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# View. Theories and Practices of Visual Culture

Nothing ('s what) Happens on the Screen

> The *mille plateaux* of tweets, blogs, and Instagram and Facebook postings have created a culture of deep confusion. Fragmentation was supposed to enrich us, so why are we now paying the bill for all its unforeseen consequences? This was not supposed to happen.[1]
>
> Geert Lovink

On the Internet – as we usually picture it and traditionally understand its role – visual materials are secondary, superfluous. They are relegated into this subordinate position mostly because of the fact that the global network was initially constituted as a communication interface that was naturally supposed to include both verbal and visual cues; it was, however, traditionally imagined as a written conversation. The notion is alive and well even today, as we gradually shift our understanding of the Internet's core function: from facilitating an exchange of information (mutual, at least to some extent) towards – first and foremost – the accumulation and processing of incessantly delivered and passively consumed data. Visual communication also seems ancillary or marginal in comparison with the more primal substrate of the Internet: the immense database – distilling everything down into simple digits and thus nullifying the sensual character of the content it contains. Additionally, the supplementary status of the visual is further justified both by the traditional understanding of the Web as a new, multilayered version of text, or even a novel public sphere, one based around the exchange of "mail," as well as by the history of media, technical instruments, and Web-associated software.

The first photo posted on the
World Wide Web, a picture of Les
Horribles Cernettes (The Horrible
CERN Girls, or LHS, a cheeky
reference to LHC, the Large
Hadron Collider), was uploaded
just 25 years ago. In the picture,
female employees of CERN, the
European Organization for Nuclear
Research, singing of their love

for the collider and leaky collectors, appear to be wearing ball
gowns and striking poses reminiscent of what would typically be
found on the cover of a soul or R&B record. 12 years later, the
first video ever to be uploaded to YouTube (hereinafter referred
to as YT) was devoid of even that minute measure of humor: in
a brief account of his visit to San Francisco Zoo, one of the site's
founders argued that the elephants behind him were "cool"
because of their long trunks, and "that's pretty much all there is
to say" about them. Despite the amusing-but-trivial content (or
maybe simply the lack of relevant information) which in both
cases may contribute to the less-than-awe-inspiring status of
these groundbreaking events in Web visuality, the pioneering
images presage the nature of a considerable portion of Internet-
based visual messaging: its tautological character (???? is an
elephant, elephants have trunks); a departure from TV-centered
narratives or traditional narratives altogether (the revelation
about elephants is not expanded into a fully fledged story
with a traditional narrative flow, plot twists, etc., and neither is it
a developing account); the short duration of the recording itself
(which, in contrast to television footage, does not necessarily
imply brevity of the message; on the contrary, chaotic delivery
combined with technical artefacts in the footage often bolster
a recording's "authenticity"); focus on the individual freely
expressing their thoughts and opinions (the only thing we learn
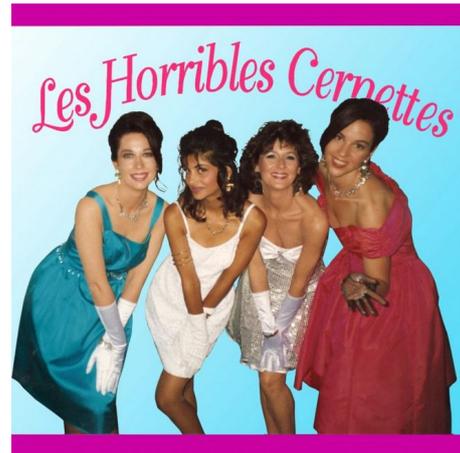
from the first YT upload is that the adolescent on the screen considers elephant trunks "cool"; elephants don't seem particularly important and could possibly be replaced by another "diversion"; the uploaded clip definitely does nothing to further the elephant's cause, nor does it critically examine the existence of institutions such as zoos); the poor quality of the footage; and a significant decrease in the time from shooting to broadcast – thus cutting the time for editing, post-production, revisions, etc., to the bare minimum.

Paradoxically, this view of Web visuality as merely supplementary in nature is only reinforced by the feedback loop between the high output volume of digital visuals – an "overabundance" thereof – and their repetitive formulas and themes. The same subjects are explored in different variants, an infinite number of times. Meanwhile, perceiving YT as a search engine – it is, after all, the second most popular one, right after Google – may in turn produce a shift of Internet imagery towards more central positions. Insofar, therefore, as Google's "image search" remains a rather negligible functionality in the company's overall offer, YT is still the prime destination for people looking for video answers to search queries that begin with "How to..." or "How do you..." The fact that YT is not recognized as a search engine despite the massive volume of similar queries it handles – because it only peruses its own archive, rather than the "Internet" in general (the latter naturally limited and filtered by browsers to a considerable extent) – allows us to acknowledge more than just its scale. As a conglomerate encompassing a multitude of separate dimensions and network functionalities, YT in its current form far transcends our traditional understanding of databases, archives, social media sites, search engines, TV channels, blogs, and even

corporate media entities.

Therefore, YT is simultaneously a major center of both visual production and consumption, though somewhat elusive on account of lacking its own production infrastructure (contrary to the traditional model, at least). As a platform for "sharing" visual products, however, YT not only retains a consistent self-identity but also brings to the surface (and naturalizes) the many decisions regarding the role of visual communication and the design of the experiences to be engendered in the audience. In light of the shift of focus of media studies – from screen to algorithmic guts – diagnosed in the introduction to this issue of *Widok*, we may turn only towards an iconoclastic critique of the screen, calling for the colorful veil to be torn down, for the interface to be replaced by one apt for development, and for mass instruction in "relevant" Web languages to be instituted. Such an approach would have us focus primarily on the more technological particulars deciding YT's monopolist position, including the strategic nullification of technological barriers: openness to diverse video formats (on the one hand), and offering snippets of code that allow YT clips to be embedded outside of the platform (on the other),[2] both of which reinforce YT's monopoly in the field of online video distribution.

But we can also take the view that sees new visual phenomena such as YT as a new system of distributing visual media via a structure that is multi-pronged rather than multi-layered. Such a perspective would not have us abstain from criticizing the content of the images; instead, it would allow us to see YT as an institution and a visual experience project (such as, for instance, a cinema) rather than simply a place to stream video clips.

Broadcast Yourself

Ever-greater efforts, if not desperate obstinacy, are nowadays required to reinforce the belief that the Internet is still a space – even a potential one – of emancipation and the alleviation of

perceptible divisions, where new practices (such as selfless "sharing"), horizontal communities (e.g. P2P), and visions of the future emerge. [3] Regardless of academic debate among media theorists on whether algorithms comprising the core of the contemporary Web are, at their heart, a catalyst for communicative capitalism or rather a tool that can be used against it, our digital modernity is essentially a state of ever-deepening crisis. [4] This is evidenced, at the very least, by the reappearance of the figure of "general intellect," a notion first outlined in Marx's *Fragment on Machines*, invoked in recent decades particularly in the context of the transformation of the model of labor triggered by the emergence of new technologies (both in Marx's time and today). [5]

Irrespective of the sweeping, general nature of the concept of "general intellect" – "an idealist residue [in Marx's thought]" – and the all-too-tempting compatibility of that impressive concept with the popular (but false) vision of the Internet as a incorporeal, immaterial *perpetuum mobile* of thought exchange, we should mention that "general intellect" seems instead to be a side effect of the transformations of labor driven by the development of production technologies, or something that the world of technology-based labor has yet to secure for itself. "Capital here – quite unintentionally – reduces human labor, expenditure of energy, to a minimum. This will redound to the benefit of emancipated labor." [6] A look at the Internet in its current, disenchanted form indicates that, conversely, new technologies have been broadening both the time and the reach of labor. Creativity has, for now, been reduced to the manufacture of ever-new, increasingly well camouflaged forms of labor and, primarily, to the unpaid fabrication of content produced not to satisfy the needs of manufacturers, but rather the platforms profiting from said content.

YT, a trivial medium and a visual nexus of the Web in crisis, of the dead Internet, is neither the most unique nor the greediest

example – Facebook, Google, and their secret EdgeRank and PageRank algorithms [7] are the most efficient (or at least the most extensively discussed) machines in this particular context. But digital images and "glowing rectangles" – with YT and devices capable of streaming its content at the forefront – suggest a language that is still relatively new, evolving at a rapid pace, not yet fully codified (in essence, still difficult to process algorithmically), and as global as possible. And thus this language can no longer be ignored, if only because of the sheer volume, pace, and intensity of the visual exchange it entails and its heretofore unseen reach.

> The numbers are astonishing: one hundred hours of YouTube video are uploaded every minute. Six billion hours of video are watched every month on the site, one hour for every person on earth. The 18-34 age group watches more YouTube than cable television. [8]
> More video is uploaded to the site in one month than the three biggest networks in America have produced together over the past 60 years. Every single day, the site is visited over four billion times and estimates say that the average user will spend at least 15 minutes there every single day. [9]

We don't need to add that these statistics are already outdated, with the numbers steadily rising – how long will they continue to do so? – and their scale becoming increasingly abstract.

> [...] scholars have argued that the architecture of cathedrals, temples, and mosques creates a sense of the community of believers through the ritual practices of everyday life. Benedict Anderson has claimed that the mass readership of newspapers and novels creates an imagined community of the nation. What kind of community can we hope for from a global dissemination of images, and how can our work help to create it?

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This question, posited by Susan Buck-Morss a year before the launch of YT, remains highly relevant despite the sheer volume of images that have been incorporated into the dynamic of the global spectacle, and despite the subordination of so many of them to the logic of clickbait. Secondly, images remain too complex for digital analysis tools intent on data acquisition to describe them with a sufficient degree of precision. This is the source of many bizarre mistakes in Google search results – which still favors tags, external in relation to the images – or surprising errors in Google Images mosaics and the results of "reverse image search" based on machine-learning augmented pattern recognition (the most efficient program of the sort, Google's Deep Dream, suffers from apophenia). [11] Like the emotions that Facebook has been intently trying to fathom (and impose on us) for the past couple of years, images continue to resist comprehensive interpretation: algorithms sort out when, where, and with whom from metadata, but struggle to classify tone, attitude, or specific type of expression (such as ambiguity, irony, or sarcasm), particularly when they have to do it from image alone. Thus, images can serve as shelter, as camouflage, and as evasion from the relentless pursuit of tracking sites and software that designs choice and thought pathways for users. The fate of the video streams on YT, one that the site was perhaps doomed to suffer from the very beginning, serves as a warning to creators and distributors of images that are progressive in nature – images projecting an unimaginable future or exposing the mostly imperceptible present or past.

"According to 2007 statistics, only between 0.5% – 1.5% users of most popular [...] social media sites – Flickr, YouTube, and Wikipedia – contributed their own content."[12] The disproportion between the number of broadcasters and recipients on YT, effectively denying the platform's original intention to activate the dormant masses using a more visual, image-based language, is striking, even if not immediately obvious. Although a perspective focused primarily on visual communication does not make it any less significant – the wider availability of the means of visual production has not produced a genuinely radical nullification of the differences between broadcasters and consumers – it cannot at the same time be distilled down into the more traditional binary opposition of activity and passivity. Over the course of the 12 years of YT's existence, the options given to users – also dependent on their choice of login (some available only through Google+ since 2013) or whether they have a premium account – along with the classification of their actions on the platform, have changed multiple times. The possibilities for interaction are plenty, but nowadays, after multiple changes to the YT algorithm between 2012 and 2017, running time is one of the site's key positioning criteria. Which *You*, if not the one that actually uploads its own, original footage to YT, is the focus of the platform's vision? That *You* can be portrayed in at least two different ways.

The motto *Broadcast Yourself* does more than just promise that from now on everyone will have suitable, individual visual representation. First and foremost, it ascribes to the *You* a somewhat unobvious need to express oneself before an international audience. Despite the grammatical ambiguity of the English *You*, there can be no doubt that in this particular instance it denotes the singular rather than the plural pronoun; more
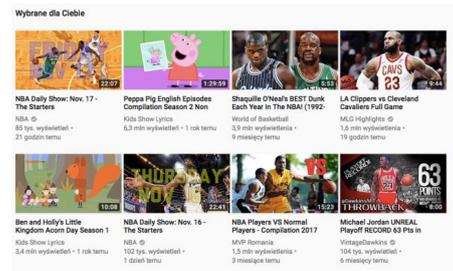
precisely, it denotes multiple instances of the singular "you," instances which cannot ever be expected to become a "we" or the plural "you." It denotes individuals now equipped with a range of instruments that allow each and every one of them to reach a seemingly boundless audiences.

Yet, from the perspective of the site, each *You* counts, in the form of data divined from users' every movement, whose every step (searching, streaming, stopping) is a reaction – quantifiable, and linked in a complex manner with other data. This results in both the specific positioning of a given clip, as well as the establishment of one's current – and ideally future – preferences.[13]

Such a mechanism, obviously in a more complex and much less visible form, is implemented across innumerable websites which acquire and process user data. YT, however, is a fairly simple machine in that particular regard, and lays the mechanism bare, at least to some extent.

> Casio, for instance, has introduced with one of its new models a "YouTube capture mode" which supports optimized recordings according to YouTube's standard. And as a convenient extra, these cameras automatically record any 15 seconds before the record button is pushed. Thus, if a user realizes with some delay that a situation turns out to be a typical "YouTube moment" worth recording and sharing online, it is (almost) never too late to push the button: the camera has already captured 15 seconds of the immediate past.[14]

This particular instance is not only about eliminating our mistakes, our lack of attention, or poor reflexes, but also about a more literal, visible, and media-designed presence of the future in the present as a "feeling of virtual experience, one that has not yet happened as past."[15] Thus, YT embodies the shift brought on by the advent of Web 2.0 and the broadly defined algorithmization of the Internet. Like McLuhan's example of

electric light as a medium also being the message, YT changes "the scale and form of human association and action"[16] regardless of "content," changes the flow of time relative to desire, and does not teach us to want inasmuch as it unveils what we are certain to want in the future. Moreover, the time-distorting assortment of ostensibly unrelated *fragments* and brief video clips is pasted back into an *unbroken continuum* of your choices – a potentially infinite and auto-launched *stream* of images. YT not only offers you a collection of clips tailored to satisfy your (future) desires, views, and vision of the world (in this regard, it resembles Facebook's News Feed, similarly customized and ultimately reinforcing one's views and beliefs) – since 2015 it hasn't even left you a couple of seconds to reflect on what you've seen: you neither have to reload a clip nor look for a new one.

Despacito

In the opening scene of HBO's *Treme*, a TV series about post-Katrina New Orleans, a Tulane University professor (played by John Goodman) is interviewed by a reporter from a national news channel. Driven to rage by the reporter's clichéd approach and

empty words that ring hollow in the face of overwhelming tragedy, the professor snatches the reporter's microphone and throws it into the murky waters that swept the city just days before. After coming home, he sits in front of the computer, turns his webcam on, and begins with an awkward: "Hello, YouTube." In subsequent recordings, he rants against the residents of other American cities and George W. Bush, accusing them of turning their backs on New Orleans in its hour of need, of being unwilling to help as disaster unfolded or during post-flood reconstruction,

and of abandoning any serious efforts at determining those responsible for the tragedy and the crimes that followed. His offensive language, politically involved tone, and rhetorical ability, interspersed with nervous sips of beer, make him – a middle-aged white man – an overnight sensation on YT, which launched in 2005, the same year that Katrina hit New Orleans. This local hero, however, would fade into obscurity rather quickly, as would his initially highly popular rants, rendered obsolete and uninteresting by the barrage of new clips of cute kittens, sponsored vlog content from a personal trainer couple, or lengthy walkthroughs of recent blockbuster video games. Regardless of Google's 2006 acquisition of YT – which resulted in the sweeping censorship of content, alongside settlements and collaborations with major media conglomerates – the site, since its launch, has embodied many of the structural qualities that subordinated the Internet to the dynamics of the late capitalist spectacle.

Initially, YT roused considerable hope. In combination with the rising availability of webcams and video-capable camera phones, the free platform that offered an easy, straightforward way to upload and distribute video content seemed to be an opportunity to even the fight for more voice and visibility against the major cable networks and their monotone message. The means of producing and distributing images – particularly moving images – were for the first time within arm's reach of the masses. In theory, one could not only say but show anything, and the "Broadcast Yourself" slogan may have seemed to some to be a new opening for representational identity politics.

"The degree to which YouTube video content is »user-generated« in the strong sense [...] is open to question."[17] It is

estimated that the ratio ranges from 50/50 to 80/20 in favor of user-generated content.[18] The problem is that it's difficult to determine where the line separating corporate and user-generated content actually runs, given that the latter includes various montages, mashups, and remixes of existing images, texts, and sounds (additionally, "user-generated content" also includes comments and descriptions). Despite the hopes of a revolution in self-expression and creativity that platforms like YT were supposed to usher in, both the content and its visual language are repetitive and prone to rehashing images of popular culture produced by media corporations, along with the more grassroots, non-critical efforts aimed mostly at self-promotion popularized by vlogs. Creativity has become an instrument to be used in the process of "making it to the big leagues" – attracting attention rather than trying to construct a novel message. The grassroots aesthetic and its attendant short-term "reality effect" are immediately co-opted by advertising agencies and harnessed in the service of sales. Derivative language and uncritical content, however, are not the most pressing issues here, although we need to remember that YT is increasingly used, not only in Poland, to spread hate speech, incite violence, and promote the far right,[19] who are unsurprisingly very fond of the brief-but-intense (TED after hours...[20]), "honest" diatribes, labeled with short, hard-hitting titles ("Marian Kowalski massacres/destroys/ridicules...") YT contains a plethora of valuable, progressive titles – lectures and discussions held in squats, coffee shops, and universities, capable (via the site) of reaching an audience far broader than those in attendance; archival footage that enables fact-checking, used rather reluctantly by mainstream media organizations ("he said"/"she said"); clips from avant-garde and independent movies; and even cartoons, helping parents break away from the bland offer of the mainstream Disney channels.

In 2012, 99% of YT traffic was generated by only 30% of the

overall content stored on its servers.²¹ The problem here is not the repetitive, non-critical content that dominates the YT archives, but rather the fact that every piece of content – even the most precious or revolutionary, such as the professor's rant from *Treme* – is locked in a rigged struggle for the audience's attention, and doomed at best to function as one of many images in a continuous stream. Within the free-to-use platform, viewers' attention both performs labor – of generating "traffic" and data (viewing data is crucially important to the platform's owners) – and is offered by YT as a commodity to be purchased by advertisers.²²

Naturally, it is not only the site's visitors who perform unpaid labor – so do its more active users, providing it with content but turning a profit for themselves only when their films are shared sufficiently and watched for long enough. As one of the forerunners of the sharing economy, YT barely produces any content itself (aside from mashups, instructional videos, and manifestos), living instead off user-provided content which attracts and captures the attention of other users.²³

YT, therefore, is a corporate version of, or a parasite on, the idea of the free sharing of content online, and indirectly on the idea of free access. On the one hand, it protects corporate property with special channels like VEVO and pays dividends to the owners of the most popular videos, while on the other it is still a free-to-use tool for sharing content, essentially making control of its circulation that much more difficult. Hence why discussions and critiques of the free-use practices *copyjustright*, *copyfarleft*, and various popular Creative Commons licenses usually emphasize their liberal provenance, or at the very least their naivety, the latter manifesting itself as the "dematerialization" of creative activity. The dominant licenses do not allow the works they cover to be used commercially; such an approach to distribution generates no profit for the independent author and thus has no potential to change their financial situation. The

cooperative copyfarleft system would allow commercial and paid use of content produced by collectives that would still be freely distributed and used within those collectives, and would be protected by a "non-alienation clause" (thus precluding corporate takeover).[24]

The critique of unpaid labor both for and on YT cannot, however, be limited to the platform's capacity as a tool for distributing and consuming content, but also has to apply to its capacity as an archive. Although YT may seem to be an immense video library, this "archive without a museum,"[25] promising all-encompassing collections, quickly proves itself to be more than a little selective. Aside from its piecemeal and selective collections of "historic" content (even of that no longer covered by copyright), and its pervasive censorship – eliminating pornographic and violent content, such as video recordings of executions, and offering users in different countries different sets of copyrighted videos – YT lacks systematic, orderly, and professional classification efforts, while those it has implemented are error-prone and tend to favor clickbait. In YT's case, trusting in an archive that would be produced from the bottom up but controlled and stimulated from the top down, and based on unpaid and unqualified labor, has produced an abyss dominated by commercial content – captivating but deficient. Although it hasn't always been the case, and although P2P practices maintain the circulation of avant-garde content mostly excluded from mainstream distribution channels, in the broader view, trusting in such a system of data storage – one that relieves the state and state institutions from funding professional archiving efforts – may very well result in the irretrievable loss of many precious pieces of content, or at the very least make them impossible to locate in the wilderness of data, a wilderness which itself prefers and promotes content that is popular, or at least similar to that which the user has just watched.

Conversely, as a forum or as a microcosm of the public sphere,

YT – especially in the form of video blogs – offered a vision of expressive individuals joining innumerable *ad hoc* communities. It created a public sphere based on "negotiations and a willingness to compromise," [26] a staple of the Habermasian utopia, but one that was extremely fragmented, where – somewhat by design – all views could be expressed and could find an audience. Critics of YT's "traditional" incarnation, including Geert Lovink and Jodi Dean, have already emphasized the point that blogging leads to a homogenization of meaning and the transformation of communication into mere empty clicks: in a torrent of opinions, one is hard-pressed to find hard facts, and yet the counter-public sphere [27] withers without a dominant narrative for it to contravene.

> Word-clouds aren't revolutionary. They are elements of communicative capitalism, elements that reinforce the collapse of meaning and argument and thus hinder argument and opposition. [...] One can't argue with a word-cloud. [28]

> Bloggers are creative nihilists because they are "good for nothing." They [...] have turned their futility into a productive force. They are the nothingists who celebrate the death of the centralized meaning structures and ignore the accusation that they would only produce noise. [29]

The same messages are replayed and repeated back and forth; this communication, however, does not have much in common with the community-forming phaticness often brought up in ethnographic analyses of language. Forms and modes of expression that are potentially subversive (irony) either wither away or participate (remix) in the dynamic driven by "novelty" and "clickability." Blogs and vlogs do not form communities, nor do they connect broadcasters with their audience by offering symbolic group identities, self-reflection, and a group image; under the guise of openness, they inject noise and gibberish into all sorts of content – making it impossible to take a position

against one specifically articulated ideology; they also muddle the lines between the public and the private, between work and play, pulling us all into an economy of working in our free time and engaging in pretend play while at work.

According to Dean, blogs offer "participation" instead of "participation in"; they produce entities that are "apolitical" (outside politics) and thoughtless, which are not offered truths and facts but competing opinions, excess, repetition, update, and excerpt. If, like Susan Buck-Morss, we recognize that images are the basic global tool of communication nowadays, responsible for possible visions of the future and capable of creating transnational communities, [30] then the upgraded – increasingly focused on image promotion and self-aggrandizement – form of blogosphere that YouTube has become will be nothing more than a trap for progressive and critical imagery – an endless stream of white noise capable of overpowering everything and everyone.

1   Geert Lovink, "Overcoming Internet Disillusionment: On the Principles of Meme Design,"
      e-flux no. 83 (2017), http://www.e-flux.com/journal/83/141287/overcoming-internet-
      disillusionment-on-the-principles-of-meme-design/ (accessed July 10, 2017).

2   These and other qualities have been correctly pointed out in one of the peer reviews of
      this essay.

3   See, e.g.: Hito Steyerl, "Too Much World: Is the Internet Dead?," *e-flux* no. 49 (2013),
      http://www.e-flux.com/journal/49/60004/too-much-world-is-the-internet-dead/
      (accessed July 10, 2017); Geert Lovink, "Overcoming Internet Disillusionment."

4   See: Matteo Pasquinelli, *Animal Spirits: A Bestiary of the Commons* (Rotterdam: NAi
      Publishers, 2008); Tiziana Terranova, *Red Stack Attack! Algorithms, Capital and the
      Automation of the Common*,
      http://www.academia.edu/8430149/Red_Stack_Attack_Algorithms_Capital_and_the_Automation_o
      (accessed December 9, 2017).

5   The labor of introducing this particular text into the discourse in Poland has mostly
      been shouldered by the editorial staff of *Praktyka Teoretyczna*; see, especially: Mikołaj
      Ratajczak, "Postoperaistyczne lektury Marksowskiego Fragmentu o maszynach

w świetle krytyki" ["Post-Operaist Critical Readings of Marx's Fragment on Machines"], *Praktyka Teoretyczna* no. 9 (2013); Joanna Bednarek, "Praca biopolityczna i nowy skład pracowy" ["Biopolitical Labor and the New Composition of Labor"], *Praktyka Teoretyczna* no. 5 (2012).

6   McKenzie Wark, *General Intellects: Twenty-Five Thinkers for Twenty-First Century* (New York–London: Verso, 2017), e-book.

7   Matteo Pasquinelli, "Google's PageRank Algorithm: A Diagram of the Cognitive Capitalism and the Rentier of the Common Intellect," in *Deep Search: The Politics of Search Beyond Google*, eds.Konrad Becker and Felix Stalder (London: Transaction Publishers, 2009).

8   Nicholas Mirzoeff, *How to See the World: An Introduction to Images, from Self-Portraits to Selfies, Maps to Movies, and More* (New York: Basic Books, 2016).

9   Marta Majorek, *Kod YouTube. Od kultury partycypacji do kultury kreatywności* [*The YouTube Code. From Participation Culture to a Culture of Creativity*] (Kraków: Universitas, 2015), 27.

10   Susan Buck-Morss, "Visual Studies and Global Imagination," *Papers of Surrealism* no. 2 (2004).

11   See: Zach Blas, Jemima Wyman, *Im here to learn so :))))))* (included in this issue of *View*); Hito Steyerl, "A Sea of Data: Apophenia and Pattern (Mis-)Recognition," in *Duty Free Art* (London: Verso, 2017).

12   Lev Manovich, "The Practice of Everyday (Media) Life," in *Video Vortex Reader: Responses to YouTube*, eds. Geert Lovink and Sabine Niederer (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2008), 33.

13   At one point YT changed its positioning criteria – from the number of views to running time. This approach made game walkthroughs, among other types of content, much more visible on the site.

14   Eggo Müller, "Where Quality Matters: Discourses on the Art of Making a YouTube Video," in *The YouTube Reader*, eds. Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau (Stockholm: National Library of Sweden, 2009), 126.

15   Steven Goodman, Luciana Parisi, "Machines of Memory," in *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*, eds. Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 346.

16   Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), 9.

17   Phil Benson, *The Discourse of YouTube: Multimodal Text in a Global Context*, e-book.

18   Benson, *The Discourse of YouTube*.

19   See: Łukasz Drozda, "Przepraszam, bez antysemityzmu" ["Oh, Sorry… Without Anti-Semitism"], *Kultura Popularna* no. 2 (2013).

20   See: Benjamin Bratton, "We need to talk about TED," *The Guardian*, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/dec/30/we-need-to-talk-about-ted (accessed June 1, 2017).

21   "Almost all YouTube views come from just 30% of films," *Daily Telegraph*, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/news/8464418/Almost-all-YouTube-views-come-from-just-30-of-films.html (accessed June 1, 2017).

22   See: The "Paying Attention" issue of *Culture Machine*, vol. 13 (2012), https://www.culturemachine.net/index.php/cm/issue/view/24 (accessed July 10, 2017).

23   See: Evgeny Morozov's sweeping critique of the digital and physical iterations of the sharing economy, Evgeny Morozov, "Szwondel Ubera, kant Facebooka" ["The Uber Swindle and the Facebook Con"], *Gazeta Wyborcza Magazyn Świąteczny*, June 13, 2015, http://wyborcza.pl/magazyn/1,124059,18111508,Szwindel_Ubera__kant_Facebooka.htm (accessed July 15, 2017).

24   Dmytry Kleiner, "Copyfarleft and Copyjustright," *Mute*, http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/copyfarleft-and-copyjustright (accessed June 10, 2017); and a critique of that approach: Stefan Meretz, "Copyfarleft & a Critique," *Mute*, http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/copyfarleft-critique (accessed June 10, 2017).

25   See: an essay on YT referencing Hal Foster's concept of "archives without museums": Jens Schröter, "On the Logic of the Digital Archive," in *The YouTube Reader*.

26   Majorek, *Kod YouTube*,9.

27   Lovink, "Overcoming Internet Disillusionment."

28   Jodi Dean, *Blog Theory: Feedback and Capture in the Circuits of Drive* (Cambridge:

Polity Press, 2010), 90.

29   Geert Lovink, *Zero Comments: Blogging and Critical Internet Theory* (London: Routledge, 2007), 1.

30   Susan Buck-Morss, Visual Studies...