

Psychopolitical Discourse in Reality TV Shows: A Study of Kate Durbin's *E! Entertainment*

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Abstract

Within the rising interest in questioning power dynamics, psychopolitical strategies have been identified as a hallmark of contemporary politics. Apart from traditional coercive power, represented by repression and prohibition, the new power operates through psychological manipulation based on positive stimulation and unlimited compulsion of entertainment and freedom. In a literary response to these power dynamics, the American poet Kate Durbin (1981-) emerged as a distinctive voice to disrupt the entraining programs in general and Reality TV shows in particular. Durbin's innovative technique foregrounds prose poetry as a conceptual space for reflective thinking to help humans understand their surrounding conditions. She meticulously annotates Reality TV shows aired on the American *E!* network to unravel their underlying ideologies and media-driven psychopolitics. The present study explores the dynamic interactions between TV shows and psychopolitical discourse presented in Durbin's *E! Entertainment*, pertaining to the sharp lens of contemporary psychopolitical theorists, such as Byung Chul Han and Slavoj Žižek. Han aligns the current psychopolitical strategies to neoliberalism with its persistent demands of commodification, self-optimization, and entrepreneurship. He describes people as achievement subjects who devotedly engage in auto-exploitation to maximize profit.

The psychological analysis of the achievement subjects employs Žižek's terms of soft totalitarianism and the commandments to "enjoy." Examining Durbin's poetry within these theoretical perspectives, the study concludes that literary engagement with entertaining programs both reveals and resists their seductive and elusive psychopolitical strategies, which contradict freedom and people's endless doing.

Keywords: Psychopolitics, Reality TV, *E! Entertainment*, achievement-Subjects, entrepreneurship.

1. Introduction: Psychopolitics in Media-Driven World

Since the start of the third millennium, entertaining programs have saturated TV Channels and perceived unprecedented acceptance and popular participation. This is further enhanced with the digitalization of every single aspect of life, a matter that blurs the boundaries between entertainment and authentic life and helps the psychopolitical tools to spread its hegemonic ideologies within popular culture. Among these programs is Reality TV, which focuses on branding, rivalry, and self-presentation. The aim of this paper is to interrogate the interactions between Reality TV shows and psychopolitical discourse presented in Kate Durbin's *E! Entertainment* (2014), in which she spared no effort to dissect the illusionary spectacles of these shows and prompt a critical thinking against the psychological power at play. This study situates its analysis of Durbin's poetry in the sharp lens of the psychopolitical theorists; Byung Chul Han (1959-) and Slavoj Žižek (1949-). Contextualizing Durbin's *E! Entertainment* within the psychopolitical theorization helps to examine her innovative transcription of Reality TV as a landmark of the seductive hegemonic power. Durbin's long prose poem "Kim's Fairytale Wedding" was thoroughly analyzed to explore the psychopolitical discourse in the Reality TV shows. The poem is Durbin's poetic rendition of the TV event, *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*, premiered (2007-2021) on the American Cable network *E!*. Kim Kardashian is publicly defined as self-made entrepreneur that achieves her personal autonomy and economic success. However, Durbin sympathizes with Kim as a media-driven figure that interprets how people perpetuate the neoliberal values and willfully present themselves to be constructed and exploited for material ends.

The term psychopolitics was first coined by the social activist, Peter Sedgwick (1934-1983) as the title of his 1955 article, in which he argued that mental suffering comes from unfair social and economic systems rooted in broader social arrangements. Social problems, such as poverty, unemployment, poor housing, and shortage of healthcare, which often cause stress and mental suffering, come from governmental strategies to organize people and communities at large. Sedgwick's early critique was developed in his later book *Psychopolitics* (1982), republished in 2015 and 2022, where he proposed that the health politics and psychological tactics have been utilized by the political systems for shaping people's thoughts, emotions, and behavior, hence affecting their freedom and autonomy.

Beyond Sedgwick's intervention, the term psychopolitics also had older genealogical roots in medicine, law, and religion, where it referred to practices adopted in the time of crises as early as Ancient Greece to arrange and control people. It was transmitted to the political realm in the 18th century, where the concept of governance had shifted in response to global crises, such as economic downturns, environmental disasters, and political upheaval (Prozorov, 2021).

The psychiatrist Milton Greenblatt (1914-1994) paved the ground for a comprehensive understanding of the term and its political implications. In his article "Towards a Definition of Psychopolitics" (1975), he stated that people's welfare depends on organizations created by politicians, whose interest to save humanity is contaminated by the instinct to serve their own benefits. He further navigated the term in his book *Psychopolitics* (1978), explaining how psychological principles can be integrated into political plans to achieve influence and power, and warning about the ways in which psychological care is designated for political ends.

Extensively, the term psychopolitics resonates in the cultural, social, and political realms. In his remarkable endeavor to explore power relations, the French philosopher Michel Foucault (1976) coined the term 'biopolitics' as a mode of governance that focuses on the administration of life, health and welfare, thereby compelling people to discipline themselves to meet social demands of being healthy and productive. This further prompted Giorgio Agamben (1998) to observe that man is no more the object but the subject of political power. Jean Baudrillard (1994) also discussed how individuals voluntarily expose their inner lives for social

consumption, merging reality with its representational images. Within hyper-technologized societies and the increasing drives to consumption, Bernard Stiegler (2008) coined the term psycho-power, examining how modern systems govern life, shape behavior, and manage subjectivity on a subconscious level. Collectively, these practical and theoretical routes underscore how the dynamics of power and governance converge in the discourse positioned under the rubric of psychopolitics (Prozorov, 2021).

However, the German philosopher of South Korean origin, Byung-Chul Han advances the term psychopolitics in his seminal book *Psychopolitics: Neoliberalism and New Technologies of Power* (2017), signifying the contemporary strategies of power shaped by the rapid technological shift to the digital age. Han aligns the term with the rise of neoliberalism, the dominant ideology of contemporary culture, which “proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade” (Harvey, 2005, p. 2).

Han reworks the Marxian notion of the binary opposition between working forces and relations of production. For Marx, this contradiction would culminate in proletarian revolution, promising communism to be a new social order. Han modifies Marx’s view and argues that capitalism survives by constant mutations, hence escape resolution. Neoliberalism, as the latest form of capitalism, eliminates the orthodox proletariat by transforming individuals into self-exploiting entrepreneurs, rendering them both master and slave of themselves. This turns class struggle into an internalized self-investment, and the old opposition between bourgeoisie and proletariat is replaced by the illusion of boundless self-production. Thus, the “dictatorship of the proletariat” never arrives, and what exists nowadays is the “dictatorship of capital.” Han states that “allo-exploitation” (domination by others) gives way to “auto-exploitation,” where people are obliged to monitor and enhance their performances (Han, 2017, pp. 11-12). In more than thirty books, Han has presented a profound analysis of how ideology and subjectivity are constructed and sustained, arguing that neoliberalism not only commodifies human life, but “seduces the soul [and] carefully protocols desires, needs and wishes instead of ‘depatterned’ them” (Han, 2017, p. 34). He clarifies the crisis of freedom, where modern technologies encourage self-promotion and autonomy, while they intensify self-absorption and exploitation. In his manifesto book, *The Burnout Society* (2015,

p. 46), Han introduces the “achievement-subject,” defining an individual who is no longer subdued to external power but willingly engaged in an inner competition. This subject “positivises itself, liberates itself into a project,” and becomes an entrepreneur, emotionally internalizing the social expectations of neoliberal culture). Han further alerts of “the violence of positivity” that exhausts people and leads to neurological diseases, such as depression and burnout (2015, p. 7). This sociopolitical framework is a hallmark in Durbin’s literary texts, focusing on its relations to popular culture in general and Reality TV in specific. She highlights how individuals have been turned into achievement subjects that egoistically devoted to self-optimization, accurate performance, and hypervisibility—neoliberal psychopolitics, espoused to maximize profit on the expense of people’s authenticity and freedom.

2. Kate Durbin: On Visionary Craftsmanship

Durbin is one of the American contemporary avant-garde poets who shows special interest in popular culture, digital art, performance, and documentary poetics. Her experimental literary craft is engaged in a meticulous registering of the intimate details of Reality TV, turning them into prose poems that expose the elusive strategies of psychopolitical discourse. Throughout her literary oeuvre, she aims to reconstruct a cultural awareness against neoliberal strategies that turn people into commodified characters. Her first poetry collection, *The Ravenous Audience* (2009) mimics the cinematic and theatrical nature of pop culture, where celebrity frames individuals as characters within a larger spectacle, reinforcing the tension between activity and objectification. Her second book, *E! Entertainment* (2014), which is the focus of this study, investigates psychopolitical discourse of neoliberalism underlying Reality TV programs and superstar culture, unravelling the ways administrators, film makers, media communities objectify people on various levels. Durbin’s last poetry collection *Hoarders* (2021) underscores the critique of neoliberal capitalism in more popular settings. The collection textualizes the 12 years most popular American documentary series, portraying the ways people “collect all manner of things: food, plants, books, dolls, [and] novelties,” to reflect the precarious life of the capitalists’ economic systems (Burnside, 2021). The book explores the thoughts and the obsessions of fifteen different persons, responding to the pressures and compulsions of the capitalist cultures, which bombards individuals to consume and accumulate. This study, however, limits itself to Durbin’s second prose poems collection, *E! Entertainment*, to present a salient

criticism of the underlying ideological politics enmeshed in the Reality TV shows that pervade the globe in the third millennium.

Noteworthy, Han, exclusively criticizes the ubiquitous of entertainment as a contemporary dominant culture. In his book *Entertainment Good and the Deconstruction of the Western Passion Narrative* (2019), he theorizes entertainment, stating that:

Entertainment has been raised to a new paradigm, to a new formula of world and being. In order to be, in order to belong to the world, it is necessary to be entertaining. Only the entertaining is real or true. The distinction between fictional and real reality [...] is no longer relevant. Reality itself appears to be an effect of entertainment. (Han, 2019, p. 83)

Han further confirms that in its all-encompassing variety, entertainment has been developed into an infinite capacity for incorporation, including “infotainment, edutainment, servotainment, and confrontainment” (Han, 2019, p. 80). He does not oppose entertainment but warns that it has been turned into endless achievements, dissolving the division between work and free time, and straining “against all temporal and functional limitations. It is no longer ‘episodic,’ but is instead becoming chronic (Han, 2019, p. 82).

While Han proclaims that “TV shows contain[s] the world,” he does not scrutinize them specifically (Han, 2019, p. 79). Durbin, however, presents a meticulous reading that critically contrasts the speedy and transient shots of TV programs. Her prose poems exemplify an artistic narrative that transcends traditional genre boundaries between poetry and prose to lay bare these ideologized programs and resist commodification and people exploitation. Interestingly, her rebellious voice works on two levels: form and content. On the structural level, she challenges traditional metered poetry and rejects structured rhyme in favor of fluid, dialogic, and expressive language, with internal rhythmic patterns that perpetuate the musicality of her poetry. Thematically, she does not merely criticize the entertaining programs and pop icons but repurposes their discourse to reveal the underlying political ideologies (Choi, 2016). Therefore, Durbin’s transcription elevates overlooked attributes of Reality TV into substantial poetic expressions, confronting the superficiality of media culture.

It is worth mentioning that interest in popular culture is not newly ignited in American poetry. In their study “Popular Culture as a Creation of Art in Frank O’Hara Selected Poems” (2022, p. 35), Hisham AbdulSattar Waheed and Anan Alkass Yousif examine O’Hara’s involvement in popular culture. They argue that as a leading figure of the New York School, O’Hara converts “the very mundane aspects of the American modern times...tabloid news...celebrity gossip, and even consumer goods” into “the tools of his poetic and artistic creation.” His poems like “Lana Turner Has Collapsed” and “Having a Coke with You” turn mass-media icons and consumer products into friendly, affective emblems, minimizing the division between esteemed art and popular culture. Durbin adopts a parallel strategy in works such as *E! Entertainment*, appropriating Reality TV transcripts and online fans commentaries to construct literary collages (Durbin, n.d.). Like O’Hara’s flaneur, who tracks mid-20th century Manhattan’s interplay of art, commerce, and celebrity, Durbin’s 21st century reporter navigates the algorithmic culture. In both cases, pop culture is artistically reframed for literary works.

Durbin’s experimental poems employ traditional poetic devices such as imagery, symbolism, and repetition to transform mundane objects or scenes into profound reflections on contemporary culture. On her website, she justifies her focus on Reality TV shows and states that:

Reality TV is the medium of our moment; we’re all straddling the line between living an “authentic” life and performing that life in front of the world. We’ve been under surveillance for a long time, but I think that reality TV is this unique medium in that it’s aware of its own surveillance. Most people think reality stars are really stupid. It actually takes a lot of savvy and a level of meta-awareness to do reality TV at all. (Durbin, n.d.)

Durbin inspects people’s collective fascination with these shows and how they perform specific agendas—be it materialism, competition, or interpersonal drama. Thus, Reality TV shows and other entertainment programs reproduce “capitalist hegemony by naturalizing neoliberal values, the myth of meritocracy, and the precarity of cultural labor” (Kosciesza, 2021, p. 1686). They use “self-reflexivity” and “metacommentary” to create “an onscreen illusion of transparency,” striving to co-opt the viewer with authenticity, familiarity, and openness to perpetuate “consumerism, hegemony, and power” (Salibian, 2020, p.

34). This blurring vision can be psychologically interpreted as placing individuals in a Lacanian imaginary space. It is an “*objet petit a*,”¹ where identity, meaning and real sense of the self are mediated and distorted by external representations of reality. Media, ideology, and spectacle generate a chain of signifiers without signified, i.e., without meaning, as the latter is never fully grasped. These programs reinforce this instability and create an endless chain of deferred signification, which practically indulges people in complete submission to the endless pursuit of labor and capital accumulation.

3. Durbin's *E! Entertainment*

Poems in *E! Entertainment* depict Durbin's practices of ekphrastic techniques as the vivid description of Reality TV shows to expand their meaning (Iredell, 2014). She unravels the underlying ideology of self-objectification in terms of visibility and competition. Thus, the book echoes Han's criticism of the achievement subjects, who are driven to exhaustion, burnout and psychic and physical fatigue (Han, 2015, p. 12).

In a BOMB interview (2014), Gabriela Jauregui describes the topics of the book as “terra incognita,” positing that they have never been tackled in literature. Durbin's *E! Entertainment* is not only experimental in its content but also in its striking physical form. It features a magic-eye cover, pink pages, and is divided into eight sections, each designed as a TV channel; it is mimicking television order and channeling its medium via the writing process (Jauregui, 2014). Titles of Chapter like “Lindsay's Necklace Trial,” “Kim's Fairytale Wedding,” “Wives Shows,” and “Anna Nicole Show” reflect Durbin's strategic engagement with pop aesthetics and her critiques of gendered media consumption. Therefore, the pink papers, culturally coded as feminine, become an elusive strategy to interrogate the constructions of female identity within pop culture. Durbin's aesthetic choice echoes Johanna Drucker's (1994) praise of the experimental literature to blur the boundaries between the physicality of the text and its meaning. Durbin exemplifies Drucker's appraisal in the way she oscillates between artistic framing and sincere criticism, cleverly portraying the hyperreal world which is deeply hidden behind the speedy shots of the Reality TV shows.

¹ In *Seminar VI, 1958*, p. 40, the French psychoanalysis Jacques Lacan first introduces the term *objet petit a* as “not the object of desire but the cause of desire. It stands in place of what is lacking, of what cannot be symbolized within the signifying chain.”

Significantly, the study demonstrates a detailed analysis of Durbin's "Kim's Fairytale Wedding" as a compelling example of her poetic dexterity in exposing the neoliberal psychopolitics that affect people in terms of self-promotion and entrepreneurial assets. The poem is the longest one in *E! Entertainment*, occupying nearly a quarter of its complete length and capturing the spirit of psychopolitics. It demonstrates how all the characters in the wedding are eager to fulfill their predetermined roles as achievement subjects and how "Kim," the universally celebrated figure who is identified as an entrepreneur, is entirely subdued to the psychopolitical strategies.

4. Durbin's "Kim's Fairytale Wedding"

The poem is a detailed and meticulous transcription of the Kardashian's TV event, premiered in 2011, on the Cable network *E!* and garnered mainly ten million viewers. Through an artistic vision, Durbin empathetically examines the underlying structure of human subjectivity, challenging thinkers of feminism who "felt comfortable trashing Kim Kardashian, [and] calling her stupid" (Durbin as cited in Choi, 2016). This dynamic resonates with Angela McRobbie's argument in *The Aftermath of Feminism* (2009) that women are encompassed into a neoliberal agenda, pretending autonomy, free choice, and empowerment. However, these attributes function as disciplinary mechanisms, subjecting women to new forms of regulation through beauty, sexuality, and self-surveillance. Durbin's poetic tone, though, turns Kim into an emblem of how visibility and the relentless demands of commodification shape and exhaust not only women's labor but any person indulged in the contemporary media landscape.

4.1. The Spectacle and Erasure of the Self

The title of the poem reveals a mocking sense of an ideal fairytale marriage, which is supposed to entail a happy-forever ending. Ironically, Kim's high-profile marriage to Kris Hemispheres, the famous tennis player, lasted only for 72 hours. Foregrounding Kim, the branded persona and the detailed transcription of the glamorous spectacle highlight a dense critique of the wedding as an event for commodification and visibility. Durbin's use of the refrain "white letters crystalize

in air,” and the involvement of hyper-detailed fashions and well-known celebrities signify the wedding as a place, purposefully constructed for competition, where every character has its own job to be fulfilled. This aligns with Han’s portrayal of neoliberal culture, in which the self is no longer rooted in secret, personal experience, but shaped for rivalry, visibility and optimization (Han, 2024). Katie Disabato (2014) describes the wedding as “a gorgeous, failed affair,” for it is primarily predicted when Durbin deliberately dubs Kris, the groom, into Not-Husband, a conceptual phrase that reveals his limited role of short-span existence. Durbin also portrays Kim and her fiancé as lacking true and intimate love; Kim is repeatedly wondering “we hate each other. We hate each other. [...] Is that awful?” (Durbin, 2014, p. 63). Commenting on the wedding as a commodified event, Durbin states that:

“Kim’s Fairytale Wedding” is a tragicomic take on the wedding industrial complex [...]. One of the things I love about reality television is that even as it attempts to forcefeed the Disney narrative of happy endings, the meta-narrative surrounding the story is often the original “reality” narrative falling to crumbs. I mean, Kim’s televised marriage lasted seventy-two days, and was totally over in the tabloids even as it was all sparkles and fairy-dust on E! (the channel). When you read E!, you can see how much she and her fiancé hate each other’s guts. They’d become a part of this machine churning out little bride and groom wedding-cake toppers made of diamonds. (Durbin as cited in Jauregui 2014)

The poem’s hyperreal and fantastic atmosphere is well-defined in “the tinkling of chimes,” “the old-fashioned 1950s font,” and the “sparkling orange sky” (Durbin, 2014, p. 61). These visual images evoke a nostalgic and luxurious sense, which serve as semiotic markers of class, taste, and aspirational identity:

*We begin with the tinkling of chimes. Our first vision is of
the white 1950's font of the Beverly Hills arch, cushioned
with palm fronds, propped against a sparkling orange sky.
Then the fancy scrawl of the Montage Beverly Hills
Hotel sign, followed by the European font of Scarpetta, a*

classy Italian restaurant.

The room is noisy. Family and friends of Kim and the Not-Husband hug each other in designer clothing. Sisters of Kim stand in line for flashes of light. All five wear mini-dresses and pumps. In the center is Kim, donning tight, white Alexander McQueen and a white short-sleeved jacket with constructed shoulders. (Durbin, 2014, p. 61)

The involved characters are described almost entirely via their clothing and accessories, which function as disciplinary tools, regulating affect, gender, and class visibility (Iredell, 2014). The expression of love, which is supposed to be an intimate concern, ironically occurs in the “designer clothing,” mocking the commodification of people’s feelings and emotions. Yet, Durbin’s poetic shot could also be interpreted as a gesture of hope and belonging within the ruins of truthfulness. The characters may be trapped in a hyperreal world of superficiality, but their longing for connection still runs under the glittering layer.

Placing Kim in the center, with her branded outfit, intensifies her role as media-driven performer, where everything is curated as a competition for attention and cultural ascendancy. The scene inside the hotel further strengthens this logic, where women—Kim and her sisters—are dressed in “mini-dresses and pumps,” aligned with the aesthetic demands of celebrity and hyper-femininity. Kim’s outfit, a tight white Alexander McQueen dress with “constructed shoulders,” literalizes the tension between softness and control, reflecting the affective labor, and turning the body into an optimized brand. She misleadingly enjoys what “she’s always dreamed of. It’s over-the-top fabulous” (Durbin, 2014, p. 65). Yet, these gestures of pleasure set the poem’s critique of the commodified, where the personal signs and emotions are scripted, packaged, and sold as entertainment.

Durbin’s deliberate hyperbole defines the gothic enchantment surrounding the Kardashians until they appear almost as mythical figures suspended between reality and fantasy. She depicts how the four women, regardless of their age, appear as consumer products rather than emotionally moved humans. For example, Kim’s “hair curls darkly down her shoulders. Her eyes are thickly lined, adorned with faux lashes. Her brows are arched, her lips nude. As she talks, her voice is soft, baby-

ish” (Durbin, 2014, p. 61-62). Moreover, “Sister Kylie, fourteen, watches in a striped dress by Fornarina. There is a red Miu Miu slung purse over shoulder. Her eyes are thickly lined” (Durbin, 2014, p. 77). This exaggerated description of women’s shape, brand, and relevant accessories functions as “forces of change [and] forms of power” to underscore the surreal spectacle of contemporary celebrity culture (McRobbie, 2009, p. 125). This “modern-gothic” (Durbin, 2014, p. 100) transforms women into colossal icons, magnified by the media’s distorting lens into modern legends as the American audience sees them (Disabato, 2014). The poetic hyperbole conveys the weight of cultural insight that drives people to hide their true selves and perform a version shaped by social expectations. This is well-defined in Jean Baudrillard’s (1994) theory of simulacra, where signs often replace reality, creating a hyperreality until the imitation becomes the real thing. Expanding on this premise, Amer Rasool Mahdi, in his dissertation, *The Novel and the Killing of the Real* (2015a, p. 21), defines simulacrum as an act of removal of the very notion of representation, stating that:

The simulacrum has been foreclosed in the history of representation because it puts under erasure the very notion of representation itself. It also challenges the binaries of model and copy, of original and reproduction, of image and likeness. That is why the credit has been given to the mimetic image that has been cherished as an affirmation of the real.

The Kardashians epitomize this condition, being no longer the real ones; instead, they are erased for a media construct or a cultural signifier. The Kardashians’ identity has been endlessly multiplied via posts, photographs and branding fantasies. Durbin’s craft shows how these exaggerated signs trap people in roles that feel more like performances than expressions of their authenticity, rendering them deeply devoted to the simulated self. The wedding could be also viewed as John Barth’s “funhouse,” a labyrinth, in which identity splits into infinite representations, turning the subject into a “name-coin” signifier without a stable signified (Mahdi, 2015b, p. 6045).

Moreover, the Kardashians’ attachment to objects makes them no longer individuals; they are incarnations of consumer systems. Justifying her focus people’s intimate attachments to objects, Durbin cites William Carlos Williams’ mantra “no ideas but in things” (as cited in Coldiron, 2021). Objects, such as the

brand names, jewelries, makeup, and clothes that reveal the celebrity myth, expose the psychopolitical tools that utilize labor and personality under the seduction of freedom and enjoyment. By cataloging the intricacies of the Kardashians' appearance with obsessive precision, Durbin shows how celebrity culture manufactures legends via superficiality, not through genuine narratives. They become colossal through fulfilling the capitalist desires, which consequently trap them within the endless circle of visibility and labor. Their lives are shaped by the demands of the camera, turning their existence into a continuous performance, and leaving no space for free time or authentic selfhood. Durbin writes "whatever you want about Kim wearing three wedding dresses, [...] Or having a beautiful extravagant wedding,' Mom says to us" (Durbin, 2014, p. 104 -105). Here, "us" stands for the viewer's demands, reflected in the camera, according to which, people, including Kim, are devotedly attached. This endless obsession to be seen automates their actions, erodes their freedom, and subjects them to the tiring exhaustion of self-surveillance. As Han argues in *The Burnout Society* (2015, p. 40), that the constant exposure and self-optimization enslave individuals through an egoistic pressure to maintain a perfect, consumable image. He diagnoses this "pathological consequence of *voluntary* self-exploitation" as a burnout syndrome because it exhausts people and leads to their entire fatigue. The Kardashians' freedom dissolves due to their hard work to appear flawless at every moment. Durbin metaphorically emphasizes Kim's devotion to the social gaze via a repeated refrain: "Kim pushes her hair" "behind her ears." Later in the text, sister Kylie recommends that Kim "should practice running in heels," followed by an onscreen aesthetic illumination, which Durbin annotates as "white letters crystallized." Kim's Mom adds "I hope she has some really comfortable shoes to wear because it's going to be a really long day" (Durbin, 2014, p. 96). This focus on the physical labor is required to maintain the illusionary view, even in discomfort, stressing that the embodied self is subordinated to the consumable brand image for optimized visibility.

In an interview held by the poet Elena Gomez (2015), Durbin comments that "I think my book *E!* captures the sense of almost total entrapment these women experience, ... reveal[ing] that we are all trapped by our society." Gomez further cites Nikki Darling's comparison of "the women of *E!* to 'gladiators' who had succeeded only by turning themselves into 'object zombies'" (Darling as cited in Gomez). Women on Reality TV are like gladiators because they have perfected

their roles, appealing to the arranged game, while people are “watching like spectators at the roman coliseum” (Durbin as cited in Gomez). The “object zombie” exemplifies Han’s “achievement-subject,” i.e. a self-optimizing agent who internalizes neoliberal imperatives under the illusion of agency. Life of the “performance zombies, fitness zombies and Botox zombies” is not a true life because it entails a brutal competition that ultimately ends to destruction, freezing living into mere survival (Han, 2021, p. 9). Durbin, by refraining from explicit moral judgment, implicates the viewer in this co-voyeurism, exposing how “we are all trapped” as spectators and performers in a late-capitalist regime of image and affect. The “object zombie” thus marks the subject: not liberated, but reanimated, in Han’s words, as a commodified “*projectile*, [where] the achievement-subject now aims at itself.” This projectile succeeds within a system that annihilates the very possibility of the real self (Han, 2018, p. 8).

Kim’s branding herself as endlessly visible, interprets her being as a “project of the self constantly optimizing and enjoying auto-compulsion” (Han, 2015, p. 46). Her obsessive sense of self-curation, encouraged with myriad opportunities for self-improvement is not an expression of agency but symptoms of self-annihilation. In her own words: “It’s like I’m forgetting what this is all supposed to be about” (Durbin, 2014, p. 84), she echoes a disoriented person, who is “tired and depressed from the pressure to perform” (Han, 2015, p. 10). The forgetting is meant to be an obliteration of the real being. In becoming “Kim the thing,” she is no longer a desiring subject but a desirable object, caught in an automated circle of visibility and validation (Dacheux, 2014).

Thus, the fairytale wedding becomes a site of tension, promising enchantment, but revealing the collapse of the real into hyperreal, where identity and emotion are continually marketed. Angela Carter’s *The Magic Toyshop* (1967, p. 25) shows marriage as “a myth sold to women through the apparatus of romance and the wedding dress, the glamorous package, in which they willingly ‘gift-wrap’ themselves to become a desirable object.”² Durbin’s “Kim’s Fairytale Wedding”

² For detailed analysis of Carter’s dubbing of Cinderella fairytale, see Ghufuran Amer Abdulridha and Isra Hashim Taher’s “*Angela Carter’s The Magic Toyshop: A Cinderella Story Revisited*” (2022, p. 39). They argue that Carter subverts the Cinderella narrative by replacing the “rich and powerful prince charming” with an “oppressed poor man”. Durbin’s depiction transforms Kim’s bridal image into a symbol of hypervisibility and psychopolitical control. In both cases, the fairytale script is preserved on the surface but emptied of emancipatory promise.

endorses a parallel critique by presenting the wedding spectacle in all its luxurious details, as a site of performance, fashioned for media consumption, rather than a promise of life-long bond. Ironically, this fairytale narrative in the digital age exemplifies the self as being increasingly objectified and shaped for performance, visibility, and inhuman control.

Under this logic, Kim, the subjected persona, becomes an entrepreneur of herself who strives to succeed in her fulltime task. This reflects Žižekian paradoxical injunction of the superego, “*enjoy!*” where the subject is obliged to show happiness and authenticity just as a duty. Kim’s real identity is erased through her commitment to the superego compulsion of media production. It does not merely drive her to act, but to enjoy acting, even though such enjoyment exceeds her limits and authenticity. Žižek clarifies that capitalism extracts a second layer of surplus value, referring to “surplus-enjoyment,” under which Kim is not only working but also compelled to “enjoy” her role, turning her private emotions into performances for the gaze of the audience (Žižek, 1999).

Significantly, Durbin places the Kim-Humphries’ wedding event under a white tent, a constructed architecture designed for visibility and aesthetic labor, resembling the contemporary power which rules transparently under the injunctions of enjoyment:

*There is a white tent. Inside a white tent is a long
white table. The table is empty and flanked by white
empty chairs.
Infront of the table is Kim, framed by golden lights and
ornate brown pillars that resemble cathedral architecture.
(Durbin, 2014, p. 61)*

The white tent is remarkably portrayed as a free and transparent place, gathering people for entertainment and media-saturation. The repetition of the word ‘white’ confirms a haunting emotional emptiness that overwhelms the scene where freedom is managed through pleasure and performance. Such spatial dynamics demonstrate Han’s notion of psychopolitics where people are complicit in their surveillance and domination, fulfilling the neoliberal imperatives to perform, exhibit, and optimize. The central persona, Kim, is ironically “framed by golden

lights” and cathedral-like pillars, a holy scene that portrays her as an iconic figure of media adoration. Yet, this also interprets a metaphoric expression of her confinements and isolation. She buried her identity in the glowing whiteness of the tent, which masks emotional labor and self-objectification. In this way, the tent becomes a panopticon of surveillance and a temple of emotional capitalism, where feeling becomes a spectacle for marketable surface (Han, 2017).

4.2 The Collective “We”: Co-Voyeurism and the Shared Desire

The abrupt opening of the poem with the collective voice, articulated as “we,” signals people’s complicity in the seductive logic of Reality TV and luxury branding. The viewers share the event as co-consumers. Thus, the poetic “we” implicates the viewers in the ritual of celebrity consumption, echoing the performative logic of Reality TV:

*We witness the wedding chapel being constructed
outdoors. [...]
Lining the aisle are white chairs with embossed black
and grey symbol resembling a family shield, incorpo-
rating Kim’s and the Not-Husband initials. The alter at
the end of the aisle has swirling, yellow, modern-gothic
pattern with a huge, white sparkling, modern-gothic cross
in the center. (Durbin, 2014, p. 100)*

The use of visual emblematic imagery and religious references, such as “family shield,” “the altar” and “cross in the center” position the viewers as passionately and ideologically capitalized subjects. They are interpellated as co-believers in the fantasy of a perfect love and ideal femininity. The scene encapsulates how dominant values related to wealth, beauty and fame are reinforced by aestheticized mechanisms of power, letting them appear natural, desirable, and smoothly shared. The collective “we” positions the viewers as fans who devotedly advocates the logic of the capital, a matter that stirs them to be its messengers and their “*Like is the digital Amen*” (Han, 2017, p. 17). Just like the actors, the viewers are commanded by the cultural superego to “enjoy” the spectacle of the wedding, stemming pleasure from Kim’s commodified visibility,

and enforcing the economic profit and surplus enjoyment to be continuously harvested.

Durbin implicates the viewers who “take [Kim] in” to blur the boundaries between narrator and consumer, confirming people’s complicity in the event as well as rendering them as entrepreneurs of their own affective and self-improving economies. The viewers are also portrayed as achievement subjects who internalize the logics of visibility and luxury and reproduce the system that commodifies them:

*Kim shuts the door, banishing the sun. she turns and
we take her in. she has large diamond stud earrings,
faux lashes, and creamy YSL Lip gloss. Under her white
Armani jacket, she wears a tight, olive green Balenciaga
mini-dress. (Durbin, 2014, p. 70)*

The very act of “banishing the sun,” renders Kim a barrier that prevents the natural sources from standing in front of the artificial, commodified life represented by her “diamond stud earrings” and branded dress. The sun is a poetic symbol that gathers myriads of meanings; “being the source of light, sight, the cause of growth in nature, the cause of hours, seasons, months, and years, without which human life were not possible” (Notopoulos, 1944, p. 165). Thus, in blocking its light, Durbin thrives on affective complicity, portraying people as living in dark simulation, not daylight authentic existence. They further enhance and anchor the neoliberal strategies of self-surveillance, reflecting Han’s notion of psychopolitics, in which freedom is oddly exploited. Thus, they willingly contribute to the logic of exposure, practicing their own achievement-oriented subjectivity:

*As sister Kourtney talks about the diamond headpiece,
we witness it in all its gleaming glory atop Kim’s hair,
which is pulled back tight and shiny.
“her makeup is flawless,” says Sister Kourtney.
We survey Kim’s face close up, olive skin smooth and caked, ...
eyelids lavender, lashes thick, brows tightly arched....
(Durbin, 2014, p. 116)*

Kim's family, friends and other invitees, as well as the offscreen viewers, all form a system of consumption, developed into co-investors. Durbin creates a poetic scene forming multilayered discourses that participate in manipulating Kim's simulated identity. The poetic voice refrains from distancing itself; instead, it confesses its seduction as Durbin argues "I represent the camera's gaze without labeling it 'bad.' But it's the medium of reality television, the collective gaze, and we're all implicated in it" (Durbin as cited in Jauregui, 2014). This shared complicity blurs the critique and enchantment, an instance of oscillating sincerity.

4.3 Self-realization: Between Diamonds and Doubts

In moments of self-realization, Kim suspects the purpose of the wedding, stating that "I have been just like not remembering what the whole purpose of this entire event is about." This is markedly intensified with her declaration that she dislikes "all about, like, the material things, and like all about all of that." The repeated 'all' confirms the absence of meaning and her struggle to articulate authenticity within this chaotic, materialistic culture. However, her stepdad—a representative of soft totalitarianism—keeps reminding her that what she performs "is not what life's about. It's about family." He then twice assures that he would "get [her] down the aisle," and attracts her attention to the "diamonds and beautiful dress" that she wears through the wedding (Durbin, 2014, p. 85). These images function as metaphors of visibility and affective performance. Ironically, her pain is not described through shedding tears, but through "mascara lining down her cheeks," suggesting that even breakdown is mediated by consumer products. Kim is not liberated but repackaged to be visible and branded, reflecting the emotional capitalism that Han repeatedly warns from (Han, 2017).

Significantly, Stepdad's comforting words reveal his functions as a nice, paternal execution of the spectacle's demands. This also aligns with Žižek's notion of soft totalitarianism, where contemporary forms of power no longer impose direct commands, but present control through the language of care, emotion, and positivity (Žižek, 2015). Stepdad does not press Kim; he lovingly guides her toward fulfilling her public role, and quietly reinforcing her commitment to appear beautiful, wealthy, and happy. Žižek's argues that contemporary ideology functions best when masked as compassion, certifying subjects willingly to participate in their own subjugation. He further confirms that ideology is best proliferated

through encouraging enjoyment or as he puts it (enjoy-meant) and the performance of happiness. Kim's emotional breakdown refers to what Žižek calls a "residue" or "leftover," of the "non-integrated surplus of senseless traumatism" which tries to resist full ideological integration. However, it further "sustains what we might call the ideological *jouis-sense*, enjoyment-in-sense (enjoy-meant), proper to ideology" (Žižek, 1989, p. 43). Kim's moments of doubt and distress do not disrupt the system; rather, as Žižek claims, it is precisely this irrational excess that gives the ideological performance its deeper force and authority. In this sense, the stepdad's gentle reassurance reabsorbs the trauma back into the fantasy, necessitating her return to the role of the perfect bride. Stepdad embodies Han's critique of the enforcement of optimization as neoliberal psychopolitics, where individuals internalize the demands to perfect themselves, believing that they act freely while they serve systems of control.

In Fanzine review of *E! Entertainment*, Stacy Elaine Dacheux (2014) states that "Kim's constant attraction to self-promotion [and] designer heels" can be diagnosed as symptoms of Stockholm Syndrome. It is a "psychological response wherein a captive begins to identify closely with his or her captors, as well as with their agenda and demands" (Singh, 2022, p. 354). As a captivated character, Kim develops feelings of affection and loyalty for her captors, turning into a "thing" and "a kidnapped media heiress," who willingly performs its orders (Dacheux, 2014). She is "always doing something for somebody else" (Durbin, 2014, p. 105).

Dacheux further cites Lisa Kerr's explanation of the "cult work" to align the working strategy of Reality TV with the Stockholm Syndrome. Kerr (2013) presents the controlling strategy of the cults and how they subdue individuals, stating that: "brainwashing works in a layering process. First, the victim is isolated; second, limits are placed on what they see, hear and do; and finally, the person doing the brainwashing raises uncertainty about the victim's old beliefs and habits," pending the real identity completely refashioned. Therefore, characters, such as Kim, "experience identity crises at the personal and social levels by categorization, brainwashing and restrictions," to fulfill the demands of a culture that trades beauty and visibility for control (Abdulkareem and Taha, 2023, p. 72).

4.4 Staging the Event: Ideological Fantasy and Ontological Erasure

The signing of the marriage license becomes a staged performance rather than a legal turn. Kim's legal name becomes an artificial negotiation—not merely

between state documentation and individual identity, but between the real and the commodified self:

Inside the tent, Kim explains: “I’m honestly really torn between changing my last name, for my future husband, but then I think it’ll be like such a mistake business-wise. So I don’t – I really don’t know what I’m gonna do.” (Durbin, 2014, p. 72)

The indecisive persona is psychologically torn between adopting the name of her “future husband” or protecting her business identity. This exemplifies the paradoxical state of the neoliberal subject where freedom of choice converts into a form of restraint. Kim’s fragmented confessions: “I’m honestly really torn” discloses as a poetic fragment. The juxtaposition between the intimate bond of marriage and the designed logic of branding ironically reveals how neoliberal discourse takes over personal identity. Kim is not free because her thought process is already mechanized by the logic of market. The facilitators of the marriage license request Kim to confirm her name, and Kim’s spelling out “K-A-R-D-A-S-H-I-A-N” do not function as a legal confirmation but as a ritual of brand association, assuring her identity as media commodity:

“Are you going to change your name?” asks Blonde Mullet Woman’s Assistant.

[...]

“You can – you can do anything you want,” says Blonde Mullet Woman’s Assistant.

The Marriage Licence looms, blue and white.

“I think on all legal documents I need to be Kardashian,” says Kim.

“so no change” Blonde Mullet Woman’s Assis.” (Durbin, 2014, pp. 72-73)

Durbin's poetic deadpan technique and hyper-specific details attract the attention of the readers for the psychopolitical strategies applied on the characters in the Reality TV. She aestheticizes an invisible official moment, presenting a message that even legal procedure, such as, the signing of the marriage license, is something staged, curated, and subordinated to the visual logic of media spectacle. The bureaucratic women function as affective agents who implicitly steer Kim through the seemingly free personal decision: "You can – you can do anything you want." This reflects Han's notion, where "the freedom of *Can* generates even more coercion than the disciplinarian *Should*," presenting the "achievement-subjects" who are encouraged to feel "entrepreneurs of themselves," and conformed to the demands of the society under the illusion of freedom and choice (Han, 2017, pp. 8-9). The marriage facilitators help Kim's brand-preserving decision without overt involvement, this further exemplifies Žižek's notion of ideology functioning best when it appears as sympathy or empowerment, rather than command (Žižek, 1989). The repetition of "No change" symbolizes Kim's resistance to any legal transformation and foreshadows the failure of her marriage. Yet, paradoxically, it upholds her simulated character as a static brand; what Baudrillard would identify as a hyperreal sign, one that does not denote the real self, but a replicated image designed for circulation (Baudrillard, 1994).

Another proof of the wedding as a commodified spectacle, rather than a genuine personal or legal milestone is presented in Durbin's portrayal of the Not-Husband as a "static body" (Durbin, 2014, p. 62). She situates him as a placeholder, not an agent, symbolizing his erasure through both his name "Not-Husband" or "NH" and the hollow gestures he upholds to keep the viewers' gaze toward Kim as the sole point of fantasy and meaning. His liminal space does not endow him with significant changes; but rather, evokes a sense of awkwardness: "Where we – where we sitting at?" the Not-Husband asks (Durbin, 2014, p. 63). He is performing his role in the achievement culture, in which he will inevitably fail because of the endless needs to fulfill ungraspable desires. To use the Lacanian notion of the "*objet petit a*," the Not-Husband embodies the transient void around which the desire is organized. Thus, every detail of Kim's wedding is staged as media-driven narratives or what Han calls "storyselling." It confirms the transient nature of these stories, characters and by extent of Kim's marriage life:

Stories on social media, which are in fact mere self-promotion, separate people from each other. Unlike narratives, they produce

neither closeness nor empathy. [...] The stories do not narrate; they advertise. Vying for attention does not create community. In the age of storytelling as storyselling, narration and advertisement become indistinguishable. (Han, 2024, p. 66)

Han confirms that stories staged for social media communication are shortly lived and do not express meaning. In her attempts to find meaning for her hyperreal existence, Kim decides to include part of her deceased father's dress in her wedding gown. Her stepdad says, "You said you wanted some of your Dad's old stuff," [...] You want to incorporate something into your dress? (Durbin, 2014, p. 81). However, this predicts a key moment of ontological erasure in Kim's commodified life. The Stepdad's head is surrounded by "multiple alarm system keypads," which confirms his mechanized role as a facilitator of the commodified wedding. He plays the role of emotional capitalism that is ready to obfuscate moments of self-realization. Kim goes on performing what appears as spontaneous mourning, she adds:

I think the best way for me to have a piece of my Dad be with me during the wedding, is to take one of his shirts. I'm going to have a heart cut out of it, and sewn into the heart of each one of my dresses." (Durbin, 2014, p. 81)

As she says the word "heart," she dashes with her fingers an invisible heart shape in the air. Her nails are painted "fire engine red," and her ring shimmers—gestures that ironically convert grief into visual spectacle. These are not merely aesthetic foundations, but affective semiotics to intensify the commodified emotion. Despite its sincerity, the sign of the heart is also staged for the camera's demands, where Kim's emotional labor is directly attached to the designed dress, mixing between personal mourning and public fantasy. Durbin crafts these moments as a satiric depiction of labor exemplified in the physical labor of sewing and emotional labor of weeping. However, a Žižekian reading of this gesture indicates a "surplus" traumatic desire that resists full integration into the ideological framework of the wedding. The sewn heart functions as a residue to preserve the emotional weight of lack and loss, even as the broader vision encourages the subject to perform and enjoy (Žižek, 1989, pp. 43–44).

Durbin sets the background of Kim's grief with "one lit, white Delerium candle," highlighting her ontological dislocation. This is the "tunnel-vision" that Dacheux (2014) refers to, in her interview with Durbin, assuring that Kim's crisis is not just psychological, but rather, ontological. It is the narrowing of being into a perfect neoliberal individual who is productive, elegant, and intensely alone. The candle usually symbolizes mourning and purity, yet its branded presence—*Delerium*—suggests that even private moments of grief are aestheticized and commodified. Rather than symbolizing an intimate spiritual moment, the candle functions as a curated prop and a substitution of loss, exploiting, rather than repressing emotion.

However, the process of conjuring up the repressed emotions aligns with the repetitive logic of the Žižekian notion of the death drive, not as a literal death, but as the compulsive repetition of loss that resists symbolic closure, diagnosed as "a ruthless technological [death] drive" (Žižek, 1997, p. 56). For Žižek trauma and loss do not always stay hidden; instead, they often return in an exaggerated form. Thus, Kim's dress makes the trauma of the father's death hyper-visible, a magnificent spectacle. In psychoanalysis, a fetish is an object that is hidden, yet displayed as a traumatic lack. This is interpreted in the wedding gown, which functions as a cover of the loss or the lack, while also a reminiscent of it. It grants Kim a sense of pleasure, yet it is mixed with death, sadness, and personal investment.

Moreover, Durbin juxtaposes the wedding with death imagery to evoke an anti-capitalist strain, provoking human mortality to act against the wearing demands of endless productivity. Han further underscores capitalism as a death drive with its destructive compulsion to perform and accumulate, stating that it "creates *undead life*, death-in-life [...] it deprives life of life" [italics in original] (Han, 2021, p. 8). Durbin uses death as a recurrent motif of finitude to subvert the fantasy of unlimited enjoyment and productivity, exposing the system's erasure of people's authenticity and freedom. Despite her attempts, Kim's bridal identity, stitched together from fragments of grief, spectacle, and self-branding, cannot express a stable self, but a highly visible simulation of selfhood, pointing toward her erasure as a living subject and her rebirth as a commodified one.

5. Conclusion

A qualitative analysis of Kate Durbin's "Kim's Fairytale Wedding," interrogates the underlying psychopolitical discourse in Reality TV shows. It reveals how Capitalism elusively spreads its ideology within entertaining programs. In an experimental technique that transcends the traditional poetic restrictions into free, narrative, and conceptual poetry, Durbin deciphers the contemporary psychopolitical dynamics embedded in the entertaining programs, assuring that they utilize individuals as resources for economic productivity. Reading Durbin's prose poems through theoretical standpoints of psychopolitics, exposes the neoliberal contrastive logic of being free and dutiful, where people are no longer subjected to external authority but are compelled to internalize and reproduce its targets.

Considering the genealogical roots of psychological practices in reordering people in times of crises, theorists and philosophers decodes the contemporary psychopolitical strategies and their social and psychic maladies. Byung Chul Han reintroduces the term psychopolitics as the contemporary neoliberal mechanization of power, confirming that it operates through unlimited compulsion of visibility, commodification, and entrepreneurship. He coined the term "achievement subjects," to redefine the Marxist' notion of the opposition between bourgeoisie and proletariat into a boundless state of auto-exploitation, self-production and objectification. In psychological terms, Slavoj Žižek argues that whereas traditional notions of social regimes stir people to prohibit and repress, the illusionary injunctions of freedom and enjoyment are the commandment of the contemporary ruling ideology. Drawing on the French sense of the word "jouissance," he claims that the impulse of enjoyment is harmful because the superego bombards individuals with the impossible demands, while at the same time mocks their failed attempts to meet them. In terms of well-doing and free will, individuals subject themselves to constant improvement and self-optimization.

Durbin's ekphrastic and meticulous transcription of Reality TV crystallizes a restless oscillation between direct immersion and critical distance, investigating power structures that steer human behavior at a subconscious level, turning them into projects for the capital investment. Her long prose poem "Kim's Fairytale Wedding" is a practical embodiment of Han and Žižek's theorization, depicting the wedding as a commodified atmosphere of luxurious life set to exploit people in terms of entertainment. Durbin's hyperbolic description mocks the artificial life and negates any intimate communication between the involved characters. They are incarnations of Han's "achievement subjects," who perform predetermined roles for

visibility and commodification. Kim, the main character in the event, projects herself for endless commands of visibility and self-promotion. Despite her attempts to recapture remnants of her past life and set free from the curated identity, the psychopolitical discourse steers her on the subconscious level. She is a role-model of subject/ project pattern who is voluntarily co-opt in self-automation and self-investment to meet the demands of neoliberalism. In contrast to the superficial, media-driven stories based on performance, efficiency and productivity, Durbin's prose poetry offers a platform for meditation, sincerity, and compassion. She regains the conceptual power of poetry that hopefully endowed life with meaning, authenticity and offers a clearer understanding of the contemporary power dynamics.

In aligning Durbin's poems within psychopolitical theoretical lens, the study unfolds the vicious ideologies intricately woven in the entertainment professions: a fact which might pass unnoticed. It tries to aware people how the need for self-glorification leads to commodification and exploitation. The study can prove to be useful to different stakeholders like the simple consumer, politicians, administrators, media houses and to society at large.

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خطاب السياسة النفسية في تلفزيون الواقع: دراسة في ديوان كيت دوربين شبكة E! الترفيهية

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المستخلص:

في ظلّ الاهتمام المتزايد بمناقشة ديناميكية السلطة، شخّصت استراتيجيات السياسة النفسية بوصفها علامة بارزة في السياسة المعاصرة، فبعيدا عن القوة القسرية التقليدية، المتمثلة في القمع والخطر، تعمل القوة الجديدة بوساطة اللاعب النفسي القائم على التحفيز الإيجابي والإلزام اللامتناهي للترفيه والحرية، وضمن سياق الاستجابة الأدبية لتلك القوى، برزت الشاعرة الأمريكية كيت دوربين (مواليد ١٩٨١) بوصفها صوتا متميزا لزعة البرامج الجاذبة عموماً، وبرامج تلفزيون الواقع خصوصاً. تُبرز أسلوبها المُبتكر في شعر النثر بوصفه فضاءً مفاهيمي (معرفي)، وتفكيراً تأملياً لمُساعدة البشر على فهم أحوالهم الراهنة، ما جعلها تُعلق بدقة (نقدية) على برامج تلفزيون الواقع التي تُبث على الشبكة الأمريكية الترفيهية E! لكشف أيدولوجياتها الكامنة والسياسات النفسية التي تُحرّكها وسائل الإعلام. تكشف هذه الدراسة التفاعلات الديناميكية بين البرامج التلفزيونية والخطاب السياسي النفسي المُقدّم في ديوان دوربين *E! Entertainment* من منظور دقيق لمنظري السياسة النفسية المعاصرين، مثل (بيونغ تشول هان وسلافوي جيجيك). يُحاول (هان) أن يصل استراتيجيات السياسة النفسية المعاصرة بالليبرالية الجديدة، بمُتطلباتها اللامتناهية للتسليع، وتحسين الذات، وريادة الأعمال. ويُعرّف المجتمع المعاصر بأنه "الذات المنجزة" التي تتخرط طوعاً في الاستغلال الذاتي لتحقيق أقصى قدر من الربح، بينما تُفسر مصطلحات (جيجيك) الدوافع النفسية التي تُحفّز تلك الذات المنجزة مُتمثلة بالاستبداد "اللطيف" ووصايا الاستمتاع، وقد مثّل شعر (دوربين) في إطار هذه النظريات، تفاعلاً أدبياً ملحوظاً مع برامج الترفيه، فصاغت تصوراً أدبياً يعتمد على تشكيل نصي شعري لتلفزيون الواقع. تخلص الدراسة إلى أن التفاعل الأدبي مع البرامج الترفيهية يكشف ويقاوم في ذات الوقت تلك الاستراتيجيات النفسية السياسية المزاوغة والمُغوية التي تتناقض مع الحرية، ومع الإنجاز اللامتناهي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: السياسة النفسية، تلفزيون الواقع، شبكة E! الترفيهية، الذات المنجزة، ريادة الأعمال.