Phenomenology, Immediacy, and Mediation: On Derrida, Meunier, and Landgrebe

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Abstract
This text explores three phenomenological approaches to immediacy from around 1970. At that time, phenomenological studies had to address the question of immediacy. Immediacy means that no mediation happens in a given relation, but, at the same time, it presupposes media because it presupposes a difference. A medium, however, cannot be immediate. If it were, the relational elements between which it mediates would be part of an unmediated relation. In this case, both separation of the elements and the medium's mediation in turn would be eliminated. Each of the three works discussed tries to rearrange this framework: Derrida by deconstructing its metaphysical foundations, Meunier by introducing filmic mediation, and Landgrebe by historicizing phenomenology as a struggle with immediacy.

Keywords: Media theory; Jacques Derrida; Jean-Pierre Meunier; Ludwig Landgrebe; immediacy

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, three books were published that explored how phenomenology is fascinated by immediacy and challenged by mediation: Jacques Derrida’s Voice and Phenomenon (La Voix et le Phénomène) in 1967, Jean-Pierre Meunier’s The Structures of the Film Experience (Les Structures de l’expérience filmique) in 1969, and Ludwig Landgrebe’s not-yet translated Der Weg der Phänomenologie. Das Problem einer ursprünglichen Erfahrung [The Path of Phenomenology: The Problem of Orignary Experience] in 1971. Each of these studies presents its own explanation of the assumed immediacy of perception, and each of them has a different, more
or less explicit conception of underlying processes of mediation. In this regard, Meunier proposes a conception of media that introduces immediacy into the phenomenological discussion and includes film as an example for the mediated immediacy of experiences.

The phenomenological tradition, to which all three books contribute, has from the beginning, been fascinated by immediacy. For example, Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s *The Structure of Behavior* (*La Structure du comportement*) from 1942, an important point of reference for French phenomenology, addresses the question of the immediate givenness of experience on almost every page. The question of immediacy belongs to phenomenology’s heritage and is part of the complex that every phenomenological study had to address at that time – and still has to address today, even though the technological conditions of our time have radically changed. The following short and preliminary remarks describe how the three books react to the challenge of immediacy. The observations converge in a conclusion that asks how to tackle the phantasms of immediacy today. The publication of the first translation of Meunier’s book, half a century after it was written, is an opportunity to ask these questions again, because this translation has a place both within the past and within the present.

One of the reasons for this constellation around the year 1970, for the historical situatedness of the articulation of phenomenology’s problem with immediacy, is that, around this time, the fundamental mediatedness of experience became obvious – a reason reflected by Meunier’s approach to identification. Film is only one entity that gained theoretical value at that time. Television had already started to replace (or rather reframe) film as the dominant medium a few years beforehand. Of course, theorists like Walter Benjamin had articulated this approach earlier, but the institutional establishment of media theory begins in this period when Marshall McLuhan’s theory of media was widely discussed in both North America and Europe. It is obvious that Derrida’s and Landgrebe’s texts demonstrate the unwillingness of philosophers to make sense of the media landscape of the time, but maybe they react to it in a deeper sense: they both explore the mediatedness of experience and find answers to the problem of immediacy. Meunier’s book, meanwhile, is evidently part of this constellation, though he restricts mediated experience to film.

As a phantasm of unity and direct, continuous contact, immediacy is not restricted to phenomenology. Immediacy means that no mediation happens in a given relation, but at the same time it presupposes media, because it presupposes a difference that has to be bridged. Immediacy means the immediate relation of at least two elements. But when there
are two, there needs to be a mediating third element. A medium, however, cannot be immediate. If it were, the relational elements between which it mediates would be part of an unmediated relation. In this case, both separation of the elements and the medium’s mediation in turn would be eliminated. As relational in-betweens, media are the condition for the immediate connection of two elements with each other, since immediacy implies the collapse of the relation between two or more elements. However, in the immediacy of a relation, the medial connection of the elements and their necessary separation are at the same time erased – there must be two to become one and the one always stays separated. A medium, in this sense, can only be phantasmatically immediate. The history of media is accompanied by a history of phantasms of immediacy that reach from the unity of logos and speech contrasted with the separation of writing in Plato’s Phaedrus to the idea that depictions of violence im mediately affect their viewers, from scenarios of immersion into atmospheric media to the immediacy of film experience.

The stakes of such immediacies entail historically different prospects of reward: they sublate the uncertainties and contingencies that lie in the separation between elements by promising to substitute multiplicity for unity; they present the prospect of an undivided community; in the form of a metaphysics, they hark back to an originary source (originärer Ursprung) from which everything else can be derived; they strive for an always already transmitted transmission in which delay or loss play no role; and they enable a primordial, uninterrupted access to the world via the senses. In the history of media, one can thus discern time and again an emphasis on the significance of media that is shot through with the ‘reverie’ of a media-less immediacy. The paradox of the immediacy of media that is thus generated consists in the negation of its own presuppositions. Immediacy displaces what ought to be explained to the realm of the unexplained and substitutes uncertainties with too-certain certainties.

This paradoxical constellation of immediacy is the starting point of all three books. In the context of phenomenology, the immediacy of experience is an important part of the epistemological framework. Each of the three books tries to rearrange this framework: Derrida by deconstructing its metaphysical foundations, Meunier by introducing filmic mediation, and Landgrebe by historicizing phenomenology as a struggle with immediacy. The latter two strive for an immediacy of experience, while Derrida attempts to dismantle these foundations. Despite the reference to an unmediated access to the world, the question of mediation intervenes into their self-assuring conception of phenomenology around 1970. The three books can
be read as symptoms of an uneasiness with phenomenology’s fascination with immediacy.

Jacques Derrida and the Mediation of Immediacy in the Soliloquy

Jacques Derrida introduces his conception of deconstruction in his publications from the late 1960s and early 1970s, in which he investigates originary unities, essentialisms, and binaries in the history of philosophy and argues against the traditional equivalence of perception and access to the world, of appropriation and signification. He grounds his project on the observation that the phantasmatic paradox of immediacy, as one example of the essentialisms he criticizes, lies in the negation of its own presuppositions. This “coherence in contradiction [...] expresses the force of a desire.” This desire, identified by Derrida as a dominant strain in the history of philosophy, aims at unity instead of separation, at direct contact instead of mediation. The deconstructive move shows that, in the binary opposition of immediacy and mediation, the suppressed necessarily intervenes in the ideal. As an instance of such unity, immediacy, Derrida explains, is a construct that appears to be unconstructed. “Immediacy is derived,” as he writes in Of Grammatology (De la Grammatologie). And he goes on to characterize such philosophies in the following terms: “As always, this archaeology is also a teleology and an eschatology; the dream of a full and immediate presence closing history, the transparence and indivision of a parousia, the suppression of contradiction and difference.”

In his deconstruction of Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology, specifically of his Logical Investigations (Logische Untersuchungen, 1900-1901) in Voice and Phenomenon, Derrida explores how the personal subject of phenomenology is based on metaphysical presuppositions and develops a critique of phenomenology’s foundational essentialisms. By taking into account “the instituting value of its own premises,” this approach unsettles the tradition of phenomenology, the dominant philosophy in France at that time. Though it took a few years for Derrida to emerge as one of the leading proponents of what North American scholars would later call French Theory, the basic tools of his thinking are already at work in Voice and Phenomenon, published alongside Of Grammatology and Writing and Difference (L’Écriture et la différence).

In this book, Derrida works through Husserl’s phenomenology of expression and indication as a key distinction that organizes his conception of language and speech. As Derrida demonstrates in a famous passage on Husserl’s conception of language and the voice, there are no signs in
soliloquies for Husserl, since the self-presence of the monologue prevents anything from being re-presented. Husserl writes:

Or shall we say that, even in solitary mental life, one still uses expressions to imitate something, though not to a second person? Shall one say that in soliloquy one speaks to oneself, and employs words as signs, i.e. as indications, of one’s own inner experiences? I cannot think such a view acceptable [...] [In soliloquy] we are in general content with imagined rather than with actual words. One of course speaks, in a certain sense, even in soliloquy, and it is certainly possible to think of oneself as speaking, and even as speaking to oneself.9

In Husserl’s view, soliloquies do not require any representational function of language since there is only the presence of the subject with itself. Self-presence must not be imbued with any representation, even if the subject speaks with itself. In this presence, no repetition of the sign is necessary. Since nothing need be repeated, the soliloquy is sign-less. For Husserl, soliloquies invite us to search for sense beyond any materialization. In this perspective, the soliloquy is immediate and allows an unmediated relation of the self to itself because it is the self that speaks and listens at the same time. The self is immediately present to itself. There is no rupture or gap in the self in this idealizing conception. Derrida is interested in the extent to which Husserlian phenomenology depends on how consciousness does not communicate because it is present-to-itself and non-fissured. Nonetheless, it presupposes difference. To include this difference, Derrida argues, involves excluding self-identity, but also, at the same time, presupposes an identity that includes difference, albeit an identity that is fractured. Even the speaking self uses signs that differ in every repetition. Communication – even when curtailed in its most radical form in a soliloquy – presupposes a difference and thus a multiplicity: “This deconstruction of presence accomplishes itself through the deconstruction of consciousness, and therefore through the irreducible notion of the trace (Spur).”10 Presence cannot be thought without absence, and absence does not simply replace but supplements presence. As Derrida argues, immediacy is derived. In this sense, the phenomenological subject is torn in itself, even though it remains unified through the soliloquy – it is immediate in its mediation.

Consequently, the presence of the speaking phenomenological subject is overburdened by metaphysics. Media, in this regard, can appear as immediate – the voice of the phenomenological subject can appear as a harbinger of self-presence. In his seminal text “Signature, Event, Context,” which initiated
the by now famous debate with John Searle, Derrida shows that the success of communication can never be accomplished – communication includes its failure. Noise, parasites, and dissemination can never be excluded as intended by metaphysical thinking. Instead, Derrida shows that the absence of writing makes possible that something is written: “Spacing (notice that this word speaks the articulation of space and time, the becoming-space of time and the becoming-time of space) is always the unperceived, the nonpresent, and the nonconscious.” This temporal logic of repetition is characteristic for Derrida’s notion of *différance*. Every mediation, in this sense, delays something, creates a difference that cannot be substituted. *Différance*, one could say, is the differentiating origin of differences, which can no longer be an origin because it produces a difference that comes before the origin. In this sense, immediacy is derived, but when it is derived, it cannot be immediate. As deferral and distinction, *différance* is a difference of a medium which has never been immediate.

**Jean-Pierre Meunier and the Immediacy of Film Experience**

Meunier’s phenomenology of film is not touched by the questions posed by Derrida. There is no feeling of uneasiness toward the notion of immediate experience in his study. The book instead develops a new perspective on the mediation of experience by introducing a further layer: the structure of film as film experience. First published in 1969, we learn from Meunier’s introduction to his book that he sees film as a medium which reflects the cultural biases, artistic output, and cultural developments of his time. For Meunier, film is the art form which offers the highest degree of identification for the viewer and is thus most relevant for an exploration of the complexities of human experience and its relation to the world:

In this conceptual framework, filmic identification is a variation of identification as a general mode of behavior, a particular type of identification corresponding to a particular type of relationship, one in which the object, although presenting almost all the characteristics that it possesses in perception, is presented as absent in its bodily physicality (p. 119).

Film, in other words, offers phenomenology a chance to test its assumptions with an aesthetic object: “These considerations, and others, will lead us to see filmic consciousness as a variation of the major category of consciousness that constitutes the imaginary consciousness” (p. 69).
For Meunier, phenomenology means to take “phenomena such as they are immediately lived, and not such as they are conceived by virtue of some pre-established objective schema” (p. 34). Consequently, immediacy appears as equivalent to life and lived, i.e. embodied experience. The opposite of immediacy, not named as such in this context, lies in the schematizing process of theorizing experience as an objective entity. There is no access to immediacy via theory, only via phenomenology. This approach offers an indirect key to the primordial dimension of subjectivity by “unveiling the invariable aspect in [...] particular forms of behavior” (p. 34). Drawing upon Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Meunier argues that an analytical conception of “cognitive operations” based upon an “adequate representation of reality” implies ignorance toward the bodily incorporation of perception as a “lived experience of phenomena” (p. 40) and the fact that the perceiving body is also the perceived body. Rather, perception, as a “primordial faculty that underpins our insertion in the world and all of our relations” (p. 38), deserves a different approach that is supposed to do justice to immediacy.

Perception, in the sense of Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology, is not simply the act of accumulating sensations, but rather a formed and structured process below the threshold of cognition. These forms and structures are the topic of phenomenology, which, at the time of Meunier’s writing, had developed an elaborate instrument to describe them. Though Meunier describes this formed and structured process, perception can nonetheless appear as immediate, because the phenomenological relation to the world is “more immediate and more primitive than that described by analytic thought, basing itself on supposedly objective elements” (p. 41/42). What does Meunier mean by immediacy? And what happens to this immediacy characterized by the movement of images and a mode of identification similar to, but productively different from real-life experience, when the relation to the world is mediated by a relation to a film?

We can find preliminary answers to these questions in Meunier’s approach to the phenomena of intersubjectivity. The immediate relation to the world that composes our bodies and subjectivities extends, he argues, to encounters with other persons: “I directly grasp the signification of their behavior, not through a cognitive operation, but through an immediate apprehension of their comportment” (p. 44). There is nothing in between, rather, the difference vanishes and makes way for a union of formerly separated entities: “The perception of other people [...] is an immediate given” (p. 44). It is impossible not to experience other people in an immediate way when we perceive them. “I grasp their intentions and, in a way, they become my
own” (p. 44). The intersubjective world perceived by this phenomenological subject is composed in its immediate relation to the world.

In this sense, the experience of film as a medium that shows other people’s lives on-screen is always mediated because film itself is a structure of perceivable elements, “in which the elements draw their meaning from their internal organization” (p. 71). Watching a film, the subject experiences the filmic world and the “world tout court” (p. 71) in an immediate and uninterrupted way, and it can only perceive individuals in the film with the same immediacy as individuals in reality – even though experience is mediated by film. The subject Meunier is interested in identifies with film and relates to the world through film in a similar way as it relates to the world through others. Similar to Husserl’s subject, which perceives itself in the soliloquy, Meunier’s subject perceives other people, preferably in a film. It is immediately present to them because it perceives them as it perceives itself.

Even if Meunier argues that film, as a medium, “is only a representation of the world,” it nonetheless offers the world to us, “in the same manner as our unmediated sensations” (p. 71), although with a different attitude, because we know that we perceive a representation. Film, for Meunier, is a medium of immediacy, but he never tackles this paradoxical constellation. In the context of this approach to film, the immediacy of perception is a central element, because its primordial, non-cognitive dimension enables a “presence alongside the objects of the world” (p. 71). In his description of the home movie, Meunier explicitly refers to the mediation of film: “We can also say that in the case of the home movie, the cinematic image truly plays the role of medium. It serves as an intermediary between the reality perceived and my current consciousness of this reality.” (p. 88) The difference between perceiving the real world and the represented world lies in different approaches toward this world, in different relations to it: “In the case of visual representation, we know that the behavior under consideration, despite presenting all the characteristics of perception, is not physically present.” (p. 71) Even if we know that mediated film experience is mediated, we still perceive immediately and thus gain an immediate access to the world: “In perception, therefore, the objects are not ‘believed’ but immediately apprehended as existent.” (p. 93) Even if, we could say, film mediates, we experience the world it presents in an immediate way because perception, in the phenomenological sense, can only be immediate. In this process of identification and relation, immediate experience is mediated.

On the one hand, then, Meunier’s assumption of immediate experience is not up to date in light of Derrida’s harsh critique of metaphysics, but on
the other hand, it opens a new sense of the mediatedness of immediacy that is not present in Derrida’s work. Though Meunier never problematizes immediacy and takes it as a given, his introduction of film as a medium of immediate experience complicates the question of immediacy for phenomenology. A phenomenology, we could argue following Meunier, that does not take into account the multiplicity of technologies of mediation that transform experience and our ways of world-making in specific ways can neither understand its technological condition, nor the immediacy that it employs.

**Ludwig Landgrebe and Philosophy’s Struggle with Itself**

In this sense, phenomenology’s appropriation of immediacy has a history. In 1971, the phenomenologist Ludwig Landgrebe, student of Edmund Husserl and teacher of Hans Blumenberg, outlines the scope of such a philosophical and phenomenological history of immediacy in a remarkable essay on the immediacy of experience. His book *Der Weg der Phänomenologie: Das Problem einer ursprünglichen Erfahrung* includes a chapter “On the Immediacy of Experience,” in which he describes the foundations of this project:

> The thinking of the 19th century in all its decisive steps – not the ones which are usually included in the compendiums of the history of philosophy – can be understood, as it were, as an index of the fight of reason with itself. Reason attempts to determine itself in relation to the immediacy of experience, and in wrestling itself from the nets in which reason positioned itself, it enmeshes itself even further.13

Landgrebe goes on to expand how this struggle emerged when philosophy encountered the problem of conceiving the world through sensibility. The modern turn to epistemology, beginning with English empiricism and leading to Kant, questioned this access to the outside world and the possibility of knowledge about it. Even though, as Landgrebe explains, for Kant the *Ding an sich* (thing-in-itself) remained beyond knowledge and experience, his search for a source of knowledge in sensibility set the conditions for a new phase of the fight of philosophy with itself. The relation of the senses and the outside world subsequently became a prominent philosophical challenge. As Landgrebe argues, this unanswered, maybe unanswerable question crosses the centuries of philosophy and finally becomes the vantage
point of phenomenology. Reason, as the foundational *logos* of philosophy, was confronted with a relation to the world beyond reason, and philosophy tried to make sense of this oscillation.

Landgrebe underlines that, for Hegel, the immediate became relevant as mediated, because the opposition between mind and matter or experience and world was itself conceived of as a product of thinking – which appears, from Landgrebe’s point of view, as an impertinence because, for him, this dialectic removes the immediate from experience:

For Hegel, sensibility, which forms the material of all knowledge, cannot be the unique source of knowledge that it was for Kant, because this material cannot be understood as something in itself immediate. The supposed immediacy of sensibility needs to be proven as mediated.¹⁴

The importance of Kant – and the failure of Hegel – lies in the conception of the *Ding an sich*, which is in itself unknowable, but necessarily immediate. In Hegel’s tendency to declare reason as the sole criterion for philosophy, Landgrebe assumes a tendency to abandon the world. Kant, on the other hand, tried to rearrange reason and sensibility in a way that gives justice to both reason and immediacy. Confronted with this question of the immediacy of experience, philosophy since then has taken up the task of determining itself in relation to immediacy, and has incorporated this challenge. Landgrebe goes on to explain that the importance of the immediacy of perception has been neglected by modern science and its focus on rational objectivity. What Landgrebe calls “the technical means of mass manipulation in cold calculation”¹⁵ is a result of this enacting approach to the world. It leads to a withering of immediacy and affect. To find a way out of this situation, it is necessary to reclaim an immediate connection to the world and the “inextricable rest that refutes to be conquered by scientific rationality.”¹⁶ Consequently, Landgrebe defines the task of phenomenology in the twentieth century as reflecting this history of struggles in order to unite reason, sensibility, and immediacy. Husserl, in fact, describes the evidence of perception as an immediate opening up of reality.

In a decisive step in this history, Heidegger replaced the strict dualism of subject and object by the idea that the object is not given, but produced [*hervorgebracht*] and closely bound to the language that we use to explore the world. Thus, the relation of immediacy between subject and object is replaced by a more dynamic relation that allows for a different conception
of immediacy as something that is not objectifiable. In this direction, Landgrebe continues the phenomenological approach as a reaction to the philosophical struggle with itself:

The *logos* of philosophical thinking as an exegesis of the immediacy of experience can only be clarified by a meditation [*Besinnung*] on the ways in which language, even before all conceptual thinking, is always an interpretation of reality.17

Referring to the late Heidegger and his turn to language, and resembling Husserl's conception of the soliloquy, Landgrebe looks for a new perspective on the immediacy of experience understood as a “hearing that does not want to rule [*Vernehmen, das nicht herrschen will*].”18 He finds his solution in the fact that, though immediacy cannot be grasped by words, it also cannot be separated from the subject that experiences it. Phenomenology, Landgrebe argues, should not stop with the investigation of immediate experience, but instead take into account that such experience is mediated by language: “Every understanding of immediacy includes a self-understanding.”19 Immediacy can only be articulated in language. In this sense, immediacy is necessarily included in the understanding of language. Immediacy happens when one understands oneself by understanding language. In the mediation of language, Landgrebe searches for immediacy and argues for a convergence of phenomenology and hermeneutics as a solution to the struggle of philosophy with itself.

**Conclusion**

Immediacy implies that the necessary separation between the two elements that are connected immediately is negated. As Michel Serres has stated, “A third exists before the second. A third exists before the others. [...] I have to go through the middle before reaching the end. There is always a mediate, a middle, and intermediary.”20 Immediacy requires a medium, though it expresses the desire to eradicate its mediation. Rather than allowing an absorption by metaphysical unity, it is necessary to consider the differences that exist because there are media. That media operate with delays, that they isolate rather than unify, that they never transmit in real-time, that the gap between perception and world is irrefutable, and that film consists of still frames does not enter the picture if media are phantasmatically invested with immediacy. Media are always in danger of being replaced by immediacy if the very separation
upon which they are premised is erased in phantasms of unity, presence, and immediacy. Landgrebe and Meunier seem to be aware at least of the condition of mediation that is necessary for immediacy, even if they strive toward an originary, unmediated connection. With Derrida, the goal must be to preserve the separation and to describe the difference of mediation not in terms of its elimination, but rather as distance as such. This is what Landgrebe and Meunier – more or less involuntarily – introduce to phenomenology.

To conclude, I want to come back to the point that the three studies of phenomenology presented here belong to a historical moment, at which immediacy itself became an explicit – and no longer implicit – problem for philosophy. Phenomenological thinking, as Derrida and Landgrebe show, has always been invested in immediacy, but, in the years around 1970, it became possible, and perhaps necessary, to articulate this problem as defining the scope of phenomenology. This is not the place to attempt to write a history of phenomenology’s fascination with immediacy, but perhaps Meunier’s book can be read as such a speculation. Of the three texts presented here, Meunier and Landgrebe present immediacy not only in the sense of an indubitable unity of self-presence, but also as a state that is dependent upon media that constitute the conditions of immediate experience: for Meunier, the possibilities of identification and world-making that are provided by film are part of its immediate experience; and for Landgrebe, the immediacy of understanding language depends upon the givenness of the medium of language. In this sense, they go one step further and incorporate mediation into phenomenology’s fascination with immediacy.

At this point, it makes sense to ask for the place of the translation of Meunier’s book in the present. If the original publication of 1969 was part of a historical situation, in which immediacy became a problem, then we should ask for the historical situatedness of the translation, and also for phenomenology’s relation to it. Has this mediated immediacy of experience any relevance today? How can we rethink phenomenology’s phantasms? To situate these questions, which of course cannot be answered here, it is necessary to understand how different today’s technological condition is from that of 1970. We currently witness, as, for example, Mark Hansen and Katherine Hayles have shown, a transition in which media no longer simply present or represent aesthetic material that can be perceived. Ubiquitous mobile technologies such as smartphones with location-based services, logistical media based on RFID (Radio Frequency Identification), or sensorial and autonomous technologies such as self-driving cars collect, Hansen writes, “huge amounts of data about behavior and our environment without our active participation, initiative or even consciousness.”21 In the face of this
redistribution not only of agency, but also of perceptive faculties, Hansen argues, we should rethink what experience, apprehension, and subjectivity mean. We have to “abandon our object- or body-centered models of media experience for a radically environmental approach.” Hansen describes the sensorial distribution of locative, mobile networks as an extension of sensorial faculties, in which mobile media create an ubiquitous environment of streams of information and energy. Humans and objects are woven into the fabric of this network. In a similar vein, Katherine Hayles demonstrates that the convergence of the most powerful locative technologies RFID and GPS necessitates a redefinition of the passage between human beings and technology, a critique of their politics, and consequently a new modification of the concept of mediation. In the environmentality of such media, agency no longer belongs to the presupposed status of a human subject – and this extends to experience. Indeed, Hansen does not call for an end of subjectivity, but for its redistribution, so that experience and mediation come together:

For the first time in our history and (very likely) in the history of the universe, we find our long-standing and up to now well-nigh unquestionable privilege as the world’s most complex sensing agents challenged, if not overthrown, by the massively replicable and ubiquitously propagating technical capacity for sensing introduced by our smart devices and technologies.

In this regard, Hansen tries to establish a phenomenology adequate to the changing technological conditions of our time. How is perception, we should ask, incorporated today, when human bodies are perhaps not the prime indicators of perceptive faculties? How can phenomenology find an answer to the challenges of ubiquitous, ‘smart’ media-technologies in a way that takes up the pathway shown by Meunier? What is an experience of film beyond film? How can we, with Derrida, deconstruct this technological condition of the present? And how can we situate ourselves in the struggle of reason with itself when we no longer fight for immediacy but for mediation?

Notes

It is important to note the differences between the immediacy of experience and the immediacy of transmission that is an important phantasm in the history of media and media theory. The idea of an instantaneous transmission that takes no time and is everywhere at once is closely related to the sciences of electricity in the eighteenth century, the emergence of telegraphic networks in the nineteenth century, and Marshall McLuhan’s theory of media in the twentieth century. The assumption of an immediacy of experience, on the other hand, is confronted with the problem of communicating experience: It is not possible to communicate experience as experience, it can only be mediated into language, pictures, or films. Florian Sprenger, *Medien des Immediaten: Elektrizität, Telegraphie, McLuhan* (Berlin: Kadmos, 2012). Parts of this paper rely on Florian Sprenger, “The Metaphysics of Media: Descartes’ Sticks, Naked Communication, and Immediacy.” *Cultural Studies* 30:4 (2016), pp. 630-649.

3. The concept of reverie has been invoked by Gaston Bachelard to describe the relation between the symbolic and the imaginary. See Gaston Bachelard, *On Poetic Imagination and Reverie* (Dallas, TX: Spring Publications, 1987).


6. Ibid., p. 115.


8. Ibid., p. 4.


18. Ibid., p. 141. Original version: “Vernehmen, das nicht herrschen will.”


22. Ibid., p. 374 (my translation).


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