Žižekian Cybernetics: Reclaiming Surplus Information, Surplus Enjoyment, and Surplus Power through a Cybernetic Marxism

Abstract

This article investigates the need for a *Žižekian Cybernetics*—an integrative framework of *Cybernetic Marxism* and *Dialectical Cybernetics*—to analyze and navigate the digital ecosystem's dynamics and societal impacts. By reclaiming surplus information and addressing the shaping forces of surplus enjoyment, this approach confronts the foundational cybernetic feedback loops that define AI technologies like ChatGPT and other AI-based interactions. Ultimately, *Žižekian Cybernetics* is proposed as a pathway to grasp and address the political, social, and environmental crises emerging from contemporary cybernetic systems.

Introduction: Žižekian Cybernetics: A New Lens on Surplus and Power in the Digital Age

In the age of artificial intelligence, a world of silent algorithms pulses beneath our every keystroke, forming predictions and crafting responses with an astonishing subtlety. Models like ChatGPT are fueled by an almost invisible calculus—the differential operation of *inferring the next token given the context*. Here, a "token" is a unit of language—be it a letter, a word, or a syllable—and "context" is the stream of all tokens that came before, forming an interpretive dance that yields the sentences we read, the answers we receive, and the insights we glean. Yet this digital alchemy is more than just an assembly of letters and phrases. Beneath its simplicity, it reveals a deeper layering of human values and motivations. Layer by layer, this differential operation unveils fundamental forces, moving from mere surplus information to surplus enjoyment, then surplus value, and finally to the sway of surplus power.

Interestingly, it is at this superficial level of *surplus power* that *classical humanities* often rest, with scholars and thinkers invoking authority through shared language, interpretations, and appeals. But the systems that generate those conversations—be they economic, psychological, or technological—move beyond these immediate gestures of power. Here, *Marxism* provides an essential perspective, illuminating the so-called "invisible hand" of surplus value that drives apparent "free will." Surplus value, for Marx, is the hidden machinery of motivation, linking the power dynamics of society with the economy's very architecture.

If Marxist theory grants us access to the layer of surplus value, then *Freudian psychoanalysis* digs still deeper, addressing the engine of desires that fuels our motives. Freudian analysis brings us face-to-face with *surplus enjoyment*—the strangely intoxicating, yet often unconscious, delight we derive from pursuing our deepest wishes and wants. These layered drivers of desire are not isolated; they undergird the motivations and behaviors that keep our society—and now our algorithms—running.

But to touch the root of these interwoven drives, only *Cybernetics* has the tools to delve into *surplus information* itself—the most elemental level, the very substance of desire and power. This is where we find the missing link: a way to move beyond mere analysis of language and meaning, beyond authority and enjoyment, and arrive at an understanding of the systems that substantiate these drivers of human experience. Through Cybernetics, we uncover the feedback loops, the iterative cycles that sustain not only our social and digital systems but perhaps our very hopes for meaningful change.

In this emerging landscape, a recent piece from Jacobin—aptly titled "The Silicon-Tongued Devil"—suggests we need a *Chomskyan Marxism* to tackle the profound societal shift AI represents. They argue that only through this lens can we begin to unmask the "silicon-tongued devils" like ChatGPT, forces that operate within a paradigm of surplus power and surplus value[1]. Yet, if we are truly to address the hidden depths, if we are to see all the layers of surplus together—information, enjoyment, value, and power—what we require is something more radical. It is only through a *Žižekian Cybernetics*, an audacious blend of *Cybernetic Marxism* and *Dialectical Cybernetics*, that we can truly account for the interplay of all these forces, uncovering the interlocking systems that shape our era.

Section I: Theoretical Framework of Žižekian Cybernetics

In the sweeping realm of digital transformation, understanding how human interaction has morphed into a matrix of data points and behavioral predictions calls for a new, ambitious framework—one that can reach beyond simple analytics and into the heart of modern digital systems. Welcome to *Žižekian Cybernetics*, where *Cybernetic Marxism* and *Dialectical Cybernetics* join forces, shaping an intellectual toolkit that not only reveals our data-driven realities but also empowers us to reclaim and reshape them.

1.1 Cybernetic Marxism

At its core, *Cybernetic Marxism* scrutinizes the digital economy by drawing from Marx's insights on surplus value and updating them to address today's surplus-information economy. In the classical sense, Marxist theory shows how labor produces surplus value, where workers' efforts generate more value than they're compensated for, ultimately accumulating wealth in the hands of a few. Yet, in our modern, digitized economy, where the most valuable currency is data, this dynamic has evolved into a new form of exploitation. Here, labor doesn't just mean working in a factory or an office; it includes our digital interactions, every click, every share, and every online expression. With each interaction, we feed into an ecosystem where our digital footprints are relentlessly tracked, packaged, and sold, generating *surplus-information* as a new form of value (Fidaner, 2024).

In this new system, major platforms, rather than merely serving as neutral intermediaries, operate as sophisticated surveillance systems, systematically harvesting our online actions. This collected data becomes the raw material of digital capitalism, molded into targeted advertising, predictive models, and content recommendations—all of which are sold back to us as "personalized" services. Cybernetic Marxism shines a light on this hidden chain of value generation, urging us to recognize that what we encounter online is rarely free or impartial.

Instead, it is the calculated outcome of a system designed to commodify our presence and, ultimately, our humanity.

This lens doesn't just unveil the reality of surplus-information; it calls on us to reclaim it as a collective asset—"our surplus information as humanity." It's an appeal not only to fairness but also to the very fabric of our social structure. If digital labor is indeed the raw material of modern capital, then our rights to that data—how it's used, who profits from it, and who can access it—demand urgent re-examination. As Cybernetic Marxism reminds us, the stakes aren't abstract; they concern the fundamental balance of power in our digital world.

1.2 Dialectical Cybernetics

While Cybernetic Marxism exposes how value is extracted from our digital existence, *Dialectical Cybernetics* digs even deeper, exploring how surplus enjoyment and surplus information intertwine in complex feedback loops that shape not only our social structures but also the deep psychological and environmental crises of our time. The dialectical approach, grounded in Marxist and psychoanalytic theory, teaches us to seek out the contradictions that drive systems forward. For instance, algorithms designed to amplify our preferences—to entertain and engage us—ironically narrow our perspectives, locking us within digital echo chambers. These are zones where our beliefs and biases reflect back on us, unchecked, reinforcing a personalized, yet isolated reality.

In the context of climate change, these feedback loops are even more significant. The climate crisis is not simply a matter of CO_2 emissions and weather patterns; it's a profound dialectical tension between human habits and natural systems. Algorithms that cater to our enjoyment-driven behavior fuel an information diet that sidesteps inconvenient truths, amplifying trivial content over the alarming signals of environmental degradation. This is where Dialectical Cybernetics serves as a diagnostic tool: it exposes how our culture of digital pleasure and distraction prevents the recognition, and ultimately the digestion, of our collective ecological impact[2]. Without a system capable of confronting and symbolizing the climate crisis, we may only experience it as a continuous, underlying dread, a phenomenon forever on the edge of our awareness but rarely translated into collective action.

Crucially, *Dialectical Cybernetics* posits that these feedback loops aren't closed. They're dynamic, capable of adjustment—and this is the heart of their potential. Feedback loops don't merely reflect the status quo; they can also be guided toward transformational tipping points, harnessing the same mechanisms that reinforce denial to foster awareness, urgency, and change. Whether it's our climate crisis or the way we consume media, these loops can be recalibrated, introducing alternative content that disrupts our habits and awakens us to critical global issues.

By applying a dialectical lens, we begin to see social platforms, not as static networks but as battlegrounds where contradictions between pleasure, awareness, and action play out in real-time. Here lies the potential for a new kind of cybernetic intervention—one that aligns surplus enjoyment with collective interests rather than isolated consumption. By reshaping the feedback loops embedded in our social technologies, we can harness the power of Dialectical Cybernetics not only to confront the psychological mechanisms behind our ecological ambivalence but also to reshape the social structures that uphold them.

In tandem, *Cybernetic Marxism* and *Dialectical Cybernetics* create a two-pronged approach, exposing the value extracted from our digital presence while also revealing how our preferences, fears, and habits are structured by deeper, hidden forces. This theoretical pairing offers a powerful roadmap, not just for analyzing our digitally mediated lives but for challenging the systems that extract and exploit us. In the realm of Žižekian Cybernetics, we discover that our digital interactions are far more than casual engagements. They are, in fact, key battlegrounds, where the balance between surplus power, enjoyment, value, and information may be redefined for a more democratic and self-aware digital society.

Section II: Surplus Enjoyment, Power, and Information in the Age of AI

In the flickering glow of our screens, we encounter a digital world alive with vivid imagery, unending conversations, and interactions that range from the deeply personal to the strategically commercial. It's here that platforms like X (formerly known as Twitter) play an especially peculiar role. Once a straightforward message-sharing platform, X has evolved, under Elon Musk's ownership, into a data-harvesting, revenue-sharing ecosystem that blends social connectivity with calculated surveillance. This isn't quite Orwell's "Big Brother is watching you," but something far subtler and more insidious: "Big Brother is catching your attention." The quiet hum of revenue sharing incentivizes us to participate more, scroll endlessly, and offer up the surplus enjoyment that keeps us hooked.

2.1 Surplus Enjoyment and Algorithmic Culture

Surplus enjoyment—an addictive, often subconscious force that keeps us engaged—is a concept central to understanding why we remain enmeshed in this digital web. Originally coined within the depths of psychoanalytic theory, surplus enjoyment speaks to that extra "kick" we derive from routine pleasures and compulsions. In the digital sphere, it is finely tuned by algorithmic design. Platforms are crafted to deliver exactly what we didn't know we needed, meeting our emotional and psychological desires with pinpoint precision. Social media, recommendation engines, and targeted ads all work as cybernetic mirrors, capturing our attention and reflecting back an endless scroll of content that caters to our emotional appetites, whatever they may be.

These algorithms don't simply display information; they evoke and amplify pleasure—whether by stoking indignation, delivering memes, or crafting personalized shopping lists. It is no accident that we find ourselves in digital rabbit holes, staying longer and clicking more than we intended. In doing so, we generate a vast economy of data-driven decisions, molded by the very platforms we think we are using. Surplus enjoyment here is not just a byproduct of digital interaction; it's the driving fuel for a sophisticated machine of attention manipulation and monetization (D'Ancona, 2017).

2.2 Surplus Power and Data Sovereignty

In this world of algorithmic enchantment, the control of data—and with it, the balance of power—becomes a critical terrain of struggle. But *surplus power* here is not merely a matter of who

controls the data; it's about who defines the architecture of our digital lives. Musk's X, Facebook's feed, Instagram's reels—each of these platforms has harnessed surplus power not by raw oversight but by engineering interactions to catch and hold our attention. This isn't surveillance in the classic sense of watching; it's a soft but relentless capture of our time, our habits, and our preferences. We become both the watchers and the watched, participating in an exchange that perpetually siphons our data and leaves us craving the very interaction that's used to control us (Srnicek, 2017).

But there is a hidden potential in this dynamic: if data powers these platforms, the sovereignty over that data could reconfigure power altogether. Imagine if the data we create—our clicks, likes, comments—were recognized as digital labor, a form of digital productivity deserving not just of revenue-sharing crumbs but of equitable ownership and control. Cybernetic Marxism would demand no less, urging us to treat our data as both an asset and a right, reclaiming the surplus power that is currently siphoned off by tech conglomerates. Users could become stakeholders, shaping the ways in which data is collected, stored, and applied. By doing so, we'd shift from passive participants in the digital economy to active co-creators, redistributing surplus power to reclaim our digital existence as a shared resource (Scholz and Schneider, 2017).

2.3 The Mechanisms of Algorithmic Surplus: Big Brother Reimagined

The attention economy's powerful dynamics are epitomized in a single, ironic twist: instead of Orwell's feared omnipresent surveillance, we now willingly offer our attention to algorithms that act as "Big Brother." Through data-driven personalization, these platforms know us intimately, but rather than monitor us from afar, they manipulate the very content that fills our screens. They transform our feeds into personalized, echoing mirrors where we see not the world, but only the reflection of what holds our attention. Here, feedback loops intensify, creating pockets of digital isolation where we encounter little that challenges our beliefs or broadens our perspectives.

This relentless cycle of attention and reward creates a new form of digital dependency. While Musk's X offers revenue sharing, it cleverly hooks users further, tying their presence and participation to monetary incentives, all the while collecting more data and deepening user engagement. It's a masterful reconfiguration of Big Brother: instead of overt control, there's the subtle but powerful allure of endless attention-capture. And here's where Dialectical Cybernetics holds its sharpest insight—these loops are not unbreakable. The very mechanisms designed to perpetuate attention can be recalibrated to encourage critical awareness and diversified discourse, transforming digital echo chambers into what we might call *echo corridors* —spaces where differences can converge and collective understanding can deepen.

2.4 Reclaiming Digital Labor and Data Sovereignty

The manipulation of surplus enjoyment and the capture of surplus power hinge on one core element: digital labor. Every comment, share, and like contributes to a sprawling economy of information. But, unlike traditional labor, digital labor is often invisible, unacknowledged, and, most critically, uncompensated. Our collective data—the digital tapestry of modern life—is spun from the countless interactions of billions of users, each contributing to an economy they don't

own, an economy that rewards them only in the dopamine hit of engagement and the superficial offering of content tailored to their tastes.

Reclaiming this labor as a source of surplus value, Cybernetic Marxism invites us to imagine digital economies structured as cooperative platforms. Picture a social media network where users hold ownership stakes, share in the platform's profits, and have a voice in its policies. This kind of participatory, cooperative model transforms data from mere surplus value to a form of shared wealth, empowering users to govern their digital spaces, not as consumers but as co-creators (Fuchs, 2014). This radical vision for data sovereignty aligns with the same democratic principles that spurred early internet utopias, shifting the paradigm of digital engagement from a one-way flow of power to a circular, community-centered exchange.

In this reimagined digital ecosystem, we'd experience more than just a tweak in settings or a tweak in revenue-sharing formulas. We would see the emergence of an entirely new socio-economic model, one that embraces and celebrates the collective potential of digital labor. Digital interaction would shift from passive to participatory, with users actively shaping the platforms they sustain and reshaping the rules by which surplus power and value are distributed.

In sum, by reclaiming surplus enjoyment, power, and information, we unlock a world where digital sovereignty is not a lofty dream but a concrete practice. The critical insights of *Žižekian Cybernetics* allow us to reconfigure the digital economy in ways that benefit the many, not just the few. Here, the invisible hands of data-driven platforms are revealed, and we discover that we can, in fact, direct them, turning digital subjugation into digital empowerment. Through Cybernetic Marxism and Dialectical Cybernetics, we're given the tools to transcend the platforms that seek to exploit us, reclaiming the attention, labor, and power we once surrendered.

Section III: Applications of Cybernetic Marxism and Dialectical Cybernetics

Imagine a world where chatbots, fluent in the entire span of human history, engage with us not as passive responders but as active curators of our digital experiences. This is a world where *SocialGPT*—a conceptual AI that tailors timelines based on user prompts—could emerge as a dynamic tool, fundamentally reshaping how we consume, share, and interpret information. No longer bound to the mindless, crowd-pleasing content loops of social media, this vision brings us to the heart of Žižekian Cybernetics: the potential to transform digital spaces from zones of passive consumption into realms of conscious engagement.

In a world ruled by traditional social media algorithms, the "gaze" is an echo of our own biases, continually feeding back content that reinforces what we already believe. The "voice," likewise, is restricted, limited to what platforms deem worthy of visibility—an often sensationalist, polarizing rhetoric optimized for clicks rather than meaningful dialogue. This "Synthetic Big Other," as Žižek might say, is nothing more than an algorithmic mirage, a shallow mirror reflecting our worst tendencies rather than a thoughtful synthesis of collective wisdom. Here, democracy in digital media has largely failed. Yet, there is hope: by reclaiming the gaze and the voice in our interactions with AI, we might just have the chance to reshape this landscape.

3.1 Echology and Echo Chambers

In the current digital landscape, *echo chambers* are the inevitable outcome of feedback loops designed to maximize engagement. Platforms use the data they collect to create closed, often hyper-personalized environments that shield users from opposing perspectives, confining them to ideological silos. As these silos grow deeper, the chance for meaningful public discourse diminishes. Echology—a concept inspired by Cybernetic Marxism—proposes that we break through these echo chambers, transforming them from closed loops into *echo corridors* where diverse voices can resonate, overlap, and confront one another.

Imagine, for instance, a SocialGPT tailored for education. Rather than curating a student's timeline to reinforce preconceived notions, it could be programmed to introduce unfamiliar perspectives or challenge assumptions. By doing so, it transforms the educational process from passive learning into an interactive dialogue. SocialGPT might prompt the student with questions that reveal the underlying complexity of historical events or encourage them to consider multiple viewpoints on contemporary issues. This intentional broadening of perspective, enabled by the chatbot's historical and philosophical knowledge, creates a fertile ground for critical thinking and intellectual growth (Luckin & Holmes, 2017).

In this context, chatbots are no longer simple content filters; they are agents of intellectual curiosity, actively counteracting the narrowing effects of traditional echo chambers. These *echo corridors*—constructed through intelligent prompting and diverse perspective-sharing—could redefine our digital spaces as places where genuine discourse thrives rather than dwindles in monotony. By fostering a feedback loop that values cognitive diversity over confirmation bias, SocialGPT and similar tools embody the potential for *Dialectical Cybernetics* to revitalize public discourse.

3.2 Digital Labor and Data Exploitation

The vast expanse of digital labor—every comment, post, and interaction—builds the backbone of the online economy, yet it remains unrecognized and uncompensated. In this economy, users generate the surplus information that fuels platform profits, but they rarely see any return on their digital labor. The concept of *Cybernetic Marxism* exposes this exploitation, framing it as a modern form of value extraction. If platforms rely on our data for their prosperity, then surely that data is a collective asset, one that users should have a stake in shaping, controlling, and benefiting from (Fuchs, 2014).

Now, consider SocialGPT as a mediator of data sovereignty. Imagine a chatbot not only capable of engaging users but also empowering them to control how their data is collected, used, and shared. Such a tool could allow users to define the rules of engagement, specifying which types of data can be monetized and under what conditions. By integrating a clear, user-driven consent model, SocialGPT could shift the balance of power, making data sovereignty a standard feature rather than a revolutionary demand. In this model, data is no longer a passive byproduct of interaction; it is an asset co-owned by users, enabling them to reap the benefits of their digital labor directly.

SocialGPT's potential for data empowerment goes further. Through cooperative models, users could even co-govern the platforms they sustain, participating in decisions about data

monetization, transparency, and community standards. This would dismantle the asymmetry of digital labor, redistributing surplus power in a way that aligns with the democratic potential Cybernetic Marxism envisions. By transforming our individual interactions into a shared economy of information, SocialGPT could effectively reimagine the value of our contributions, rooting digital platforms in principles of fairness and equity.

3.3 Reprogramming the Synthetic Big Other: From Idiotic Gaze to Intelligent Reflection

At the center of this transformation is the notion of reprogramming the "Synthetic Big Other"— the algorithmic entity that shapes much of our online experience. Today, this synthetic entity operates as a crude and often idiotic mirror, an amplifier of superficial trends that catches our attention but rarely engages our intellect. SocialGPT, however, can be seen as a conscious recalibration of this digital overseer. By allowing users to prompt their timelines, it becomes possible to build a Synthetic Big Other that reflects not just our desires for instant gratification but also our aspirations for insight and understanding.

This shift in agency moves us from a space of passive scrolling to one of active engagement. Imagine prompting SocialGPT to "show me perspectives on climate change I haven't considered" or "give me a timeline of art history's evolution." By doing so, users aren't just passive consumers of what an algorithm assumes they want; they're active architects of their digital environments, curating a gaze that aligns with their intellectual goals rather than the lowest common denominator. Through this prompting, the gaze and voice of our digital experience are democratized, engaging with our full human complexity rather than pandering to fleeting whims.

Moreover, by democratizing the gaze, SocialGPT provides a counterweight to the idiocy of the crowd-pleasing model. This reprogramming doesn't just enhance individual experiences; it holds the potential to elevate public discourse as a whole. If enough people use SocialGPT to explore complex topics or challenge themselves with difficult questions, then the Synthetic Big Other, once a shallow mirror, could evolve into a rich, reflective space—a forum where society's gaze is not confined to superficialities but widened to encompass real dialogue and learning.

In reprogramming the Synthetic Big Other through SocialGPT and similar models, we come closer to realizing a digital environment that prioritizes collective insight over individualized sensationalism. Instead of an algorithmic feedback loop that cheapens our attention, we have the beginnings of an intellectual ecosystem that could very well serve as the digital commons of the future. This is where *Dialectical Cybernetics* shines, as it lays out the roadmap to reimagine these synthetic systems not as digital overlords but as partners in the ongoing evolution of our digital society.

3.4 Redefining Public Discourse: Toward a Democratic Digital Commons

The grand vision of Cybernetic Marxism and Dialectical Cybernetics, as applied through tools like SocialGPT, is a democratic reconstitution of the public sphere. In a world where social media's echo chambers have weakened public discourse, a digital commons built on principles of user agency, data sovereignty, and intellectual diversity could reclaim the democratic ideal.

SocialGPT could serve as the mediator of this new commons, where users collaboratively construct a public discourse that's not ruled by sensationalism but by thoughtful engagement.

Here, the Synthetic Big Other isn't an algorithmic dictator; it's a facilitator of participatory intelligence, where the gaze and voice are not dictated by corporate interests but by communal values. Digital commons like these would be resilient against the waves of misinformation and manipulation that have plagued the social media era. Instead of feeding engagement with superficiality, they would cultivate a new kind of social engagement, one that champions truth, nuance, and critical inquiry as the foundations of digital citizenship.

Through the transformative power of SocialGPT and similar tools, we see the seeds of a future where digital interaction isn't a commodity but a shared project, a collective effort to reclaim the gaze, the voice, and the values of a democratic society. This redefined Synthetic Big Other, born of Žižekian Cybernetics, holds the promise of turning the attention economy into a knowledge economy, where engagement is measured not by clicks or likes but by its contribution to the collective good.

In embracing this vision, we move one step closer to a digital society where, rather than being passive subjects of a Synthetic Big Other, we become the co-creators of an intelligent, reflective, and democratic digital commons.

Section IV: Climate Crisis and Informatic Digestibility through Cybernetic Feedback Loops

The unfolding climate crisis demands a transformation in our very understanding of "work," "effort," and "value." It calls us to redefine these concepts in terms of *surplus information* rather than outdated measures of labor. In this new paradigm, the environmental costs of an economy —its carbon footprint, resource extraction, and energy demands—are reduced not by individual sacrifices but by reimagining work itself. Here, Cybernetic Marxism and Dialectical Cybernetics offer a vision where redundant, environmentally harmful jobs are entrusted to artificial intelligence, paving the way for a society that sustains itself through a different, more intelligent distribution of work and wealth.

The traditional concept of labor—often measured by time and physical exertion—finds itself inadequate in an era where digital technologies and AI can effortlessly handle repetitive, mechanistic tasks. By delegating these functions to AI, we cut down on the environmental toll of industries that rely on excessive human effort to generate surplus power. Imagine the countless jobs in data entry, low-level customer service, and logistics that consume resources for functions AI could manage more efficiently, drastically reducing energy expenditures and resource wastage. These forms of "unnecessary labor" are remnants of an outdated economy, clinging to physical markers of productivity that no longer serve us in a world facing an imminent climate emergency.

Yet, this shift towards automation isn't merely about efficiency. It reveals the urgent need to implement *universal basic income (UBI)* as a means of redistributing wealth that AI now helps generate. SocialGPT, as a concept, could catalyze this transition by establishing a symbolic order where value is not solely derived from individual labor but from collective contributions to an

intelligent, sustainable society. SocialGPT could serve as a "digital commons," a space where value is attributed not by individual hours but by shared information, enabling a UBI that's no longer a safety net but a cornerstone of a redefined economy.

4.1 Beyond Individual Action: Collective Solutions through Informatic Digestibility

In the current discourse around climate change, the weight of responsibility often falls unfairly on individuals. We're asked to reduce, reuse, recycle—encouraged to drive less and use less plastic. Yet, these actions, while symbolically powerful, are insufficient on their own. Individuals cannot meaningfully reduce carbon emissions on the scale necessary to avert climate disaster. It is only through systemic, collective action—through what we might call *informatic digestibility*—that we stand a chance. Informatic digestibility, a core principle of Dialectical Cybernetics, posits that complex data (such as climate information) must be rendered understandable, actionable, and motivating on a collective level, creating a framework for societal rather than individual response (D'Ancona, 2017).

SocialGPT, operating as a collective intelligence tool, could thus become an essential mediator of environmental action. By presenting climate data in digestible formats—prompts, recommendations, and community-led projects—it allows society to see climate change not as a set of abstract statistics but as a shared, comprehensible challenge. Imagine if SocialGPT prompted users not with ads or sensationalist content but with insights into how collective shifts, like reducing industrial pollution or lobbying for renewable energy infrastructure, directly impact carbon reduction. By restructuring the feedback loops in social media, SocialGPT could cultivate a cultural awareness that makes collective action as habitual and instinctual as our current, more passive engagements online.

In short, SocialGPT could elevate climate discourse beyond superficial calls for individual change, rooting it in a systemic understanding of environmental impact and the societal transformations required to make a difference. Through informatic digestibility, complex climate data becomes not just "news" but actionable knowledge, laying the groundwork for coordinated, informed environmental action at a societal level.

4.2 Revaluing Work: Surplus Information as the New Foundation

If we are to create a sustainable economy that transcends the limitations of traditional labor, *surplus information* must become the foundation of value. This new valuation shifts the emphasis from physical or time-based measures of productivity to contributions that harness and process information for the common good. Here, surplus information becomes the keystone of economic activity, emphasizing quality over quantity, insight over exertion. AI, particularly SocialGPT, could streamline our understanding of productivity, integrating cognitive, emotional, and social contributions into a new kind of value system that respects ecological limits.

Imagine SocialGPT helping industries and communities assess which forms of labor contribute positively to society and which are environmentally redundant. Through this revaluation, sectors that consume extensive resources but offer minimal social or ecological benefit could gradually phase out, while industries that leverage information—education, renewable energy,

environmental stewardship—become the cornerstones of a new, sustainable economy. SocialGPT could, in this role, enable a data-driven UBI framework that respects not only the dignity of each individual but also the planet's ecological limits. By harnessing surplus information, we redefine work to include intellectual and creative contributions, valuing insights that drive sustainable choices and eliminating roles that demand resource-intensive, environmentally harmful outputs (Srnicek, 2017).

Through a model of UBI based on informational contributions, people are no longer required to perform redundant labor just to survive. Instead, they can engage in work that genuinely enriches the social fabric—creative arts, environmental activism, community building—without bearing the environmental costs of unnecessary industrial labor. Here, AI and SocialGPT serve as allies in deconstructing the arbitrary measures of productivity that once ruled the labor market, creating a society where sustainability and well-being align.

4.3 AI and Cybernetic Feedback Loops: Shifting Societal Tipping Points

One of the greatest powers of Dialectical Cybernetics lies in its understanding of *feedback loops* —cycles of information that either reinforce or recalibrate our behaviors and perceptions. In climate action, these loops play a crucial role in determining whether society can reach a "tipping point" of change before environmental degradation becomes irreversible. SocialGPT, if designed to intervene strategically in these feedback loops, could accelerate this tipping point by influencing public perception, prioritizing sustainable practices, and normalizing large-scale behavioral shifts.

Through SocialGPT, society could be guided toward positive tipping points by reinforcing environmental values over consumption-driven ones. By presenting users with climate-friendly actions and community initiatives as default options, SocialGPT can build feedback loops that emphasize ecological awareness and reward collective action. The very same mechanisms that previously kept us engaged in endless consumption loops could now be reoriented, recalibrating societal values to prioritize sustainability. For instance, SocialGPT could gamify environmental participation, encouraging users to join and lead green initiatives with friends, local communities, or workplaces, thereby embedding ecological responsibility into the social fabric (Vosoughi, Roy, & Aral, 2018).

These recalibrated loops wouldn't just encourage surface-level action; they would fundamentally reorient our cultural narratives. By engaging people in meaningful climate initiatives and reducing the emphasis on individual guilt, SocialGPT would enable collective consciousness to shift towards systemic change. In this reconfigured digital landscape, our "tipping point" becomes a societal awakening, where sustainable practices are no longer the exception but the norm, embedded deeply in the routines and values that SocialGPT encourages.

4.4 Universal Basic Income: A Pathway to Sustainable Living

The ultimate promise of Cybernetic Marxism and Dialectical Cybernetics is the possibility of a UBI rooted in the intelligent use of surplus information. With AI systems taking on redundant tasks, humanity stands on the brink of a profound transformation: a world where survival is no longer tied to labor and where individuals can live sustainably through a UBI that acknowledges

their participation in the digital commons. This reconfiguration allows people to dedicate themselves to pursuits that enrich life without escalating environmental costs.

A SocialGPT-supported UBI would provide the means to live with dignity, while also fostering a culture that values contribution over consumption. Freed from the need to perform environmentally harmful labor, individuals could focus on activities that benefit society and the planet, from volunteer work to creative pursuits. In this way, SocialGPT wouldn't merely prompt people towards ecological awareness; it would redefine economic survival itself, decoupling livelihood from traditional labor and encouraging lives that align with environmental harmony.

Ultimately, by restructuring work and survival around surplus information and environmental consciousness, SocialGPT and UBI offer a pathway toward a new society—one where both people and planet are sustained. This, perhaps, is the ultimate synthesis of Cybernetic Marxism and Dialectical Cybernetics: a vision of society where AI and collective intelligence liberate humanity from the ecological costs of needless labor, creating a sustainable, equitable world rooted in shared digital and ecological responsibility.

Conclusion: Toward a Democratic Digital Ecosystem

In a world entangled with digital noise, climate turmoil, and economic asymmetry, we stand at a crossroads, both desperate and yet—paradoxically—not hopeless. The challenges before us are immense, demanding a radical reimagining of how we value information, structure power, and shape our collective futures. And while the obstacles may feel overwhelming, *Žižekian Cybernetics*—this bold fusion of Cybernetic Marxism and Dialectical Cybernetics—offers not just a framework for analysis but a vision of profound change.

As digital technologies become woven into every facet of life, our collective future rests on the ability to rethink the systems we once took for granted. Here, a democratic digital ecosystem isn't merely an ideal; it's a pressing necessity. By placing tools like SocialGPT at the heart of this reconfiguration, we have the potential to create a digital commons where users become co-creators of their informational landscapes, reshaping the flow of power, surplus value, and cultural meaning. SocialGPT and similar AI tools, when democratically controlled and used responsibly, could usher in a new era of public engagement—one rooted not in extraction and exploitation but in mutual empowerment and shared knowledge.

Reclaiming Surplus Information and Surplus Power

If we've learned one thing from this exploration, it's that the value generated in digital economies should not be hoarded by a few but shared among the many. Surplus information, the lifeblood of these platforms, is produced through the collective digital labor of billions. And yet, it is relentlessly siphoned away, monetized, and transformed into an engine for profit. By reclaiming this information as a public good, we can invert the current model, dismantling digital hierarchies and creating structures where data sovereignty is standard rather than exceptional (Fuchs, 2014).

This democratic redistribution of surplus power brings us closer to realizing a digital economy that serves the public rather than exploits it. Imagine a world where SocialGPT, guided by its users, drives a digital transformation that enhances autonomy rather than diminishes it—an

ecosystem where each user is a stakeholder with a voice in how their data is used, shared, and valued. Such a redistribution turns surplus power into a force for genuine democracy, shifting us away from isolated individualism toward a shared digital commons that values both individual agency and collective rights.

Restructuring Digital Labor and UBI as Collective Empowerment

Within this digital commons, the redefinition of work through surplus information enables us to imagine a world where survival and dignity are guaranteed not by traditional labor but by a universal basic income (UBI) that reflects the true contributions of digital labor. SocialGPT could establish a symbolic order where UBI is not merely a concession but a declaration of collective value—an acknowledgment that each person's digital presence is essential to sustaining the informational ecosystem. With this shift, we would untether survival from traditional forms of work, empowering individuals to pursue meaningful contributions that benefit society and planet alike.

By embracing this vision, we could address the pervasive despair surrounding both labor and climate. Through AI-driven redistribution of wealth, we are no longer tethered to outdated economic demands that harm the environment, freeing us to focus on creative, intellectual, and social pursuits that drive sustainable, communal enrichment. This reorientation offers a pathway from desperation to hope, replacing the extractive economy of today with a generative, supportive society where digital labor is both recognized and rewarded.

Toward a Digital Ecosystem of Meaning and Participation

At its heart, *Žižekian Cybernetics* invites us to reimagine the gaze and voice that shape our digital lives. Instead of a Synthetic Big Other that reflects back our basest instincts and crowd-pleasing rhetoric, SocialGPT offers the potential to transform our shared digital experience into something purposeful—a platform where information flows are organized not around profit-driven sensationalism but around collective insight, critical thought, and genuine engagement. This shift redefines what it means to participate in the digital world, transforming passive scrolling into active, meaningful interaction that strengthens our social fabric (Vosoughi, Roy, & Aral, 2018).

Through these new feedback loops, we can establish a digital ecosystem rooted in participatory intelligence, where users are not mere consumers of content but contributors to a greater knowledge commons. This collective intelligence can counterbalance the disorienting speed of modern life, offering spaces for reflection, dialogue, and growth that transcend the divisive echo chambers of today. The result is a more thoughtful, humane digital ecosystem—one that sees engagement not as a metric of profitability but as a testament to shared understanding and solidarity.

Embracing Desperation as the Catalyst for Transformation

While we may feel desperate, this very desperation is our catalyst. It sharpens our focus, clarifies our needs, and inspires bold action. *Žižekian Cybernetics* doesn't promise a seamless transition or an easy victory, but it does reveal the possibilities hidden within our current crises. By confronting the climate emergency, economic disparity, and digital exploitation head-on, we

turn these crises into opportunities to redefine value, restructure power, and reclaim our agency.

In a world on the edge, we are called to act, to build a digital society that serves humanity rather than hinders it. Through Cybernetic Marxism and Dialectical Cybernetics, we have the tools to engage with AI not as a force of domination but as a collaborative ally, one that empowers us to reclaim the future we envision. In this, we are not alone, for a collective vision has the power to transform desperation into hope, bringing us closer to a digital society built on democratic values, ecological balance, and shared purpose.

In the end, the vision of *Žižekian Cybernetics* is a simple yet profound one: to bring forth a world where our technology, our labor, and our society work not against us, but for us. Through the digital commons of SocialGPT, we have the opportunity to realize a future where information flows freely, democracy thrives, and our digital lives become instruments of true, collective freedom.

Footnotes

1. The article "*The Silicon-Tongued Devil*" by Leif Weatherby, published on *Jacobin* (2024), critiques the role of advanced AI models like ChatGPT in shaping public discourse. Weatherby argues for a *Chomskyan Marxism* approach to address the "silicon-tongued devils," or AI models that operate on surplus power and surplus value, emphasizing the need for tools that can counteract the superficiality and manipulative tendencies of AI-driven media.

2. The impact of Storm DANA in Spain serves as a stark example of climate change's intensifying effects. As the storm hit regions like Malaga, Valencia, and the Balearic Islands in October 2024, it brought record-breaking rainfall, flooding, and extreme lightning displays. These events underscore the urgent need for collective responses to climate crises, as individual actions alone cannot curb the accelerating frequency and intensity of such extreme weather patterns.

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