

Introduction

The tradition of phenomenological research has always been interested in consciousness, particularly in perception, for phenomenology considers perception as the privileged mode of consciousness: perception endows the consciousness with their objects to the extent that they are real objects. On the other hand, at least since the pioneering research made by Harold Innis, Eric Havelock, Walter Ong, and Marshall McLuhan – among others – it became a highly plausible hypothesis that there are complex relationships between media and the modes of perception. It is only natural, therefore, that many phenomenologists began to be interested in media. On the other hand, the media of global communication are nowadays a pervasive phenomenon. Not only telegraph, photography, telephone, television, broadcasting, cinema, etc. make a massive presence in our lives, but they are being radically transformed by the all-embracing medium constituted by digital codes. Philosophy, as age-old reflection on truth, beauty and goodness, on reality, life and consciousness, can in the end do nothing but become concerned with technology, especially with technology in the form of the so-called “new media.” The essays presented in this volume of Glimpse witness the extent to which philosophy and theoretical thinking in general can deal with new media, as it is apparent from the following very short presentations of their content in alphabetical order of their authors.

Acebal, Luis

Application of Poe's Aesthetics to Film Shorts

Following the well-established tradition of examining film along literary criteria, Luis Acebal compares short films with short stories. Leaning on Poe's literary criticism, he singles out unity of impression, length, and subject matter as those characteristics shared by good short films and short stories. Of course, both unity of impression and length are formal qualities of such kinds of representation that in some sense are easy to observe, but subject matter is a much more problematic issue. Poe's general rule demands beauty, that is, the subject matter of a work of art must elevate the soul through beauty, and beauty

elevates the soul to its highest when mingled with melancholy; for its part death is the classical melancholic theme. Acebal, thus, refers to the short film *Eau de la Vie*, which in only thirteen minutes deploys a strong unitary impression through beauty and death. The most noticeable idea in Acebal text is, thus, to apply criteria valid for short stories as criteria for judging the aesthetic value of short films.

Bourdaa, Melanie

Cultural Industries and Temporalities

Bourdaa addresses the mutating landscape of the TV-industry by considering the role of TV-fans in the frame of the convergence between television and Internet, as shown by the official websites of various shows. In fact, interactively linked to the show industry through Internet, fandom can strongly influence the show it consumes: TV producers have to be aware and to respond to the expertise of the fans, on their part, fans can to some extent shape the shows they consume, for example, by influencing the storyline or by generating a kind of mythology around the show. Social networks such as Facebook and Twitter deepen the involvement of the fandom with the show, and mobile devices such as smartphones create a favorable environment for the convergence of TV with the web. In the end, in reading Bourdaa's text one has to ask if the web and social network “enhanced TV” is still TV.

Cameron, Gregory

Ideology in the Age of the Internet

In his text Cameron opposes the common view that the Internet and new communication technologies order democracy by offering to the individual the opportunity of criticism and publication. It is true that as opposed to traditional broadcasting (print, film, radio, television, and gramophone) that the Internet solves the problem of response by the receiver; nevertheless, rather than countering the forces of ideology, the Internet enhances them. To sustain this thesis, Cameron sketches a phenomenological theory of ideology centered on the stability of meaning structures – “sedimented meanings.” Because of the passivity of the receiver, traditional broadcasting cannot guarantee the way such a receiver reacts to the broadcasted objects.

But because of the ability of the Internet user to customize the objects he accesses, there is a strong guarantee for the agreement of the receiver with corresponding meanings, thus generating a high level of stability. In a word, the Internet is, paradoxically, much less prone to generate criticism than traditional broadcasting.

**Carrillo Canán, A. & Calderón Zacacla, M.
Bazin, Flusser, and the Aesthetics of Photography**

According to this text, it is the formalist concept of estrangement what both Bazin and Flusser use to determine the aesthetic nature of photography. For Bazin photography is an “aesthetic transformer” insofar as it takes whatever object out of its pragmatic, every-day context and transposes it into a realm in which it becomes extraordinary. On his part, Flusser applies the formalist criterion of aesthetic quality by stressing the extraordinariness of the photographed content. This difference in applying the same general formalist criterion of aesthetic quality leads Bazin and Flusser to a fundamental theoretical opposition each other. According to Bazin, because of its technical nature the photograph shares its being with the photographed object, so in admiring a photograph one admires the object itself. For Flusser, it is not the photographed object but the perspective the photograph offers to it that is extraordinary – and, thus, admired. Thus, according to Flusser a photograph is aesthetic according to the general criterion that it is an improbable object, whereas for Bazin one admires a photograph because of its very nature as a photograph, not because it is an improbable object, as others argue.

**Carrillo Canán, Alberto, Rivas López, Victor & García González, Miguel. A.
The Mediasphere and the Metaphysical Link of the Political and Cultural Meaning of Nation**

The authors of this text address the traditionally intermingled meanings and values associated with the two different ideas of nation as political and as cultural unity, pointing out that the cultural heavily relies on symbolic articulations involving music, songs, texts, and images. By necessity, the symbolic articulation of culture as national identity is exclusionary. One can say that there is only one national flag, only one national history book, only

one national anthem, etc. Nevertheless, the mediasphere is the place an increasing amount of increasingly freely-flowing information juxtaposes fragments of every symbolic articulations of identity. Particularly, the visual experience of place is paramount for cultural identity as a located one, yet the American entertainment industry, above all cinema, overflows the global media sphere with images articulating modes of behaving and values. In fact, many of the images present places that are half fictional – digitally created. In the end, the experience of every Earth dweller is increasingly constituted by direct experience linked to real places and by mediatized fictional experience, a mixture that de-locates personal and national identity, which questions more than ever before the supposed link between the political and the cultural meaning of nation.

**Carrillo Canán, Alberto & Zindel, May
Bazin and the Aesthetics of Digital Cinema**

According to Bazin, realist cinema tends to weaken the purely narrative dimension of film, but new digital cinema tends to concentrate in the image for the sake of the image, resulting in a heightened illusionism and, simultaneously, in the weakening of cinematic narrative. The narrative dimension of cinema has to do, according to its literary origin, with imagining, whereas the cinematic image has primarily to do with illusion. Insofar as the realist film, according to Bazin, tends to be made of shots showing an integral event each, those shot have an “absolute character,” that is, they have meaning on their own and not relating to narrative; its narrative value is, so to say, something additional. So the absolute shows the event and lets nothing to imagine – everything is shown –, it is basically illusion. Obviously, in digital cinema the processed image tends to show impossible events, the interest lying again in the event as such and only secondarily in its narrative function. Realism in analog cinema and illusionism in digital cinema possess similar structures.

**Cline, Kurt
Harry Houdini and the Role of Magic in the Development of Early Cinema**

Clines set forth a parallelism between Houdini’s performances and early cinema, especially that of

Méliès, to the extent that people conceived both as “the creation of illusion.” Yet, Méliès' cinema concentrates the public amazement on what is achieved, whereas the amazement created by performance of the legerdemain centers on both what and how it is achieved. On the other hand, Houdini produced some films centered on his abilities and that meant a great change: whereas on the stage he screens what he is doing during his escapes, on film he un-screens what he does – and in this way, his cinema, to an important extent, is no longer a mere illusion but becomes a register. Furthermore, even if a master of illusion – magician, escape artist, filmmaker – Houdini was also an investigator and a scientist. As such, he was in permanent crusade against fraudulent spiritualist practices, showing that such practices were always illusion in the negative sense of deception, the very opposite to either filmic register and filmic illusion. In this way, he forcefully urged us to question of our own modes of perception.

Crocker, Stephen

Shock, Time and Mechanism in Bergson and Benjamin

The author of this text reminds us of Benjamin's theory of shock produced by new technological forms as a restructuring of the human sensorium. From this perspective, shock, far from being merely an injury, is a creative process. Shock breaks down the continuity of routine and tradition, and such a rupture is the condition of the reconstruction of experience in new ways. Shock rips a known element of its context, putting it in a new one. The dislocated object is unable to carry within itself its original context – the lost of the “aura.” In this way, shock both separates us from the past and promises us insight into the nature of pastness. This positive moment in Benjamin's theory of shock can be better understood by resorting to Bergson's theory of time. Contrary to both tradition and the “empty, homogeneous time” of modernity, ruptures in time permit us to ask what holds time together. According to Bergson, one learns about the nature of time through breakdown and reconstruction, much like a shock-effect. Memory does not take us back into the past, but takes us out of the present. It is in-betweenness that unifies both. So, both technologies that train the sensorium for enduring

shock and memory, link past and present, and offer us opportunities to reflect on the human condition.

López Cuenca, Alberto

Knowledge, Mind and Multitude: Making Explicit the General Intellect

In spite of various death certificates issued against subjectivity and knowledge by postmodern criticism, nowadays they seem stronger than ever. This is surprising since these critics themselves move on the modern terrain of the academic practices based and intertwined with such core concepts of modernity. Yet by now the very bastion of modernity, the book, is getting displaced by hypertext and media platforms. Such new media break down the appearance of a collection of isolated individuals producing knowledge and show clearly that humans are social from the very outset, and that information media are modes of the plasticity of mind, so that self, mind, and world are always intertwined. López Cuenca resorts to Virno's transformation of Marx's idea of “general intellect” as the kind of intellect that corresponds to the “multitude.” These ideas offer us the conceptual frame to get rid of the correlative concepts of “people” and “individual.” As related to the first conceptual couple, knowledge is basically communal information and communication, related to the many that are not equivalent individuals (subjects). Such a conceptual displacement would make it necessary to rethink and to reformulate the inherited Western notions of philosophy and legal system.

De la Fuente Lora, Gerardo

Universities and New Media: An Arena of Struggle

Universities are institutions with strong globalizing trust, together with churches, banks, and, nowadays, global corporations. The common trait in all these organizations is that their logic does not smoothly coincide with the main politic logic of modernity: the logic of the national state. In the case of universities, the use of the new technologies of communication tend also to follow a logic different from the logic of the national state. On the other hand, that sector of modern populations with access to global communication media has roots in cities – and even regions – more than in nations, like Renaissance cities. It may be that the destiny of cities-populations and universities in their conflicts

with the national states will be similar. In this arena, global corporations are themselves a factor. They, like universities, produce knowledge and communication with a logic that is neither the one of the universities nor that of the national states. The market logic of the global corporations prescribes the idea of the modularity of knowledge, whereas universities tend to work on the basis of a holistic view of it. In resisting the pressure of national bureaucracies by following corporate ideology, universities are at risk of losing their own logic. In order to keep their logic, a possible support for universities could be in tying themselves to the “multitude,” that is, to that modern population of national states living in cities.

Garza, Gilbert and Landrum Brittany
The Politics of Image in the Age of YouTube.

The authors of this text follow Postman in considering that McLuhan’s thesis, “the medium is the message,” has import not only as to the ways of life of the media users but that the medium has also an epistemological import: it defines what can be true in communication. Such varieties of truth correlate with the varieties of public spheres, and the public sphere, fostered by electronic media, is characterized by high fragmentation. Particularly TV, a non-linear, non-propositional medium, has profoundly shaped the way people think: messages are both entertainment and information and are destined to be received in aloneness. The Internet takes over such characteristics of TV-experience. The result is that Americans do not talk to each other, they do not exchange ideas but images – argument becomes visual rhetoric. They express fears and preferences but they are not debatable. In fact, TV makes it impossible to really appreciate the skill and abilities, the expertise – or the lack of them – of, say, presidential candidates. Fragmented information (telegraph) and image (photograph) are intertwined in both TV and the Internet, rendering politicians advertising. In other words, thinking does not play well on the Internet.

Guyot, Jacques
Television program agendas in Europe: from public polices to cultural industries

From the very beginning, intellectuals received TV as a secondary and, worst, degraded medium

compared to traditional media such as theater, sports, news, etc, with the result that the creative potential of TV was denied and TV itself was abandoned to politics and business. But, in fact, TV is a complex and expensive cultural form. At the beginning, the possibilities of the medium were not well-defined and it became terrain for craftsmen and experimenters. On the other hand, public broadcasting was mostly oriented to education and learning, citizenship and civil society, but the introduction of advertising and the shift toward entertainment generated the change from “the viewer” to “the audience.” At any rate, following McLuhan and Braudillard, one can say that independently of its content, the logic of TV is the logic of the flow: any content whatever follows other content without any reason based on the contents, but only in catching audiences. The programmer becomes more important than the producer, and his strategy is guided by marketing strategies, the rationalization of the production, and the concentration of the production. In this way, TV has moved from small-scale audiovisual production to the standards of industrial capitalism. Nevertheless, there are important regulations tending to promote diversity and protecting fragile programs such as documentaries.

Heurtebise, Jean-Yves
The Paradox of Sociology of Heroism: Comics and Politics

Films concerning superheroes become ordinary and in this way they mix the ordinary and the extraordinary. To address this mixture, Heurtebise offers a consideration along several axes. In sociological terms, he refers us to Durkheim and Tarde. Durkheim based his sociological theory on the average man, which makes the task of the sociology of the hero seemingly impossible. On his part, Tarde’s sociology accounts for imitation and repetition and also for innovation and creativity. Until the development of appropriate mathematical models – in the theory of fractals and in non-linear thermodynamics – Tarde’s theory was mathematically untractable, but with the help of the appropriate mathematics, something as the sociology of deviant individuals – including heroes – seems an obtainable goal. On the road to superhero films, one encounters comics, and here Heurtebise maintains that it is the conservative

character of comics that allows for the existence of this medium for superheroes. Comics are one more of the cultural forms that ideologically compensate the individual for his lack of power in highly complex societies. In the end, the ideological power of superhero comics and films is in informing the de-powered individual of capitalist mass society that whatever happens in the world, he can do nothing about it. You are not a superhero!

Heurtebise, Jean-Yves
Political Movies

The author of this essay addresses the question of what are and who should produce political movies. “Political” is not a movie genre, and is not a set of conventions that makes a movie political. In political movies, someone has to make a choice in the midst of some crisis and that choice has consequences on others and on the world. As to the form, editing is paramount to political films: such a film has to create links between images that essentially have a meaning outside of the movie. Additionally, a main trait of a political movie is that it leads to seeking for the truth from a political perspective is the ability to govern one’s own mind. In a few words, a movie is political – not politicized – only to the extent that it produces a feeling of truth and an impression of reality counteracting our common perception of the world. Power makes of reality the measure of truth, whereas counterpower makes truth the measure of reality; for this reason, political movies – as instances of counterpower – have the power to make the truth real.

Irwin, Stacey
Placescape: Pedagogical Reflection on Community in an Online Classroom

Starting from personal experience in e-learning, the author of this text begins by discussing a phenomenological approach to “nearness” and asks if nearness is possible without physical proximity. The author sustains that e-contact in e-teaching and learning is personal in spite of dispensing with physical proximity. In fact, it demands personal commitment to the course and through it, to the people involved in it. She proposes the notion of regions that are not geographic locations. She argues that the idea of an e-region as the frame of

e-contact. In this way one, can easily conceive of the e-region of the “classroom.” One needs only to make flexible the idea of presencing. If there is presence in memory, why not in e-presence? Every participant in an e-course can move steadily around the world, but can be present in exactly the same region of e-learning. Furthermore, such an e-region is communal space in which meaning is shared. In other words, community-shared meaning does not need to be located. Especially important is the fact that e-regions precisely show that we are much more than bodies and, further, that there is other sense of inhabitation than the merely corporeal. To inhabit is much more than to take space somewhere.

Larson, Michael
The Society of Spectacle and the Opening of Politics

Larson attempts to make a productive discussion of Debord’s concept of the society of spectacle, and at the same time rejects the typical – essentialist – criticism of modern society postulating that it departs from an original unit that was truer or more authentic. The spectacle should be understood as the economic order itself, the commodification of everything that organizes the whole structure of life. This has effects on the discourse articulated by mass-media journalism. In spite of the proclaimed sense of neutrality and objectivity, the selection of information is not neutral. The first commandment of this supposed neutrality is the reliance on government officers and prominent public figures. They set an already biased agenda. The second bias lies in the avoidance of contextualization, for constructing a context implies choices that appear to be a breakdown of neutrality; particularly, it could imply taking distance from persons who are the sources. A third bias lies in what the medium itself deems to be news, according to its own preferences and values. For Agamben, the spectacle sunders us of all traditional forms of identity and meaning, making as undeniable the contingency of the community. This is a central condition for critical politics.

Lundsten, Lars
Film – Ingarden’s Blind Spot

The thesis of this paper is that Ingarden’s aesthetic theory can be generalized and, particularly, applied

to film, in spite of the fact that Ingarden did not consider film as an art on its own. He plainly considered non-fiction films as non-art. Furthermore, Ingarden seems to think of the camera as mere neutral agent, dispensing with the creative activity of the filmmakers. In literature he accounts for writing and for reading, but for film he only accounts for seeing—and is blind before showing. Ingarden's model concerning literary works is the following: the artist creates a material object, but such an object implies also a set of purely intentional objects – quasi-real objects, he creates also the corresponding world of fiction, and, finally, a set of features that make the genuine work of art. Such features have to be understood as a kind of composition, and it is this composition what makes the work of art. Generalizing Ingarden's model, in the case of cinema, one can find the same four levels making a work of art. It is clear that the fourth or properly aesthetic level, that one concerning not merely the intentional objectivities but their composition, corresponds to what is well-known as film creativity.

Majkut, Paul

Size Matter: Screen Size and Storytelling

Intellectuals readily adopt the narratological point of view about media events (gift-packages). The story told (content) is the all-important concern, while the medium (the wrapping) is dismissed. In the case of movies, the medium is the moving image that strikes the eye and the content is the story told by the image. But if by considering only what strikes the eye, content cannot fully explain what cinema is about. Above all, the intensity of what strikes the eye is related to the size of the screen. The small TV screen and the large theater screen are a very different media, rendering utterly different media event of the "same story." The big screen in a theater not only lacks the distracting elements that encompass the TV screen. It engulfs the viewer: the medium is the environment. Furthermore, the TV viewer controls a very selected part of his visual field, whereas the image in a theater overwhelms the viewer. As a consequence, in a departure from realism, the "larger than life" image in a theater is impressive, while the small TV image is miniaturized life. These are elements that make the "meaning" of

each film shot very different in the theater as in TV. One does not see the same film in TV as in the theater. The medium is by no means a disposable wrapping when considering narrative.

Majkut, Paul

The Untext of the Printed Word: Being

A "text" is free to find a medium, but once that happens it becomes that medium's text and is determined by it. To the extent that it determines the text, a medium is an "untext." The same "text" in a manuscript and printed as book is determined by two different media and, in the end, carry different texts. One way the book determines the text is editorial and typographical variation – format, spacing, bold font, italics, etc. An extreme case thereof is the so-called misuse of typography to alter the meaning of the text. That is the case of *sous rature* introduced by Heidegger in crossing out the word Being. This crossing-out is a typographical symbolization meaning, Heidegger tells us, "inadequate but necessary," yet, as a mere typographical device (—), it impacts more than the periphrastic expression "inadequate but necessary." Nevertheless, this impact is bound to the printed page since it is an impossibility in speech, and so the philosopher of language as "the house of Being" slips from language to the printed page – in fact, to mere typography. Heidegger moves from or conflates language as text to a merely visual untext – in spite of his criticism of the eye.

Rivas López, Victor G.

On Why Cinema is not Reducible to the Sheer Image

Because life is not aimless but directed toward some end, cinema must have at least a minimum narrative. One can figure out a very dramatic cinematic sequence without any words or subtitles that completely reveals its meaning on a general human level. Nevertheless, the sequence is incomprehensible both as to the situations that should have preceded it and as to what will follow it. The concrete meaning of the sequence depends completely on some narrative framework. The same is true of very simple sequences, say workers falling down a wall: the viewer looks for the narrative framework that would make it understandable why and to which aim the workers

do what they do. It is this narrative articulation of cinematic sequences that permits the individual viewer from identifying himself with cinema, what makes cinema the cultural main phenomenon of the 20th Century. On the other hand, if one defines narrative as the meaningful connection of life and literature, the richness of highly developed and reflexive subjectivity, it is possible to say that cinema is narrative, but not necessarily literary.

Stowers, Gwendolyn

The Internet and Political Education

The unstoppable flow of newer and better technology does not mean a better education. Modern society is facing the problem of learning to be part of a community instead of becoming a competitive individual. This leads to the significance of the Internet as a teaching instrument. Schools in the USA are increasingly introducing programs to be used by teachers, but it seems that most of them are oriented to measure things or to give so-called rubrics – templates or guidelines – both for teaching and learning activities. Measuring substitutes by critical thinking, templates substitute for creativity. True, the new digital technology permits us to quantify and to standardize as never before, but this by no means guarantees that teachers are creating critical, creative and reflexive individuals, for which there is today a great need. Media are shaping us, but we are not necessarily aware of them, neither in general nor in education.

Van de Bossche, Marc

One more place to be? The (im-)possibility of virtual bodies

Against the Cartesian tradition, there are philosophers who think of the mind as something necessarily intertwined with the body. But what happens when the body is not the physiological one but a technological extension of it? Andy Clark decidedly thinks that our technologies have to be thought of as part of our mind: intelligence is nothing but looping interactions between material brains, material bodies, and technological environments. In this perspective, cognitive processes are extended beyond the confines of skin and skull. Nevertheless, the question remains: Is there no dividing line between tool and user? The

question becomes even more pressing as to virtual reality (VR) – the computer-generated visual, audible and tactile-multimedia experience. In this case, properly speaking, there is no environment as extended body, but only cartographical points created by computer language. In other words, following Don Ihde, being a body and being a virtual body are very different things.

Van Den Eede, Yoni

A Comparative Analysis of the “Hybrid” Concepts of Latour and McLuhan

It is common to consider politics and media as two separate and opposed realms. It is better to think of a unity of both domains as a hybrid. For Latour “actants” – individuals and organizations – are hybrids; for McLuhan, where technologies collide there appear hybrid energies. Latour attempts to uncover the hidden by means of a “literary” approach, whereas McLuhan applies a “probing” attitude. Both actants and technologies change by “translation.” In the end, both Latour and McLuhan stress not objects nor subjects, nor their relationships, but quasi-objects, hybrid energies, networks, environments, all of them working without our control and, to a great extent, invisible for us. We are in the midst of such invisible entities and politics is a dimension of it. For this reason, to see that politics and media are not separate entities does mean to see that we are inwardly networks, environments, hybrids, etc. To do politics means to get involved in not merely introspection.

Van Den Eede, Yoni

The Medium “Body”: Subversive Perspectives

In order to discuss the body as a medium, the author leans on phenomenology, McLuhan, and Graham Hartman. According to Hartman, the main distinction of interest here is not that between humans and objects but that between objects and relations. For McLuhan every artifact – including works of art and theories – is a medium and media have a linguistic character; furthermore, all media have the structure of the tetrad. On his part, Hartman thinks that not only media but everything, including the body, has the structure of the tetrad, so bodies can be examined as one does with media. One needs here to think of the body as extension (medium) of itself, to the extent that it enhances

itself. The tetradic analysis of the body as medium is as follows: the body grows, that is, extends itself. The body leaves some character of ancestry behind, that is, it obsolesces them. On the other hand, the body genetically retrieves some characters of ancestry. Finally, the reversal of the medium should be nothing but its decline before death. Of course, many questions remain disputable. For example, does genetic engineering eliminate genetic obsolescence?

Vitalis, André

Temporalities and Television: A Comparative Study of France and Spain

The average citizen of the First World countries spends at least 3-4 hours a day watching TV, and TV is a fluid medium, linked to time. This text examines the temporality of TV in select countries. First, TV programmers have to be aware of social times. Today, we live in conditions of “presentism,” which means that past and future are not as important as the timely immediacy of the present. The Interest does not lie in preparing the

future, but in intensifying the present. In fact, the present **tends** to become an eternal or overloaded present. The essay refers to empirical evidence of the disappearance of the future in the TV and to people’s change of attitude toward it. In Aquitaine, France, over 40 years the attitude changed from an optimistic view of the future marked by progress to worries about an uncertain perspective. On the other hand, the past is cut out of the time line: it does not throw light on the present and the future but is only a collection of museum pieces.

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