

Techno-imagination and Implicit Knowledge

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Abstract. Techno-imagination is the ability to encode and decode images created by devices. This technological shift has caused a departure from images towards an alphanumeric codification of knowledge. This has led to the disconnection between thinking and speaking, caused by new computer codes. The paper discusses the effects of this paradigm shift on the mental processing of vision data and on the relation between concepts and images. We conclude our exploration with a strategy to define a concept of media to allow for both of its features: mediality and transparency.

Keywords: image, mediality, transparency, art, imaging, instrumentality.

1 Introduction

"Post Modern fantasy operates in the coordinate system whose axes are orbital, synchronistic, and combinatorial." (Sloterdijk, 2001: 48-49)

If we accept Flusser's concept of techno-imagination, we can accordingly describe a film, its production and consumption from the phenomenological perspective. Thus, we can interpret techno-imagination as the ability to encode and decode images ("techno-images") created by devices (or "apparatuses" in Flusser's terms). The hypothesis is that the techno-imagination is radically different from traditional imagination. The difference can be explained using the following description: the actual "reading" and "writing" of techno-images (e.g., photos, movies, television programs) have a set of completely different requirements for the reception and interpretation of these phenomena than is the case for "reading" and "writing" of classical paintings (e.g., mosaics, cave drawings, sketches on glass plates). This turnover has redefined writing as a term for departing from the images towards the alphanumeric codification of knowledge: "Writing is the withdrawing from images, as it allows images to spread into concepts." (Flusser, 1999: 35)

This turnover also meant a change in the perspectives of knowledge and the creation of forms of opinion. A part of the modern requirements for the devices from their users determines the possibility of their use and application. This requires a cognitive adaptation to the changed nature of the object of knowledge. Flusser talks about relational learning of objects, things or reality, about the establishment of the so-called ideographic formats of things. "... (F)or our consideration, what is crucial is the observation that the new computer codes are "ideographic", i.e., that they suspend the link between thinking and speaking. Elite thinking has been emancipated from the

discursive structure of our language and now it experiences and judges the world and itself not as processes anymore, but as computations, such as the movements of relational fields." (Flusser, 1999: 51)

We can say that the ideography of codes is also a kind of division between the pre-technological period and our own contemporary knowledge-society. Our present time is a period introducing combinatorics and computation in the system of thought which interrupted a relatively close relationship between thought and its articulation in speech. After turning from painting to writing, the difference is established between thinking and its articulation in speech.

This is the stage that is characterized by a distinction between idea and representation in an unusual, yet sharper, difference. In the case of ideas, for example, a film does not mediate reality, only a fiction pointing to the reality. The idea, therefore, presents symbols representing reality. The representation itself does not mean anything because it only displays something that lies in front of us. In contrast, the idea means something, although it refers to something that is not here, but what it represents and that it replaces the displayed thing. The representation is actually displaying symbols, valid under the agreement, that the displayed represents the reality which we do not have before us.

Aware of this more powerful difference, we can further say that in today's complex world, which surrounds us with networks, technologies, satellites, mobile phones, etc., techno-images are transmitted through a system of a codified universe where most of the "messages" consist of techno-images, rather than traditional texts, as it was in the early last century. Techno-imagination informs the perception field according to the construction of the devices.

Nevertheless, the game still remains twofold: first, the significantly new and informative nature of the creation and production of technical images as innovative representation, which resemble a plan (or a "map" in Flusser's terms) not only for orientation, but primarily for our decision making. Second, a completely instrumental, quantitative view of the mere reproduction of images to influence the audience. In the latter case, we are talking about structural constraints of knowledge objectivity. The belief in a vision, or representation, brings some unwelcome consequences. Apparently, under the influence of our culture, the traditions and transmitted forms of knowing that we are willing to trust is in almost everything we see. This is a kind of conditionality which is difficult to overcome and which prevents us more or less from critical exploration. The effect of the contribution of the new means of communication in the system of knowledge, such as visualization, can thus not only be altered at the level of the forms of judgment, and the need to search for an interface for an available "form of reality", but also on the level of impact that can have long-term neutralization effects. This means that the novel forms of opinions, imaging innovation, and forms of thinking miss their intent: techno-imagination in this regard is rather suppressed.

This unintended effect, however, illustrates well the understanding of the difference which arose from the new forms of pictures and the necessary revision of opinions in a system of knowledge: that nature that speaks to the camera is different than the one that speaks to our eye. (Benjamin, 1979: 35)

2 Neutralization and Transparency

The aesthetics of display gives us a critical tool against the superficial illusion that what images make visible, can be also possible. For, as Plato reminds us: the real world is invisible.

In fact, the procedure of seeking an instrumental combination of the abstract and the real for movements which are concealed by the self-motion of images that limit and sometimes prevent vision is somehow a countermovement against the dominance of surface, covering what allows for something to be seen. Beyond this movement of the vision, we must learn to see the way how neutralizations make that vision possible.

In a certain metaphor: for the seen, so far, there was almost anything other to be seen. We ask for neutralization processes of motion, procesualities that enable for the creation of static units that make objects degrade before us, balanced and yet separate things, differences from what we actually see.

We do not see the object as an object, which is just a backward reconstruction from our senses. We see only through a certain restraint, a stopping of the process, an interruption of lines, etc.: we register therefore states not as facts, i.e. the states of matter according to Wittgenstein (as a breaking free from a logical procedure), but we see just what lets us to be 'seen'. What remains in the visual field by itself distinguishable from the procedure of vision: we see the effects of transparency. The instrumentalization of association is therefore a framework for rendering which calls for a reconstruction of the seen: not so to stop us to see an image, but rather so that, if possible, to offer also what was currently hidden by the process of becoming visible.

The structure and composition of the abstract and the real world is therefore a reference to the unseen in a vision, hidden too much by the contemporary, streamlined and technologically mediated visibility and, therefore, a reference moving towards another order of connecting the universal and the individual. To be able to connect the variable and the constant, which does not peak in a fatality of an image seen once and forever, but for such a connection that still offers the movement of beauty towards what equals beauty. That is, to harmonize the differences which allows beauty. And to express the surface through depth which does not offers itself cheaply by being just visible.

For quite a long time, we have already known that "the concept of time, the only reality of which according to Bachelard was the reality of a moment, could be built only on our ignorance of our speed in the world, which is entirely devoted to the law of motion, and hence the creator of illusion of immobility." (Virilio 2010: 107)

The aesthetics of display is thus a strategy that pauses on the first thing that offers itself to display, by looking behind the picture for what the image does not depict.

It is so mainly due to the purity of imaging, which allows for the initiative of a phenomenon to bring the initiative of mediation that still leaves in the game everything the images leave behind. In short, what we cannot yet see, wants to speak in the language of images. Paul Klee assessed the situation by saying that art allow us to see. We can add to the second part of his sentence by saying: "no matter in what reality it is actually happening." "The aesthetically formed spirit lets before the thing

it deals with just defile what equals the spirit, and what it understands or hopes to make equal to itself." (Adorno 1997: 74)

The aesthetics of display leads to the restoration of forms that are silenced by a certain type of imaging. The form in the world of images is only thanks to the speech of display, which is never content with what is given. The form still seeks a place to express all that did not make it still through the established units. For even this speech does not want to be silenced once and for all only because it has not found an adequate expression.

The form seeks, on the contrary, ways of duplication, supplementation (Derrida), to replace the missing part of a whole, for which there is no available way of expression, a term (Lyotard). Thinking, however, gets doubled by the interaction of transparency with mediality, thus unlearns to just copy the so-called reality, which is unavailable in principle, so reality can be only more or less successfully replaced. Transparency is not just a certain way of seeing thoroughly, but also an instruction on how to see, through what to see, therefore, how to get through the gap of dividing things and phenomena.

3 Medium Image and Concept

"Image technique always refers to the metaphysics of imagination: as if there were two ways of understanding the transition from one image to another." (Deleuze 2006: 72)

Let us say that the display is effective, when displaying by the image also shows a change in the potential state of affairs at different levels of explication. If we can follow the movement of a concept definition through an image, including a change of position expressing the current level of state of affairs, then just showing the concept shows the change itself. In this situation, we can say that the "practice" of a concept as a medium is the reconstruction of the thinking "format" in order to be able to build up the "state of things" again from other levels and into new structures; basically, it is to finish a chosen formalization of abstraction. On the other hand, the aim of an image as a medium is a formalization of vision. Philosophy of the media is then the examination and seeking of positions, where the two media encounter and may overlap each other, so it is the necessary "comparability" between different forms of mediation, often described as a "modulation", and used by the aforementioned Deleuze to describe analogue synthesizers as necessary "... introduction of immediate connections between the different elements". (Deleuze 2003: 95) We are therefore talking about mediality as the original operator of mediation.

We understand mediality basically as an instant background, say, as an "operator of mediation": i.e. a multilevel background with a hidden hierarchy for communication with different orders, i.e. between complexity and the reality, or between the universe and multiverse. Thanks to mediality, we are able to work with the objects from the objectivation world without knowing to what extent they are related to the foundations of the subject. We can nevertheless say that, thanks to the hidden systematics of the real world which we perceive as a background, the heterogenic

objects are in a certain unity which makes this world depictable. Mediality philosophy then follows its own, so-called zero state of media thinking: "The philosophy of mediality looks into the thinking in the zero medium, i.e. in what the thinking mediates the thinking itself." (Bystřický 2007: 32)

When applying the direct connections, it can be said that the concept uses one part of the spectrum of mediation, while the image uses the other part. This allows a processing at two levels: abstraction and imagination.

The conceptual order is, in its majority, "codified" by the mediation of abstract determining. That is to say that the order is constituted as a theory of a certain type of use of the forms of transparency, i.e. - showing at displaying - that is available to the level of mediation.

The term thus leads to the definition through determination, scaling the difference between inner and outer space levels of localization, between what the term is opening up and then proceeds to another level: the term leaves thus in the game the movement of the transfer of the thinking levels in which the change in the starting position of the concept is happening. Both the medias are differentiated between "identification" with the help of distinguishing the unchanging positions and definiteness, and, with the help of restrictions which in turn may change the position. The concepts are thus shown as locally arranged distinctions; that is to say as a place of a unique overlap between the real and the virtual that can be used just because they can be thought of as a form of mediation without altering the position from which they are based. This then brings us to another aspect, the concepts and images that the mediation procedures allow: namely, that in addition to its unique and indisputable transitive function, these procedures allow mediation as a system of transparency. The medium of a concept thus generates abstract forms; the media the image then generates the regimes of imagination.

The media of the image as a part of the system of transparency allows establishing the topic of vision. The image media can thus represent the vision itself as visibility and therefore as a taxonomy of transparency: it represents seeing through visibility. The actual images are indeed a secondary operation, but their contribution is not in the order of access to the primary data, but how by displaying and pointing out they bring attention to a specific functionality, efficiency, utility, and "application" of certain forms of transparency, such as, e.g. painting, photography, film images. They do so in the broad sense of the word mediation, because it is about what you can actually see when it can be displayed.

While the practice of concepts refers to the possibility of using a specific access point for mediation between complexity and reality, the whole is framed by images of the whole's current application: i.e. a situation where we can ask how much the mediation acts as an operator of thinking, what type of mediation it is. Namely, the transparency and display which makes something as "noticeable" in the same regime in which "something" is given to be perceived.

In principle, this allows the sharing of data as data, content as a separate and stand-alone content, etc. Consequently, we are talking about the establishment of certain facts as certain versions of some limit values, because "if every fact is assembled from option, then the fact is a "limit value". (Flusser 1996: 249)

The obvious difference is already at the level of the approach to mediation: the concepts work in a primary regime of mediation, reconstruct the accesses to what is giving to us as a giving givenness; images highlight those systems of transparency, in which we can show the giving givenness: i.e. to show it in vision. The images allow us to see through more accurately, through what the given is given: an understanding of the regimes that certain structures and data released into the game of vision and have become so our world visible through technologies. "While the pre-image designers had to fight against the objective world, we are already confronted with a "materialized spirit". (Flusser 1981: 19)

4 Conclusion

To conclude, we may ask how to actually define the term "media" to fulfill its two main characteristics: mediality and transparency.

To connect the two defining features of the media we need two things. First, perhaps a new platform for the unification and diversification as a new approach to the concept of media which points to an essential hierarchization of the unification while it refers to the different levels of rationalization. "... (W)hat a structure carries and serves as its internal borders, is the tightest circuit between the current image and the virtual image." (Deleuze 2006: 85)

Second, we need an establishment of forms of knowledge that also introduces a corresponding difference of order which subsequently allows those forms. It is not, therefore, a static concept of the known equation of concept, subject and knowledge, but rather a concept of the formation and transparency, as the establishment of the subject in the regime of control of an environment, in which thinking operates as his or her own mediator. We speak therefore about a specific association between the virtual and the real image. "More greater circles will be able to develop, corresponding to increasingly deeper layers of reality and increasingly higher levels of memory and thinking." (Deleuze 2006: 85)

This is also to say that what is constituted through the performance of subjectivity as an object is something dual because what moves from the background of the subject to the forefront of transparency of the same subject is a kind of "making visible" just by setting the direction of constitution of the subject, which simultaneously moves in the direction of the concept, practiced thereof on a higher level, to make the named at the same time as something divided from what it names. Transparency must lead to the emancipation of thought from the concept and knowledge must lead to show the control methods that originated in the individual knowledge.

Kupka's view of the matter is similar: "... an artist can never present a completely and totally authentic idea he or she chose; he artist decides (...) on the lines and modulated positions, profiles and the relationships between volumes. (...) A large part of the work lies in the combination and the understanding and awareness of it." (Kupka 1999: 187) We could, with some exaggeration, call it a temptation for birth.

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