject, while acting with the dream of satisfaction, is constantly confronted with the reality that such satisfaction is impossible.

In short, the *objet petit a* is the unattainable object-source of desire and represents the lost thing that triggers the subject's desires but can never be fully attained. Understanding the role of the *objet petit a* is vital for analyzing human behavior and how it interacts with people's desires. This is particularly true in contexts such as consumer culture and digital media, where the promise of satisfaction is constantly presented but never fully delivered. To take a closer look at the validity of this statement and to test its accuracy, it is necessary to examine Netflix in light of the Lacanian concepts mentioned above.

Netflix as The Other

The purpose of the algorithm is to predict and recommend content that aligns with the user's preferences, thereby effectively shaping the user's viewing habits and desires. It can be said that algorithms like those of Netflix function as "cultural intermediaries"; these algorithms not only

reflect user preferences but also actively construct these preferences by filtering and organizing content based on past behaviors (Gillespie, 2014; 174).

This compilation process expresses a situation where the Lacanian Other serves as an external authority that directs the user's desires within the symbolic framework of Netflix's content presentation. The algorithm's ability to "know" what the viewer wants before the viewer themselves becomes aware of it particularly reflects the role of the Other within the framework of Lacanian theory. Lacan argues that the Other knows the desires of the subject better than the subject knows them themselves, because the desires of the subject are formed and articulated primarily through the Other (Fink, 1995; 59). Similarly, Netflix's algorithm analyzes a user's viewing history, search patterns, and interactions with the platform to predict and recommend content that aligns with the user's default preferences (Jenner, 2018; 5). This predictive ability not only reflects past behaviors but also actively shapes future desires by suggesting content that the user may not have consciously considered.

Additionally, the functioning of the algorithm also reflects Lacan's concept of "*the desire of the Other*." This is clearly evident in the way Netflix's algorithm presents content recommendations; users are often guided by the algorithm's suggestions, and these recommendations indirectly carry the authority of what is considered desirable within Netflix's

symbolic order. The algorithm's recommendations are imbued with the authority of the Other, as they not only suggest what the user might enjoy but also represent what Netflix's symbolic system deems appropriate for the user's identity and past behaviors. The user's interaction with the platform thus becomes a dialogue with the Other; here, the algorithm's suggestions serve as a representative of the desires and expectations of a broader cultural and social order.

The relationship between the user and the algorithmic Other has been examined in various studies. For example, John Cheney-Lippold (2011) discusses how algorithms participate in the "modulation" of individual identities by assigning preferences and categorizing users in ways that affect their self-perception and desires; *as more data is received about a certain user's online behavior, new coded computations can be performed to alter who the user is perceived to be and what content that user might want* (p. 168). Netflix's algorithm effectively modulates the user's identity by predicting and recommending content, subtly shaping their desires according to the logic of the algorithmic Other. This modulation enhances the user's interaction with the platform; because the algorithm continuously reaffirms and develops the user's identity through its recommendations. This situation creates a feedback loop in which the user's desires are both shaped and reflected by the algorithm. This dynamic not only reflects the profound impact of the algorithm on user behavior but also illustrates how digital platforms like Netflix interact with human desire and manipulate it through the symbolic authority of the algorithmic Other.

According to Lacan, this symbolic order is crucial in shaping the identity and desires of the subject; it provides the signifiers through which meaning is constructed and communicated. Similarly, Netflix functions as a symbolic arrangement that shapes and meets the desires of viewers and how they interact with the platform. The platform's extensive content library, combined with advanced recommendation algorithms, creates a system where users' choices and preferences are both shaped and constrained by the available options and the way these options are presented. For this reason, Netflix not only provides content; it actively shapes the environment in which viewers make choices, guiding them with a carefully crafted experience that reflects the platform's internal logic and objectives.

The availability of content on Netflix is neither random nor neutral; it is meticulously organized and mediated by the platform's symbolic structure, which operates in a manner quite similar to Lacan's symbolic order. As shown in his work *Story: Substance, Structure, Style and the Principles of Screenwriting* (2016), Robert McKee illustrates that storytelling is governed by traditions that align with specific narrative structures and audience expectations; “*The world now consumes films, novels, theatre, and television in such quantities and with such ravenous hunger that the story arts have become humanity’s prime source of inspiration, as it seeks the order chaos and gain insight into life*” (p. 12). Netflix creates a symbolic network by categorizing and

organizing its content into genres, themes, and personalized recommendations, guiding viewer engagement along predetermined paths. These pathways are shaped by the platform's way of understanding user behavior, but they also subtly guide that behavior by highlighting certain content while leaving other content in the background.

In her analysis of digital media environments, Taina Bucher (2018) discusses how platforms like Netflix create "algorithmic neighborhoods"; these neighborhoods are areas where user interaction is heavily mediated by algorithmic processes (p. 118). These fronts function as symbolic arrangements where the accessibility and visibility of content are determined by the platform's internal rules and priorities. For users, navigating Netflix feels like traversing a symbolic network shaped by the platform's imposed recommendations and categories. The symbolic order of Netflix not only defines what can be desired but also determines how desires are directed and satisfied.

Additionally, Netflix's symbolic arrangement is dynamic and adaptable, constantly evolving based on user interactions and preferences. As stated by Lev Manovich (2001), digital environments are characterized by their capacity for continuous updating and restructuring based on user input (p. 223). Netflix serves as an example of creating a symbolic order that both responds to and shapes user desires by continuously improving its recommendations and content categories

based on viewer data. This continuous interaction reflects the dialectical relationship between the user and the platform; in Lacan's theory, the identity and desires of the subject are shaped by the symbolic structures they inhabit, while simultaneously shaping those structures.

Netflix's symbolic arrangement is also characterized by its ability to sustain user engagement through the illusion of choice and the promise of satisfaction. As Shoshana Zuboff discovered in 2019, digital platforms often operate according to the principle of continuous engagement. Here, users are encouraged to stay on the platform due to the constant availability of new content; *"these interactions are measured and monitored in real time and at scale, with a view to rewarding or extinguishing behavior according to its market effect"* (p. 177). Netflix's symbolic arrangement ensures that users are always on the brink of discovering something new and desirable, but this exploration is mediated through the platform's symbolic structure; this structure determines which content is visible, how it is presented, and when it is recommended. This creates a cycle of desire where satisfaction is always postponed, keeping users engaged in an endless chase for fulfillment.

Binge-watching and The Unattainable Object

The phenomenon of binge-watching has become increasingly common with the rise of streaming platforms like Netflix. Binge-watching can be seen as a concrete example of this cycle in which the viewer constantly seeks the satisfaction promised by the next episode, the next season, or the resolution of a narrative arc.

Academic discussions have begun to acknowledge that the habit of binge-watching is increasingly guided by deeper psychological processes. Binge-watching is not just a response to the convenience provided by streaming platforms; it is also an expression of the desire to fill a deep void or to find meaning in an immersive narrative experience (Broe, 2019, 23). This overlaps with Lacan's concept of *objet petit a*; here, the viewer is constantly in search of an elusive satisfaction that the narrative structure of binge-watching perpetually postpones. The pleasure derived from binge-watching, therefore, is not related to the attainment of satisfaction, but rather, it concerns the pursuit itself.

Additionally, the role of the Other is also vital in sustaining this desire for observation. In the context of binge-watching, Netflix effectively directs viewers' desires by organizing and recommending content, serving as the Other by keeping them engaged. The recommendation algorithm discussed by Zuboff (2019) is an important tool that demonstrates the platform's influence, predicting and shaping the user's desires (p. 267). This tool guides users by suggesting

what they should watch next. This algorithmic guidance reflects the role of the Lacanian Other in mediating desire; it continuously offers new content that promises the satisfaction the audience craves while never fully delivering it, thereby maintaining their interest.

The unconscious nature of this desire is further reinforced by the viewer's awareness or lack thereof of the infinite nature of the content. The viewer, despite being consciously aware that more content can always be consumed, is subconsciously driven by a desire to continue watching; this desire is constantly reinforced by the symbolic structures of the platform. This dynamic is examined by Adam Kotsko (2010); he discusses how contemporary media consumption is often characterized by a tension between conscious awareness of the boundaries of media and the unconscious impulse to engage with it (p. 71). Kotsko's analysis suggests that the behavior of binge-watching is not merely a matter of preference, but is also driven by deeper, unconscious desires that are manipulated and sustained by the platform, aligning with Lacan's theory.

Todd McGowan (2016) expresses this situation as; *“As long as desire remains within the channels that capitalism provides for it, there is no possibility for satisfaction, just a false happiness that serves as the form of appearance for profound dissatisfaction. Desire directed toward commodities is inherently repressed desire”* (p. 9). McGowan also emphasizes the significant role of the Other in shaping desire in the digital age (p. 72); as platforms like Netflix

increasingly determine what individuals see, consume, and desire. Digital content is designed in such a way that it keeps the user in constant interaction with the platform, in this endless cycle of desire where consumption satisfaction is perpetually postponed.

Netflix continuously presents new content that promises to satisfy individual desires, while the boundary between the digital world and the reality experienced by individuals becomes increasingly blurred. The blurring of these boundaries can lead to a sense of confusion where an individual's identity is increasingly defined by their interactions with digital content rather than their interactions with the physical world. As McGowan points out, the digital age has led to a situation where individuals' desires are more closely linked to digital consumption habits than to real-world experiences (p. 60). This situation creates a new form of subjectivity that is deeply intertwined with the digital Other.

Additionally, the narrative techniques used in many Netflix series, such as suspenseful endings and open-ended stories, serve to sustain this cycle of desire. These narrative strategies are designed to create a sense of wanting more in the viewer; this generates a feeling of lack that compels the audience to continue watching. The use of these techniques in television series is a deliberate strategy to maintain viewer interest by keeping narrative tension unresolved. This narrative structure aligns with Lacan's idea that desire is sustained by the gap between the subject

and *objet petit a* — each new chapter or season continuously reopens a void, ensuring that the viewer remains trapped in an infinite cycle of desire.

Discussion

As we have seen in the approach to desire that we have examined so far (unlike many of the psychoanalytic approaches), there is a situation of not confining desire to the realm of sexuality. The tendency to expand the meaning of desire and to see it as more than just an interpretative problem is also shared by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, in addition to Lacan.

According to Deleuze and Guattari (2009), who distinguish desire from sexuality and individuality, the relationship between society and theory is not a matter of representation, model, or reference, but rather a genetic relationship with biological, historical, and social content, where society produces theory (p. 13). In their notion of the political unconscious, the influence of Jacques Lacan has been inevitable. Lacan, who combines Freud's concept of desire and Marx's concept of politics, presents a theory that associates psychological oppression with political oppression. Deleuze and Guattari, on the other hand, developed a more political analysis of desire than Lacan's theory (p. 140).

Although it falls outside the scope of this study, it should be noted that the relationship between binge-watching culture and desire can be discussed in light of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of desire of product.

Additionally, it is possible to discuss Netflix's relationship with desire and its ability to connect viewers to screens through binge-watching culture within the framework of Henry Jenkins' theories.

As is known, in the traditional media understanding, individuals have been defined through consumer roles rather than being referred to as participants in the surrounding culture. In the past decade, with the expansion of new media sources, a "hybrid media" ecology has emerged in a world where the masses have started to interact more than ever. In this context, individuals have transformed their positions by taking power and responsibility (Jenkins & Deuze, 2008, p. 6). According to Jenkins (2009, pp. 3-7), individuals are becoming part of a participatory culture in the world of online communication. A participatory culture is one that has few barriers to artistic and civic engagement and is supported by individuals who create and share their own content. Therefore, it would be beneficial for the discussion conducted within the scope of this study to be carried out from a different perspective based on the criteria presented by Jenkins.

Conclusion

This article examines the intersection between Jacques Lacan's Theory of Desire and contemporary media consumption, particularly through the phenomenon of binge-watching series on Netflix. We demonstrated that by analyzing Netflix's content strategies, recommendation algorithms, and psychological dynamics, Lacan's concepts of *objet petit a* and the Other provide insight into why viewers are drawn to long viewing sessions. Chasing endless satisfaction through Netflix's vast content library reflects Lacan's understanding of desire as a continuous, unfulfilled quest. This analysis highlights how digital platforms like Netflix manipulate unconscious desires and keep users trapped in a consumption cycle that reflects deeper psychological structures.

As a modern manifestation of the Other, Netflix plays a significant role in shaping the subject's desires, identity, and experience of reality. The content of the platform functions as an *objet petit a*, an unattainable object of desire that keeps the subject trapped in a continuous cycle of consumption. This dynamic highlights the profound impact of digital platforms on the formation of subjectivity in contemporary society; here, identity and reality are increasingly mediated by the algorithms and content strategies of the digital Other.

In light of Lacanian theory, the future of media consumption will increasingly be characterized by the exploitation of unconscious desires, as digital platforms like Netflix

continuously enhance their abilities to manipulate and influence users. As technology advances, it is expected that the capabilities of these platforms to predict, shape, and sustain user engagement will become increasingly sophisticated; this will further trap users in a cycle of desire that is perpetually postponed and never fully satisfied.

One possible development is the increased personalization of content driven by advancements in artificial intelligence and machine learning. As algorithms become more adept at analyzing user data, platforms can offer hyper-personalized content that caters not only to broad preferences but also to the specific subconscious desires of individual users. The continuous collection and analysis of personal data allows platforms to create increasingly accurate profiles of users; this enables them to anticipate and meet desires that users may not even be consciously aware of. This could lead to a media consumption environment where the distinction between the user's desires and what the platform offers becomes increasingly blurred, deepening the user's dependence on the platform for a satisfaction that is perpetually out of reach.

Understanding media consumption from a psychoanalytic perspective is quite important, especially with the continuous evolution of digital technologies and their deeper integration into our daily lives. As platforms like Netflix become increasingly adept at engaging users through complex algorithms and vast content libraries, the importance of recognizing and addressing

psychological dynamics can never be overlooked. By applying Lacan's Theory of Desire to these modern phenomena, we gain valuable insights into how our unconscious drives are shaped and manipulated by digital media. This situation emphasizes the need for greater awareness and critical engagement with technologies that increasingly define our reality.

This psychoanalytic perspective not only enriches our understanding of media consumption but also draws attention to the ethical implications of these practices. While exploring the future of digital media, it is important to consider how these platforms affect our desires, identities, and experiences of reality. It is necessary to ensure that technological advancements serve to improve the human condition rather than exploit it.

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