Review of: "The Age of the Algorithmic Society — A Girardian Analysis of Mimesis, Rivalry, and Identity in the Age of Artificial Intelligence"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Review

The article attempts to explore René Girard's mimetic theory and the algorithmic society, particularly in the context of the potential advent of Artificial General Intelligence (AGI). While AGI is an intriguing concept that some consider to hold promise for the future of technology and human progress, it is essential to approach this assumption with a critical mindset. It is important to acknowledge that AGI is still largely speculative and theoretical. The variables for sociotechnical challenges after the advent of AGI are still open-ended. It sure can be enticing to speculate on it, however, the spectrum of possibility is vast and includes some sci-fi scenarios (e.g. The Matrix and Skynet). The AGI point of view is a red herring that can be avoided.

The potential of the paper rested on the interplay between Girard's mimetic desire and the algorithmic society as the author puts it. The paper could've been a bridge between mimetic desire and Weapons of Math Destruction. Cathy O'Neil's book sheds light on the pervasive influence of algorithms and their potential to perpetuate inequality and injustice. O'Neil exposes the dark side of Big Data and explores how "mathematical models of risk" can be destructive when applied indiscriminately in various domains of life. The key insight of the book, which is very pertinent here, is the notion that algorithms, while often presented as objective and impartial decision-making tools, can embed and perpetuate biases and discrimination. The paper does lean on the broad assumption of "AI" as an "impartial" mirror that merely reproduces and feeds off one's desire. Only one sentence remarks that the current AI models should be curated to avoid being divisive.

The field of autonomous systems outpaced the establishment of robust regulatory frameworks. This lack of regulation raises significant concerns regarding the ethical and societal implications. However, it was the necessary conditions for what Nick Srnicek calls platform capitalism.

One of the primary concerns with platform capitalism is the concentration of power in the hands of a few dominant players. Companies like Amazon, Google, and Facebook have amassed unprecedented control over vast amounts of data, consumer behavior, and market access. Broadly, these companies own the tools to create and reproduce desires for their benefit. While the autonomous systems are occasionally opaque regarding their inner workings, the outcomes provided are remarkably accurate to these companies' bottom line.