Collective work of art and digital ethnography: Identity and Perception on Instagram. *Me, Myself & I* project

Obra artística colectiva y etnografía digital: Identidad y Percepción en Instagram. Proyecto Me, Myself & I

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Abstract

Me, Myself & I is a collective art project about Instagram. It was made between December 2020 and March 2021. The methodology was an open call, where each user of the platform sent the most representative post of themselves explaining in a text why they selected it over the rest. The 126 participations show the potential of the immaterial codes of social media when discerning other identities or self-exhibiting ourselves. By analyzing the personal image, we also worked on understanding the perception of a virtual community. The research was supported by the II ESTIBA Grants.

Resumen

Me, Myself & I es un proyecto artístico colaborativo en torno a Instagram. Se realizó entre diciembre de 2020 y marzo de 2021. La metodología empleada fue una convocatoria abierta en la que cada usuario/a mandó libremente una captura de pantalla de su *post* más representativo junto con un texto explicativo del motivo de selección. Las 126 participaciones muestran

la potencia de los códigos inmateriales de las redes sociales a la hora de auto-exhibirnos. Al analizar la imagen personal se trabajó la percepción comunitaria virtual con cada vez más difusas fronteras entre lo digital y lo terrenal. La investigación contó con el apoyo de las II Becas ESTIBA.

1. INTRODUCTION AND STATE OF THE ART

Me, Myself & I seeks to understand the rituals of image projection and the formulas of perception under which content is poured on the Instagram social network. This is a virtual environment where individual realities occupy every screen, where one's own creativity can find new forms of expression or be completely annulled amidst the rest of the identities that are exalted there.

To navigate all this social fluctuation, the most used boat is leisure. We speak of leisure understood as learning that responds to the new form of socio-individual development, based on subjectivities and experimentation. This kind of leisure occurs partly on digital platforms and partly also in terrestrial events. There is therefore a complementary duplicity between the identities that separate and bring together the physical person and his or her virtual avatar. This study is based on the observation that everyone who has a profile on any network (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook...) is a slave to its maintenance and it also becomes an important task in their daily life. This aspect encourages the creative spirit whereby each user shows what he/she wants to show.

In turn, and as a consequence, individual creation is increasingly leaning towards a media-creating community to achieve something superior; the anonymous and collective work of art (Brea, 2003). This strategy also benefits the area of influence of audiovisual works, due to the sum of the radius of action of each person within a virtual community. Another factor that affects the gestation of this kind of community is the creation of content that manages to bring them together due to the acceleration of image productions on the Internet. Regarding this phenomenon, Jiménez-Donaire (2021) speaks of a digital swarm of people connected to each other and says that "this virtual swarm consists of individuals connected to each other, but paradoxically isolated" (2021, p.72), thus clearly stating the duality between the need to live in common and the need to build a solid ego, a strong and coherent identity that can be maintained over time through the production of this kind of transmedia content.

Continuing with the participant observation, it can be seen that this utopia of the media community is truncated by the intervention of large corporations, interfering in a tool that could be independent and generate valuable leisure in itself, such as the Internet. Capitalism acts as an amplifier through *mass-media* by promul-

gating simultaneously vast quantities of information for the same incident. This way, the system avoids applying censorship that could go against these dynamics by generating information cacophony that annuls itself daily.

When reference is made to Benjamin, the great author who mentioned the work of art during the period of its technical reproducibility in 1936, we must remember that the technical work (any reproduction taken from a device) is not an imitation, but leads to its updating, to its wear and tear or to the transformation of the relationship of the public with art by extracting something from its context to resignify it at the present time (Benjamin, 1936). This loss of spatial-temporal location generates a mutation supported by the new modes of reception that as a consequence change the language, thus requiring new policies for the use and democratization of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) in teaching, promoted by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). These measures may well prevent future online threats due to the lack of knowledge of the internal dynamics hidden behind the screens, especially at an early age.

Culture and leisure stand as franchises that link the existence of more free time with that of a greater cultural offer. The privatization of cultural consumption is increasingly taking place through canned goods. It is not surprising, therefore, that there is a tendency towards the construction of plural identities that add layers of meaning according to the contexts that concern each individual.

Increasing emphasis is placed on the exercise of participation, which invites people to experience the productive process. Society assimilates its participation in the development of activities as a more relevant aspect than the final result of these activities. Culture seems to go beyond being an end in itself, and sometimes becomes the servant of other kinds of ends, such as the economic benefit of corporate brands or country brands (territorial branding). There are new forms of concentration in the face of trending topic events that focus attention on simultaneous public opinion.

New forms of consumption are convulsively exposing us to the bait of experiential products that promote a powerful perception of the self in terms of the feeling of freedom for decision-making. It is a present where personal choices are a symbol of the control of subjectivity.

When there is order in consciousness, we can focus on the consolidation of a novel, increasingly complete and formed version of ourselves. Moreover, all this is exacerbated by the ability to edit oneself / the self/ what the Internet offers, as suggested by García Castañeda (2019) in his text on the aesthetics of the hyper mediatized subject, where he stresses that: "the final moment in the process of aestheticizing the self in the network, refers to the self-curation of the person's self-virtual image itself" (p.19). In this way, it can be seen how the way of showing ourselves inevitably conditions the creation of self-awareness in the contemporary era and specifically in its virtual dimension.

In addition: "Leisure is one of the areas where the most experiences are lived in which the limit between the global and the local is

blurred" (Cuenca, 2014, p.26). This aspect has been expanding thanks to the material loss of territory and, in turn, of terrestrial boundaries, which are increasingly absent in the virtual environment. This is due to citizens' knowledge of and access to hardware and software; however, this could change with new regulatory measures linked to economic status.

The social network Instagram was created in 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger and its name combines "the concepts of «*snapshot*» and «*telegram*», words that reminded the creators of their childhood with Polaroid photographs" (Gil, 2022, p.1). In this way, a public exhibition portal appears that, in its origins, had a square image format, in homage to Kodak Instamatic and Polaroid (Gil, 2022).

Instagram has been part of the Facebook franchise since 2012 (BBC, 2018) and this has caused what were once personal and family photo albums to expand to the whole world, diluting the boundary between public and private. Being fully visual from its conception, it is not surprising that the platform only includes the written word as a caption or linked message. It did not take long for video to be incorporated as a necessary structural modification for this social network to reach its transmedia puberty.

However, by recently introducing the mechanism of the interview as a binary response (yes or no), Instagram has opened a new field that, although it makes it possible to carry out research through the medium, it also reinforces the value of opinion and populism within a network where it was believed, until now, that the image had power over words. Thus, this tool seems to be used in a more abrupt way: "(...) All imitative arts carry two messages: a denoted message, which is the analogon itself, and a connoted message, which is, in a certain manner, the way in which society offers the reader its opinion about it" (Barthes, 2002, p.13-14).

Focusing now on the analysis of the codes that are applied to the images, we are aware that these images are not reality, at least not beyond the dematerialization of physical reality through the crystallization of specific moments, but rather, in the words of García and Pereiro (2019): "the Image-Code is the substance of New Media and a valuable tool for preservation" (p.111). This preservation finds in memory a way to maintain contemporary visual codes edited with a lesser or greater degree of detail and veracity. Nowadays, filters have modified the essence of the messages to the point of becoming mere geolocation tags of personalities built by an accumulation of data that is disseminated individually. It is an ode to the ego within an *infoxicated* society which, paradoxically, is at the same time incapable of assimilating such a quantity of information, detaching itself from the self and understanding it from the commonplace.

This quasi-hyperactive impulse of constant activity to demonstrate that we live and that we enjoy ourselves, is translated into an Anglo-Saxon concept to define users: *adprosumer* (Arroyo, 2011). According to this author the term is made up of three syllables: AD (advertisement) because the customer is satisfied with the product or service and shares it with the network of potential customers within their reach; PRO (producer) which refers to the new generation of customers who provide information, and SUMER (consumer) since in addition to producing information, also consumes it. However, this theory is mutating more than a decade later

due to the problems that arise in interpersonal relationships that are present in the use policies that the creative community must accept on the Internet.

This selection of backgrounds has been the main motivation hidden under the epidermis of the *Me, Myself & I* project. The proposal began to take shape in 2017 and emerged with force between 2020 and 2021. We found 126 life stories that narrate ways of feeling, ways of belonging and ways of enunciating what concerns us the most and, at the same time, what is difficult for us to communicate: who we are and what we have come to do.

2. METHODOLOGY

It is known beforehand that the visions that reach us are constructs. Nevertheless, we are human beings and as such we like stories (to tell and to be told). For this reason, between 2020 and 2021, and with the support of the Haceria Arteak-ZAWP Association and the Ministry of Culture of Spain, a space for collective reflection was born, which can be a tool to explore other paths of self-criticism built in common on social networks: the online archive: https://memyselfandi-sm.blogspot.com/.

The sampling strategy specially designed for *Me, Myself & I* to study the messy identities of Instagram and humanize the desire that leads us to self-exhibit followed the data provided by the agencies Hootsuite and We, are social in the year the project was carried out, which was in 2021. Salgado (2021) points out that social network users are on the rise in Spain, with eight million new users in 2021. This report reflects that the behavior of Internet users was setting post-pandemic adaptation trends at that time.

This factor is an important conditioning factor when analyzing the results obtained, as they are personal perceptions captured during difficult circumstances. The results are socio-individual portraits of a time in which both social networks and new technologies managed to establish themselves both rapidly and unexpectedly (and sometimes difficult to manage). This has generated intimate and very powerful intangible communities among strangers (as a future line of thought, it is questionable whether these communities are stable and sustainable in the long term).

The work of agencies that research into the behavior of people on the Internet using ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) shows that the use of Instagram is in third position, with 69% of potential users. Moreover, the age range that appears most often on Instagram is between the ages selected for the *Me, Myself & I* project: between 18 and 34 years old. These ages have the highest percentages in the graph, with 14.5% of women and 15.3% of men aged 18-24, and 16.1% of women and 16.9% of men aged 25-34 (We are social and Hootsuite, 2021, p.130). This refutes the reason why, when activating the sample, Instagram users within these age ranges were contacted, limiting a broader spectrum that would be unmanageable for a single author.

The *Me, Myself & I* digital ethnography exercise was the result of an open call that was communicated through different online channels so that people between the ages of 18 and 34 could take advantage of this opportunity to freely delve into the self-knowledge of their profiles and the functioning of the platform as a community.

It is difficult to reduce all the complexity behind an Instagram profile to the confines of a pre-fixed template devised specifically for the project (e.g. Figure 1), and to confine thoughts and feelings to a screenshot and 570 characters including spaces. However, sometimes it is only by experimenting in this way that soliloquies become one or the other.

Figure 1

Me, Myself & I *template. Own source.*

Note: The image represents the base template that was used to lay out all the content that entered the email configured for *Me, Myself & I.* On the left was the screenshot image (with or without the username visible as agreed). On the right the descriptive text, and below the date of publication of the post on Instagram and the date of reception in the project.

On the other hand, and in addition to receiving 126 stories of a very diverse nature (reflexive, creative, doubtful…), each participant had to fill out an informed consent that would allow their testimony to appear publicly on the project's blog, research Instagram profile, exhibitions and/or possible publications, having received and filed 111 (e.g. Figure 2).

Another variable that was measured in parallel was the place from which the content was broadcast. Most were urban participations with 21% of the total came from Madrid. This data reflects the clear demographic imbalance in Spain, although it is somewhat anecdotal in this study and is visible on the scale of a sample as small as the one at hand (e.g. Figure 2).

Figure 2

Results Me, My self & I. *Own source*

LOCATIONS
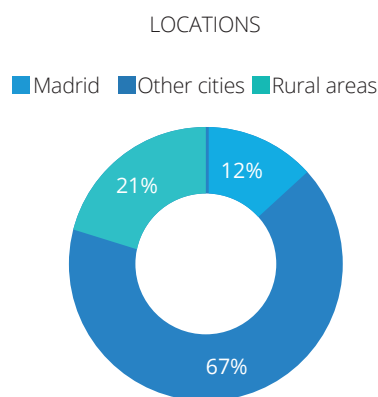
126 participants
111 informed consents (figure made upon this data)
Data extracted to be employed in my thesis The impact of cultural participation in the neo rural ecosystem: digitization as a new meeting space for the community (the public)

Note: The image shows the geographical distribution of the participations and the number of informed consents received in order to be published in the project's communication exercises.

3. RESULTS. BEYOND SELFIES: FROM EGO TO ECO

When the project began in December 2020, it was soon verified that the authorship of the work would never be our own. Its execution escaped any type of control that might apply to it. At no point were entries censored or selected, which left the project free to become what the co-authors of the work wanted to make of it.

The mechanization of authorship meant that the recipient of the content became an automaton who did little more than open an email, download the material received into a folder and go to the editing program to assemble the final image, sending it back to the sender, together with an informed consent form where the participants filled in and signed where they wanted to appear in the work; not even that decision rested with the project manager. This depersonalization of the self, dissolved into a communal entity gave full creative freedom.

This effort highlighted that a sense of community can be generated by agreeing to be part of a work of these dimensions. The sharing of a project prompted those who wanted to play the game to review their own publications, under the premise of choosing a single image that described them above the rest. They then had to send a screenshot of their choice to the author, also providing information on issues such as whether their phone was set to night mode or not, whether it had a black background (e.g. Figure 3), or a white background (e.g. Figure 4). This also provided information, in the background, on blue light hypersensitivity, aesthetic preference, or even the daily screen time of each participant. Such a screenshot had to be accompanied by a short descriptive text of no more than 570 characters (spaces included), resulting in a conjunction of all of these in the official project template, explained in Figure 1 in the methodology section.

Each result offered light and shadow not only from the device itself, but above all from the person who was using it to show insecurity, creativity, nostalgia, or joy (among many other emotions typical of the fickleness of our current society).
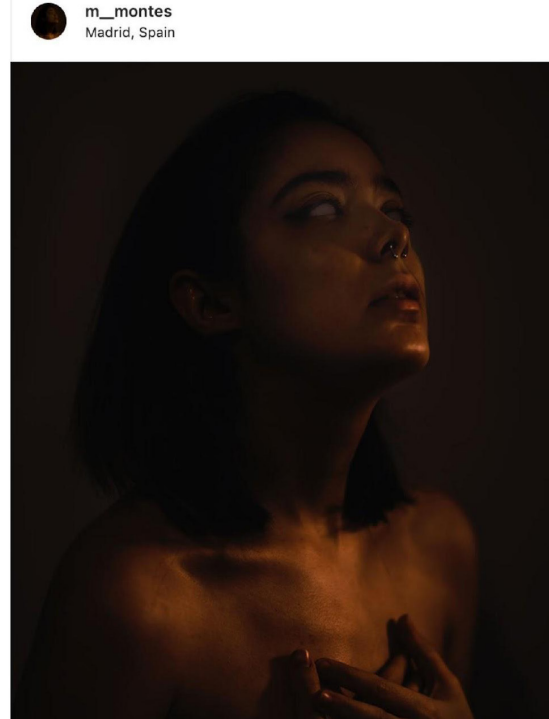
Figure 3

Example participation: Me, Myself & I
black background. Source: @93826284s
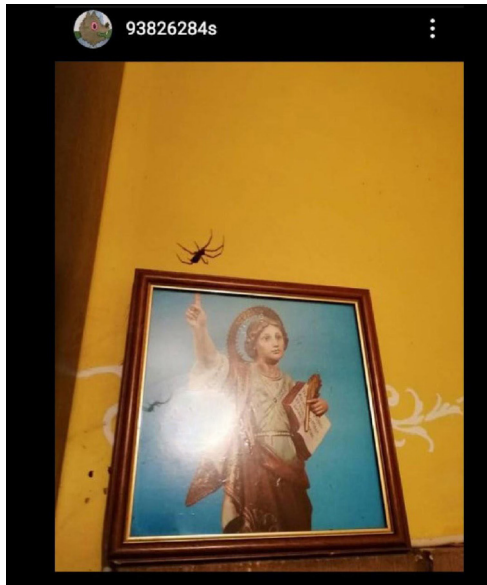
Note: Example of participation in the collective work *Me, Myself & I* with a testimonial received on 01/25/2021 from user @93826284s with the phone set to dark mode.

Figure 4

Example participation: Me, Myself & I *white background. Source: @m_montes.*

In one go
Like my writing: in hot
With the tare just made,
with the latent pain.
No cure,
but you are vulnerable.
Think in your decisions
in your self-respect
Stop and think:
what your wound is
what your pleasure,
and what you have to do.

Date of publication of image: 01/20/2021
Date received for MM&I: 01/25/2021

Note: Example of participation in the collective work *Me, Myself & I* with a testimonial received on 01/20/2021 from the user @m_montes with the phone set to a white background.

Although the results were also exhibited in the form of a photographic installation in an old boiler factory, the way it was produced meant that the blog and the project's Instagram profile *(@pfifacetas_identidad)* were more natural spaces to broadcast the 111 consented participations of Instagram users who were involved in this development and wanted to be a visible part of the collective work.

After the installation of the Internet as a means for international communication, the identities of users have been mutating until they have become roles or avatars, often represented as selfies. As the referent of post-photography Joan Fontcuberta (2016) mentions: "we don't so much want to show the world as to indicate our being in the world" (p.87). In this way, these new self-portraits are a way of showing how we belong to territories.

These kinds of images are becoming visually more succulent, but also freer of earthly conditions. The physical environment has different standards than the digital environment. This was another of the reasons why *Me, Myself & I* sought, at all times, to show the more forgotten physical B-side of digital showcases: that which is not seen because it is process-based and unpublished, but that lays the foundations for later broadcasting the contents. Here it is expressed with the descriptive text that accompanies the chosen image.

In the same way, interpersonal relationships are distorted in the virtual space because the number of followers or friends visible to other users turns out to be more important than the real bond that one has with each person, who is a numerical tag within the online tracking system. Obsession with the quantitative leaves behind a trail of subjectivities that overflow and are often not attended to as they deserve.

The use of photography has been installed in society as a very quick way of recounting memorable events or life changes of any relevance on the Internet. This whole dialectic can be manipulated to achieve a variety of uses, and is essential to the capitalist system. According to Berger (2001): "Through photographs the world is transformed into a series of unconnected and independent particles; and history, past and present, into a collection of anecdotes and fait divers. The camera atomizes, controls and obscures reality" (p.55). In this way, moments are frozen in memory. The whole tangle of moments that are captured with a device that, like a car, can learn how to use it. This, it twins the machine with the human being. This hybridization is much feared because it jeopardizes the degree of humanization of creative processes.

When we carry out a detailed autopsy of *Me, Myself & I,* we see that the construction of how things are perceived is very powerful. Many of the images refer to the Western imaginary in cinematographic postures of the bodies, in taking landscape views like postcards, or in making productions based on what other creators broadcast daily by using their own digital showcases.

From the 19th century onwards, the well-known secularization of religion took place due to the embrace of capitalism: another kind of worship that demanded a social reform to stay. The 20th century erected an opportunism that turned everything into a spectacle: nature, history, other people, etc. It is an ever-present, eternal spectacle of immediate expectation. It is an ever-present, eternal spectacle of immediate expectation; there is a direct relationship between spectator and audiovisual product. Within this new climax, we must remember that the camera, moreover, frees from the yoke of memory, further mechanizing the qualitative result of this new civilization.

Thanks to *Me, Myself & I,* we can see that a new way of telling reality through transmedia has emerged in a multitude of aspects that increasingly materialize the concept of the cyborg as a representative figure of the masses due to this hybrid between the body and its creation in pixels.

Nowadays, society lives in a moment in which: "photography is more alive than ever, just not under the same circumstances" (Toro-Peralta and Grisales-Vargas, 2021, p.5). This means that this accumulation of images forms part of a socio-political imaginary that aspires to achieve a different memory that will change the concept of anthropocentrism for that of the Anthropocene (new geological stratum resulting from the remainders of human activity). This new maelstrom reaches its peak with the new dynamics of concentration of public opinion on social networks such as Twitter, a platform where each user can share their view, now also with a greater number of characters.

If we pay attention to the policies of Facebook (a company that also owns Instagram, the social network on which *Me, Myself & I* is based) we can observe a manifesto claiming to make the world "a more open and connected place" (Facebook, 2022). In its cover letter, Facebook explains the type of information it collects, such as the user activity and the data it provides (data that also includes the geolocation of the place where the photographs were taken, the date, duration and frequency of activities shared), data about the user provided by other users, the groups to which the user is connected, billing, shipping and payment information. Furthermore, as if that were not enough, the franchise can also access the information accumulated in the devices where its application is

installed, or that are simply access ports to it (mobiles, tablets, computers...).

All this tangle of captured (but unearned) information is used to develop and provide better services, and to offer shortcuts and suggestions (cookies: external advertising). In other words, a whole business with the benefit of interconnectivity between users as an advantage.

The people responsible for the social platform state that:

> "When we have information about the location, we use it to tailor our services to your needs and the needs of others; for example, we help you record visits and find events or offers in your area, or tell your friends that you are near them" (Facebook, 2022).

However, do we really want such an exhaustive control of our lives and our personal connections? Is the right to social disconnection, to absence, ever taken care of?

"The reason that the spectacle is nowhere to be found at home is that the spectacle is everywhere" (Debord, 1999, p.49). This faithfully summarizes the sheltering of one's own gestures and those of others under the sphere of artificiality that constantly interchanges the concept of reality with that of representation. Contemporary society lacks justifications and that is why the material bases of almost any event are in a very precarious equilibrium within a time frozen by flash halos.

The existence of oral and written languages allows one of the communicating parties to feel confirmed by the other visual party in an exercise of feedback. Thanks to this, the human being can count on others as on him/herself. Within this statement it is very common for the

deepest fears and ignorance to be confirmed. This type of impulse reveals that it is something innate to seek to live in community (Berger, 2001), because as Kropotkin would say, mutual help has proven to be essential for the perpetuation of the species and in this case, also of art.

Contemporary public photography tends to offer information to the environment outside the experience, just as if a stranger were shouting to attract everyone's attention. It does not contain meaning in itself because it functions "by attribution" (Berger, 2001). The alternative use of photography today constructs a context for each snapshot in a unilinear way, not radially as it happens with the mnemonic function. This scheme that seeks to branch out more and more is what *Me, Myself & I* has worked as the central axis.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Human beings have a tendency to accumulate data or objects only in the hope that they will be able to use them in the future. We live in a society of rapid and massive consumption, a worthy heir to the collections of the past that erected ideals of prestige, conquest or hobby, and which have been forming the largest three-dimensional encyclopedias that we have outside the network: museums and archives of historical memory that are also turning towards new forms of exhibiting their contents in the virtual world.

This relationship with technology needs some sphere to ensure it, and that sphere is art. According to Benjamin: "Among the social functions of art, the most important is that of establishing a balance between man

and the system of apparatus" (1936, p.84). This balance is more than surpassed today, with the mechanization of manual processes such as drawing or animation through graphic tablets, computers and editing programs. This brotherhood refers to two sides of a whole that is very visible in the results of *Me, Myself & I*: the human being as creator and the created as a tool for transmission.

Never in the succession of the different centuries has there been so much awareness of the right to privacy. In spite of this, the policies of use of the different platforms often seem to deny it at the root in order to obtain data that feeds large companies. The preservation of historical memory is also being left aside, possibly because living in an infoxicated society, the average citizen has forgotten the value of connection beyond the use of Wi-Fi. However, with the arrival of digital natives into adulthood, we can see a concern regarding the profiling of identity, interrelationships and knowledge about the visual medium on the web. With the maturity of the users there are also mixed feelings such as shame, violence, sexual, political, polemic issues… and all this without leaving aside the question of who I am and what I have come to do in this life (the eternal existentialist dilemmas poured into contemporary media).

After the anthropocentrism-consented establishment of the self in psychology, the individual in society, the self in philosophy and the artist in art, the commitment to specify a concept for normality supported by institutions such

as mental hospitals in the twentieth century is falling flat in contemporaneity. The value of the bizarre can no longer be used to define and contrast one person with another, for both are as strange and disturbing as any other. When defining the strange or the weird, one turns to Fisher, who creates a bias between two concepts: the strange and the creepy, defining the former as "a particular type of disturbance (...) something that should not exist here" (Fisher, 2018, p.19). Presence has found in the ways of appearing in a photograph, of self-portraying or of making ourselves present in spaces beyond our absolute control, a multitude of ways that shoot in as many directions as axioms this plot can come to weave. Here it is worth noting that there are so many stories broadcast on the Internet and their possible ways of bringing them together that *Me, Myself & I* is presented as a pilot project that calls for opening up other explorations within social networks in this regard.

Perhaps it is precisely this lack of control that is given to us by accepting the policies of use of these online platforms, that *Me, Myself & I* directly addresses us in familiar forms. This collective work undertakes the problem of the drift of the personal narrative by forcing us to choose an image, the most identifying image of the person who is brush, paintbrush, canvas and support, essential raw material in this artistic display.

Another important point to highlight is the large amount of content that is poured into a channel where the exchange of data is very extensive. This exchange is such that the web is always active and in constant oscillation. Internet Live Stats, which counts each and every one of the movements that take place on the Internet every day, counts that in sixty seconds 3.6 million Google searches are generated, 150 million e-mails are sent, 140,000 video calls are made, 45,000 photographs are uploaded to Instagram, and 8.1 million videos are viewed

on YouTube (Internet Live Stats, 2022). This maxi-consumption of online content represents a change in the communication dynamics of companies, institutions and the public, who are committed to transparency where little or nothing can be hidden in a hyper-connected network.

Internet society has become a sea of compulsive sharers, with 81% of Spanish users accessing the web daily to review and share content (We are Social and Hootsuite, 2021). Social networks are the main hub for sharing with others immediately, without going back over our own digital footprint. This abandonment of content that has already had its moment of glory means that we are unconcerned with perpetuity, as we have already accounted for that which most deserves to be remembered and exhibited; so why even consider it as digital heritage in the future? Memory is fading, but memories are also increasingly lazy and tend to seek the immortality of any kind of record in order to leave a physical, material or virtual record of what builds us, individually and socially.

Regarding statistical data provided, and adding a more subjective and humanistic aspect, Rendueles (2013) talks to us about sociophobia. He considers that we live and coexist in a state of permanent panic due to anthropological density, and therefore defines sociophobia as a universal bias spread across the entire surface of the globe. This apparently negative aspect is a bid to raise awareness of the digital utopia of cyber-fetishism in a technological determinism constrained by ICTs and far removed from Marxist ideals. Sociophobia is established as the central ideal of liberal currents, with Bentham's panopticon as the model. This panopticon is based on a circular construction with individual cells around the entire circumference of the building, with the guards in a central

watchtower, open to all angles of vision. This idea captures the key that technology needs: an omnipresence, a permanent visibility that never lets us see when it is exercising its power. Because of these characteristics, and others that are less essential, it remains the model for contemporary international relations (Rendueles, 2013).

According to C. Gattegno, quoted by Dondis (1976): "Sight, though we all use it so naturally, has not yet produced its own civilization [...] it enables our minds to receive and retain an infinite number of units of information in a fraction of a second" (p.14). *Me, Myself & I* leads us to suggest that the civilization that will foster visuality will be cemented by the support of preference-linked knowledge. Arguably, it is being arrived at right now. Contemporaneity will hardly be able to see at the time the imprint it will leave on the future, but it is aware of the changes it needs to resolve in the exercise of its routine, within its breeding ground.

Moreover, sight has found in photography (or in post-photography) an important ally, as we have already seen, since: "Thanks to the realism of photography, it is more difficult to disassociate ourselves from real experience, and therefore to escape from autobiography" (Jiménez Revuelta, 2021, p.84). With these words, the author places us in a panorama where autobiography, understood as a look at the personal past, becomes part of the collective memory, through faithful or distorted memories. All of this is linked to new communication strategies.

The future civilization needs to face all socio-individual dilemmas by communicating among peers. We need to express ourselves, to feel listened to and to gain security by laying the foundations of what makes us part of a society,

of a community. The civilization that is to come needs to manage the gift of sight and master it in order to be able to say without words that which may not be able to find any other means of communication. The civilization to come is already scratching the surface and is asking for changes in the different ways we have of living, coexisting and sharing.

In this way, and following the idea of Domínguez (2020) that: "we must speak about observation beyond its contemplative dimension: understanding it as an act of a new game of inquiring and questioning" (Domínguez, 2020, p.100), we would need to properly instruct ourselves in this language to be able to translate it, interpret it, communicate with it and, above all, not lose the ability to enjoy it.

Perhaps what today began as a collective work of art on digital ethnography with *Me, Myself & I* will take on different meaning later on. We may reach a time when social networks become much more plural and personalized encyclopedias of life, full of different points of view and with a multitude of access ports, just as is the case today with Wikipedia. We are leaving reflections for future generations as long as the managers of cultural heritage (or rather: of the new digital heritage) allow it.

The new community ecosystem built on the basis of likes and visits to other people's social profiles finds a new dimension. The loss of hermeneutics in the diaspora of this type of proposals generates a desire for visual literacy, which is necessary to discern the hidden messages and the deferred knowledge available behind each creation. The famous adprosumer to which we are already accustomed leads to an expansion

of the author-audience under algorithms and commercial strategies with the ultimate goal of capitalizing.

After having achieved a certain secularization of religion, this sudden cult of a technological doctrine stands out. Technology has become, as an all-powerful entity, a meter of cities and social structures in the world (or rather of its reflection in the virtual network). This spectacularization of power, as previously defined by Debord (1999), is demonstrated by the study of the impacts of *Me, Myself & I* on Instagram, which highlight an intended omnipresence on the part of the users connected to it, both at the level of sender and at the level of receiver.

 Within this speculative tangle, the boundaries of the real are becoming increasingly blurred. The division between the physical person and the virtual person adds to this confusion and the way they fit together is often not as simple as it might seem at first sight. However, the importance of preserving digital heritage as a child of its time must be emphasized.

Just as after the boom of architecture, sacrilegious sculpture, or painting in previous stages it was assimilated that maintaining and caring for the most outstanding results of these disciplines was to preserve the history of humanity itself, it should also be understood that digital works and online contents are powerful. Their power is still pubescent before the boundaries of our history, but it can find, in artistic recreations that bring us closer to digital ethnographies and collective works, a whole ocean of motivations that move us towards other realities and circumstances but above all, towards other ways of making community.

Collective work of art and digital ethnography: Identity and Perception on Instagram. Me, Myself & I project

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