

Review of: "Who Am I Really? – Illusions and Splits in the Mirror"

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I am not qualified to talk about psychology, so I will focus on my area of expertise, which is communication and social media.

The article's abstract is misleading, because it says the text will analyze the “as-if” personality in the context of social media. However, considerations about social media are practically absent from the whole text. There are only a few passages mentioning social media effects and none of them has references. There is no visible connection between the “as-if” personality and social media. For example, the author says:

“Enchanted with youth, living in the fantasy worlds of video games, online pornography, and social media can indicate these lacks in the psyche, arousing this variety of defenses against reality.”

Why do video games and online pornography indicates these lacks? They are not self evident examples: a video game can be read both as a tool of socialization (because people can interact online through them) or as a tool of isolation (among many other readings). Pornography can be read both as media that promotes sexualization or that promotes sexual freedom. The author must indicate the perspective/reference/debate they are mobilizing when they talk about social media. Again, they are not self evident examples.

I do not know what exactly the author meant when they talked about social media, but I assume they wanted to bring examples about inauthentic cultural content. If that is the case, My first suggestion is to remove the considerations of social media in the objective/abstract of the text and proceed with the psychological analysis only. Now, allow me to put my personal view: this is the best option in my opinion, because it is not possible anymore to establish an easy connection between inauthenticity and social media. This connection is out of date, it started in the beginning of the internet with a promise of being a independent space from companies, from traditional massmedia, from politics, etc. At the internet, you could be anyone you want. We saw this trend in older social media like Orkut, for example, in which you could create fake profiles and posing yourself as a singer of a famous band or an artist. Today, the scenario is different. Widespread social media like facebook and instagram do not allow fake profiles, and people use them for work, shopping and also politics. Zeynep Tufekci, for example, demonstrated the central role Twitter played in the construction of the events of the Arab Spring. The posts on twitter were inauthentic contents disconnected with the reality, they were real communications that brought real consequences!

But if the author wants to keep social media as an object, my second suggestion would be for them to bring references of

social media to the debate. Search in googlescholar using keywords as “inauthentic” and “internet”, for example, to find articles that discuss this topic and bring them to the discussion, because it is far from being obvious.