



WEB

In the late sixties of the last century, when the web was born it was a large beige machine, a sort of “filing cabinet disguised as R2-D2” (Blum 2021), a tool for military intelligence, which had to optimize transmission of information in case of nuclear conflicts. We know what happened since then: through an unpredictable process of evolution and adaptation to the environment, the web has become the device through which public and private spaces have been redefined, the speed and ways of transmitting information, the methods of production and circulation of knowledge, radically transforming not only the sphere of communication but the very forms of experience. Faced with this technological innovation and its consequences, there have been many creative and reflective efforts to think about such new world and its forms of life.

In the nineties of the last century, the virtual paradigm was imposed, in an attempt to define the ontological status of the new modes of interaction, thus problematizing the experience of the double that was taking shape with the web and the digital sphere (Diodato, Heim, Levy). In the transition to the new millennium, other buzzwords emerged – such as interactivity, interface and software (Chun, Galloway, Hookway, Manovich) – which have occupied the reflection of media theorists and philosophers, to respond to those very rapid transformations that led first to the birth of web 2.0, then to the pervasive spread of social networks on a global scale. Today, the concept of metaverse requires both a creative effort and an interdisciplinary critical reflection to guide the future developments of an increasingly hybrid world (Floridi).

If it is true that forms of life *tout court* have been redefined by the spread of the web on a global scale, it is equally true that cinema and the media constitute a privileged terrain through which to read and interpret such changes. First and foremost, the web represents the technical infrastructure that has revolutionized the practices of use and sharing of images: in the continuous dynamics

between auratic and exhibition value (Benjamin), the web defines a new accessibility and manipulability of images, their more immediate circulation, reconfiguring our daily relationship with them. The web, however, represents not only a technical infrastructure, but also a grammar and a logic for the construction of discursiveness through images, the place in which new expressive forms can emerge, in a very necessary dialogue with the tradition of the seventh art.

Starting from such theoretical framework, some perspectives can be identified to reflect on this subject.

Remediation and relocation of the cinematic experience. Starting from the book by Bolter and Grusin, which has now become a classic of the theory of new media, the theoretical reflection has focused on the relationship between traditional and new media, also from an archaeological perspective (Parikka). The web, through the development of specific interfaces, determines the remediation of previous media forms and formats. Perhaps the most effective example is that of Instagram, the haptic TV that has become an online practice for millions of people. Remediation continues to operate as the dominant logic of the new online media, but the web is also the main place where the cinematic experience relocates (Casetti). The phenomenon of relocation represents a challenge, not only in theoretical terms due to the need to define what cinema or post-cinema is (Shaviro, Denson), but also in creative and productive terms, with respect to the reorganization of the entire industrial system. The recent pandemic crisis has accelerated a process that has been underway for some time, in which streaming platforms have become the main operators for the distribution and use of audiovisual content, apparently allocating the experience of the film theatre to a renewed form of auraticity.

Transmediality: between aesthetics and productive-receptive logic. The trespassing of the audiovisual experience beyond the traditional media has led to the emergence of a new aesthetic, new rules for the construction and distribution of the cinematographic and audiovisual storytelling. The web makes possible that phenomenon that goes by the name of convergence (Jenkins), in which the media tend to hybridize and interact with each other in the construction of the experience of viewing and enjoying images in motion. Transmediality, however, is not just a distribution strategy, which displaces the storytelling across multiple formats and media (from cinema to videogames, from comics to the web, from *Matrix* to *Marvel Cinematic Universe* via *Gomorrah*), but it becomes a formal logic for the creation of narrative worlds capable of adapting to different media formats and registers in relation to the level of involvement. The horizontal nature of online communication, in fact, allows the viewer to interact directly with the storytelling, thus contributing to the construction of real online communities, which therefore also redefine the very concept of audience and fandom.

In the convergent era of transmedia, understood both as a distributive strategy and as a formal logic, the viewer can turn into a producer and thus participate in the storytelling, redefining their roles and tasks.

The archive, the editing, the detournement. Even before being a place for the distribution and use of audiovisual content through streaming services, the web was the largest archive of images ever available. If it is true, as Foucault argues, that the archive is the *archè* – the principle that regulates the emergence of utterances and speeches –, then the unprecedented accessibility of public and private, amateur and official images, sequences and their intrinsic manipulability, have radically redefined our relationship with the images and the discourses that can be constructed with them. From video art to cinema, passing through the spontaneous creation of content by users, the web is the archive of a shared global imagination (think for example of the production of Dominic Gagnon or that of Natalie Bookchin), the reserve of shreds of History available to be reorganized and reworked in a collective cultural memory. The Arab Springs represented the moment in which this potential manifested itself more clearly, in which the forms of testimony were remodeled, through processes of elaboration and reuse of media contents starting from an archive that coincides with the indexed and potentially boundless structure of the web (Della Ratta). Different forms of expression can be exercised on this material; indeed, more radically, it can be argued that the media materiality of these contents solicits a precise modality of interaction with them and therefore establishes a specific form of expression, where word, image and sound are syncretically organized (Montani). From memes to mash-ups, from Instagram Stories to TikTok videos, a circle is established between technique, operation and the sphere of the symbolic, whose virtuosity or viciousness is yet to be discovered.

Telling the future. The technological transformations and the rapid changes they have produced have fueled the cinematic imagination which on many occasions has tried to tell the technologically unfolded future, helping to define an imaginary that is built on the border between reality and fiction, utopia and dystopia. From Soderbergh to Fincher and Stone, from *Halt and Catch Fire* to *Black Mirror*, the film and serial formats explore, on the one hand, the history of origins, retracing the prodromes of a media culture that is increasingly naturalizing today, and on the other the future scenarios, opening a metariflexive space on the media environment in which we live and on the role of moving images.

The web as a metaphor. The web is also a metaphor for practices, knowledge, devices, the development of which took place horizontally and without anchoring, as opposed to the rooted

growth that found its generator of meaning in the tree metaphor. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari called rhizome such growth by progressive and erratic divisions. Something without center and roots, capable of generating progressive concatenations of multiple connections, depending on the quantity and quality of the encounters. The rhizome is, in this sense, “an anti-genealogy” (*A Thousand Plateaus*). But today there are also further reticular interpretative schemes which, starting from metaphors drawn from biological sciences such as mycology or botany, or from practices such as anthropology, attempt to restructure relational dynamics in continuity or in contrast with what was written by Deleuze and Guattari (think, for example, of the production of Coccia, Tsing, Ingold and Kohn). It can thus be shown how the metaphor of the web, far from being a conclusive image of agency, even and perhaps above all inhuman, lends itself to further articulations within contemporary culture. These themes are also explored by the cinematographic medium. Just think of contemporary films like Docournau’s *Titane* or Garland’s *Annihilation*, as well as classic films like Cronenberg’s *Videodrome* or *Crash*, in which the metaphor of the web of beings intervenes to complicate the image of an isolated subject in its individuality, through what could be called a new ontology of the sensible.

Deadline for the submission of the abstract (150 words): June 30, 2022

Deadline for the submission of the essay: September 30, 2022

Essays should be expressly written for the journal and should strictly respect the following word limit:

***Focus*: Min 5000 Max 6000 words (including spaces and footnotes)**

***Rifrazioni*: Min 2000 Max 3000 words (including spaces and footnotes)**

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