

## Youth and Media Consumption - A New Reader Arises

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The ways youth currently relate to communication technologies may provide evidence regarding the appropriations of part of media reception in the near future. This text reflects upon the history of media appropriation by youth and considers Hobsbawn's thinking (1995), which describes the scenario in the middle of the technological development of the 1970's: "Youth has become an independent group. This group is a concentrated mass of purchasing power and this is because each new generation of adults was socialized in a self-conscious youthful culture." It is understood that from that historical period, a new reader arose, who went through changes in their cognitive profile, according to Santaella (2004). We also consider Turkle's (1997) thinking, who believes computers significantly change people's relationships and daily lives, especially among youth.

Turkle (2006) mentions adolescence as a period of "moratorium", a pause, not of action, but of consequence. The author reminds us there is no action without consequence, but the high school period and even the first years of college are perceived as times with no direct consequences. However, today young people live with the AIDS threat; they begin feeling the pressure to acquire things in primary school. "You need the moratorium period to explore, to fall in and out of love with ideas, as much as with people" (Turkle, 2006:292). According to the author, cyberspace is currently offering some of this space for fun. It offers an opportunity for experimentation that is frequently absent from the rest of our lives.

In the pursuit of such evidence, we initially investigate the history of media appropriation by youth. We also observe some cyberspace environments, where young people establish different forms of relationship, exhibiting and publishing content, such as texts and images. Furthermore, this research analyzes the use of portable technologies by some of these people for the consumption of the same

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contents mentioned. The analysis considers categories such as nomadism, individualism, customization, exhibition and voyeurism, public and private space, the memory of the on-demand generation, and the profile of the youth subject of a world in transformation. It is understood that the media consumption of today's young people will determine the trends for appropriation by society in the coming years. The categories and concepts selected are the result of a preliminary observation. They can already be pointed out as important research problems to be analyzed by the different sectors that work with young people and also with trends of consumption involving communication contents and technologies.

#### The early 20<sup>th</sup> century

First, we think it is important to consider some historical aspects, relating to media, specially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Speed and physical mobility are paramount in the early 20th century. Society lives under the impact of creation. The expansion of the industrial economy involves people in radical changes to their daily habits. Inventions whose application is yet to be defined are present. It is the age of the new physics, of experiments, and the attempt to transmit signals over long distances. Many, according to Flichy (1993), make the same attempt. However, the changes are not easily introduced to people's daily lives. The impact is great, and as defined by Sevchenko (1998), the trend is usually for intimidation and disorientation. Society initially resists to changes and new theories.

The several areas suffer with the impact brought on by the changes, from daily life and household work up to the arts. However, despite the bewilderment, the speed and shifts remain. The idea to recolonize territories is there. That is why this question may be identified as one of the most important: how to communicate and transmit over long distances? People do not know exactly what to do about the new possibilities that keep coming up, but they acknowledge the need. The issue in this context is covering distances at any level. People are on the move, women start changing their status, means of transportation evolve, yet communications are still precarious.

#### Post-war technological progress

Everything that is invented needs to be perfected for daily use, whether war-oriented or not. The question is: what are the inventions for? The first impact and rejection are no longer there. Daily changes start making people think. Five centuries

after the emergence of the press, radio tries to do with voice, this very primitive form of communication, that which previously could only be done in print: store it, repeat it, and transmit it over great distances. The three inventions that transform the use of human voice, telephone, radio and tape recorder, are initially conceived as improvements to the telegraphic system. The information given by Pool (1992) points towards the social scope of radio. Considering that the phonograph, the telephone and the radio are initially conceived as an improvement to telegraphy, then telephone and radio are sister media.

What comes up as radio broadcasting is an irreversible mass medium that provides a few capital producers a channel to address the entire nation. It is an instrument to be listened to alone or with the family. *It was a companion for lonely times, the drug of the friendless* (Pool, 1992:84). Radio broadcasting replaces the neighborhood bar, the church gathering, the local band or concert. Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, sociologists describe an expanding urban civilization. Big cities, factories, geographical mobility, bureaucracy and communication media create, according to them, a society branded by the lack of personality and existence of very similar products, and radio fits that description. Telephone is different, being a product against the easy generalization that is going on.

Both telephone and radio have deep, albeit different, effects on the ecology of human activity. For instance, the urban change processes that start early in the century thrive in the 20s with the beginning of radio broadcasting. The coincidence between broadcasting and fast urbanization is a fortuitous matter, but it means that radio becomes a form of entertainment for the first generation of dwellers classified as immigrants and cast into the anonymity of new cities. They do not know their immediate neighbors nor belong to any group organized according to their own cultural traditions. To those people, radio probably provides much of what their parents had given them at parties or on countryside vacation times, at weekly religious gatherings. According to Pool (1992), radio is an excellent substitute for community social life.

At this time, the world lives another expansion era, concurrent to the post-war search for peace and reconstruction. The long-distance conveyance of information is already common, but man wants to go beyond and opens the way for space travels. People feel controlled by machines that now take over daily life with full force. Metropolises grow horizontally and may expand vertically, thanks to the versatility of

new construction materials such as reinforced concrete, specialty steels, aluminum, and resistant glass sheets that will give rise to buildings and skyscrapers.

People have their lives run by a complex engineering of flows that controls water supply systems, sewers, electricity supply, gas, telephone and transportation, besides planning communication channels, transit, and food distribution systems, health services, education and public safety. That way, in a metropolis, everything is included in a control system, even the pace at which people move around in the streets. There is a dependence on the intensity of pedestrian flows and vehicle transit, so much so that, if someone goes slower than the people around them, they may get kicked, elbowed and trampled over. If they do not cross the express way fast enough, they end up under the wheels of some car.

The total technological control over the environment results in behavioral alteration. In a mechanized society, it is men and women who must adapt to the rhythm and speed of machines, and not the other way around. The machine-imposed alteration on people's behavior causes a change in the set of values upheld by society. After all, as reports Sevchenko (2001), individuals are no longer evaluated for their personal qualities or the differences that make their personality unique. There is neither time nor space for that. In fast growing metropolises, everyone comes from somewhere else. Therefore, practically no one knows anybody; each one has their own individual history.

#### Changes to daily life

The practical way to identify and get to know others is the fastest and most direct one: by the way they dress, the symbolic objects they display, the way they talk and the tone of their voice, and the way they carry themselves. Basic communication, which precedes speech and establishes the conditions of approach, is external and based on outward symbols. As such codes change at neck breaking speeds, people live the empire of fads. Changes take place to prevent people from emulating or representing characteristics and status that do not correspond to their real place in life. People are that which they buy. In 1947, Christian Dior changes fashion standards as he creates the New Look. The new female silhouette is forged in bold designs and luxury fabrics.

The essential feature of communication, the potential to attract and captivate is concentrated in the quality of the goods a person displays, in the capital applied not only on clothing, accessories and personal objects, adds Sevchenko (2001). Also noted

are the resources and free time dedicated to the development and fitness of people's bodies, their manners, and the improvement of their communication skills.

People move quickly, according to Sennett (1997), especially into suburbs whose only access is by car. The logistics of speed alienates the body from the spaces through which it navigates, and for security reasons, the planning of expressways makes them neutral and standardized. The act of driving forces the body to remain sitting in a fixed position.

Two new associated factors – the acceleration of daily life rhythms and the invasion of technology, added to the expansion of the role of sight as a source of orientation and fast interpretation of flows – cause changes to the sensibility and to the forms of sensory perception of metropolitan populations. An over-appreciation of vision takes place, accentuated and intensified by the spreading of advertising techniques, falling mostly upon the refinement of the ability to perceive movement. In the traditional habit there is a focus on objects and artistic contexts.

Sevcenko (2001) reveals that, in this new increasingly accelerated world, the adaptation gain in sensory and cultural terms consists in establishing immediate links to the dynamic flows. The sophistication of visual abilities enables the horizons of imagination to be expanded and instigates minds to surmise more complex forms of interaction with new potentials.

Television starts making its presence known and reaches its golden age in this scenario. Radio becomes ancillary and goes through its expansion especially due to the technological adaptation of the transistor, created in 47 but used on a large scale after the 50s. In fact, television is the medium that corresponds to the appreciation of vision.

The 50s point towards individual independence, a higher degree of intellectualization, expansion of mass production, and appreciation of the young demographics. Incidentally, the general audience is now seen much more as consumers of the goods mass produced by the industry. Technological progress values youngsters who look to transistor radios for individual reception. Hobsbawm (1995:319) reminds us that the bourgeoisie expected its boys – unlike its girls – to go through a period of turbulence and banging their heads against the wall for a while before settling down. Until the 1970s, the post-war world used to be governed by a gerontocracy, to a larger extent than in most of the previous periods, especially by men who were already adults at the end or even the beginning of World War I.

Regarding teen culture, another significant new feature in this period derives from the first, as Hobsbawm sees it. Youngsters became dominant in developed market economies, partly because they now represented a concentrated mass of purchasing power, partly because each new generation of adults had been socialized as part of a self-aware teen culture and carried the marks of such experience. Another factor to be considered is the astounding speed of technological changes that give young people a measurable advantage over more conservative age groups, or at least those unable to adapt themselves. In that period, that which children could learn from their parents became less obvious than what parents did not know and children did. Generational roles were thus inverted.

As a peculiar feature of the new young culture in urban societies, Hobsbawm also mentions their prodigious ability to go international. Their independent market power makes it easier for young people to find material or cultural symbols of identity. However, what further enhances the outlines of such identity is the massive historic abyss that separates generations born before 1925 from those born after 1950. Young people were unable to grasp what their elders had experienced or felt in wars and occupations.

Tapscott (1999) writes that anyone born between 1946 and 1964 is considered a baby boomer, and that the demographic explosion was heard louder in the United States, Canada and Australia. It took place, first, because families postponed having children until after the war, and second, because the economy was stronger after the war. In 1957, for instance, US families had more than 3 children. The 50s was a time of great optimism.

The boomers could be called the Cold War generation, the post-war prosperity generation. However, as Tapscott (1999) describes, it was the impact of a revolution in communications – the rise of TV – which shaped that generation and their world. In the early 50s, when TV got to homes, people took their chairs from their spot close to the radio and moved them to face the TV set.

On its turn, the period between 1965 and 1976 was called the baby bust, especially because 15% less babies were born in the 10 years following the demographic boom. As boomers came of age between 1963 and 1982, the number of families with children at home dropped. Tapscott (1999) states that baby-busters are the best educated group in history; however, as teenagers, they lived through harsh

economic times marked by unemployment and low salaries. At the same time, they are aggressive communicators, ones that are extremely media-oriented.

Hobsbawn highlights that the Golden Age broadened the abyss, at least until the 1970s. Young men and women brought up in a time of full employment were unable to relate to the 1930s experience. An older generation was similarly incapable of understanding young people for whom a job did not mean a safe port but something that could be found at any time and let go of just as easily in exchange for a better project.

That abyss was not restricted to industrial countries. The decline of peasantry generates a similar gap between rural generations and formerly rural ones, manual labor and mechanized ones. Most of the world's population was now younger than never. In most of the Third World, where the demographic transition from high birth rates to low ones had not yet taken place, between two-fifths and half of the population were under 14 years of age at some point in the latter half of the century.

Tapscott (1999) says that a new revolution is shaping a generation and their world. However, to the youth of today, well-versed in media as they are, TV's methods are old-fashioned and inept. They are unidirectional, allowing very few to choose programs and content. This generation includes several different classes, races, religions and social perspectives. They make up a less idealistic group, more socially aware or connected. They are young web surfers who are also highly concerned for the environment.

#### Looking into contemporary youth

The release of iPhone and other smartphones has revolutionized telephone services and surprised even those who are no longer taken aback by any technological breakthroughs, as pointed out by the survey published in MTV's 2008 Young Universe Dossier. The population surveyed represented 8 million youngsters in 9 Brazilian cities, 49 million young people across the country aged between 12 and 30 from the upper, middle and lower classes.

Smartphones turned cell phones into multimedia devices that reach 74% of Brazilian youth. Among members of the 12 to 14 age group, they reach 56%. Among upper class kids, they reach 92%. Today, young people use various features of their devices, such as calling and SMS/texting, taking and sending pictures, listening to

music, playing games, downloading songs, going online, sending emails and downloading ringtones.

From 2005 to 2008, the rate of young people logging on to the Internet increased from 66 to 86%. According to survey data, such growth is related to a higher offer of free and paid places where they can access the web outside the home.

Meanwhile, TV and radio are highly popular media among young people, especially to watch movies, newscasts, soap operas, sports and TV series. At the same time, radio is seen as an outdated outlet, while the Internet is regarded the most convenient way to get in the know, the one with the best information content and the closest to people of its generation. TV is indispensable in life and good for entertainment and fun.

When it comes to the situation of the world, the most concerning topics are global warming, wars, starvation and terrorism, violence and social inequality. Brazilian youngsters still see their generation as vain, shopaholics, lackadaisical, individualistic, impatient, and stressed out. Nevertheless, they also regard themselves as well informed, technological and bold.

The backdrop in which these young people are being raised is based on a family, regardless of social class or format, which on the one hand overprotects their children and on the other is unable to fulfill its role, assigning to schools the job of teaching and educating. Schools, especially public ones, are no longer the main stage of events, for they have failed to keep up with the world's evolution in terms of technology, creativity and appeal. Schools compete directly against computers, the Internet, TV and the media in general.

Violence has made young people more scared and fearful of the world, and it is taking them longer to leave home and join the job market. At the same time, their individualism is the product of overprotection and a lifestyle that privileges that which is unique, that which is made for each consumer. The idea of group has been set aside, and each individual's will and opinion prevail. Thinking about others is a highly uncommon task for this generation, as shown by the Young Universe Dossier.

Information is found everywhere, albeit in a superficial way that lacks substance. The Internet and the media allow young people to discuss everything but most of them are unable to filter or go deeper into anything. Many are the friends listed in cell phone address books but few are those one can rely on. So far, these young people have been looking for individual solutions, trying to better their



surroundings and quality of life, although they are yet to show any intent to generate major movements. They have started influencing their families and groups, despite being still unaware of their power.

Young people expect more from the media and wish to see more practical information for their daily lives in the line-up. They expect a more active stance, more opinion-making, via campaigns and encouragement to raise people's awareness and engage them, making people think of the group and not of the individual.

A survey carried out in Brazil by magazine *Veja* among young people aged between 13 and 19 across the country has identified that boys and girls born since 1990 do not aspire to put together any sort of revolution, neither political nor sexual, like the ones the 60s and 70s youth dreamed of having. Their major wish is to make money from their work, and they are more conservative in terms of family values. The product of the technological revolution and globalization, they are still the generation of the present time. They are capable of doing several things at the same time, as mobile technologies have become an extension of their bodies and senses.

Given their familiarity with the latest technologies, they are the consultants when it comes to the devices to be purchased by the family, managing to exacerbate that which Hobsbawm described regarding the 70s. This is also a generation that lacks privacy, once that teenagers usually lay their whole lives bare on relationship websites. Orkut is the favorite among Brazilian youngsters.

Bauman (2004:82) defines that the advent of virtual proximity makes human connections simultaneously more frequent and trivial, more intense and shorter. Contacts require less time and effort to be set up and also to be broken up. "The spasms of virtual proximity end, ideally, with no leftovers or permanent sediments. It can be actually and metaphorically terminated with no more than a mere push of a button."

### Exhibition and Voyeurism

Some features and categories emerge when we look into contemporary youth. According to Virilio (2006:101), an issue related to globalization is the tyranny of the compulsive observer and the exhibitionist one as they take on each other. There would be no globalization without taking exhibitionism and voyeurism further. "Through webcams, surveillance cameras, etc., we are being increasingly confronted by a global tele-surveillance in which the fact that we can show what is made in the

world in real time leads to a “march of the gaze”, with the characteristics of modern tele-surveillance, of a modern-time panoptic... We have democratized voyeurism on a global scale.

Santaella (2007:180), as she analyzed the liquid spaces of mobility, says that the first operative word in cyberspace is content availability in language configurations that have been increasingly finding their true hypermediatic, interactive nature. The second operative word, points the author, is spilling all the beans. “To do that there is nothing better than putting up a blog. Blogs come in an array of versions: photoblogs, audioblogs, vlogs and also moblogs, the latter being updated by means of mobile technologies.”

To Santella (2007:181), in this mix of personal exposure and interaction, there is nothing that best suits these needs than relationship programs, like Orkut, whose significant expansion in Brazil can only be explained by the very peculiar characteristics of the country's teen culture.

#### Public and Private space

Many may the notions of space be, in that the virtual space is also an environment of meaning. Traditionally, the public space is defined as the space of the State and community institutions, which belong to the civil society. Bauman (2001) makes a distinction between the ideal model of public civic spaces and that of non-civic spaces. Public civic spaces are favorable to the individual practice of civility, as a common asset that people can share. Non-civic spaces are those of the great squares made to inspire respect and at the same time discourage people from lingering there, or those intended to turn a city's residents into consumers that share physical venues of consumption; places that encourage action but not interaction, of which shopping centers are the best example, as one of the places people go to the most and veritable temples of the younger population.

Santaella (2007:246) says that the separation between public and personal space, treasured in the 19th century, began with newspapers and slipped when radio and TV started bringing news and culture into homes. “The slip intensified irrevocably with the Internet, from which, provided users are skilled surfers, infinite data from multiple origins and for a wide range of purposes flow into the inner recesses of the home. Regarding mobile technologies, the situation is reverse: personal space is now descending on the public one. Therefore, all the borders get

blurred.” To the same extent that connectivity anywhere anytime is growing, so is personal space eroding away, concludes Santaella, the opposite being also true, given that because of cell phones one's private life trespasses into the public space.

#### Solitude, individualization and personalization

Augé (2006) states that the third term which defines supermodernity consists in passive individualization, which is different from the modern ideal of winning individualization. This is about the individualization of consumers, whose appearance is related to the development of communications media. In the author's view, the relationship with communications media can generate a form of passivity, insofar as it exposes individuals to the spectacle of an ephemeral now on a day-to-day basis, a form of solitude insofar as it invites them to “solitary navigation” and in which all telecommunications abstract the relationship with the other, replacing face-to-face interaction with sound or image. Augé (2006) understands this as a form of illusion, to the extent that it leaves the preparation of points of view at the discretion of each person, opinions which are in general quite induced, but perceived as personal. The author points out that he is not describing a fatality, but a group of risks, or trends.

He also reflects on the individualization of destinies or itineraries and about the illusion of free individual choice, which, in his opinion, is developed from the moment in which the cosmologies, ideologies and intellectual obligations to which they are linked are weakened. Augé (2006 p.107) says that “the ideological market has become equivalent to a self-service restaurant where individuals can provide themselves with single pieces to put together their own cosmology and have the feeling of thinking for themselves.” Passivity, solitude and individualization meet on various levels, including religious ones, according to Augé (2006).

The thought of Lipovetsky (2004) who, for his part, adopts the concept of hypermodernity, becomes pertinent in this matter. The author describes the hypermodernity based on a hyperindividualist society, where one invests emotionally in that which is closest, in the bonds which are based on similarity and common origin. In accordance with this line of thinking, a hedonist and psychologistic culture is born within the current society which incites the immediate satisfaction of necessities, extolling personal “flourishing”. In communication, these characteristics point towards a trend to individualized or personalized production of information,

either in the realm of publicity, journalism or even within the logic where everybody produces for everybody.

However, some concepts should be set aside for reflection about this individualist moment and the consequent production of content: the concept and the origin of personalization or individualization, the history of communications media and their presence in this context, becoming evidence of the process, insofar as the reading habits of this audience or the constructed culture interfere directly.

At this point it becomes important to look for historical aspects which reveal the construction of the process, especially in the relationship of the audiences with the communications media, as we wrote before. However, it becomes equally important to consider the type of isolation that many authors are currently proposing as a result of the relationships with the means of social communication.

This technological trend responds to a question in this historic stage. Lipovetsky (2004) describes hypermodernity as based on a hyperindividualist society where emotional investments are made in what is closer, in bonds established on similarities and common origins. Still according to the theory of Lipovetsky, today's society gives rise to a hedonistic, "psychologistic" culture that urges the immediate satisfaction of needs and exalts personal "flourishing". In communications, these characteristics indicate a trend towards individual or personal production of information, be it in the sphere of advertising or even that of journalism.

The concept of content personalization in social communications, still pending a clear definition, starts being outlined in a context that survived many years based on the segmentation of information in conventional media for purely commercial purposes. Digital technologies offer opportunities for personal generation of information that reach the pinnacle of individualization. Once again the media, accustomed as it is to speaking to the masses, to informing large audiences, face a paradox: the demand for individual information.

Personalization in communications is heretofore understood as the possibility for the audience to interact with the format and content of the newspaper, to consume only that which is desired in the way it is desired, within the limits of technology itself. They comprise news pieces, receipt of customized newspapers, newsletters, or messages with advertising purposes. Nevertheless, other issues start being raised regarding the behavior of media accustomed to mass production, especially in terms of large scale printing or even radio broadcasting.

Bauman (2004: 82) understands that the advent of virtual proximity makes human connections simultaneously more frequent and trivial, more intense and shorter. The most important accomplishment of virtual proximity seems to be the separation between communication and relationship. Unlike topographic proximity, it does not require previously established bonds nor necessarily results in their establishment. “Being connected is less costly than being engaged – but also considerably less productive in terms of building and maintaining bonds.”

As the generation nursed by the web is now enjoying their first years of dating, online dating is soaring. Not that it is a last resource. It is a recreational activity, it is fun.

### Nomadism and Mobility

Joshua Meyrowitz (2004) thinks that we are becoming global nomads and he affirms that although we move into a new era of globalization and wireless communication, we are going back to the earliest form of human association: nomadic hunting and gathering. A key feature, he says, of the electronic era is that most physical, social, cultural, political, and economic boundaries have become more porous, sometimes to the point of functionally disappearing. This is also one of the principle aspects of society in the past. Digital interactions create new means for non-geographic “groups” to act together for economic, social, and/or political purposes. Meyrowitz is not so optimistic when he analyzes that for many people, however, the technical possibility of connecting electronically to virtually everywhere as if it were local space may increase the danger of losing the ability to grasp the overview, to see geographical and historical context, to perceive overall patterns.

Technologically speaking, it is impossible to exclude cell phones from any historic records. More than transistor radios in the 50s, this technology leads communication platforms into a new context: that of individualization and personalization.

Pellanda (2005) states that an important change in the Internet history is the access format. The author recalls that in 1973 Martin Cooper installed the first radio base in the United States and proved it was possible to use signal cells capable of covering areas where people moved around. Japanese NTT launched the first cell phone commercial service in 1979, and to this day holds the technological and quantitative leadership in the market.

Data services such as Internet connections have gained space since then. With that, carrier revenues currently made up primarily of voice calls are bound to change in the future. According to Pellanda (2005), the solution for them is to become content providers in order to increase revenue by using data. In Brazil, there already are video streaming services, and carriers offer TV services delivered to cell phones. Nearly all European and North American carriers are now offering some kind of TV-based cell phone service.

#### Memory of the on-demand generation

Mitchell (2006) investigates the fact that society is coming into an era in which life increasingly unfolds at the intersection of the physical and real world and virtuality and digital interconnections. He considers the importance of the places and relationships that interfere with memory. His most recent work deals with themes concerning the reconfiguration of living spaces and social relations. Places and memories, according to Casalegno (2006) in a text opening an interview with Mitchell, always represent two fundamental models in the configuration of communities, the evolution of culture and people's relationships.

The author speaks of memory as based on something transmitted by face-to-face contact and that becomes a group memory and truly keeps the community and culture together. It is at this point that architecture begins to transform itself into the repository for memory, and physically, all important buildings, religious buildings, are inscribed. Mitchell (2006 p.58) states that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century radio and television entered this context and at present the network is beginning to become crucial. None of these media disappears as new ones come into being.

...if you look at this in technological terms, it has been dependent on the development of remote communication and telecommunications and recording technology, which began in the 1960s and, I repeat, this is not so revolutionary. What these electronic messages truly are is a combination of telecommunications and recording technologies under the control of a sophisticated computer. So these technologies did not truly merge until the 1960s when there was this explosive change.

The preservation of memory and the strategies used for this conservation are also pointed out by Mitchell, who presents the example of recording and the technological changes as a result of that. In his view, the human memory was

originally the only medium. That is, the oral tradition, direct transmission from one human memory to another. The development of writing and printing and recording technologies fulfilled this role, now played on a large scale by digital electronic recording. In the author's opinion, the fundamental difference with electronic media recording is that it is not necessary to physically transfer the artifacts of the memory. It is together with telecommunications in this "amazing" manner which induces this type of portable memory condition.

Virilio (2006 p.93) also considers the matter, bringing in the "lived" memory, the memory which occurs at the moment, as a new element offered by communications technologies. In his opinion, this represents a paradox, since television or the Internet and other technologies all promote the idea of a memory of the present moment. "It is as if there were this magnifying glass effect, not on an object, but on a moment in time: a dilatation effect." From this perspective, the author sees these technologies as working like a telescope for the memory. Virilio believes that the Internet and information technology will make it possible to see what is happening in communication in the shortest space of time. At this point in his considerations, the author defines that this is a memory which concerns the community, since there is no memory on its own. According to his thinking, memory is a language, a tool for communication. There is no memory which is not collective.

According to Bauman (2004), memory is an ambiguous blessing. At the same time it is a blessing it is also a curse put upon someone. The past is a huge amount of events, and memory never retains them all. Bringing back the past, keeping it alive, can only be accomplished by means of active work – selecting, processing, recycling – by the memory.

People tend to weave their memory of the world by using the thread of their experiences. The members of the current generation may find the luminous, joyful image of a confident, trustworthy world artificial – deeply against what they themselves learn every day and what is hinted at by the ordinary narratives of human experience and recommended by the life strategies presented to them day in and day out. They would rather see themselves in the actions and confessions of characters featuring in the latest wave of TV shows, highly popular and avidly watched as they are.

Nomadism, individualism, customization and personalization, exhibition and voyeurism, public and private space, the memory of the on-demand generation, and the profile of the youth subject of a world in transformation. These categories are located based on observing young people in Brazil and our current society. Mobile technologies result from the development of a society that with each new period becomes increasingly more nomad, more globalized. It is no longer enough to learn through the virtual world. Knowledge at a distance leads to the next stage: the desire to be present and in direct connection with another reality or piece of information.

These changes have led to the production of personalized contents for individuals increasingly more focused on themselves but who make a point of sharing their own everyday experiences public on an exacerbated scale. They are audiences and, especially youngsters, who have little notion of the boundaries between the public space and the personal one. Virtual communities allow for a close, distant and public relationship. The memory of it all is the memory of a present time, as Virilio states. However, as the author himself says, in the absence of a memory that is not collective, the question that poses itself is what the memory of an individualistic society will be like.

Young people today, given the strong influence they exert on society and significantly on the industry, to the extent that they make up a community of trend-setting consumers, will be the readers of the future. Nevertheless, today they already are different readers, with a different cognitive profile than youngsters from other generations, and consequently the adults of previous eras.

Santaella (2004) describes the cyberspace reader, and reaches the concept of the immersive reader. Before that, she describes multiple types of readers, a diversity that has been historically increasing. The author lists the reader of images, drawings, paintings, pictures, or photographs. There are newspaper or magazine readers, and those who read charts, maps, notation systems. There are also the readers of the city or the reader-spectator of images in motion, in movies, TV and video.

According to Santaella (2004:18), this diversity has been joined by readers of images, computer graphics, and written text readers who, from the paper, “jumped” onto the surface of electronic screens. Moving along, although in a much more complex manner, these readers are traveling on network infoways, becoming a new



type of reader who “navigates the liquid and non-linear architectures of hypermedia in cyberspace.”

Santaella (2004) seeks to outline cognitive profiles and, from the multiplicity of readers, extracts three types she considers the main ones: contemplative, moving, and immersive. The author emphasizes that, in order to differentiate reading processes, this typology does not take as its starting point the distinctions between types of language or sign processes. Neither does it start from the sort of support or channels that communicate the messages, such as books, newspapers, TV or computers. To outline reader profiles, what the author bases herself on are the types of sensorial, perceptive and cognitive abilities involved in the processes and act of reading to set up cognitive reader profiles.

The first type, the contemplative, meditative reader from the pre-industrial age, is also the reader of printed books and expository, fixed images. They arise in the Renaissance and predominantly last until the mid 19th century. The second is the reader of the world in motion, dynamic, hybrid, one of signic mixtures. We are dealing here with a reader that is the product of the Industrial Revolution and of the emergence of major urban centers. He is the man in the crowd. This reader descends from the newspaper boom and the reproductive universe of photography and movies. They not only go through the industrial age but also its basic characteristics as the advent of the electronic revolution takes place, the age of TV in all its glory.

The third type of reader is the one that starts emerging in the new spaces of virtual reality. Before describing the characteristics of such reader, who is starting to take shape, Santaella (2004: 19) points out that:

although there is a historic sequence in the emergence of each of these types of reader, it does not mean that one excludes the other, that the emergence of a type of reader leads the previous one to disappear. On the contrary, there does not seem to be anything more cumulative than the triumphs of human culture. Therefore, what we find is that the three types of readers coexist and are reciprocal, although each type remains in fact unbending to the others and actually requires different perceptive, sensorial-motor, and cognitive abilities.

Santaella (2004) provides a detailed description of the three types of readers she has outlined but we have decided to focus on the moving, fragmented reader and

on the immersive reader. We understand that in order to address the broadcast of the War of the Worlds program and all its results among the audience, we need to consider that age in history and the receiver inserted therein. The immersive reader is also of interest for this reflection, as they update the role of readers in the contemporary backdrop and allow us to analyze the changes through which these relationships located in the sphere of perception go through.

The moving reader lives in the mid 19th century, when urban transformations in cities like Paris and London were the models for great changes that deeply affected how people lived. Due to the increment that the Industrial Revolution had brought to these cities' capitalism, people traffic grew to meet the expanding flow of capital. To enable communications, especially for the men in charge of companies and their administration, there appear the telegraph and the telephone. Then, opinion networks cement themselves; newspapers bring quick, immediate news, typical of cities holding an oversupply of information.

Hypermediatically guided reading is a nomadic activity, a mobile one, which brings together movements that band together according to an associative logic and custom, non-transferable cognitive maps. Santaella (2004) also considers that, in hypermedia, the reading is everything and the message is only something that gets written as the producing reader activates the connections.

The new readers result in the absence of a predetermined course, meaning that they do not bring along the support provided by memory, as they navigate uncharted waters. These readers move to the pace of information, at the speed of light and their motor, perceptive and mental reactions as well, in the opinion of Santaella (2004).

Therefore, if these young people are the new readers of images in motion, portable information that gets individualized contents and is able to generate and make the most personal experiences public will surely be permanent.

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