Call for papers

Versus n. 125, July-December 2017

Forms of life, utopias, technologies. Between Semiotics and Aesthetics

Edited by Riccardo Finocchi and Isabella Pezzini

Our proposal starts from some questions arisen by the growing presence of electronic devices in our everyday life, a phenomenon that requires, also for Semiotics, a non-sectorial reflection. Semiotics could take this as an opportunity to think about the suitability and possibility of renewal of its theoretical and methodological paths and of its analytical tools. Indeed, it would be very productive to dialogue and interact with those parts of Philosophy, and specifically of Aesthetics, that share with Semiotics comparable interests and research questions.

For this reason this special issue is open also to national and international proposals emerging from the research of workgroups that have already produced analysis in this field.

Our everyday life is characterized by an increasing amount of information, boosted by new communication technologies. New communication technologies employ "signs" and aesthesic "stimuli" that affect the modalities of the experience, pervaded by the aesthetic dimension as never before. This special issue aims to investigate this process and its effects, considering its impact and influence on both A) life of people and individual subjects, and their making of experience; B) more generally, on the way we live socially and politically (in the broader meaning of the political dimension).

Semiotics and Aesthetics, with their mutual theoretical relationship, can help to develop an accurate analysis of the processes and practices of everyday life, thanks to their inclination to observe and describe: A) the mechanisms of the communication system in the light of the development of new technologies, of affect dynamics and utopist tendency; B) the implications on everyday praxis and the modifications of the corresponding forms of life, considering the impact of technique and technology on the human perceptual/sensible system. This analytical possibility gives also an opportunity to define a theoretical model to investigate contemporary times that could define a field of studies and that, at the same time, could be open to interdisciplinary debates. The need of such interrogation is evident in the urgency of dealing with the very rapid transformations of the complex system of relations where subjects, objects, communication technologies and everyday life are intertwined.

More specifically, there will be four main areas:

1) An introductory section that brings semiotic and aesthetic reflections together. This section aims to reframe, from a theoretical and historical point of view, the assumptions of a recodification/redefinition of the world. It will offer a reading of the signs and meanings that characterize the (new or different) forms of life permeated by digital technologies. It also aims to underline the dynamics of subjectivity in the technical objectification of aesthetic activity, of affect dynamics and of the environments in which we live everyday.

2) A section concerning the change in the paradigm of the information and of its fruition through which everyday activities of people are structured and organized, among technical 'forms of life', subjectivity and objectivity. One of the aims of this issue will be to analyse social praxis starting from the establishment of search engines as main gateway to the web, centralizing the different

forms of communication; another aim will be to start a reflection about the political and cultural consequences of the new technical organization of the everyday.

3) A debate about the impact of new media on the contemporary everyday life through a comparison with past analysis that have marked the academic discussion on media-everyday life relation, e.g. *Apocalittici e Integrati* by Umberto Eco and the following debate, re-opened also in occasion of the 50th anniversary

4) A section devoted to new spaces of everyday life as they are transforming in the use of mobile devices with geolocalization functions, which allow the users to be at the same time in a given point of the (real) world while in constant dialogue with the entire world (as "enclosed" into the Web). These technologies have fostered, on the one hand, the development of augmented reality applications and, on the other hand, the diffusion of an 'always on' attitude. The issue aims to a deeper comprehension of the ways all these aspects affect everyday practices, the notion of lived environment and common/shared space, relational dimension, and on the perceptive human system.

The special issue will consist of 7 articles of 30,000 characters each (space included). The articles are due by January 15th 2017.