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Self-(re)presentation in mobile communication practices

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Abstract Mobile communication entails multiple and multimedia ways of representing the self: of depicting, performing and making oneself present, to ourselves and to our significant ones, as well as to different connected audiences. This chapter explores how these complex choreographic performances of presentation-representation-embodiment, are the effect of a shared agency between people and mobile media, involving intentions, desires, habits, collective norms and expectations, written and non-written rules, as well as the affordances and constraints of the different digital infrastructures, from mobile devices to apps and platforms, with their commercial and technical requirements. Special attention is given to the choreographic aspect of these performances, for instance in how gender and race are performed in mobile mediated forms of self-(re)presentation, with aesthetic and ethical implications. These choreographies are forms of current digital labor, where the production of images and visibilities prevails, in mobile practices such as the taking and sharing of selfies, and the uses and practices around mobile apps.

Keywords: smartphones, self-representation and presentation, mediated presence, social media, selfies.

> To be alive means to be possessed by an urge toward self-display. Living things make their appearance like actors on a stage set for them. Hannah Arendt, *The Life of Mind*

Modes of presentations and representations of the self have always been mediated, if not by technologies, then by language, clothes, body features, physical appearance and different materialities involved in personal and collective stylization. Contemporary modes of mobile communication entail a proliferation of forms and occasions for self-(re)presentation for ordinary people in everyday life, enacted in different apps: from social media to dating and hook-ups apps, as well as in mobile instant messaging. Moreover, using smartphones in public settings, in other people's presence, also plays a role in face-to-face self-(re)presentation, in the impression we make on these people. This chapter discusses the collective, relational and performative character of mobile mediated self-(re)presentation, with their ethical and aesthetic implications, as a form of current digital labor, as these ordinary mobile practices and performances contribute to create content, value and profit for the digital platforms and the digital data economy. Then a brief account is given of how smartphone uses are part of our self-(re)presentation performances in face-to-face interactions. The conclusion deals with the messy visibilities produced in both kinds of mobile mediated presence and representation, online and face-to-face.

Mobile choreographies of self-(re)presentation: collective, relational and performative

Mobile communication practices support multiple and multimodal ways of representing the self where, nowadays, the visual prevails, in the characteristic mix of image and text that defines current mobile images. These practices contribute to depict, perform and make oneself present: to ourselves, to our significant others, as well as to connected audiences. These practices are not only ways of presenting and representing our self, but also part of current embodiment processes. Mobile communication plays a double role in

these processes: regarding how our bodies are digitally inscribed, seen, touched, grabbed and circulated, as images, sounds, texts and all kind of data, in screens, devices and mobile apps; as well as regarding how our physical bodies are inscribed, mobilized and shaped by what we learn and acquire through these practices. I refer here to the gestures, movements, skills, ways of doing, of seeing, of posing, of writing, of selecting and effacing that we embody thanks to our digital practices and literacy.

Mobile practices play a growing role in our sense of self, understood as the making, presenting, representing, performing and embodying of a self, which is, as the same time, an individual and individualizing pursuit, and a collective and collectivizing one. Here we should understand the word 'collective' as Bruno Latour (2005) does, including not only people, but also objects and technologies mobilized and participant in this task of presenting and representing the self. This task is the result of a shared and distributed agency between the people and the technologies (devices, platforms, apps) involved in the making of these practices. Therefore, the practices are not only the result of human intentions, desires, habits, *habitus* and social determinations, but also of the technical and commercial affordances and constraints of the technologies involved. This shared agency entails forms of collective learning and collaboration, as well as tensions and conflicts between the different human and non-human agents involved. This mobile self(re)presentation is a collective performance. The notion of representation also points to the performative aspect, which can be considered a choreography. This term highlights not only the relational and collective aspects, but also the existence of a script, of a set of conventions, written and unwritten norms and rules, and routines, according to which movements unfold. The repeated performances contribute to maintain the choreography, but it can also be challenged and changed by the way it is performed (Foster, 1998).

People in the audience are also performers and co-participants in the collective definition of the situation (Goffman, 1956). Therefore, the presentation and representation of the self occur at the same time as the participants define the situation they are part of. Again, we include in the group of participants not only other people involved, but also the technologies and their material, technical and commercial affordances and constraints, such as the public relevance algorithms (Gillespie, 2014) that organize and select the digital content shared. Thus, the (re)presentations of the self in mobile media practices are iterative ways of defining these practices, considered as social situations resulting from digital infrastructures, which, reciprocally, these choreographies contribute to shape and to design.

Erving Goffman describes two types of equipment for the presentation of the self in face-to-face encounters. One is the setting, the scenic part (furniture, décor, physical lay-out) that stays in place and 'does not follow the subject'; and the other is the one 'intimately' identified with the performer and her body, which follow her wherever she goes (clothes, sex, age and racial characteristics, size and looks, gestures, posture, speech patterns, facial expressions). These are the embodied features of the self and the embodied materials, such as clothes or make-up. Nonetheless, in mobile mediated (re)presentation of the self, part of the scenic equipment does follow the subject, close to her body, wherever she goes, if her smartphone is at hand and connected. Mobile devices and apps are a kind of embodied setting, intimately identified with the performer. The temporality, duration and spatiality of mobile mediated (re)presentation of the self differentiate them from the face-to-face modalities studied by Goffman. But in both cases, the set of features intimately associated with the bodies and their appearance tells the audience about social and ritual statuses, while being interpreted according to stereotyped expectations and collective representations. Both types of equipment regularly function in a general and fixed fashion

to define the situation. They are selected rather than created. The same could be said for the setting offered by mobile media practices, apps and platforms.

Computers and mobile media enable new ways of social sorting as new ways of recognition and relation. For the embodied characteristics such as race, age, gender or body size we do not have the choice to select, or to efface, them, when we perform visual forms of self presentation, which are predominant in current mobile digital practices. But we can stylize them through the growing ordinary curatorial work of visual representation, such as pictures and selfies.

Thus, we present and represent ourselves in choreographic performances. They repeat, reinforce or challenge the socially expected behaviors, gestures and movements associated and attributed to our bodies. This choreography of recognizable gestures makes us readable to other people. Gestures are linked to social stratification categories, such as gender, race, age or class. The visible traces of the body are tied to invisible characteristics. Thus, the skin and the body appearance become the sign of something else. Race and gender turn the body into a signifier. Analyzing race as a technology, as mediation, a way of doing things, Wendy Chun (2009) observes that the body is the sign of a difference that exceeds the body. This gap between what the body says, what is visible, and what the body is taken to mean, what is attributed to its visible signs and appearance, underlies the force of racism and of sexism. These categories prescribe suitable and unsuitable practices and behaviors according to social orderings. They are crucial in the sorting of individuals: the social distribution of privileges, resources and disadvantages. Race has become a digital medium as well: a distinctive set of informatic codes, networked mediated narratives, maps, images and visualizations that index identities (Nakamura and Chow-White, 2012). Race and gender are forms of code as well as a visual representation of raced and gendered bodies, as users consume and perform

images of race, and gender, of masculinities and femininities. For instance, when playing with a raced and gendered avatar, or when using digital images depicting people of color, often stereotypical, to display our moods and affective resonances in social media, as in popular uses of gifs (image files that contain looping animations) and memes (such as images macros with a direct caption on them). Another example of gendered use and consumption of digital images is a case of shared agency mobilized in contemporary forms of performing masculinity. When male teenagers perform digital forms of touch, such as tagging girls' pictures without her consent, grabbing those pictures for his self-(re)presentation practices to gain peer recognition and status (Renold and Ringrose, 2017). These examples of using others' digital images in our self-(re)presentation practices, to perform our affective work or to increase our recognition and status, reveal how internet and mobile digital technologies are complex topographies of power and privilege. They are made up of new (plat)forms of economic and technological exclusion and both old and new styles of gender and race as code, interaction, and image (Nakamura and Chow-White, 2012).

This repetition of gestures, movements and performances results in the naturalization and reinforcing of identities and collective belonging (Butler, 1993). Gender and race are performed choreographically, as a mutual shaping relation of excluding features corresponding to distinct categories: feminine and masculine, black and white. Social media and mobile mediated forms of self (re)presentation are ways of learning how to perform and of checking the suitability of our performance compared to other users, according to the feedback we receive in comments and likes. As in those digital spaces, we are performers and audiences for our contacts at the same time. Nowadays mobile media performances and forms of self-(re)presentation are ways of doing and undoing race and gender. For instance, whiteness is performed as a privileged cultural category in

social media and image centered apps, whose main feature is the white privilege to (re)present ourselves as raceless, whereas people from racialized groups often share more content and views that show group belonging, color consciousness and identification with groups historically stigmatized (Daniels, 2012). White aesthetic domination is also supported by technical affordances, such as the filters provided by apps as Instagram, whose unannounced effect is to bleach the skin (Jerkins, 2015); or the face recognition technology in smartphones that do not work properly for women and non-white users, due to the bias present in automated facial analysis algorithms and datasets (Buolamwini and Gebru, 2018). These can be considered cases of misinterpellation (Senft and Noble, 2014) regarding gender, race and social media. The experience of being encouraged to believe that one is part of the 'everybody', as one takes part in the everyday modes of mobile media self(re)presentation, and then, being addressed in a way that makes clear that one is not, reinforcing and reiterating the axes of privilege and subalternity.

Embodiment processes are historical, and history is also a sequence of gestures, as we have learnt from authors such as Norbert Elias or Judith Butler. The iterative aspect of self-(re)presentation choreographies makes them a way of linking past and present. Bodies are history made flesh: the result of personal and collective, historical and biographical processes, where physical shapes, gestures, structures of feeling and perceiving are shaped, challenged and changed. Moreover, bodies are the first material we have to understand and interpret past, present and future. Striking a pose, in front of other people in public or in pictures, as the selfies we share and display, can be a way of considering how bodies make history, being also sometimes a defiance, a mode of resistance. Style can also be a threat to social orderings and sorting (Hebdige, 1979).

The Spanish curators Sabel Gavaldón and Manuel Segade coin the notion of 'radical performance' for a recent exhibition in the Spanish Arts Centre, CA2M[1], to account for

the dissident gestures that audaciously confront social norms. Radical because they open a space to imagine other possible bodies and worlds, calling for subjectivities and social choreographies in the making, not already fixed and naturalized. As minorities and subaltern groups, use their bodies to invent dissident forms of beauty, subjectivation and desire. Selfies and social media feeds also enact radical performances that challenge and resist stereotypes.

Following Butler's notion of the performative character of gender, current scholarship reveals how digital modes of self-(re)presentation are involved in the maintaining and repeating of conventional modes of embodying gender and race, mirroring face-to-face interactions and following mass media representations (Kapidzic and Merrick, 2015) or reinforcing collective traditions. For example, the 'southern lady' idealization found in the selfies displayed in Instagram by university female students from Georgia (US), as performances that circulate a public pedagogy of femininity and contribute to notions of traditional gender roles and physical attractiveness that reinforce classed and raced norms of beauty (Schmeichel et al. 2017). But mobile self-(re)presentations can also enact radical performances, challenging these conventional modes, as the adult women who redefine what it means to be beautiful and sexy, as they reclaim the sexual appeal of their bodies and grab the attention of others in perceived safe spaces, such as Not Safe for Work blogs in Tumblr (Tiildenberg, 2016). Thus, modes of self-pornification through selfies, that is, of posing and portraying oneself as sexually attractive to grab someone else's attention in mobile mediated flirting, seduction and erotic games, can be radical performances. Sometimes these can be considered (non-intentional) radical performances. As in the case of heterosexual men's sexy selfies that display images of their bodies in hook-up apps, depicting and presenting these men as objects of sexual desire on display. A digital gesture that challenges the norm of hegemonic masculinity of

men as the subjects of the gaze and not the objects to be looked at. Though for these men, unlike the women of Tiidenberg's study, the radicality of the performance is not intended, nor experienced as 'empowering', and can cause embarrassment and disquiets (Lasén and García, 2015).

In these examples of self-(re)presentation through digital images, the visual experience is connected to all our body and senses, especially to touch. This touching aspect of visual interactions is even more relevant in mobile media interactions and (re)presentations of the self, as touch and vision are equally significant in the production and receptions of mobile images, such as selfies. Taking a selfie is a dialogue between the fingers and the eyes (Senft, 2015), in the various stages of checking the frame, the light, the pose, taking the pictures, selecting one and uploading or sending it. Then, the picture will be seen, discussed, and touched by other fingers in other screens. Even the judgment of the pictures is translated into touch: touching to like or to report and tagging as a vector of digital touch (Renold and Ringrose, 2017). Tagging a picture can be understood as a form of touch afforded by the shared agency between us and the digital devices and platforms where the tagging happens, where 'there is no simple ontological divide between human and machine' (*Ibidem*, 1069). As Terri Senft puts it, digital images online are not only a matter of gaze and vision, but also a matter of grab, where we and our bodies are touched, affected and moved, where our guts can react, and our bodies can experience various kinds of excitement, and where other senses, as the touch or the hearing, are also involved. We grab what we see and are grabbed in, and affected by, the mobile mediated experience. Moreover, each image and its metadata are also grabbed, seized, on any server in which the photo rests, and are susceptible to be grabbed, as any other digital content, even if we do not share it, by surveillance agencies, hackers or someone who has been able to grab our device or our password (Senft, 2015).

Therefore, mobile apps and social media are also performative battlegrounds (Thumin, 2017) where different models of appropriated femininity, masculinity and ethnicity are enacted, publicized, challenged, defended, appropriated, criticized and fought.

Ethics and aesthetics in self-(re)presentation

According to Goffman (1956), once one gets the proper sign-equipment and knows how to manage it, it can be used to embellish and illumine one's daily performance with a favorable social style, which offers an idealized impression, attuned to habits and expectations, allowing for a collective idealized definition of the situation. Again, we should include in this collective the technical affordances, and the commercial and normative features of the apps and platforms taking part in these performances, which tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of society or groups involved in each social situation. These performances are rituals accepted as reality, enacting a rejuvenation, repetition and affirmation of the moral values of a community. 'The world, in truth, is a wedding' (*Ibidem*, 23). Nowadays the chronic of this wedding unfolds in our digital screens and our apps' feeds, live and inscribed, susceptible to repeated views, sharing and interpretations.

Idealization is closely linked to the maintenance of expressive control, which is, again, a collective and choreographic task involving the performers, their contacts and followers, and the digital affordances and constraints. Some previous forms of control of the impression given, such as the segregation of audiences for different presentations of the self, become harder to get in the digital environment characterized by the collapse of contexts (Marwick and boyd, 2011; Wesch, 2009). A way of keeping this control is the increasingly complex curatorial work of users about their images and messages through the selection of different apps to reach diverse audiences and to present different performances based on different kind of selfies and other images. For instance, Instagram

and Facebook have become some sort of ‘village square’ and the place where you give your best impression, where you build your public image, or even your brand (Banet-Weiser, 2012). In contrast, Snapchat or the different WhatsApp groups and instant messaging one-to-one exchanges relate to another kind of stylization. As not all forms of stylization of the self entail an idealization according to a particular set of values and rules. So these apps take part in less idealized, more relaxed, intimate, ludic and even self-deprecating forms of self-(re)presentation, which are often credited with a plus of authenticity (Lasén, 2015; David, 2015). Affordances, such as the ephemerality of content or the ability to select the recipients, are crucial to understanding the different meanings of self-(re)presentations, and a way of keeping a certain form of audience segregation, which, in any case is always limited, due to the easy circulation and replication of digital contents.

The management of the impression given is always fragile, either in mobile mediations or face-to-face, and can be shattered by very minor mishaps. Our performances can be shattered by all kinds of glitches: digital, gender, ethnic, etc. (Warfield, 2016). There is a stark difference between our all-to-human selves, subject to variations in moods, intensities and energy (which are increasingly more-than-human selves, open to the shared agency with non-human entities such as mobile technologies) and the socialized self as a character put on for an audience, who shouldn’t be subject to up and downs. Quoting Simone de Beauvoir, Goffman states that socialization not only transfigures but also fixes. It offers the social and personal gratification of being identified with a figure, a character, a performance that stabilizes and justifies us. Despite frequent media claims about selfies and social media performances as narcissistic and isolating, this pleasure of socialization, as the fixing of a suitable role and the stylization to become an identified character, either to the conventional or to the radical and ‘subcultural’ (Hedbige, 1979),

could be a better way of understanding the appeal and success of these practices. An appeal grounded on the promises of recognition and haunted by the chances of misrecognition and misinterpellation.

The stylization of the self allows us to alleviate the weight of individuality. It substitutes the individual particularity, uncertainty and instability, with something larger. Style is an unburdening of the personality, the replacement of individual intensification by a broader general entity (Simmel 1902/1994). The subdued and calming quality that emanates from stylized objects resides in this supra-individual character. Selfies, social media profiles and accounts, are also part of this realm of socialized stylized objects. However, Georg Simmel's description can be also a case of 'cruel optimism' (Berlant, 2011). For example, when the stylization entails idealizations and fantasies of belonging – which are shattered by the controversies, embarrassment and shaming elicited by the public display of such images and by the impossibility to know, due to the technical affordances of digital inscriptions – who will be our audiences now and in the future. Alternatively, the pleasure of sociability in repeated forms of self-(re)presentation is haunted by anxieties of coming out as inappropriate and not getting the right feedback. Moreover, the risks and consequences of mishaps and glitches, of misrecognition and misinterpellation, get different value when this stylization of the self is not only a way of signaling belonging and sociability, but also a way of building a personal brand (Banet-Weiser, 2012). This marks your value, not only personal and social, but also moral and economic, as in the trust you deserve. For instance, as seen by those who monetize their digital self-(re)presentations, such as YouTubers and influencers.

Thus, these aesthetic aspects of the presentation of the self in everyday interactions are entangled with ethics. Self-(re)presentations is a claim of what one is, a claim to be a person of a particular kind, a way of informing others what one is and what they ought to

see as the ‘is’ (Goffman, 1956). When (re)presenting ourselves, we are making a moral demand upon others to recognize this claim and to treat us appropriately. Selfies displayed and shared account for something more than what the image features. Pose, gestures, framing, color, filters, are mobilized to present the self by stating moral values, decisions and choices, tastes, identifications with ones and distance from others. At the same time, all the participants in the performance contribute to validate it, to define what is good and what is wrong, what is appropriate and what is not for that specific social situation. Apps’ infrastructures provide those who see our representations with the means to rate, validate, or report them as inappropriate. Furthermore, the algorithms that select, organize, prioritize or hide content, according to what is more profitable and could attract more clicks, contribute to shape what is considered and perceived as right, revealing their moral and punishing effect, as well as their contribution to the maintenance of forms of exclusion and oppression, as sexism and racism (Noble, 2018).

Thus, these collective and mobile mediated performances are shaped by moral judgements about what is appropriate and inappropriate, while simultaneously eliciting such judgments. When it takes place in mobile mediated interactions, self-(re)presentation is subject to the moving written and unwritten rules of what is appropriate and what is not. This is not only for our contacts, known and unknown, or according to the current social representations and cultural frames for performing and interpreting the representations of the self, but also for the other agents involved in the communication practice; as the Terms of Service set by the commercial owners of apps and platforms, and the wider legal regulations involved.

Working consensus and potential dissents frame these collective performances, which are haunted by the risk of disruption, embarrassment and shame if we fail to comply with social expectations, obligations, and this complex normative entanglement, as Goffman

already highlighted it with the notions of face-work and saving face. These relate to the management of the impression we try to convey, which is also a collective endeavor, involving different tactics, as the tact we usually display (at least when we interact face-to-face) in these choreographic performances. Face-work is a complex collaborative dance, even more when we do not face each other and move with anonymous strangers, whose tact and goodwill are not guaranteed. The particularities of mobile communication practices, such as the physical and time distance, the articulation between synchronous and asynchronous interactions, and the collapse of contexts in social media, modify the conditions for both the potentiality for embarrassment and shame. They also modify the defensive and protective tactics, such as tact, to safeguard the impression fostered by an individual in the presence of others. Through our self-(re)presentation displays, we see and are seen; we touch others and are touched by them, sometimes with tact, sometimes roughly.

Self-(re)presentation as digital labor

Goffman uses the term 'work', as in the expression face-work, to describe the self-(re)presentation performances, which are also forms of emotional work, of expressing, controlling and managing feelings and emotions, as well as ways of affecting and being affected by the whole choreography deployed in each social situation. When they become digitalized performances in social media and mobile apps, they are also part of current digital labor. This does not only mean that these collective performances also occur in work and professional social situations. It does not only refer to the increasing importance of social media for the professional careers of celebrities, models, actors, musicians, and other pop culture characters, as a metric and a validation of their popularity and reputation. Nor does this only recognize that popular self-(re)presentation performances in social media platforms and apps are monetized and can become a proper job, as in the

case of YouTubers, Instagrammers and other influencers (Abidin, 2016). Digital labor is the work done by us, ordinary users, who produce ordinary self-(re)presentations performed, inscribed, shared and stored in our devices, social media profiles and app feeds, as it creates content, value and profit. We are working for these commercial outlets, doing digital and emotional labor for their profit gain. Any normal ordinary behavior digitally inscribed turns into monetizable labor. In mobile digital practices, the body speech produces collective value when it is captured (grabbed), massified, and scanned by sites of monetization (Galloway, 2009). Unlike face-to-face forms of self-(re)presentation, we are not enacting an ephemeral performance, but creating digital multimodal content that is consumed, commodified, sold and bought, and datafied, far from our control and even from our awareness. When presenting and representing ourselves in mobile communication practices, we are also working for the current algorithmic and digital data economies. In most cases this is without considering it as a form of free labor (Terranova, 2000), without knowing that this aspect of our life is becoming work as well, without grasping its effects and consequences, without knowing the way these algorithms function and how our data are treated and combined (Fuchs, 2015). Difference, as in gender or race, becomes mobilized for value creation in the market place. Therefore, bodies must speak, the subaltern speaks and the algorithm listens (Galloway, 2009). Thus, the growing uses of digital datasets, beyond our control and knowledge, as means of surveillance and control, deepen the inequity of current social orderings. It creates cumulative disadvantages for racialized and subaltern subjects, who are more often the target of social surveillance and control and the sufferers of common social bias that are nowadays reproduced and extended by digital algorithms (Gandy, 2012; Daniels, 2012; Noble, 2018). This can produce new forms of discriminatory choices that extend the old ones, as when algorithms are used to issue or to refuse health

insurances or mortgages, a discrimination that is reinforced by the lack of transparency and the pretension of objective neutrality surrounding algorithms and big data.

Mobile mediated face-to-face presence

Our modes of self-(re)presentation are mediated by the smartphone in face-to-face interactions as well. The phone, its screen and sounds are also part of the equipment of our public performance. This is one of the complexities of mobile communication practices regarding self-(re)presentation: how to manage being present and (re)presented in several places at the same time, being affected by these different situations, and affecting them at the same time. We distribute our attention among our screens and devices, our contacts at a distance, and the face-to-face situation; and have to manage the modulation of presence habilitated by the smartphones and the interactions with our audiences. This has been a research topic since the beginning of the studies about mobile phone uses (Ling, 2004; Licoppe, 2004; Ito, 2005; Gergen, 2002; Cumiskey, 2005; Lasén, 2006).

The management of the impression we give depends upon what we are doing with the phone: talking, messaging, gaming, listening to music loud, watching a video, taking a selfie; as well as the way we manage the distribution of our attention, which is also part of the modulation of our presence in these different settings. Current smartphones uses can increase mobile owners' sonic presence, beyond the already accepted sound of a phone conversation. By sonic presence, I refer to how multimedia sounds of music, videos and games coming out of smartphones' loudspeakers increase the public presence of people holding those phones and provide information about them and their tastes. This increased sonic presence calls the attention of those around us and can be perceived as disruptive, as it challenges public expected behavior in situations and cultural contexts when one is supposed to be quiet in public (Lasén, 2018).

When using our smartphone, we must distribute our attention between the screen and our surroundings. We answer different social summons and expectations, as well as our own desires and intentions. Mobile media usages 'grab' us. They require our visual, listening and tactile attention, which can diminish our presence in the physical space where we are; therefore, shaping the ways we present and represent ourselves face to face. The popular media term *phubbing* refers to this situation and its potential conflicts. Not everyone who uses their phone when being with other people wishes to snub them, but beyond individual intentionality, the distributed and shared agency between people and devices can have this effect and cause an impression that is perceived as such. From media 'moral panics' to scholarly views (Turkle, 2015) this is considered not only bad manners, but also a negative effect of smartphones in the quality of social and interpersonal relations. Willingly or not, it enacts modes of self-(re)presentation. When one really wants to snub or prefers the mobile mediated exchange to the potential interaction with the surroundings, mobile media practice helps to give this impression. This is seen, for instance, among teenagers that follow a group instant messaging conversation while they are at the family table, or by solo commuters fighting boredom and tiredness. As these two face-to-face situations are framed by different social rules, the reactions of the audiences are quite different. Teenagers can expect to be scolded by their parents, and this banal mobile use can become part of the common quarrels of young people defending their autonomy regarding family mores and rules, as they can be perceived as a source of disrupted co-presence (Kadylak et al, 2018). In the commuting situation, being attentive to the mobile does not have to create a bad impression, if the phone does not produce sounds that can be considered disruptive (Lasén, 2018). With the help of the phone, we can modulate our presence in ordinary ways of self-(re)presentation, as being partially or intermittently absent and present (Licoppe, 2004). Through the lenses of our topic about

self-(re)presentation, these practices can be considered as claims to have a break from the summons of our surroundings, a claim for a personal territory within the public space, or to a certain privacy within the home, which, paradoxically, is afforded by the ability to connect to online public or semi-public settings.

However, when we are with others and we modulate our presence between the phone and the face-to-face interactions, a careful performance is required if one does not wish to be perceived as snubbing. As in any case of self-presentation, the management of the impression is a choreographic task performed collectively with our audience, and a constant exchange of clues, more or less consciously, sent and received. For instance, if the other people are using their phones as well, or if there exists a known previous verbal or tacit arrangement about when or how it is suitable to pay attention at the phone. Different tacit rules emerge regarding the amount of time we keep looking at the screen, the priority to the face-to-face conversation that should not be interrupted, the explicit explanation of why one should attend to the phone at that moment, etc. The media accounts of phubbing often describe mobile phone uses as a fully immersive practice that cut us from our surroundings. However, this is not the only or even the main case. When observing mobile phone users, the most common occurrence is a distributed attention, whose rhythm depends largely upon the summons coming for both settings, which results in being more or less present and more or less absent, being intermittently present and absent in both social situations.

Conclusions: Self-(re)presentations as messy visibilities

‘You want to create your personal brand, and you end up making a mess’ says a young woman in one of our research workshops about selfies in Madrid, regarding the difficulties of controlling the circulation of personal images and the multiple interpretations of them. People increasing their sonic presence in public thanks to sounds

played by their phones, or trying to be present, and to present their selves, in multiple spaces at the same time, also experience this mess afforded by mobile media.

Simmel described the issue of visibility brilliantly a century ago in an essay about the problem of the portrait (1918): What is supposedly visible, is a mess, a confused entanglement of what is happening with various external and internal attachments, sentimental reactions, evaluations, judgements and interaction with other movements and with the environment. To this entanglement, the mutability of the viewpoint and the observers' implication must be added. For other people, our presence is a fluctuating complex of impressions and associations, of empathy and antipathy, of judgements and prejudices, of memories and hopes. All of this is presented to us when we face the embodied manifestation of other, either in physical co-presence or by watching our screens. It is impossible to extract one's self-(re)presentation out of this entanglement, free of all interpretation and attachments. The image of a person is much more and much less than its effective visibility (Simmel, 1918). This is particularly relevant given the prevalence of visual (re)presentations of the self in contemporary mobile communications practices and social media apps. The visibility of presenting, representing and performing the self is an entanglement of technologies, bodies, spaces, temporalities and subjectivities. Thus, we must add to the entanglement signaled by Simmel the affordances and constraints of the technical and commercial infrastructures of smartphones, apps and platforms. These contribute to the script of the choreographic performance of the (re)presentation of the self. These depictions of the self are moving images, snapshots on the move, at the same time, fixed, inscribed in our digital devices, ready to be shared, observed, stored, tagged, reported, commented, and interpreted, by human and non-human agents.

Seeing, visibility and visuality, establishes our place, our presence, in the surrounding world. The relation between what we see and what we know, of the world and of others, is never settled. The explanation never quite fits the sight (Berger, 1972). This visual presence is established in the reciprocal manner of the vision, where our eyes combine with the eyes of the others, both technically mediated, to make it fully credible that we are part of the visible world, as John Berger puts it. This reciprocity is even more evident in mobile media visual practices of (re)presentation. Every image embodies a way of seeing, coupled with ways of touching and being touched, and a way of effacing, a selection, in our case a selection made in various stages: when the picture was taken, or the video was recorded, but also when we select which image we share, with which filters, in which app. Once the pictures are shared in social media, the algorithms of the different social media and apps take over this task of selecting.

Mobile mediated practices enacted through apps and social media are one of the main contemporary ways of achieving, through the same gestures and practices, three entangled aspects of self-(re)presentation. These are 1) making oneself public; 2) making tastes, views, issues and practices one is attached to, public; and 3) therefore, making the public, this is, contributing to shape public discourses and the networked public realm. The messiness of these choreographic performances increases when they become the effect of a sociotechnical entanglement, caught in a deep net of different norms, haunted by shame, embarrassment and anxiety, and mobilized by the expected fix of socialized self-expression and stylization.

Notes

1. The exhibition, called Elements of Vogue, shows different enactments of vogueing (an African American queer popular culture form of dancing) as well as

other art performative modes by African American and queer artists, http://ca2m.org/es/en-curso/elements-of-vogue.

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