

“Attention” and “Subjectification” in Society of Control

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Today we live in a society in which information technology is highly developed (TV, internet, mobile phones, etc.). We are faced with overflowing amounts of information, and under such conditions we realize that our “attention” has become a limited resource, since it is impossible to direct our attention to all the available information. We are also tired of being flooded with too much information. In spite of this, we cannot help paying attention to the interface which supplies information.

In the past decade, economic theory has turned to the concept of the “attention economy” to come up with economic strategies to benefit from focusing and controlling limited human attention. We now live in an age where our attention is not at our disposal, but attracted, forced and controlled.

In this presentation, I take up Gilles Deleuze’s idea of “society of control” and examine how our attention is controlled by analyzing the function of signs which attract our attention, and explain the process of subjectification through the control of attention.

The presentation takes the following steps. Firstly, by applying the semiotics of Charles S. Peirce, I discuss the relationship between attention and index attracting it. Secondly, I consider the contemporary context of the problem of attention, with special attention to the works of Jonathan Crary, Jonathan Beller, and Franco Berardi, and explore the relationship between attention and subjectification. Thirdly, I deal with the basic concepts in *The Attention Economy* by Thomas H. Davenport and John C. Beck to develop my argument. Finally, I examine whether it is possible in today’s world to become the subject of attention without being subjugated.