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From Postmodern Skepticism to Selective Credulity: Active Epistemic Resistance in Digital Democracies

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Abstract: This paper theorizes the epistemic phenomenon of *selective credulity*, a condition in which individuals consciously dismiss credible evidence that challenges their existing beliefs, despite exposure to multiple sources. Drawing on postmodern philosophy, digital media theory, and contemporary case studies, the study argues that selective credulity represents a significant shift in the relationship between knowledge, power and digital media. By examining three empirical cases—anti-South Asian narratives, climate change denial and religious polarization in India—the paper demonstrates how digitally networked communication fosters tribal epistemologies that undermine democratic discourse and collective reasoning. Unlike algorithmic isolation associated with “echo chambers” or “filter bubbles”, selective credulity reflects an active human choice to reject contradictory beliefs in favor of emotional satisfaction. Individuals encountering different ideas often delegitimize them through tribal logic, in which external thoughts are perceived as threats to the survival of their community identities. This epistemic fragmentation, the paper argues, functions as a governance mechanism that keeps people satisfied but rationally neutralized. The study concludes by proposing the concept of “interfacing spaces” for restoring epistemic pluralism and sustaining participatory democracy.

Keywords: *selective credulity, echo chambers, algorithmic mediation, postmodern skepticism, epistemic resistance*

1. Introduction

Between 2020 and 2023, hate crimes targeting South Asians increased from 135 incidents in 2020 to 265 incidents in 2023, an increase of nearly 100 percent in four years (Statistics Canada). Similar patterns have emerged across multiple regions worldwide, highlighting the potential link between the rise of online hate speech and real-world discriminatory acts. Online hate content often receives significantly higher engagement—likes, shares and reactions—than evidence-based, demonstrating the transformative potential of digital media to convert ideology into violent expression. These digital platforms thus act not merely as intermediaries but as active participants in shaping ideological extremism.

The emergence of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in the early 2020s further intensified the fragmentation of public discourse into polarized epistemic communities. These groups tend to consume information that aligns with preexisting beliefs and actively delegitimize contradictory perspectives as unreliable or ideologically biased. This pattern exemplifies what I term “selective credulity”, an epistemic orientation in which individuals deliberately dismiss counter arguments regardless of their evidential quality. The present article therefore traces the evolution of epistemic thought: from classical universalism to postmodern critique to explain the emergence of selective credulity in the digital age.

2. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

2.1 Conceptualizing Selective Credulity

Selective credulity differs from C. Thi Nguyen’s conception of *echo chambers* in its relationship to data exposure. Nguyen defines echo chambers as “a social systemic structure from which other relevant voices have been actively excluded and discredited” (141). In Nguyen’s model, algorithms determine what information users encounter, creating digital spaces characterized by the absence of opposing voices. Echo chamber subjects thus believe alternative perspectives as false narratives that lack credibility. It also diverges from Eli Pariser’s *filter bubble theory*, which attributes informational isolation primarily to algorithmic curation. Pariser’s model suggests users remain unaware of epistemic confinement due to algorithmic filtering. However, contemporary users encounter diverse content through cross-platform circulation. Despite the exposure, they remain epistemically confined within tribal commitments.

The strong emotional attachment users develop toward digital tribalism must therefore be examined to understand the complex dynamics of extreme polarization in recent times. Thus, the study seeks to uncover the mechanisms underlying this persistent epistemic resistance. By affiliating

themselves with tribal communities, individuals voluntarily restrain their epistemic autonomy, appropriating postmodern skepticism to legitimize their own intellectual confinement.

2.2 Methodological Approach

The paper employs a genealogical approach to trace the historical transformations linking knowledge and power relations, alongside a comparative case study methodology to ground the theoretical insights in observable phenomena. The three empirical cases—anti-South Asian sentiments, climate change denial, and religious polarization in India—were selected for their shared epistemic structure. Each exemplifies selective credulity as a systematic pattern of deliberate dismissal of credible evidence and conflicting opinions. By analyzing the actual discourse, the study demonstrates how selective credulity operates as a performative practice within postmodern digital spaces.

3. The Archaeology of Reason: From Classical Universalism to Postmodern Skepticism

3.1 Genealogy of Truth: Reason as Universal Liberation

Western epistemology often locates its foundational inquiry in Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" (*Republic*, Book VII), an allegory that raises fundamental questions about human perception of reality and nature of "truth". The prisoners, chained within the cave, perceive shadows as accurate representations of the external world. Opinions formed through immediate sensory experience, what Plato termed *doxa* (opinion) confine individuals to the realm of appearances rather than genuine reality. In contrast, true knowledge (*episteme*) transcends sensory limitations, enabling apprehension of the universal "forms" that constitute ultimate reality. For Plato, philosopher kings who perceive truth through rational inquiry possess the moral and intellectual authority to govern justly. Thus, he privileges reason as the primary epistemic faculty capable of accessing truth beyond sensory perception.

Rene Descartes's *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641) further developed this rationalist tradition through his method of doubt or methodological skepticism.

...in order to reject them all, it will be sufficient to find some reason for doubting each one. Nor shall I therefore have to go through them each individually, which would be an endless task: but since, once the foundations are undermined, the building will collapse of its own accord, I shall straight away attack the very principles that form the basis of all my former beliefs (Descartes, *Meditation I*).

He established a dualistic ontology distinguishing *res extensa* (material substance) from *res cogitans* (realm of mind and reason). While sensory perception may deceive, the act of rational thought provides a foundation for certainty (Descartes, *Meditation II*).

The Enlightenment project subsequently universalized these rationalist insights, positing reason as a human faculty capable of liberating individuals from religious dogma and political tyranny. The philosophers further envisioned universal principles grounded in rationality, scientific objectivity and individualism as instruments for the advancement of humankind. Thus emerged the “grand narratives” of modernity: stories of progress and emancipation premised on the belief that only universal truths can ensure individual freedom. However, claim to universality embedded in Enlightenment rationalism faced significant criticism from mid twentieth century philosophers who challenged universal truth claims to be western-centric paradigms serving only the interests of dominant socio-political groups.

3.2 Postmodern Critique: The Deconstruction of Grand narratives

Jean-Francois Lyotard’s *Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979) crystallized the emerging skepticism toward Enlightenment Universalism into a systematic critique of knowledge production in capitalist societies. Lyotard identified how modernity legitimized knowledge through “grand narratives”, comprehensive stories that promised human liberation through rational progress, scientific advancement and universal emancipation. He challenged Enlightenment universalism by exposing the power relations embedded within these collective ideals.

Twentieth-century historical catastrophes—two world wars, regional conflicts and colonial exploitation—exposed how grand narratives of modernity often advanced the interests of European powers rather than universal human welfare. Technologies and scientific discourses, celebrated as instruments of liberation, frequently operate as mechanisms of social domination within the marginalized communities. While Europe proclaimed “development” as evidence of scientific achievement, colonized populations experienced dispossession, cultural erasure and systemic violence. Represented as primitive precursors to civilized nations, these states were compelled to follow the predetermined trajectory of modernization. In the name of progress, their local knowledge systems, cultural values and indigenous epistemologies were systematically devalued and dismissed. Consequently, the European narrative of advancement silenced every alternative worldview capable of challenging these supposedly universal “truths” of Western modernity.

Lyotard observed how these grand narratives gradually lost legitimacy in post-industrial societies, giving rise to widespread skepticism toward universal truth claims. As resistance to western discourses intensified, digital platforms appeared to provide new spaces where marginalized communities could articulate their experiences and challenge dominant epistemologies. However, Lyotard also identified the emergence of a new metanarrative of *performativity*, in which knowledge becomes a “commodity” continuously evaluated for its efficiency and productivity rather than for its truth value.

Knowledge in the form of an informational commodity indispensable to productive power is already, and will continue to be, a major-perhaps the major-stake in the worldwide competition for power. It is conceivable that the nation-states will one day fight for control of information, just as they battled in the past for control over territory, and afterwards for control of access to and exploitation of raw materials and cheap labor. A new field is opened for industrial and commercial strategies on the one hand, and political and military strategies on the other (Lyotard 5).

Lyotard's analysis anticipated the contemporary digital landscape, wherein truth, power and technology intersect to sustain systems of dominance. His concept of *performativity* finds its ultimate expression in curated digital platforms, which, once celebrated as democratic forces in knowledge production, have instead reduced knowledge itself to a tradable commodity.

In the digital age, knowledge operates not only to assert dominance but also to discipline social behavior through increasingly sophisticated mechanisms. Michael Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power in *Discipline and Punish* (1975) provides crucial insight into how knowledge and power operate together to produce "docile subjects". Unlike traditional forms of authority that rely on overt violence, disciplinary power functions through surveillance and normalization.

Discipline creates between individuals a 'private' link, which is a relation of constraints entirely different from contractual obligation; the acceptance of a discipline may be underwritten by contract; the way in which it is imposed, the mechanisms it bring into play, the non-reversible subordination of one group of people by another, the 'surplus' power that is always fixed on the same side, the inequality of position of the different 'partners' in relation to common regulation, all these distinguish the disciplinary link from the contractual link, and make it possible to distort the contractual link systematically from the moment it has as its content a mechanism of discipline (Foucault 222-223).

Institutions such as schools, prisons and clinics collectively produce subjects who internalize dominant norms. By classifying individuals as "normal" or deviant, these institutions ensure conformity to established standards. Postmodern philosophers resisted such disciplinary mechanisms, advocating for intellectual freedom and humans as active agents of meaning making rather than passive subjects of control.

However, this very resistance generated conditions for a new form of epistemic control. By dismantling grand narratives and exposing the power mechanisms underlying them, postmodern critique destabilized the shared epistemic frameworks essential for a democratic discourse. Thus, the postmodern concept of individuality turned into a space called *selective credulity* where all truth claims

were equally suspected. This transformation from postmodern skepticism to selective credulity marks a crucial shift in the relationship between knowledge and power in the digital age.

4. From Postmodern Skepticism to Selective Credulity: Case Studies

Social media platforms that emerged in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries initially appeared to fulfill the liberatory promise envisioned by postmodernism. Unlike traditional mass media with filtered contents, these platforms enabled real-time decentralized communication without hierarchical structures mediating discourse. As a result, marginalized voices gained unprecedented opportunities to participate in knowledge production and epistemic circulation. Over time, these platforms became integral to everyday life, fundamentally reshaping the architecture of human understanding.

However, as epistemic sources multiplied, individuals started retreating into information sources that affirmed their existing beliefs rather than engaging critically with the thought. Recent empirical studies have found algorithmic mechanisms contribute to the creation of epistemic isolation. But as active subjects within isolated epistemic spaces, users still encounter a wide range of perspectives. This highlights the necessity of examining epistemic tribalism, which cannot be fully explained by simple algorithmic filtering mechanisms.

4.1 Selective Credulity as Active Epistemic Resistance

Individuals practicing selective credulity do not lack exposure to diverse content; rather, they consciously dismiss contradictory evidence. Despite encountering diverse viewpoints, they privilege the boundaries of their epistemic communities over external perspectives. This active resistance is a deliberate psychological “choice” rather than an algorithmically determined outcome. For the “neo-liberal” digital subject, participation in echo chambers is not a passive consumption but an act of self-curation. Users deliberately construct epistemic isolation by curating their information environments, turning every response into a performative practice. Through filtering and selecting, individuals thus become the “center” of digital habitats they reside.

However, this subjective experience of epistemic control cannot be detached from the structural aspects of digital capitalism. The architecture of digital platforms is designed to commodify every thought and engagement into tradable resource. Even emotional engagements function as a measurable currency in the digital economy. Digital platforms have thus created a peculiar paradox distinct from traditional hierarchical control. Rather than imposing ideology through centralized authority, they incorporate users into the flow of discourse and reward their participation with algorithmic visibility and affective validation.

Digital capitalism thus turned knowledge into a consumable commodity; users scroll, express outrage and share awareness, reducing every engagement to an expressive performance rather than transformative action. This pattern reveals a critical feature of selective credulity: the displacement of transformative action by the practices of visibility. Psychological comfort, validation and perceived control induce individuals to conflate emotional assurance with intellectual autonomy. Within the postmodern context characterized by pluralization, occupying such an informational “center” was seen as empowering. Users perceived this new center as control over their intellectuality, when it functioned as epistemic confinement, pushing them deep into respective epistemic corners.

The postmodern concept of decentralization, often celebrated as democratization of discourse, conceals the most complex dynamics of structural fragmentation. In the absence of visible hierarchy to resist or central authority to challenge, the users come to perceive themselves as autonomous entities within a distributed network. Yet this multiplicity generates merely the simulacrum of democratic participation; in reality, the fragmentation of epistemic authority erodes the shared foundations required to contest structural inequalities. The question, therefore, is whether the multiplicity within digital platforms genuinely represents free will, or whether it’s just another structured architecture of control under the guise of plurality.

Selective credulity thus poses a structural threat to democratic discourse by undermining the shared epistemic standards upon which public reasoning depends. When all external sources of knowledge are discredited, the possibility of a common epistemic ground collapses, leaving democratic approach into a state of uncertainty. The situation is further intensified when individuals begin dismissing entire sources of information by labelling them as “information biased” or a product of “established narratives”. When scientists, journalists and academic researchers are all collectively categorized and dismissed without substantive engagement, no institution remains capable of correcting tribal misinformation. Consequently, tribal information systems begin to function as the sole legitimate sources of truth within their respective epistemic communities.

5. From Epistemic Resistance to Hate Crimes: An Emerging Threat to Democratic Governance

Having rejected external evidence, individuals increasingly confine themselves to self-reinforcing narratives, thereby creating conditions in which ideas can be enforced into potential acts of violence. Although this rejection of evidence is a conscious choice, digital platforms intensify its consequences by transforming online hatred into coordinated action. Rather than merely practicing epistemic isolation, these platforms bring like-minded individuals together, facilitating the radicalization of their beliefs. This progression from the active dismissal of external sources to epistemic isolation, and ultimately to organized hate crimes represents a structured ideological trajectory.

Unlike echo chambers or filter bubbles, selective credulity operates as an active mechanism within digital communities. It rejects the essential conditions necessary for a democratic environment: confrontation, revision and recognition of epistemic diversity. Thus, epistemic resistance, as an active cognitive choice rather than algorithmic determined outcome, becomes crucial for preserving the integrity of democracy.

5.1 Anti- Indian Hate Crimes: From Online Hate to Physical Violence

Between 2021 and 2024, thousands of people participated in anti-immigration rallies across the world, coinciding with a marked rise in hate speech targeting South Asian and other minority communities. The Global monitoring reports indicate a sharp escalation in online hate content during this period, particularly a significant surge in racist and xenophobic crimes across several European countries. These trends reveal the intensification of hostility toward South Asians is not just the result of organic public sentiment but of systemic amplification within digital environments.

Digital platforms are structurally designed to privilege emotionally charged and polarizing content for maximum engagement. Most often, these echo chamber communities target minorities to trigger outrage and participation. For instance, *March for Australia* protests held across the major cities were organized primarily through social media platforms, with approximately 5000 to 8000 people assembling for Sydney rally alone. The movement's official website states, "Australia is changing in ways most of us never agreed to. People are waking up to a country they barely recognize. Endless immigration, weak leadership and political cowardice have brought us here" (March for Australia 2025). This rhetoric demonstrates a systematic disapproval of legitimate evidence concerning immigrants' legal status and economic contribution.

An analysis of social media discussions surrounding these rallies reveals the pattern of selective credulity: a reversal of privileged subjective observation over statistical evidence. In Canada, the anti-minority sentiment has extended beyond digital spaces into everyday public life. For example, Ontario Member of Provincial Parliament Hardeep Grewal reported a racist incident on X, describing how, while spending time with his family in Muskoka, he was subjected to verbal abuse by a passerby. According to Grewal, one individual shouted a racial slur— "Hey turban head' go home"—while another yelled "You all should die" (Grewal 2025).

These incidents illustrate how hate operates as both social pathology and an economic product within digital capitalism. The persistence of hate speech despite the diversity of digital platforms shows the problem extends far beyond simple filtering mechanisms. Within the closed epistemic communities, members' voices are continuously reinforced and validated, producing an echo of self-affirmation. Thus, the post-modern pursuit of recognition and multiplicity, once envisioned as freedom, now traps individuals into the self-reinforcing cycles of validation.

The recent surge in anti-South Asian sentiments across European countries reveals how capitalist digitality operates: offering a false sense of intellectual freedom while subtly directing thought and discourse. Users believe they occupy the center of their informational worlds, exercising control, yet they remain subjects of algorithmic manipulation, mistaking the architecture of digital governance for freedom.

5.2 Capitalist Digitality and Climate Crisis: Role of Technology in the Deeping Climate Change

While anti-Indian hate sentiments generate hostility between different communities, climate change denial represents a crisis for humanity as a whole. Despite the rise in climate-related catastrophes, a significant portion of public remains skeptical about human responsibility. Even when presented with scientific evidence, many users continue to deny it to be anthropogenic. This paradox shows the psychological power of selective credulity on the human minds. A comprehensive 2023 Ipsos study conducted across twenty-nine countries found that thirty-six percent of respondents denied the human causes of climate change. The denial is concerning as the numbers continue to rise over time, reflecting the danger of epistemic resistance within public consciousness.

The scientific studies and news reports debunking climate myths are systematically dismissed prior to any engagement with empirical reality. When researchers and activists are both criticized for adhering to climate science, the conspiracy theories become the new “reality” exemplifying the logic of personal interests. Recent technological developments, especially the advancement of AI, pose additional concern regarding climate change.

Data centre electricity consumption is set to more than double to around 945 TWh by 2030. This is slightly more than Japan’s total electricity consumption today. AI is the most important driver of this growth.... Renewables and natural gas take the lead in meeting data centre electricity demand (International Energy Agency 2025, 14)

The exponential expansion of AI data centers is projected to continue over the next decade, significantly increasing the consumption of global energy and greenhouse gas emissions. Despite repeated scientific warnings regarding the carbon intensity of AI systems, large sections of the public remain reluctant to acknowledge the environmental reality of this development.

Communities that celebrate the transformative potential of artificial intelligence often disregard scientific warnings about its consequences on environment. This selective dismissal illustrates the ultimate danger of selective credulity: the inability to find solutions as the underlying problems are systematically ignored. The most profound consequence of epistemic fragmentation lies in the absence of shared epistemic ground necessary for collective participation. When skepticism itself becomes

fragmented, transforming from healthy critique to total denial, democratic and meaningful exchange of ideas becomes impossible.

5.3 Weaponizing Faith: Absence of Democratic Pluralism

In India, the digital public space plays a crucial role in sustaining democratic engagement. In a nation characterized by religious, caste and linguistic diversity, maintaining an inclusive communicative space remains a persistent challenge. Over the past decade, while digital platforms have amplified the voices of previously marginalized communities, they have also facilitated the rapid circulation of misinformation and hate propaganda targeting particular religious groups. Recent studies analyzing religious based content on social media have identified systematic patterns of echo chamber formation, particularly during election periods. Like anti-South Asian hate discourse, such online hostility produces immediate harm to the minority groups. It shows the most perilous dimension of selective credulity, the deliberate cultivation of hatred through algorithmic exploitation, wherein technological design and ideological manipulation intersect to undermine democracy.

In the 2023 UNESCO based study on *Online Disinformation and Hate Speech*, religion was reported as one of the main targets of online hate. Within the Indian context, hate speech often operates less as spontaneous public expression and more as a deliberate political strategy systematically mobilized to reinforce identity-based polarization. This process not just validates the in-group beliefs but also dismantles the epistemic foundations of democracy. Such documented attacks on the minorities further degrade the constitutional ideal of secularism.

Religious communities often operate through epistemic closure mechanisms, wherein fabricated narratives and misleading arguments circulate at higher rates rather than reality based. This ideological isolation intensifies markedly during election periods, as political deepfakes and hate speech become an unscrupulous strategy to influence people's decisions. The cumulative effect of this process ultimately erodes the epistemic foundations upon which democratic principles survive.

While postmodern skepticism originally aimed to broaden the epistemic field by legitimizing the marginalized perspectives, selective credulity represents its distortion. This transition from epistemic inclusivity to epistemic exclusion marks a new era in the discourse of knowledge. The above-mentioned cases collectively represent how users who encounter diverse perspectives systematically delegitimize external sources.

6. The Architecture of Distributed Power

The digital platforms appear to be fundamentally democratic and secular. Unlike traditional media, these platforms offer horizontal communication where every user is a producer and consumer of content. Stock market, crypto currency and other computing frameworks are a few digital spaces

that removed traditional hierarchical structure from its core. But when the authority is distributed, clear resistance against the collective organization becomes impossible. It becomes difficult to identify and challenge the structural power when there is no one to take accountability. By allowing multiplicity, the digital platforms have thus created a new form of authority through the manufacturing of “free will” and “satisfaction”. For example, both climate activists and deniers simultaneously organize content and feel empowered in their digital circle.

The architecture of digital platforms thus functions as a governance mechanism, sustaining user engagement while maintaining a level of fragmentation that prevents collective political action. By marginalizing dialogue and shared epistemic understanding, these platforms thus prevent a unified resistance.

6.1 Algorithmic Hegemony and the Psychology of Consent

We now inhabit a world where algorithms demand humans prove their humanity. Within less than a decade, artificial intelligence has proved how rapidly humans are approaching a future wherein human intelligence becomes secondary within its own system of creation. Generative AI, emerged in the early 2020s, signifies such a profound transformation in knowledge production. They actively produce new content yet remain fundamentally constrained within the boundaries of preexisting patterns of thought. Individuals engaging deeply with such models become participants in the very structures of epistemic containment they sought to escape once, mistaking algorithmic coherence for intellectual autonomy.

From education and healthcare to finance and communication, generative AI models have become integral mediators of human experience. As Gilles Deleuze anticipated in his reflections on *Societies of Control*, individuals are gradually reduced to data points, continuously monitored and categorized into different epistemic compartments. What makes this condition more unsettling is the voluntary nature of participation. Users willingly disclose personal information, mistaking surveillance for progress and algorithmic mediation for empowerment. Data extraction, now relabeled as “personalization”, has thus become the central mechanism of digital capitalism. Under the guise of advancement, users now actively participate in the very structures that constrain their autonomy.

Human persistence in AI driven systems can be partly explained by their architecture of decentralization. Contemporary economic and informational infrastructures, whether in cryptocurrencies or stock markets, create an illusion of distributed power. Within these digital structures, the users act as autonomous agents navigating devoid of central authority, not recognizing the extent to which these networks regulate data circulation. The incessant movement of data ensures continuous individual participation, while the quiet consolidation of power remains hidden beneath these structures.

7. Conclusion

Postmodernism, with its sustained skepticism toward universal truths, has fragmented the foundations of democratic discourse. As shared narratives dissolved, belief systems became increasingly privatized and self-referential. In the absence of collective meaning, individuals started turning more inward, prioritizing tribal-interests over communal responsibility. The digital age intensifies this condition, appropriating the epistemic spaces to produce algorithmic control over humans. The algorithmically curated spaces have thus replaced human ethics with content, turning every single piece of information into a commodity of convenience. The result is a cognitive closure, in which personal interests become prioritized over collective well-being. The denial of climate change, the politicization of religious identities and the normalization of online hate demonstrates this transformation.

The growing withdrawal of individuals into private spheres of self-interest has totally eroded the shared ground necessary for a democratic discourse, facilitating a rise of extremism and heightened religious, political and regional conflicts worldwide. In contrast, the concept of *interfacing spaces* offers a practical framework for renewed epistemic engagement in the digital age. Such spaces demand individuals to consciously regulate the flow of data entering their cognitive environments rather than surrendering to algorithmic control. The objective is not to create yet another filtered space, but to establish a shared epistemic ground oriented toward common good.

7.1 From Postmodern Deference to the Digital Tetragonal Middle Ground

When postmodernism displaced the center of the episteme revealing there is no fixed origin, it opened an endless play of signification that defers any claim for stable truth. Digital platforms moved beyond this decentering approach to restructure the whole architecture of knowledge. These platforms cornered knowledge into tribal epistemic positions where selective credulity operates as a systematic resistance to epistemic differences. Unlike the absent center of postmodernism that offers an endless deferral, the reconfiguration entails a model of democratic knowledge production: a tetragonal structure with a mediated epistemic ground composed of differentiated corners. This reconceptualization liberates knowledge from both the individual choices and universal narratives, repositioning truth as an argument that emerged through both transparent reasoning and negotiation across differences. The tetragonal middle ground thus offers an interfacing space where knowledge flows without any objection. It ensures continuous exposure to multiple perspectives, enabling non-hierarchical movement and dynamic negotiation through the destabilization of epistemic certainties.

7.2 Interfacing Spaces as New Epistemic Architecture

Interfacing spaces are inherently performative sites in which diverse voices encounter, negotiate and co-construct meaning. As postmodern thinkers have argued, knowledge must remain in flux, not confined in fixed structures dictated by algorithmic hierarchies or digital capitalist imperatives. The power of communication lies not merely in the transmission of knowledge, but in the production of discursive fields where multiple perspectives intersect and new epistemic possibilities emerge. These spaces operate on the pattern of epistemic transparency, requiring individuals to disclose their reasoning process. When someone dismisses climate change as a “myth”, they articulate the reasons for their biased opinion. This transparency brings a shift in the engagement from “biased” reaction to an “arguable” position, making tribal commitments visible and subject to critique.

Individuals within such spaces resist algorithmic confinement by intentionally seeking sources beyond their habitual exposure. Inclusion of voices with divergent epistemological orientations thus enhances the potential for meaningful dialogue and collective reasoning. This creates an alternative architecture where shared commitments and accountability enforce a new source of participation from the subjects. For instance, environmental forums might integrate both climate activists and skeptics in critical exchange, requiring each to engage with opposing ideas rather than perpetuating tribal performances that merely reaffirm division.

The viability of interfacing spaces depends on recognizing that epistemic agency is neither fully independent nor entirely determined by technological systems. Although algorithmic infrastructures shape the visibility and circulation of information, individuals still retain a capacity for reflexive judgement. The aim, therefore, is to re-activate this suppressed reflexivity by foregrounding epistemic responsibility as a shared social practice rather than an individual choice. By rendering epistemic beliefs open to negotiation, interfacing spaces weaken the economic investments in digital capitalism. Moreover, the shift from immediate affirmation to dialogical endurance reaffirms the ethical stakes of knowing each other. In doing so, a new productive space enabling democratic discourse is formed. In a way, interfacing spaces offer a structural space to counter selective credulity by creating conditions where epistemic resistance becomes visible.

The goal, therefore, is neither a return to modernist epistemic authority, nor an uncritical embrace of postmodern relativism, but the formation of an intersubjective, dialogical space where knowledge remains in process. Rather than pursuing absolute truths, users engage in a continuous negotiation, producing agreements that remain open to revision through renewed dialogue. Truth, within this framework, it is neither discovered nor deferred but collectively constructed through dynamic engagement. This epistemic approach allows disagreements to be generative, transforming epistemic diversity from a state of polarization into a condition for collective reasoning.

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