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Note

1.   This issue, among others, has been recently explored in the short and dense book *The Roh and the Cooked: Tony Conrad and Beverly Grant in Europe* (Berlin: August Verlag, 2012) by Branden W. Joseph, a publication worth mentioning because it may provide some further directions in research on avant-garde film. As the subtitle indicates, the book focuses on Tony Conrad and Beverly Grant's journey to Europe in 1972 and explores the impact of this experience on their subsequent work. As Joseph points out, the couple's trip to Europe to attend Documenta 5 in Kassel is seen as a key moment for avant-garde film. It is in fact a transitional phase, in which the ultra-dominant category of 'structural film' (the manifestation of modernism in experimental film) had reached a stage of crisis. Conrad, creator of *The Flicker* (1966), who had been included in this very category by P. Adams Sitney, managed to break free from this narrowing field of production precisely as a result of his encounters while travelling in Europe. One meeting in particular, essential to the issues discussed here, proved to be decisive: an encounter with Otto Muehl and Austrian Actionism. Once back in the United States, Conrad set out to dismantle the entire paradigm of structural film with his *Yellow Movies* (screens painted on paper, the colours fading slowly with the passage of time). He went even further with a whole series of experiments with 'cooked' film strips, in which celluloid became a substitute for various recipes, to

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Moving data

Sophie Gnesda and Ramón Reichert

Mobile communication via mobile and wireless devices not only dominates social communication in terms of everyday media but has already replaced the paradigm of the computer as the medium of convergence for information and communication technologies. The development of smart phones has far-ranging impacts on the consumption of previously disconnected individual media and has laid the ground for an omnipresent convergence of media, which is strongly advancing to encompass everyday use. The smart phone has become a multi-layered media device, used as a game console, monitor, video and photo camera, and television or biometric tool, depending on its software settings, hardware configuration, and the diverse range of applications available.

The dominance of smart phones in everyday culture has also awakened the interest of media studies to engage with the aesthetic, cultural, and social dimensions of the use of mobile phones. By this time the smart phone has even advanced to become an object of research in recent academic literature, so that along with media-sociological and techno-historical reflections there are also noticeably more media-aesthetic and usage-cultural-themed investigations on the topic of mobile information and communication technologies.

Moving Data

The iPhone and the Future of Media

Edited by Pelle Snickars
and Patrick Vonderau

The volume *Moving Data: The iPhone and the Future of Media* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), edited by Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau, is the first comprehensive publication on the media culture of the iPhone. The collection consists of 22 original essays and is characterised by stringent arguments within a multi-layered structure of topics. The essays have a high level of reflection, are well-grounded, problem-oriented, and offer detailed analysis of the new media object in question. Innovative theory and empirical studies are intertwined nicely in *Moving Data*. The editors avoid dealing superficially with many issues and consistently provide – for both theoretical studies as well as the socio-cultural analysis of the present – innovative and independent explanatory models.

Unfortunately, the editors increase the commercial hype surrounding the iPhone by converting the book cover into an advertising space and using the ubiquitous device as an alluring cover image. The narrow approach to the introduction of multi-touch screens is also represented in the thematic focus of the volume,

which fails to cover the theoretically and historically relevant developments of the 1990s. Remarkable gaps also appear within the analysis of the context of reception and application, wherein empirical studies regarding the application of media are neither systematically nor comparatively used. Media-sociological deficits also appear in the overview of available applications, which apparently could not be processed in terms of their life- and subject-forming aspects. Nevertheless, the volume enriches a research field predominantly based on communication studies[1] with an explicit focus on film and media studies. The volume also embraces sociological, gender-theoretical, intercultural, and power dynamic considerations, and therefore provides important exposure to applied cultural studies which examine the socio-cultural effectiveness of media technologies.

In their introduction, Snickars and Vonderau reflect the methodological and epistemological orientation of their volume and follow the pioneering claim to address the iPhone as a phenomenon of convergence of different technologies, cultures, and practices of marketing. Considering this background, they try to interpret the iPhone as a media-cultural upheaval and locate its social effectiveness in comparable media archaeological upheavals such as the development of photography (1810s) and telegraphy (1830s), the invention of the telephone (1876), the phonograph (1877), wireless telegraphy, and the development of moving images and cinema (1880). Literature on the subject of mobile telecommunications has placed more attention on the question of the relationship between the media industry, technological innovation, and cultural change. Rich Ling's *The Mobile Connection: The Cell Phone's Impact on Society* (2004) deals with the everyday cultural implications of mobile phones and finds in their media use a novel behavior change in youth cultural communication. This socio-cultural perspective is continued in Gerard Goggin's *Cell Phone Culture* (2006), which tackles developments prior to the emergence of the iPhone with the future role of the mobile phone in everyday culture. However, *Moving Data* goes far beyond these empirically-based and diagnostically-motivated assessments, offering theoretical perspectives and transdisciplinary analysis models in different essays.

The opening chapter by Nana Verhoeff presents an ambitious media archeology perspective. She shows that the iPhone is to be regarded as a hybrid knowledge-object of mobile data communication and processing, that is organised as a 'layered Inferface' (p. 34) and establishes a new type of mobile interaction describes by the term 'performative cartography'. 'Originating in the art of making maps but putting forward a new regime of understanding and representing space, mobile cartography has infused spatial representation with a distinct temporal and procedural dimension.' (p. 33)

The contributions gathered in 'Data Archaeologies' by Alexandra Schneider, Kristopher L. Cannon, and Jennifer M. Barker examine the media conditions of the

technical infrastructure, multimedia recording, storage and visualisation (mapping, monitoring), data, and the use of individualised information. *Moving Data* opens a wide field of research like meta-theoretical data criticism and impressively demonstrates that studies of new media must show how mobile communication media lead to the normalisation of life and the development of lifestyles, and may cause an expansion of social control.

Following the contributions of the first chapter, the mobile technical infrastructure of the iPhone can be seen as a technology that can enable a wide scope of unregulated flexible communication and content distribution for tactical media use. The geolocation associated with the iPhone operates below the visible application layers and is therefore less than a medial limit of information flow perceived by the recipient, rather than the domination and power neutral tool that Jennifer Street Kamp criticised in the contribution 'Media Archaeology, Installation Art and the iPhone Experience'. The second chapter builds in a coherent manner on the well-founded media technological explanations and on media archaelogical contextualisations of the first chapter and moves the 'Politics of Redistribution' into the focus of the investigation. Göran Bolin, Alisa Perren, and Karen Petruska examine the exchange relation of the digital economy and new forms of image and film aesthetics. They show that with the iPhone, a new visual culture of cinematic and televisual representation has emerged, which is technically feasible but always including the dynamic distribution of content through the user. The iPhone has components which, through the help of their microbes, are capable of exploding the supposed technological determination in the field of application and performative culture development.

The third chapter examines the contemporary cultural significance of iPhone apps and was provided by the editors with the rather strange title 'The App Revolution'. In our opinion, the questions raised in this chapter represent the most informative part of the book when it is viewed as an attempt to formulate a diagnosis of the present media studies. Because of the apps and the application software for mobile devices such as smart phones and tablet computers, a new media culture in everyday life has emerged, which also exerts a large influence on social behavior. The essay by Barbara Flueckiger follows a general hypothesis, which deals with the interactive aspects of the iPhone apps. Based on this assessment, the topics explored by Gerard Goggin, Janey Gordon, and Anu Koivunen have brought the concrete changes of mobile apps in the application culture of contemporary society. With their feedback technologies, iPhone apps are not only making life easier, but also multiply social control in peer-to-peer networks.

The apps for mobile devices usually monitor/record by means of GPS. Subject-centered data and information is used to make the data-directed behavior of friends and family visible in real time. The contribution by Oliver Leistert titled

'The iPhone's Failure: Protests and Resistances' shows that mobile-accessible social networking sites and their comment functions, hypertext systems, ranking, and voting procedures ensure that the daily life and behavior of mobilised users increasingly become the scene of mutual observation.

This observation situation is often described as 360-degree feedback – everyone can monitor anything, anywhere, at all times. The use of location-independent, real-time transmission make commercially-driven apps the appropriate tool for media self-management techniques in standby mode. Because apps always influence the attitudes of subjects through their use, they can be regarded as persuasive media. In this context, Anders Albrechtslund speaks of the enforcement of a new 'Participatory Surveillance' (2008), which occurs at the interface between the mobile consumer devices and social networking sites. With their various functions, through a collective process, our everyday life and behavior has become an area of social evaluation and adaptation processes.

The fourth and final chapter titled 'Mobile Lives' focuses on the aesthetic practices of media use and tries to prove that the iPhone – beyond its economic management use – opens up to artistic and creative uses. Anne Balsamo deals with this in her article 'I Phone I Learn', which sees the iPhone as a place of subjectivity and cultural memory. Frauke Behrendt investigates this in the perspective-rich essay 'Playing the iPhone', which explores new art forms by Application Softart. The use of the iPhone as a tool for experimental and artistic practices is a new format to be further investigated. It is a media art of the everyday, which makes a new aesthetic possible in ordinary usage, in mobile and situational contexts. The app art is as mobile as their carrier media and can produce an artistic experience anywhere at any time. In this sense, the app art is understood as contributing to the democratisation of art. It transforms mobile communication and information in a haptic experience and controllable medium of art and replaces them by way of their functional and useful frame of reference. In this creative user culture, 'Mediascapes' (Mark Deuze/Watson Brown/Hans Ibold/Nicky Lewis/Peter Blank, p. 307) remove the smart phone from solipsistic application functions and make it the medium of collective experience and collaborative networking.

Though the volume provides a broad variety of theoretically-challenging texts, it does exhibit some shortcomings in terms of its conceptual arrangement. In addition to this, the reworking of the transformation in media associated with the iPhone shows some theoretical flaws. Among others, the social and economic production conditions involved in the process of manufacturing remain under-exposed. This inevitably leads to the minimisation and suppression of issues regarding exploitative relationships and global trading.[2] Ultimately, in the context of the growing importance of mobile telecommunications and their applications, the volume *Moving Data: The iPhone and the Future of Media* takes a multi-faceted

look at the digital reorganisation of the mobile user interface and develops new research approaches and perspectives for the study of mobile information and communications technologies.

Notes

1. Hjorth & Burgess & Richardson 2012.
2. Grace 2013.

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