



Epistemology of New Media: The Screen and the Crisis of Reality

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Abstract: This crisis is engendered by new media technologies' pervasive influence on contemporary society's grasp of reality, communication, and also its foundational knowledge. The paper argues the digital age, defined by its characteristic "fluid knowledge" and a notable "electronic acceleration," leads to a significant blurring of boundaries. The distinctions between the real and artificial, the organic and inorganic, are increasingly challenged. This directly confronts traditional epistemological certainties, resulting in a "collapse of previous dualities" where the image emerges as a dominant communicative vehicle over text.

Keywords: new media, epistemology, screencrisis of reality.

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Introduction

The advent and pervasive spread of digital technologies have triggered a radical transformation in contemporary society, primarily reshaping our conception of communication, knowledge, and, ultimately, reality itself. We find ourselves immersed in an era defined by the "fluidity of knowledge" and a "strong electronic acceleration," a context that inevitably calls into question the epistemological certainties that forged past notions of identity and the world.

As Iain Chambers emphasizes, we are witnessing a progressive "blurring, confusion, and permeability of boundaries," where the distinction between real and artificial, organic and inorganic, authentic and simulacrum becomes increasingly labile. This "collapse of previous dualities" projects us into an "instructive confusion," unhooking the foundations of our knowledge. Our bodies, invaded by technology, are continuously "re-membered" and reappear in the electronic world, contaminated and pollinated by cinema, television, computers, and multimedia simulations.

In this scenario, reality ceases to be univocal, manifesting instead as a fluid entity in perennial becoming. Communication, consequently, must evolve to express this "reality with a mutant body," opening up to multiple perspectives, almost a "window onto infinity." New communication technologies, and multimedia in particular, as suggested by Jean Baudrillard, become the privileged tool to "connect the scattered fragments of reality," establishing a "dialogue with infinity" where everything is digitizable and infinitely reproducible, offering "the endless fascination of the spectacle of thought."

The image as a communicative vehicle

The communication system is no longer exclusively dominated by writing. The media, cinema, television, and computers "show" knowledge content, replacing traditional narration. The image, with its intrinsic power of representation, emerges as a primary communicative vehicle, capable of providing information often more directly and effectively than words, adding cognitive perspectives that verbal language struggles to convey. "The word becomes image," and this shift has profound implications, not only in teaching but in every field of knowledge and experience transmission.

Few artists have managed to explore the implications of this techno-cultural revolution with the depth and radicality of David Cronenberg. His cinema, defined as "mutant," configures itself as a veritable essay on the anthropological changes induced by the "pervasiveness of media." Cronenberg, stating that "technology is human, it comes from the human mind, from human creativity," uses the cinematographic medium to illuminate the epistemological reflections of its complex language, compelling us to a conscious verification of our role as spectators.

His work reflects on the inadequacy of old interpretative tools in the face of the decentralized, fragmented, and pluralistic thrust of new representative solutions. Cronenberg's films, from *Videodrome* to *eXistenz*, from *Naked Lunch* to *Crash*, speak to us of "new psycho-biological realities," of "profane 'marriages' between man and machine," of the invasiveness of communication media in the "cybernetic noosphere." His work is a constant reflection "on the epistemological instability of the image and the dissimilar sign codes that characterize it."



Videodrome (1982) perhaps represents the apex of this reflection, a watershed work that anticipates the "metamorphosis of vision." The film investigates "the inevitable epistemological uncertainty of contemporary man in the face of the polymorphous nature of moving images." Max Renn, the protagonist, engulfed by the Videodrome signal, loses the ability to distinguish the real from the virtual, eventually becoming a "human VCR" himself. The television screen and the cinematographic screen merge, the invasiveness of media penetrates daily life, and the body itself becomes the site of symbiosis between human and technological. As Professor O'Blivion states in the film, "the only reality is what we perceive with our senses," but the image, especially the media image, is the most "easily contaminable and least trustworthy."

Cronenberg, through linguistic and narrative solutions that shatter linearity and subvert expectations, forces the spectator into an antiphrastric, analytical, and detached experience precisely while immersed in spectacular dynamics. He deconstructs the work-spectator relationship, highlighting the conventionality of all language and the need to "learn to observe individual products of visual communication as if they were exotic," using a "defamiliarizing gaze."

Cronenberg's poetics values "the fragment, bizarre collections, surprising juxtapositions," echoing Walter Benjamin's "micrological" approach, where truth is grasped by penetrating details. In a world where mass media compress space and time, shattering authorities and conceptual frameworks, Cronenbergian aesthetics become a model of cultural criticism. His is an "ethnographic gaze" that, by "fetishistically penetrating the matter of communication," initiates a decoding of its "estranging and exotic phenomenologies."

The body, "fetishistic space par excellence," is the starting point and the ultimate term for this decomposition, for a new aesthetic of the fragment and detail that reflects the convulsions of the contemporary gaze. The Fourth Industrial Revolution, labeled "Industry 4.0," indicates the growing tendency of companies to implement radical technological and organizational change in order to improve working conditions and increase productivity and profitability levels, in response to ongoing changes in the environment (Oesterreich and Teuteberg, 2016; Ustundag and Cevikcan, 2018).

Digitalization has significantly optimized timeframes and ensured greater efficiency in communication, which is becoming increasingly rapid and instantaneous. Furthermore, its multimedia capabilities have reduced the distances between people, connecting them from anywhere in the world; the accessibility of all types of information, anywhere and by anyone, has broken down all physical and intellectual boundaries; all information is accessible, and in real-time, you can get an answer to any question.

Brennen and Kreiss (2016) define digitization as the material process of converting individual analog streams of information into digital bits. The second importance is related to digitalization as the acceptance or increase of the use of digital technology by organizations, industries, countries. (The Oxford English Dictionary). Robinson (2008) defines his analogy much more in detail when he notes that it is analogous as smoothly changing, possessing the properties of the apparent impeccable and untouchable credibility of space and time.

The key to successful digital transformation, therefore, lies not in the use of new or traditional technologies, but in the re-design and management of changes related to the operation of the business. It is not only a technological challenge, but most of all, a challenge related to management, managers, and employees. (Westerman et al., 2011).

The digital globalization of shared services also envisages a changed management approach to policy-making, based on fewer direct decisions and the provision of more guidance or guidance (Westerman et al., 2011). Digital transformation, therefore, requires strong leadership that can implement and direct change and a vision that defines the specific parts of the organization that will transform (Westerman et al., 2011)

Conclusions

The philosophy of mediaticity, so powerfully embodied in Cronenberg's cinema, compels us to recognize that the "good old book" can no longer be the sole referent of knowledge. Technology has transformed reality into a mutant entity, one that eludes rigid descriptive categories and ancient interpretative tools. Cronenberg's work, with its insistence on the "conventional mimetic-objective quality of the image," on the "monologic constraint of visual representation," and on the need to overcome the "self-reproducing authority of the visual," invites us to dynamic participation.

It is necessary to exercise the gaze, accept the pluralistic thrust of new representations, and creatively participate in epistemological upheavals. Cinema and, by extension, every form of technological mediation, as Cronenberg himself suggests, will continue to "dig anew into men," analyzing the bewilderment and infinite possibilities offered by technology. The challenge of the philosophy of mediaticity lies in understanding and navigating this continuous metamorphosis, where man, his body, his perception, and his reality are constantly renegotiated at the interface with the screen.

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