

# Postmodern Culture

## Postmodern Culture

Volume 25, Number 1, September 2014

Johns Hopkins University Press

Article



[.View](#) | Saved to [MyMUSE library](#).

## View Citation

## Additional Information

## “Against Telephysics” from *Contra la tele-visión*

\_\_\_\_\_ – [\(bio\)](#) and Introduction

Viviane Mahieux

Translated by \_\_\_\_\_ – [\(bio\)](#).

---

## Introduction

Heriberto Yépez is a Mexican writer who practices many genres. He is a poet, a novelist, an essayist and a translator who maintains a highly visible profile in Mexican letters. For many years, he has published regularly in the country’s most important newspapers and cultural supplements, and he also cultivates an online presence, maintaining a blog where he reposts some of his work and engages with literary and cultural polemics in both Mexico and the United States.

Yépez is from Tijuana, and unlike many Mexican writers from northern states who crave a national audience, he has chosen not to move to Mexico City, the highly centralized cultural nucleus of the country. The experience of living in the U.S./Mexico borderlands informs his writing on many levels, and he continually experiments with the delicate balancing act of speaking for a local culture while addressing a broad and often distant public. Some of Yépez’s best-known works deal specifically with Tijuana and how the city oscillates between two contradictory imaginaries: it is either condemned as the junkyard of postmodernity, or singled out as a promising laboratory for cultural hybridity. In his novel *A.B.U.R.T.O.* (2005), for

example, he parts from the figure of Mario Aburto, the presumed killer of presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio, who was shot in Tijuana in 1994, to recreate the atmosphere of the city during one of its darkest periods. *Tijuanologías* (2006), a combination of essay and chronicle, is not exactly a book about Tijuana, but rather about how the border city is imagined and mythified in both Mexico and the United States. In this work, Yépez constructs Tijuana, and the region of northern Mexico, as a space that stands in opposition to a hegemonic center (the capital), paradoxically reaffirming the interdependence between both spaces in the national Mexican imaginary.

Although Yépez presents himself as a writer from the borderlands, located far from the cultural capital of Mexico City and outside the vast academic and literary networks of the United States, he is hardly a marginal figure. His online presence has effectively counterbalanced the limitations that often accompany publishing in small regional presses—the circulation and distribution of books in Mexico is notoriously deficient, and it is often difficult to find books published in Tijuana, for example, in the rest of the country. Yépez has also published in mainstream transnational presses such as Editorial Planeta, and in some of Mexico's most established media outlets. In his weekly newspaper column, published in *Laberinto*, the literary supplement to the Mexico City daily *Milenio* until the summer of 2015, Yépez was relentlessly polemical, sometimes to the point of being self-defeating. His articles often launched heated discussions, staging—and reaffirming—his contentious relationship with both established Mexico City writers and academic culture on both sides of the border. More than constituting a rejection, Yépez's provocations mark a will to engage with these different cultural spheres. As a self-styled border intellectual with a flair for performance—his new blog persona is “Border Destroyer”—Yépez places himself in a privileged position to intervene in conversations both north and south, assuming an ironic critical distance and a belligerent tone that can obscure how astutely he navigates both spheres.

The border—both in its immediate political reality and in its potential for conceptual thought—also informs Yépez's essays in literary criticism and theory. As a harsh, nonsynchronic space, where polyphony is possible but at the cost of great inequality, the border enables the development of a critical double distance, one that serves as a starting point for cultural analysis. Thinking theoretically from the border also constitutes an exercise in forging—sometimes even forcing, if need be—a coincidence between the practical and the abstract, the objective being to transform a border space generally placed at the receiving end of theory into a source of theoretical thought in itself.

“Against Telephysics” is the first essay of Yépez's short book *Contra la tele-visión*, published in 2008 by a small Mexico City press called Tumbona Ediciones. It is included in their “Versus” series, an original and often playfully polemic collection of texts where writers and cultural critics develop arguments “against” certain concepts, such as originality (Jonathan Lethem), having children (Lina Meruane), active life (Rafael Lemus), love (Laura Kipnis), or non-smokers

(Richard Klein). The format of the books juxtaposes philosophy and popular culture. They are small and slim pocket-sized volumes, with cover art that mimics boxing posters—glove included—and that presents each author as one of the adversaries in a match. Yépez's essay fits well in the series, in part because of his contentious public presence, of course, but also because of his writing style, which draws from both the essayistic tradition of Octavio Paz, seeped in philosophy and psychoanalysis, and the cultural criticism of Carlos Monsiváis, of a conversational and informal nature, more attuned with Mexican popular culture.

This essay, like many of Yépez's columns, is composed of short sentences, maxims and aphorisms. In a fragmented style that reads a bit like a Twitter feed, he moves between concepts and registers, choosing to illustrate, rather than argue for, his conceptualization of tele-physics. Yépez contends that we live in a period where tele-physics (the culture of the image) has replaced meta-physics (the cultivation of the spirit). The notions of distance, otherness, contradiction and radical difference have been replaced by an anthropocentric fantasy of integration and of simultaneity, one that neutralizes the pain of separation. We are in a "world transformed into interzone", Yépez claims, where the status quo of "already dominant values" is idealized and proposed as an object of desire. Undoubtedly, Yépez's critique of tele-physics is anchored in his reflections on the border. Although this essay does not engage with the specificity of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, the blatant tension, inequality and non-synchronicity inherent to this space are erased in the celebration of cultural hybridity that tele-physics facilitates, and it is precisely the friction of borders, of radical alterity, that he revindicates here.

## Against Telephysics

"Tele-vision" is vision that being has of itself when it does not lie with itself. It is when Being and *imago* have become distant from each other. It is vision from an assumed distance before itself. Tele-vision is consciousness that is formed when we suppose that our being is not with us. Strictly, tele-vision was formed in the dualist era.

In general, dualism had been thought by means of metaphysical notions. But metaphysics is able to disappear without dualism coming to an end. Dualism is still preserved without the necessity of its old ally.

Metaphysics is fantasy and, at the same time, the attempt at ending fantasy. (Hence, metaphysics is contradiction returning as greatness. The sublime paradox.) Metaphysics claims in a centripetal way that perceived ("sensory") reality is an illusion whose foundation is found *beyond*. But metaphysics—as suggested by its loss of prestige—since the seventeenth century ("from Descartes to Wittgenstein") announced its replacement. Until the present—still shadowed by the metaphysical paradigm, including Science, its final stronghold, through the

subatomic world and the general notion of “law”—there is not a concept that describes the later phase of dualist fantasy (of which “metaphysics” is only *one* stage). Allow me to introduce a notion to describe that sequence. It is the notion of *telephysics*.

“Tele-vision” does not only signify a device (the “idiot box”) or, even, a (spectacular, commodified or acidic) *lifestyle*.<sup>1</sup> What is called “tele-vision,” though we are not conscious of it, implies a displacement from *metaphysics* toward *telephysics*. This turn defines this epoch.

I am dating this epoch starting from the sixteenth century, when telephysics predominates in the “discovery” between the Oxident and America. Also, the transformation of Being into self-image, and images of the Other into realities which become institutions or practices, was accelerated, becoming explicit in the World Order. This order is the order of telephysics that cancels the (exclusive) separated worlds of the metaphysical era, in order to inaugurate an epoch in which the *Other has been integrated*.

If metaphysics is the general position from which one encounters “true” reality in another “world” (either the *Topus Uranus* or the quantum world) and, thus, the “macro” or “sensible” reality is an illusion or an aura, telephysics is the turn that consists in alleging (consciously or unconsciously) that authentic reality is found *far away* (tele), but *inside* of this world. Telephysics found the furthest beyond without having to leave this world.

Telephysics made this world an infinite postponement.

Telephysics not only abolished the other world. It also abolished *this world* to substitute itself for a series of interfaces in its search. It is the world transformed into *interzone*.

Metaphysics postulates that it is required to go *beyond this world* to find “reality,” “truth,” or “science;” telephysics, on the other hand, postulates that one must search all that is “beyond,” but *inside* of “this” world. Telephysics is the denial of radical otherness. It is the sphere of (unrealized) sameness. It is the co-unconscious project of de-realizing the world to supplant it with a single series of abstract desires, a purely phantasmal co-unconscious.

Telephysics is the fantasy of impossible integration.

The distant is no longer the metaphysical, but the *physical* itself. In the metaphysical perspective, the physical was the misleading immediate. In the telephysical, the metaphysical (a beyond of *physis*) has disappeared, but the physical strictly has also vanished. (It is a reflection that searches for someone outside of the mirror and does not find her.) In the telephysical, as much the physical as the metaphysical have evaporated. Telephysics is the domain of emptiness. Everything has become distance. And everything that one wants in that non-world is shortening distance. Desire has become synonymous with instantaneous signal.

The Sky has disappeared, but also the Earth. Or, better said, the Earth ran out in contrast to the Sky.

All to which there is a *here* has to *find itself* Far Away. It is the negation of the here and the far away. Telephysics is complete paradox. It is contradiction without the sublime. It is ridiculous antinomy.

You make an image and go towards it, as if you had not known that it is the image that was made by you yourself.

This is the image that fans of Paris Hilton or RBD have on their posters, the image that you will sign with the autograph of the *superstar*.<sup>2</sup> Seeing such an image would make you faint. It is also the image that the exploited has of herself, but long attributed to the exploiter, in whom she does not recognize herself.

The motivation of the telephysical is that the actual state-of-things (remaining unchanged) returns our beyond. For what this teleology achieves it is necessary to leave behind identifying which is the actual state-of-things and, once free of such consciousness, making it reappear no longer as prevailing reality, but as desirable objective.

“Be yourself”, “Yes!”, “*Be Yourself!*”,<sup>3</sup> are the perfect telephysical slogans: the once absurd psychology of a time that lives in recoil of its *very self*. Since, for not changing, the imaginary recoiled being, having recoiled in a brilliant move, *looks forward toward* its abandoned, imaginary reality and therefore achieves having a goal (*¡tener una meta!*), a goal that seems ahead.

Telephysical being recoils-from-itself and later aspires to itself.

Yet, why does the split occur that subsequently causes co-control? Why does a conflict occur in the interior of man (*hombre*)? The conflict appeared because a part of our being was invalidated by others (parents, family and society). And since that moment the conflict is as strong, the disagreement with oneself so intense, that we flee from that conflict taking a step back. In that step back, we take refuge in one of those poles; we situate it in a type of bullfighter’s cape, since one who observes oneself, as remote spectator, attributes the conflict to that other pole—Evil, Love, Other, etc.—, but seeing it from there (an inferior position, of oneself), one no longer recognizes it as an alienated part of oneself.

Paradoxically, looking so to that now “distant” pole—and with that which we have not identified ourselves as much as that from which we look—, it seems to us admirable, fearful, attractive, fascinating, repugnant, dangerous and, of course, we will watch ourselves moving toward it... reinstating of new the conflict that once again becomes unbearable, we will resolve such fallacious forms, newly giving a step back, and so on successively...

Telephysics is metaphysics *without* the Idea of radical “beyond.” Telephysics is metaphysics of a world that has lost its beyond. Telephysics is the project of renunciation of the “other world.” Telephysics finds its other world in the fluctuation inside of this one. For the

telephysical, the *meta* has disappeared and the *tele* has appeared: the beyond has given up its place to the *distant-accessible*.

This distance is able to be *geography, epoch, class, gender, culture*, etc. Telephysics traces its beyond in purity, it does not matter if this inscribes itself in the synchronic or the diachronic. Semiotics is the Seriousness of the telephysical! This epoch substituted the “Idea” (Metaphysics!) for the “Sign.”

In this context it should be clear what I further will interpret by “tele-vision.” Of course it means an electronic device and a series of channels wherein programs and news are transmitted. It means advertising, remote control, MTV, cable, Televisa, BBC, CNN, NBC, etcetera. “Television” signifies distraction, entertainment, spectacle, competitions, information, news, *gossip*, today.<sup>4</sup> (The tele-vision, feeling itself separated from everything, is obsessed with what happens “now.” Being absent from this reality, one desires to know it via remote control.) Tele-vision is the vision that those separated-from-Being (*separados-del-Ser*) have.

Tele-vision, after all, is the complement of lost perception. When one no longer correctly perceives the now, one requires an *informational* attachment. Tele-vision is part of the epistemological project. It provides consciousness. It is part of Science. The telescope and television set are part of the same telephysical impulse.

Tele-vision is the concrete (socio-material) bridge between the metaphysical era and the telephysical epoch. Tele-vision and movies show the *transition* between the metaphysical and the telephysical, a *transition* still unfinished.

Metaphysics permitted that we would go away ourselves from this world toward the imagination of a separate world; paradigm that was inherited from primitive thought, that which connected oneself with that mediated world of myth and rite. But telephysics already has another world distinct from the metaphysical world. If metaphysics is the identification with the soul or spirit, telephysics is the identification with the image. An image that, from that moment on, dreams itself as autonomous and then, at the next moment, becomes exasperated. Anxious of everything, eager for nothing. Telephysics is the retirement from all reality; the desire for which that exile could be possible.

The “television,” more than a technology, is how technology supplements (and modifies) the function of thinking. *Thinking* for the Greeks means situating oneself in the mental sphere in which entities find their otherworldly foundation. They dissolve its thinghood in an immaterial, single force (Parmenidean Being). Thinking signifies giving up conceiving the subject-object relation in order to find itself in the imagination of its *arche*, principle, law or un-limitation (*apeiron*); the thinkable in contraposition to the determined, sensible or finite. Tele-vision is the technique through which, in “ordinary life,” the Oxidental citizen renounces

to travel to the region of the “Idea” in order to prefer that of the Image. If the bible (the religions of the Book) is metaphysics made mundane practice, tele-vision is reified telephysics. Tele-vision denies—like philosophical thinking—the (ontical) thing, but makes it an interval of progressive, linear time where metaphysics (thanks to *uponoida*) applied an interval of regressive, linear time; in this turn, we pass from the metaphysical search for (Reproductive) Essence to that for (Reachable) Image.

By tele-vision, therefore, I want to say “screen.” In that sense, it includes its precursor (movie theater) and its nieces (computer, internet, hyperreality, “war”). Telephysics is the beyond become (sociogeopolitical) distance: the distance, for instance, between First and Third World, citizen and ruler, life (*vida*) and VIP, becoming and fashion, now and Already.

Metaphysics believed in the *I* while telephysics predicts the *Show*.<sup>5</sup> If the *I* is the profound, substantial, abyssal stronghold, the Show is the *I-as-another* (*Yo-Más-El-Otro*) bearing witness to itself. It is the exchange of ritual (reinstallation of Mythical Time) for spectacle (teleportation toward *Next World*).<sup>6</sup> Telephysics is the epoch in which all technology has become special effect.

Metaphysics gives support to Essence; telephysics, to the *Look*.<sup>7</sup>

Telephysics is not entirely clear for us because we are an intermediate epoch between dying metaphysics and fetal telephysics. And, however, telephysics already shows itself as succession (*sucesión*) toward a metaphysics without Event (*Suceso*). Metaphysics was finding its reality in the invisible; telephysics, in the monitor.

The psycho-history of contemporary tele-vision explains how and for what we have passed from a metaphysical era to a telephysical epoch in that the *historical* yields its post to the *pantopical*.

What does the “historical” signify? The idea that there is a (Hegelian) Absolute that manifests itself through (Kantian) space-time. This idea shows, evidences, tests, waits, teleologizes, grand narrativizes, serves, and loves the historical from a progressive-linear mode.

So, the historical in the telephysical epoch is exchanged for the pantopical, but this substitution implies violence or transgressed paradigm without committed baton or essential passing of the torch: the pantopical is the historical without the necessity of the gradual, without the requisite of the one *after* the other. The only thing that differentiates the historical from the pantopical is that, in the pantopical, whatever was separated historically through time, “now” is “simultaneously” co-present in a “common” space in which everything co-exists in a synchronic co-here.

Tele-vision is one of the emblems of pantopia.

Tele-vision is the popular pantopia of which the “Market” is the abstract pantopia.

Why do we “view” TV? Because TV provides us with security—already announced by the metaphysics that freed us from religions—from the reality that “is elsewhere.” And, at the same time that it provides us with security from that “elsewhere,” it is merely “far away,” that is to say, not impossible; although distant, it is accessible and *reachable*. *Tele-vision is metaphysics without tragedy*. Metaphysics without the pain of separation. In that sense, tele-vision is the success of re-ligation.

Tele-vision flatters the (whimsical) certainty of that direction which we already possess and leads toward the Palace of the Other. An Other that we already know. An Other that is The Same. The Same Over There (*Lo Mismo Allá*).<sup>8</sup>

How is that translated into *recognizable* terms? The individual that works in alienated conditions from itself and others—not just a *slave* but simultaneously an *owner*: therefore, Neither-the-One-Nor-the-Other—loses herself while finding herself in consensus. Tele-vision certifies that difference is based on the identical. Tele-vision eliminates the contradiction that metaphysics aggravated. Tele-vision distracts from itself to occupy us with the otherness-that-is-not-it.

It is exactly by means of the tele-vision that the metaphysical yields its position to the telephysical in Oxidental daily life. And by Oxidental I do not want to say only the (Euro-American) Occidental, but all citizens of any culture in its late stage, in its globalized “hybridization.” The logic of the *reality show* displays the relation that the telephysical epoch maintains with the real; that is, the difference between the real and the *reality* is the difference that exists between the physical and the telephysical.<sup>9</sup> The same can be said of the notion of the “virtual.” They are already the first categories of the telephysical. The same philosophy, without entirely noticing this turn, has transformed itself since the Frankfurt School until Foucault, Baudrillard or Virilio, in a discussion about the telephysical. But the moment has arrived to understand it entirely. The metaphysical has died and from its abortion emerged the telephysical. Utopia has been supplanted by pantopia (*pantopía*). Pantopia is not the utopia that no longer has a future. Pantopia is the future that no longer has a present.

The telephysical is an anthropocentric fantasy; it is not occurring outside of the human being. In fact, the telephysical is the fantasy that man no longer becomes inside of the ecological process. How was the telephysical produced? A distance appeared between man and world that surrounded it: it hypertrophied “mind”: “thought” turned back to metastasis. The pain of the real was cured with the absolute invasion of reality, to which ideas and images juxtapose. When the juxtaposition covers the complete terrain of the existing we are in the total regime of the telephysical. It is the propagation of the “mental” that inaugurates this exclusively phantasmatic reign.



The telephysical sparked when the world of *things* appeared. A “thing” is an entity whose process of becoming has become invisible. Therefore, it is charged with a (conscious or unconscious) fantasized autonomy in such a way that, psychologically, its actual reality (the *thing* that it is) and its process of becoming do not seem to be together. The *thing* is the entity separated from its process. Denied processes become telephysics.

The human being, we say, understood as a body that begins at the moment it makes itself visible in abstraction from its uterine, familiar, cultural, or genealogical process, is a *thing*. The modern notion of individual is not more than the objectification of the indivisibility of the individual with other bodies—that long process. The individual as thing, namely, is conceived as a body whose being begins with delivery and whose mind will be a product of itself (or, in the best of cases, of its “environment”). The “thing” now abstracted from process, the telephysical temptation begins that, lacking any procedural evolution, will search for atomic metamorphosis, free *eidolas!*, giving consistency to its floatation in the ether of its neomemory.

In the same fashion, when meat is packaged between plastics, placed in a supermarket, deboned, including altered in its consistency, form, or original flavor: then, it has been objectified. In a world in which we are surrounded by things, of which we are not familiar of their process backwards and forwards within linear time, the telephysical gradually emerges: first as an ontological orphanhood (solitude), prideful separation (through hidden fear: rationalism of dominance) and unconscious feeling of the unreality of everything (idealism, irony); after, as an indifference toward the entire environment (nihilism), becoming a kind of container (pantopia) subject to constant reordering of parts (remix) and, finally, as a complete de-realization where *things* become *images*. It is this epoch in which we actually live, after a provisional transition through industry and the world-of-things. When things have reach their maximum thinghood, paradoxically, they fade mutating into images. (The telephysical is not the final phase. The images will become signals, orders; the telephysical could be accompanied, catalyzed, or exceeded by a cyberontological epoch, in which the real will be synonymous with its absolute self-control, where the difference between process, thing, image and order will be null.)

The telephysical opens a distance in which the closest becomes the furthest and the furthest is perceived as immediate. Both distances are obviously grand illusions. Being, then, no longer perceives that which is closest—its own body, its emotions, its domestic environment, its *polis*—and the distant believes itself to be a neighbor. The desire to be a star of the spectacle, the “world” of news, the images!—, inverting all reality, establishing neurotic emptiness.

Tele-vision, in reality, still is a precarious form of telephysics.

In its character as external device to the human body, in its role as receptacle or macrotechnology, it lets us see that even telephysics has not been perpetrated. (Telephysics is a project that is able to be disjointed.) Whatever we do is evidence that we already see the ordinary world through a screen. An Eleatic gap is already opened between our perception and the perceived. That same Eleatic gap is already opened between us and ourselves. The Tortoise of my life will never reach the Achilles of my escape.

A screen appeared between us and reality, a distance that, however, is made to pass through anti-distance. A medium that is made to pass through the mediated. An interzone that assumes the form of the immediate. Psychologically, TV is a mass *immediate*; more than mass media it is a technology that covers up its mediation by simulating itself immediately and massively. The television set is the technology that, by being globalized and homemade, accelerated the transition from metaphysics toward telephysics, taking us away from our reality—and continuing well the alienated project of dualism—in order to situate ourselves illusorily in a distant reality, inaugurating in this way a new beyond (neo *ultrella*). By means of tele-vision, telephysics invented a new “unreachable” that, no longer pertaining to the metaphysical unreachable (the noumenon), but forming part of the generalized telephysical promise (every world is constituted as *this* word), is phenomenon, is visible, is an *unreachable accessible!* Accessible through complementary *fast food, gossip, the paparazzo’s eye, the ladder of fame, instant competition, the camera of reality.*<sup>10</sup> Velocity governed the telephysical world and, by the same velocity, this stage could quickly vanish. Its function could be merely to destroy metaphysics and prepare another era, for that which the telephysical epoch would be a rapid mediation—seven or nine centuries. The epoch itself could be victim of its express character.

To the metaphysical empire corresponded a life based in *another life*; to the telephysical epoch, *televlife (televida)*: to exist as if you were an image in a world in which the rest of the images were authentic. Televlife desires to preserve distance—by not maintaining this distance it throws itself into the uncertain at first and by any means desires to escape the televital—; and to preserve distance, the televital individual must move away as much as possible from itself becoming a self-image—constructed by the “fragmented I” (“y/o”),<sup>11</sup> the psycho-historical co-unconscious and both super egos (matriarchal and patriarchal). With that, the world is transformed into images based on *realities* that can buy, change, vote, disqualify, exchange at will, within translogical *zapping, reload, code-switching, swinger, anything goes, 2x1, click!, remix, chaz chaz.*<sup>12</sup> Televlife is the fading of the perception of processes into a destitute filth.

Contemporary tele-vision—that is, one that works underneath the understanding of a world (this world) and share *one* time: the tele-vision that constitutes itself as Receptacle Space—is the leading technology through which latent logic is psycho-historically propagated; the post-metaphysical (pro-telephysical) is modernized; it reiterates the idea that reality is unreal, that

there is another, more truthful reality. But now that reality is not outside of this world, but in a far-away-click, in a *Nowhere-Now Here!*, a beyond-Already!-Here!, in which the notions that used to be divided into two worlds, attributed to two irreconcilable spheres, have been reunited in one office, in one demiurge.<sup>13</sup> It is no longer a matter of the phenomenal and noumenal worlds of metaphysics, but of the phantasmagoria of telephysics, a remix of both, the one and the other *together & happy*, in magnificent resolution (full color and live, in direct, digital stereo sound).<sup>14</sup> This is the world in which distant states (*estados*), incompatible states of dualist metaphysics, have been replaced by the United States (*Estados Unidos*) of integrated telephysics, globalized telephysics, where the only real is your image and all images are true, as tele-vision is not merely a device, *lifestyle*,<sup>15</sup> or transnational technology, but a way of making existence into looking at the most distant as if it were the closest and looking at the closest as if it were not true.

Tele-vision is not a technology, but a world in which Being has become psycho-image and History, a series of single images—to be recombined and pass from gradual, metaphysical History to simultaneous, US (*estadounidense*) pantopia. Tele-vision is not a technology, but a world in which processes have become things and later things become images. Tele-vision is not a technology, but a world in which fantasies have become relations and relations become videogames. Tele-vision is not a technology, it is a world in which the distant has become immediate and the immediate becomes infinitely distant. Tele-vision is the epoch in which vision has never been further away.

The present has been turned into nostalgia.

Psycho-politically, telephysics is the replacement of the metaphysical project by a project in which hegemonic mentality simulates not having power, through images that consciousness takes to be “superior,” but in reality are already outdated states. From advertising to the inspired goals of the *jet set*,<sup>16</sup> telephysics establishes a truculent distance with whatever already prevails. Telephysics is made of converted regressions in ideals. Telephysics pushes toward psychologically infantile or politically reactionary states considering them *non plus ultra*.

The telephysical fabricates a self-image in which the idealizations of itself—that is to say, the already leading structures—become a mode of co-existence where Otherness is denied.

This denied Otherness could be generic, racial, cultural alterity and, subsequently, the denial that a superior state of consciousness exists. It is called *nihilism* when the denial that there could be a superior state of consciousness that one could access implies the rejection of the game of overseer institutions which make an abstraction out of our participation in them (concealment of co-control). It is indolence when we refuse to advance to a higher state of self-consciousness or, even, when one denies the possibility that such advancement even exists, whisking it away by means of relativist theses or open conformism. Also, *telephysics* is denoted

when the rejection of a higher state of consciousness works in tandem with the fabrication of a mediated life as becoming surrogate and apocryphal aspiration: the spectacle idealizes the *status quo*.<sup>17</sup> Telephysics is nihilism and indolence that do not desire to recognize that they have lost all beyond fabricating a spurious beyond, a less-than-here, a without-here, an anti-now.

The stars that the spectacle places in the convex sky are the insured coins in the inferior pocket. The telephysical promises, in truth, refer to *already dominant values*. Seducing us toward the Same, seducing us toward nihilism and indolence—as if there were a novel alternative!—, making seductive and attractive, the confirmation of the board of prevailing values is the fundamental function of the spectacle. This is commonly known as *success*.

The spectacle preserves our general state of security. By security I mean to say the desire that the psycho-social structure is not altered. Notice how all the aesthetic, telephysical categories—*cool chic! nice!*—are relative interjections to this *vote for repetition* masked as a *promise of otherness*.<sup>18</sup> Exclamations provided for a false *shock*.<sup>19</sup> Atelocardias to simulate (avoid) revolution, shock or leap. Telephysics seduces us toward change when in reality it traps us in permanency. This is, additionally, the essence of *fashion* or *tourism*.<sup>20</sup>

Sancho does not admit that it is he who feeds the deliriums of his owner and who deludes him just to keep playing the role of dominated-manipulated-victim. Sancho does not recognize that Don Quixote and he are two coins with the same face.

Tibetan Buddhism predicts that in dying we enter the Bardo state, a *post mortem* mental region in which all sorts of exciting and terrifying images appear that, if we take them as real by heading toward them or fleeing from them, they will return us through disgrace to the material world, without realizing that all these images are simply a great spectacle of thought still to be overcome. The rattling sounds of fantasy.

We are a dying epoch. Sometimes this agony is called Death of God, Death of Man, End of History, End of Modernity, etcetera. In reality, neither these terms nor others are important. These phrases try to portray a nervous state that communicates to us that, paradoxically, we have died and, however, we continue to semi-live. We are exactly in a moment in which we should remember that images that surround us correspond to a spiritual test. If we take those images as truths, in their attractiveness or terror, we remain trapped in *Interzone*,<sup>21</sup> cryptic name of the United States, which is not a country, but a form of fantastical existence that has lost touch with long processes and the surrounding reality; a mental state in which, between the one and the other, there are thousands of intermediate images that reproduce themselves at each instant.

Wisdoms like Buddhism appertain to the metaphysical era; they are its dualist solution and the plan of its illuminated healing. Now another wisdom is necessary. A wisdom with which we are able to depart from the telephysical epoch, where mind, body, emotions, feelings, and co-unconscious stop their production of images. Otherwise, we cannot even return to the world of things. The logical outcome of the telephysical epoch does not allow such return. Telephysics could dematerialize everything. And, thus, for the first time in the history of man, the spirit could “dwell” not in a body, but a zone of nobody, *buffer zone* or limbo from which there would be no escape.<sup>22</sup> Only an interminable waiting room.

And, precisely, this most-*spleen*-claustrophobia is a feeling generated by the telephysical epoch.<sup>23</sup> The feeling that it will be difficult of impossible to leave it. This idea belongs to telefantasies. Worrying ourselves about leaving an epoch made of pure images is absurd. From an epoch made of pure images one is never able to leave because we had never entered into it.

It is unnecessary to resolve the telephysical illusion. We cannot leave this epoch. We never entered it. And in this consists that epoch: in not being able to expire, in prolonging its delusion because it cannot be finished. The telephysical epoch consists of a human being banging his head against a wall, trying to open a gap in the wall in order to get to the other side. Televital man, telephysical being, is necessarily pure. The wall against which he bangs his head does not exist. It is an imaginary wall. The wall is another one of its images.

Viviane Mahieux  
University of California, Irvine

---

Jake Nabasny

---

---

### **Heriberto Yépez**

Heriberto Yépez is the author of two dozen books of fiction, poetry, and critical writing in Spanish. He is also the editor and translator of Jerome Rothenberg’s poetics, and more recently the co-editor of several volumes of Ulises Carrión’s work. His experimental book *Wars. Threesomes. Drafts and Mothers* was published by Factory School in 2007, and the translation of his book around Charles Olson’s Mexican experience, *The Empire of Neomemory*, appeared in 2013 from Chain Links. He lives in Tijuana and defines himself as a post-national writer.

### **Viviane Mahieux**

Viviane Mahieux is Associate Professor of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of California, Irvine. She is the author of *Urban Chroniclers in Modern Latin America: The Shared Intimacy of Everyday Life* (University of Texas Press, 2011). Her research interests include Mexican studies, the avant-gardes, urban theory, the genre of the chronicle, journalism and media theory.

### **Jake Nabasny**

Jake Nabasny is a Ph.D. student in Comparative Literature at the University of Buffalo. His other translations have appeared in *Anarchist Developments in Cultural Studies* and *El Libertario*. He has recently published an article on politics and subjectivity in *3:AM Magazine*.

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Lifestyle is in English. (All footnotes belong to the translator.)

**2.** Superstar is in English.

**3.** Be Yourself (in italics) is in English.

**4.** Gossip is in English.

**5.** Show is in English.

**6.** Next World is in English.

**7.** Look is in English.

**8.** This phrase is a play on *la más allá* (“beyond”).

**9.** Reality show and reality are in English.

**10.** Fast food, gossip, paparazzo, and reality are in English.

**11.** This term is untranslatable. Yépez uses the word *yo*, which denotes the “I” or self. However, he cuts it into two with a slash, forming two other Spanish words: *and* and *or*. The point seems to be that not only is the “I” fragmented, but that its parts are also composed of contradictory processes of conjunction and disjunction.

**12.** Italicized words are in English.

**13.** Click and Nowhere-Now Here are in English.

**14.** Together & happy is in English.

**15.** Lifestyle is in English.

**16.** Jet set is in English.

**17.** Status quo is in English.

**18.** Cool, chic, and nice are in English.

**19.** Shock is in English.

**20.** Tourism is in English.

**21.** Interzone is in English.

**22.** Buffer zone is in English.

**23.** Spleen is in English.

---

Copyright © 2015-1990 Postmodern Culture & the Johns Hopkins University Press

## Additional Information

<b>ISSN</b>	1053-1920
<b>Launched on MUSE</b>	2015-12-07
<b>Open Access</b>	No