

The successful American expedition to the moon in 1969 with the Apollo project may be an important event in the history of space travel, a catalyst for technological development of a kind previously only seen in phases of war, and of course a key date in the Cold War. But first and foremost, it is *the* supreme television event. It is the basic model for all television events since then, so that changes in the variation, selection and restabilization of television events in the time since can be measured and described in relation to the expedition to the moon.¹ After this, nothing is ever the same again, and television establishes itself as an agent of change, not just a witness to it. Instead of putting itself at the service of the moon project, it uses the flight to the moon to serve its own ends, and turns it into its agent.

In the essay that follows I elaborate the meaning and stakes of this claim in four movements. In the first I explain the significance of the Apollo landing as a television event in greater detail. In the second I argue that the flight to the moon also marks an important turning point in the whole scopic regime of the modern era. As the self-proclaimed high point of an optical *dispositif* that began, at the latest, with Galileo's telescopic gaze, it gives valid and final expression to the modern planetary order of the gaze. In the third movement, however, I propose that this intensification of the modern way of seeing requires reflection. And it is precisely through this process of reflection that the televisual view of the moon, while giving large-scale confirmation of this way of seeing, at the same time converts it into a completely new quality, a "second order." Finally, in the fourth movement I argue that the moon project completely—and crucially—reverses this order of the gaze yet another time. For the flight to the moon is only a success if it leads to a return to Earth. Accordingly, by returning from the moon to Earth, television is already putting down the roots for the establishment of a new view of the world, possibly on an epochal scale, a view of the world that no longer belongs to a planetary order, but instead obeys a satellite regime. Similarly, in the course of these four passages—from television as witness to television as independent agent, from the individual telescopic gaze to the all-powerful televisual gaze, from the first-order regime of the gaze to the "second order" regime, and from the *dispositif* of the planet to that of the satellite—the expedition to the moon not only marks a great television event or simply the greatest event among other similar, comparable ones. It stands alone; it is entirely singular.

1

The singularity of the moon project with regard to television begins with the fact that the flight to the moon is the first major event that would not have been possible without television, and thus not only plays out in front of the camera and for the camera, but by means of the camera; where the event itself has been expressly brought about with the resources of television, on which it is dependent. Television not only accompanies the flight to the moon, publicizing its novelty and the difference it is making; witnessing, verifying and proving the events. It does all this, but above all, it has been involved in the organization of the flight from the start, from conception to implementation and then editing. The moon project is a television project, the moon programme a television programme. Television produces, releases and instrumentalizes the flight to the moon for its own purposes.

The interesting thing here is that television itself makes no secret of this. There is no need for revelation here. Even if one had no other sources but the relevant television footage from 1967 to 1969, the role of the medium in organizing the flight to the moon would be obvious. Television itself openly displays the dependence of the flight to the moon on television. Here we

can follow the analysis of Eric Barnouw, who demonstrates that the lunar mission was announced in advance in the newspapers as “The greatest show in the history of television”²—and indeed, the Nielsen ratings showed the highest ratings ever recorded. Barnouw talks of “Cosmic Niensens.”³ But Barnouw also explicitly talks of the “script” that television had developed for the flight to the moon, which—at least in the case of Apollo 11, the first complete mission to the moon—was faultlessly performed for us and in front of us.⁴ Significantly, television had planned a place for itself in the script—the main role. This is one of the reasons why we will be discussing “second order television” here (and more below).

The difference between this and previous key events of live television was that they were happening anyway, and were then broadcast, while the flight to the moon took place right from the start as television, through television, in television, and only there. This begins with the necessary technologies. Without the processes of imaging and image transmission developed for television, successful monitoring and control of the flight and the moon travellers would not have been technically possible. Thus two companies specializing in television technology, RCA and Westinghouse, were involved in the technical preparation of the programme from an early stage.⁵

This pre-eminent function of television technologies for navigation and control, aided by transmitted visibility and visualization, was not left in the invisible realm of the experts and technocrats, however. On the contrary, it was clearly communicated to the public, though it is worth noting that this communication underwent a shift from the microscopic to the thematic level: what is the point of putting a man on the moon if we have no camera to show it? The first manoeuvre Neil Armstrong had to carry out was, of course, to activate the external camera on the lunar module. His first significant action was to deliver the famous declaration about man and mankind, on camera. It would not be too much to say that the goal of the Apollo mission was to put a camera on the moon; it was the camera that then required a cameraman and an actor. It is thus no coincidence that from the first telecommunications satellite “Telstar” in 1957 to the present age of navigation and positioning systems, the only economic sector relevant to consumers to benefit from space travel (i.e. the only one lying outside capital goods, beyond the immediate military/technological industry for producing spacecraft) has been the telecommunications industry: television, mobile phones, satnav.

The structure of the overall programme of Apollo flights from 1967 onwards, and the time sequence of the Apollo 11 flight, are also closely governed by the dramaturgical demands of television—or, to be more precise, the demands of the episodic series—and not by technical requirements. As a result there was also extensive coverage of the preparatory flights. From an economical and journalistic point of view, this was done to secure the audience’s interest. Here the dramatic device of intensification was used: every flight went a little further into space (and back again) than the previous one. This kept up the suspense, though it was by no means necessary for technical reasons. The media pattern at work here is obvious: this is the production of information by creating and then eliminating uncertainty.⁶ Every murder mystery on television follows this pattern; it is the basis of the fictional information of the mass media. It is therefore only logical that there has been vigorous, though groundless speculation about the fictional nature of the flight to the moon.⁷

Be that as it may, the area in which television has particularly developed this structural element—the elimination of self-created uncertainty—is the principle of the series, specifically that epoch-defining product of the culture industry that is the episodic series. This serial effect of the moon programme—one of the two cornerstones of the televisual world to this day—was supplemented by the second: the effect of television “liveness.” Since the landing of Apollo 8 it had been possible to transmit live images from outer space. Spectacular use was made of this capacity with

the famous “live” Bible reading from the Apollo 9 capsule at Christmas, which juxtaposed the story of the Creation, read by the astronauts themselves, with the images of Earth recorded from the window of the capsule. This element of show not only built up the importance of the programme itself. For the first time, it revealed the planetary dimension, the universal aspiration of the undertaking. It simultaneously positioned this universal undertaking within the long chain of special Christmas broadcasts that had established and structured the history of radio and television up to that point: from Reginald Fessenden’s legendary maritime radio broadcast on Christmas Eve, 1906; to Manfred von Ardenne’s presentation of television using cathode ray tubes in 1926; to the terrible radio broadcast of Christmas 1942, linking German troops from all the fronts into a single televisual unit; to the commencement of television broadcasting operations by the ARD (German public service broadcasting network) in Christmas 1952, an event which admittedly would scarcely have been noticeable as far away as the USA.

A third element linking television and the flight to the moon is their joint epistemology, which obeys the regime of visibility and evidence.⁸ Not only does the silver luminary in the night sky share a specific, gentle, flat glow with the black and white screen. Had it not been visualized by television, the flight to the moon could never have attained the character of reality, in the sense of “reality” taken as ‘effectiveness.’ This applies not only to the pictures of the moon, which have repeatedly, if quite nonsensically, been challenged. All the absurd speculations about the flight to the moon being a fiction created using the methods of television also contain a grain of truth: the structural chain of fictionalization discussed above. The Apollo programme was, in fact – more or less purely – a television show. Contrary to the claims of conspiracy theorists, however, it was not staged in the closed and remote interior world of a studio in the desert, but in a production space that was apparently not separated in any way from the space in which the viewers lived and experienced the world. Furthermore, this space was bigger, more comprehensive and unbounded than anything before or after: outer space, the universe. The strategy was not separation and concealment, but inclusion, opening, expansion and disclosure. In this way, the simulated world of the space flight becomes one with the world that is deluded about the flight.

In the same way, not only the final success, but the whole process and above all the workings of the mission had to be disclosed and put on display. The uncertainty eliminated at the end of the process first had to be created, and for this it was necessary to name, communicate and make visible, as far as possible, the improbabilities that needed to be overcome. The flight to the moon thus also marks an important stage in the history of the visualization of technical knowledge. The whole technical process in its various phases, the basic functions of the technical components, the difficulties that had to be surmounted, and the underlying physics—all this was presented to the public in countless visualizations and popularizations, and here too, television played the role of the principle route of dissemination. Again and again, in countless animations, models, and diagrams, with commentary from engineers, doctors, experts and the like, the workings of the project were explained. In their annual reviews of the period, the public service broadcasters in Germany pointed out with great pride the incredible number of hours of programming they had spent in this way for the overall reporting related to the flight to the moon.⁹ The broadcasters’ own space travel experts—such as the legendary Günther Siefarth at the ARD—briefly became popular figures. There was even an exact copy of the “lunar ferry” in the studio of the ZDF [a second German public service broadcaster] for illustrative purposes. Again, then, the simulative character of the enterprise was made plain for all to see.¹⁰

These efforts were of course accompanied by exertions on the part of other media in the media network. The visualization of television was supplemented by newspapers and magazines, youth magazines and calendars, and posters. It was above all this visualization—and not just its goal at

the moment when it was accomplished that gave the whole project its credibility by proving, it could work.¹¹

Moreover, it was precisely this credibility that opened up the political scene to this complex of space travel and television. The first level here is economical. The immensely expensive space travel programme was funded by taxes, and therefore had to enjoy prestige among all sectors of society to justify the costs in the eyes of the members of parliament who had to approve it. The second level is more directly political, and involves the organization of power. In the first instance this is a conventional matter of state power. The aim of the whole undertaking, after all, was to gain a geopolitical advantage over the other bloc in the Cold War.¹² To this end, the lunar television programme pursued a double strategy. On the one hand, the global public, and ideally also the population of the other bloc, had to be convinced of the performative superiority, the unsurpassed power of the American economic and political system, and this in an area where the United States had actually begun with a decided handicap: in the competitive horizon of the time, which could be measured in months, e.g. in the area of nuclear arms. In order to reach this goal, NASA was prepared to take the considerable risk of a publicly staged operation, on display “live” at all times, which could have failed for all to see. On the other hand, however, the idea was, far more profoundly, to diminish the fundamental dichotomy of global politics at the time, which is to say, the Cold War itself. The flight to the moon was intended to come across as a victory for freedom, and was actually presented as a collective undertaking of and for all the forces of the Earth. America was thus supposedly acting on behalf of all peoples and all powers. And in order to reach this propaganda goal, television was indispensable, being the only medium capable of not only expressing this aspiration, but also of bringing it about performatively, simply by means of its structure as a global “live” broadcast that actually took place.

Behind this staging, however, power is being wielded in yet another form, that of the medium itself. Television is not simply placing itself at the disposal of official geopolitics. Instead, it is using the figuration of the Cold War to its own ends, in an act of virtually unprecedented media self-empowerment. Whatever people do after this, they do it as agents of television.¹³

2

This unique positioning of the flight to the moon as a television event is not the end of the story, though. As I have already proposed, the Apollo programme is not only a gigantic television show; it is *the* central event of television history. Television thereafter is not the same as television before; we can almost speak of pre-Apollonian and post-Apollonian television. For in the process of the moon broadcasts television appropriates epochal relevance: on the one hand, in the flight to the moon it appropriates power over reality by organizing an event of planetary dimensions itself, and declaring the world to be its own interior. At the same time it positions itself within a scopic and epistemic grand tradition, that of the Copernican world order and the Galilean viewpoint.¹⁴ Armstrong’s speech about “mankind,” declaimed while on the moon, already hints that this is about the central position, or more correctly, the universal position of “man,” but that it is also, in particular, about *his* position in space, *his* place, and *its* visibility. This is already shown very simply by the view from the window of the capsule to Earth. Other initial indicators include the world tours on which astronauts who had returned from other phases of the mission were sent during the Apollo 11 preparations. These tours not only had political functions in the framework of the emerging policy of détente, but also helped to raise global awareness of the programme itself.¹⁵

Of course, the main thing to be mentioned here is the fabulous, astounding, and—both aesthetically and epistemically—impressive and convincing images showing the Earth, our Earth, our place in the universe, as it appears from the moon, against the backdrop of this very universe.¹⁶ These images are the main achievement of the complex of television and space travel,

which produces them in two steps: firstly by making them possible, and secondly by disseminating them on a vast scale across the whole planet. For the first time, the Copernican position of our habitat as a planet in the universe becomes completely obvious, appearing for all to see against a backdrop of jet-black emptiness that is nevertheless seen from a different point—one which also serves as a base for the gaze. Thus television finishes what Galileo had begun.¹⁷

In two respects, however, it goes beyond the Galilean order. In comparison to the telescopic view of the universe the televisual view offers, on the one hand, insight into the spatial and physical order that prevails throughout the universe, and thus also includes the place of the observer, the Earth, and prevails here too. On the other hand, it also makes the Earth itself visible, while the telescope could only show other, analogous planets. The scopic regime of European modernity, which had begun with the development of perspective, continued with the increasing prevalence of reading, and was given the finishing touch by Galileo's telescopic gaze, was thus resoundingly confirmed and at the same time transformed. Not for the first time, of course: photography and especially film had already brought about substantial changes by breaking up the points of view from which we regard the world.¹⁸ After all, it makes a great difference whether one takes the view into the universe as the basis for logical deduction or speculation about the situation on one's own planet, like Galileo,¹⁹ or actually looks at one's own planet while looking out at another object, the satellite, and the astronauts who are walking on it. The televisual view of the moon produces evidence, as I've already shown, but this is not just ordinary evidence. It is pan-evidence: everything is visible. This kind of evidence means that the visualization of the universe does not only occur for one eye at a time, and only for a few select eyes overall. On the contrary, it is carried out without distinction—at least this is the principle, the claim—for all to see, all at once. Thus, in one gigantic push, all the limitations and opportunities for doubt that are present in the Galilean view are bypassed.

In 1969 there is of course no longer any need to assert the Copernican world-view *per se*. But by giving its weighty support to the Copernican tradition, by giving his world view expression on a grand scale, and with decisive new dimensions, television takes on the task of both securing and de-trivializing that which is taken for granted. In this respect, it functions as a technique of implausibilization.²⁰ It formulates, in a completely unexpected manner, a consensus that is planetary in two senses. It simultaneously attains maximal redundancy on an epistemic level, and maximal information on an aesthetic level. Furthermore, every attempt to exclude people from participation in this view, e.g. by governments that did not join the live transmission for political reasons, is shown up as wrong. Anyone denying others this view is thus automatically placed outside the consensus of the universe, and in the context of an inquisitorial, misanthropic ignorance.

But the Copernican turn is really significant only as a turning point. It changes something, and changes it profoundly. Completing it thus means carrying on a change or even bringing it to an end. And this is exactly what television accomplishes in the moon programme. It not only confirms the view deployed in the Copernican/Galilean turn, but also carries out a transformation, as in this deployment. Moon television takes what the Copernican turn claims and signifies—for both the spatial order and the order of the gaze in outer space—and turns it back onto the spatial order and the order of the gaze on Earth. In the process, it takes aim at a peculiar area of tension in the order of the gaze in the modern age. For although the modern world order irretrievably renounces the central position of the Earth, at the same time it confirms and reinforces the central position of the subject of the gaze—and thus of the subject of cognition—in relation to the object of the gaze. The subjugation of the object by the subject, as exemplified in Florentine central perspective, is first given valid expression in the modern view; it was probably even the prerequisite for the achievement of the new world model. The

view that proved the relativity and coordinateness of the place of the observer was based on the sovereignty of the observer's gaze. This is where the visual exaggeration of television begins: at this highly charged relationship between view and place.

3

To explain this suggestion, a detour is required. I would like this talk of television's "Copernican turn"—admittedly quite excessive in terms of method—to be understood as it is used by the French film scholar Youssef Ishagpour. He speaks of film's "Copernican turn", which he pinpoints as beginning with the work of Orson Welles, and specifically with the film *Citizen Kane* (1941).²¹ By film's "Copernican turn" he basically means the same thing that has been influentially discussed elsewhere as the transition from classical cinema to the modern film,²² but puts it differently, describing it as a shift from the "image of reality" to the "reality of the image".²³

The change in viewpoint that Ishagpour observes in Welles's work involves a shift from an established approach to one that marks a new epoch. The first sees the moving picture as an instrument for recording, reproducing or producing moving reality, including invented, imaginary reality. Attention is focused on this reality. The second, new approach, however, directs attention to the image itself as an agent of production and observation. The interest no longer lies in what is represented, narrated, made up or documented. The interest lies in how this is done; how the image engages with the image. And according to Ishagpour, Welles's films in general—and especially *Citizen Kane*—lend themselves to being read as observers of this radical change. *Citizen Kane* thus represents not (only) an observation or representation of the life of the main character, but an observation of this observation, a representation of this representation. In a different theoretical context, that of systems theory and radical constructivism, one could speak of the transition to "second order" observation.²⁴ According to Ishagpour, however, the change is from the "image of reality" to the "reality of the image."²⁵ He sees this shift as "Copernican" because it goes hand in hand with a complete destabilization of that which has been seen as necessarily fixed and primary. Whatever was the constant—the narration of a story, the announcement of an event, a figure, a character, a historical fact—becomes the dependent variable of artistic processes, which are the actual subject of the film. Things that were fixed become mobile. And film takes on a paradigmatic role here. In the 20th century the transition to "second order" logics take place everywhere, in other cultural fields and other arts, but also in scientific knowledge. Without a transition of this kind to the "second order" there would be no conceptual art, no media art, but also no discourse analysis, no modern computer science, no philosophy of difference. Perhaps film did not invent this second order, and perhaps it was not the first medium to make this transition. But it made the second order visible, observable, and part of everyday discourse.

The case of the flight to the moon is of course somewhat different again. Television is based on a completely different viewing regime, and forms a different *dispositif* than that of film. Perhaps there is actually no real line of development connecting film and television. Because unlike film, television is, as far as its technological basis is concerned, a medium of transmission, not of recording. It does not retain anything; it merely connects. It imports and exports images and views. And it is precisely this function that enables it to connect the internal organization of the images that we know from film with the external organization of places and views far beyond the reach of the cinema and the studio. Even in its classical pre-moon, pre-Apollonian phase, television has always been a matter of merging the space of the image—the internal organization of the events on screen—with internal space in the real world—the living room in which the television stands—and the boundless system of space outside. It is simultaneously intimate and planetary in scale and conception. And this is exactly what links television's "Copernican" turn in the order of outer space with Ishagpour's concept of a "Copernican" turn in film.

Television of course inherits the first hints of this quality from radio, which also displays a globalizing tendency. But it takes it a step further in its early efforts at worldwide networking, in the spectacular live transmissions that define the early history of television.²⁶ And it develops it even further through its close links with space travel, which go back to well before the flight to the moon. Its revolution thus has quite different dimensions than that of film. It concerns the transition to the “reality of the image” and thus to “second order” processes, but in the dimension where planetary or global thinking connects with the perceptual situation of the subject, which cannot become a planetary or global subject without this.

A planetary way of seeing, such as that deployed by television, is distinguished in part by the fact that it operates in universal views, rather than clips and scenes. In actual fact, the truly spectacular images showing the earth as seen from outer space and from the surface of the moon are by far the most fascinating and effective images of the whole expedition to the moon. At the same time, however, they are “second order” images. In order to allow a universal view of this kind, television must first leave the planet. It must open up a level of its own reality and order in outer space. Only then can it return to the planet, taking with it this reality and order of its own, which becomes visible in the previously impossible image of the planet. Thus it imports the second level into the first level, since the planet can only be observed effectively, i.e. collectively, publicly, on the planet itself and from the planet (we would not go so far as to say: by the planet).²⁷ There can be no image *of the* planet in the sense of a “first order” visibility because no image can capture the planet as a pre-existing planet, as an object. There can only be the planet *as* image, as the result of a specific and comprehensive operation—the expedition to the moon.

This transition to the reflexivity of the televisual arrangement of space is clearly formulable—perhaps more clearly than anywhere else—in the definition of television itself. Television is, according to the official definition given by Paul Nipkow in 1884, “a device designed to make an object located at one place A visible at any other place B (at the same time, L.E.).”²⁸ This practical and paradigmatic definition uses the modern, binding distinction between the subject and the object of the gaze, and presupposes that places A and B are different. Television is established as a medium of transmission, the medium for the transmission from A to B of the visibility of the object for a subject. It thus springs from the scopic regime of modernity, undaunted and unscathed by all the upheavals that challenged it, and embodies this regime on a mass media basis.

However, in the age of Apollo television changes, and with it our vision and the order of our images change. The subject of the gaze, located at place B, on Earth, sees this place B as it can be seen from A. Place B is made visible at place B. B is depicted on B. Thus television is transformed from a medium of transmission to a medium of reflection. Place B becomes part of the reality of the image, television enters its “second order.” Of course the success of this process requires previous practice in the filmic principle of the reverse-angle shot—cutting to the perspective of a person in the film who has just been looked at as an object.²⁹ The extension of this principle to inanimate objects had also already become established practice in film: the hero’s view of an object is supplemented by a view into the character’s face from the perspective of the object he/she is looking at.³⁰ Thus the character’s reaction to the object can be made visible, for example.

In television, however, as suggested above, this conventionalized film principle is transported into a totally different dimension, a planetary dimension. The gaze is now no longer focused on an individual subject-object relationship. The object sighted is not, as in the case of the mirror or the reverse-angle shot, the subject of the gaze itself. It possesses no individuality. Instead it is place B, the place of the subject of the gaze, but no view of the subject is made visible. This is a first step towards the depersonalization of the viewing relationship. The relationship between

subject and object within the gaze is thus made visible, no longer as an origin that is given, but as a consequence that is produced by a spatial configuration. Secondly, however—and decisively—this is not a matter of a single, addressable place B, where subjectivity can be produced. On the contrary, in the case of the flight to the moon, this is about a global dimension, the indivisible totality or the total space of all possible places labelled B, viewed as a whole.³¹ If the space can be broken up into any number of points of view and axes of view by the mobile camera and the editing process, the televised image of the Earth shows the whole spectrum of possible points of view and viewing relations. It shows, in a single image, the possibility of all even remotely possible images—not all these images themselves, but the totality of all places B that would become possible. This totality is made visible at place B.

This is not sheer speculation, but is resoundingly confirmed when one searches through the television footage of 20 and 21 July 1969. The globalizing aspiration of the coverage plays an enormous role here. The commentaries repeatedly point out the huge numbers of viewers, and the fact that the moon broadcast can be simultaneously received all over the world. This is illustrated by live coverage of viewers in all sorts of other places on Earth, showing them in their connection to the flight to the moon and the view of the moon, awaiting the event on the screen. This particularly applies to two much-emphasized images that, while lacking the aesthetic quality or the fascination of the picture of Earth, are nonetheless of great relevance for the overall project. One is the image most frequently seen in this whole context, and particularly on the evening of the flight itself: the repeatedly shown image of the control centre in Houston, Texas.³² Here there were, in turn, an enormous number of images to be seen: radar images, visualizations, images of monitors showing data, but also television images—including the same ones which we could also see. Large numbers of men in white shirts were kept busy viewing and commenting on all these pictures. In the image of the control centre, the totality of all images found an image that could then in turn function as part of the totality of images. Thus it was ultimately our screens that came to be used as the control centres. Stanley Cavell gave theoretical expression to this state of affairs with his suggestion that “monitoring” had replaced “viewing,” without, however, referring to the flight to the moon and the control centre.³³

A second much-emphasized image was to be seen during the telephone conversation between the astronauts and President Nixon: a split-screen juxtaposing the President, with the precise indication “Live from White House”, and the astronauts, with the caption “Live from Moon.” This turned the screen into the place where the two places, A and B, were brought together visually once more, and duplicated. The area that interests Ishagpour—the micro-organization of the image and of the sequence of images—becomes a reflection of the area that concerned Nipkow in his definition of television: the external organization.

For Ishagpour and others, filmic modernity begins with Welles.³⁴ According to this view, the analogy with the Copernican change in epoch lies in the fact that the transition to a “second order” or to the “reality of the image” is a sign of modernity. In connection to this one could test whether the flight to the moon can be seen as the beginning of a—in this case specifically televisual—modernizing movement for television as well. However, this assumption would have to take into account the fact that the postulated televisual modernity itself—as we saw in the previous section—positions itself in a continuous line with the modern order of the gaze, which it nonetheless transforms at the same time. It would also have to show how television, which, as we saw in the first section, rose to hegemony through the flight to the moon, conducts its own modernization as a push to modernize the whole televisual world.

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The radical change brought about by the transition to a “second order” level of television cannot be the end of the story, though—especially if we accept the argument outlined above. According

to this view, the change in the order of the gaze and the order of thought effected by the moon project must have planetary dimensions, in the sense that it not only seizes hold of television, which produced it, but also of television's whole world, i.e. *the world*. This must be another turning point of almost Copernican dimensions, even greater than that perceived by Ishagpour in film. I therefore wish to end with a few suppositions regarding this perspective of continuing change, and also to gather a little evidence for this.

The place from which the reality of the image (i.e. of the planet) can be made visible in a planetary sense is, as we have seen, not the planet itself. It is a place which is accessible from the planet and which can then be imported to the planet or projected onto it, but is different from it. In Nipkow's schema it is actually—we are speaking of the view back from the moon to Earth—a third place: quite visible, but by no means the object of the gaze and of the coverage; still less the place of the visible (for that is Earth); nor is it the place from which and in which everything becomes visible, since this place is—and this is the main point of this discussion—also Earth. This place is the planet's satellite, i.e. in the case of Earth, the moon. It is a secondary place, subordinate to the planet itself and dependent on it, but nonetheless necessary in order to see the planet. The view from the moon, or from a point on the way to the moon, back to Earth is the decisive change in viewpoint that is brought about by the flight to the moon, a result that was neither planned, nor programmed, nor foreseen. The moon not only reflects our gaze without becoming the object of the gaze itself; it also looks at us itself, but without becoming the subject of the gaze. Neither object nor subject of observation, it nonetheless permeates the image. It does not remain invisible as an exterior that has to be unveiled. It is by no means central to this image (this is still Earth), and therefore also bears no resemblance to an empty centre.³⁵ It is marginal; at most, the lunar soil at the bottom edge of the image frames and grounds the image. Nonetheless, the satellite plays a crucial role. It is not a centre around which the image and ultimately the whole configuration of images is mounted. Instead, the satellite is a factor that plays a marginal but fundamental part in each picture and in the overall configuration.

The images and events of a single night of television are not enough, however, to justify talk of a change in viewpoint—let alone a Copernican one. A lasting effect and some consequences are needed. Even the massive impact of that image of Earth as we encountered it above, which became extraordinarily popular in 1970 as a magazine front page, a poster, and an element in advertising, is certainly not sufficient proof of this. One hint of a change of outlook may be the fact that the book cover for the famous report to the “Club of Rome”, written by the systems analyst Dennis Meadows and published in 1970 under the title *The Limits to Growth*, showed the image of Earth seen from the moon.³⁶ This study was the first to describe and conceive the Earth in its entirety as a global and closed system, and had considerable influence on the ecological ideas emerging at the time. But if we look closely, the flight to the moon uses the image of Earth to mark the turning point, not the result of the turning-back. Turning back must lead to a return; just as the television signals have to return from the moon to the Earth, and the flight is not finished until the moon travellers have returned.

Television's return to Earth thus also meant, on the one hand, the return of the principle of universal vision, of reflexivity, and of the external perspective of the gaze. In this process universal visibility/universal reachability could not retain its unique character as the one image that included all places and became visible simultaneously in all places. Instead it had brought with it, on returning from space, the principle of the satellite, of that which is incidentally visible, which accompanies all images, without ever becoming central, but without which no picture can become possible. Universal vision was thus disintegrated once and for all. This, however, confirmed the success of the new scopic regime. After all, the “Big Event” of the flight to the moon, with the “Big Ratings” and the “Big Picture” still functioned in a pre-Apollonian logic of the one view, shared by all and uniting all, produced in a place, A, that is fundamentally

inaccessible, remote, and only visible exceptionally and by means of enormous effort and expense. It was unrepeatable, and the swift failure of the subsequent episodes in the “Apollo” series, with rapidly dwindling ratings, showed how unsuitable the project was for everyday life. Television, however, primarily inhabits everyday life. So the flight to the moon brought the solution to the problem at the same time—though television itself did not at first notice or develop it. Indeed, television’s return from the moon brought this place, the satellite, down to Earth; and not just that: it made it available at all times.

From then on television not only retained the basic tendency to deconstruct each place A that it showed at place B as part of a totality of visible places encompassing both all As and all Bs. It is this procedure that marks, as we have seen, television’s modernization, its transition from an order of viewing to a “second” order of monitoring. The image of the control centre in Houston as the immanent counterpart to the transcendent image of the moon (which it nonetheless includes) captures this Cavellian dichotomy in a single image. At the same time, however, television has brought the third place, the satellite, with it, and now adds it to each of its images. The third place does not necessarily have to become visible, like the lunar soil. It is sufficient that each picture on television looks as though it were being observed from another picture. True, this process does not play any significant role in 1969 or for many years to come. The technical instruments to implement it are not yet available, anyway. And yet the image of the control centre is, for its part, not a central master image. It is either the backdrop or the marker of a basic continuum; or it carries in itself all the other images from which it can be seen. The president on the telephone sees exactly the same thing that we also see in the bottom left corner of the screen, the picture of the moon. And he himself can perhaps not be seen on the moon, but can be heard, and we see the moon travellers whom we see quite plainly as those who are seen from outside. What we see is an image that has always been seen from the perspective of another image (or part of an image). Thus the satellite as the support for the external gaze is in the picture here. According to this idea, there is no longer any exterior, any blind spot, or any empty centre of the picture. Jean Baudrillard wrote something in a similar vein in 1978 (though he did not take the flight to the moon into account), describing television as the “end of the Panopticon”, when this end could already be sensed but had not yet taken its full effect.³⁷

As mentioned above, the explicit, obvious visualization of the place of the satellite that occurred in the moon broadcast is later omitted. And yet television, having returned to Earth, no longer has a blind spot; it identifies every place B, i.e. every control centre and every place in which we are located as viewers, as a possible place A that is made visible by television. This identification, however, is only effective from a third place, that of the satellite; and for this reason, the place of the satellite enters into every picture on television. In this scenario television revolves around and accompanies both itself and us—and we do the same to it. Since then, every picture on television simultaneously contains an exterior view of itself, as one of its inverted images, at least as the necessary possibility of its own occurrence. Every place A is, seen from the satellite, just (any) place B, and vice versa. This also applies if the image undergoes no changes in angle and no relativization, either executed externally or internally, e.g. through a split screen. And it is precisely this unprecedented viewing routine that is the prerequisite for the successful functioning of all the innovations of “neo-television” in the 1980s, which would come hand in hand with the multiplication of routes of distribution and dissemination, with increased numbers of channels, remote controls, and the transition to Caldwell’s “televisuality,” the self-referential stylistics of television.³⁸

In the end this leads to a gradual epochal shift in the momentum of the planetary perspective. In fact it actually disappears. Barnouw correctly points out that the planet already looks like a spaceship, and thus like an artificial satellite, in the Apollo images.³⁹ With television’s return to Earth, the view of the planet emerges as what it is: the satellite’s view. The tremendous

uniqueness of the flight to the moon thus lies in the fact that, on the one hand, it holds up an all-encompassing image that has never been seen before to reflect, for the first time, an era of viewing, and, in doing so, reinforces and concludes the era. It is this image, the triumph of the Copernican-Galilean view, that makes the planetary perspective visible and available. On the other hand the price for bringing it back to Earth was the beginning of the end of the planetary perspective, and the transformation of the planetary regime into a satellite regime. The heroic universality, wholeness and uniqueness of the planet on the night of the moon landing gives way to what it had already become on that night: something that belongs entirely to the regime of the satellite. Thus television since then has ceased to be the central agency of omnipresent monitoring, observation, and imaging. Television itself is nothing other than the artificial satellite of a form of everyday life that it created through its own return from the moon, in which all places revolve around each other as different places, and all views revolve around each other as images.

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Notes

¹ Niklas Luhmann, *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1998), 413-594.

² Eric Barnouw, *Tube of Plenty: The Evolution of American Television* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 424.

³ Barnouw, *Tube of Plenty*, 422.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 425.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 423.

⁶ Niklas Luhmann, *Die Realität der Massenmedien* (Opladen: Westdt. Verl., 1996), 96ff.

⁷ Peter Zec, "Mana oder die 0-Funktion der Television," in *Unser Fernsehen. Vom Pantoffelkino zum Terminal*, eds. Norbert Nowotsch & Rainer Weißenborn (Drensteinfurt: Huba 1985), 16-25.

⁸ See Christina Bartz, *Massen Medium Fernsehen. Die Semantik der Masse in der Medienbeschreibung* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2007), 57ff.

⁹ Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen, *Jahrbuch 1969* (Mainz: ZDF 1970), 216; Knut Hickethier, *Geschichte des deutschen Fernsehens* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1998), 274ff.

¹⁰ Jean Baudrillard, "Die Präzession der Simulacra," in *Die Agonie des Realen* (Berlin: Merve, 1978), 51ff.

¹¹ Niklas Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme. Grundriß einer allgemeinen Theorie* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp 1984), 179ff.

¹² Barnouw, *Tube of Plenty*, 427.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 428.

¹⁴ For the concept of the "scopic regime" see Martin Jay, "Scopic Regimes of Modernity," in *Vision and Visuality*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988), 3-28.

¹⁵ Barnouw, *Tube of Plenty*, 423.

¹⁶ Hanno Kühnert, "Tagebuch einer Fernsehnacht," in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 14 August 1969, 14.

¹⁷ Joseph Vogl, "Medien-Werden. Galileis Fernrohr," in *Mediale Historiographien*, eds. Lorenz Engell & Joseph Vogl (Weimar: Verl. d. Bauhaus-Univ., 2001), 115-124.

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- ¹⁸ See Jacques Aumont, *L'Oeil interminable. Cinema et Peinture* (Paris: Librairie Seguir, 1989); Jens Schröter, "Intermedialität. Facetten und Probleme eines aktuellen medienwissenschaftlichen Begriffs," in *montage a/v* (1998), 130-154.
- ¹⁹ Vogl, 115-124. On evidence and discursivity in the work of Galileo, see also: Isabelle Stengers, "Die Galilei-Affären," in *Elemente einer Geschichte der Wissenschaften*, ed. Michel Serres (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1994), pp. 408ff.
- ²⁰ Niklas Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme*, 162ff.
- ²¹ Youssef Ishagpour, *Orson Welles, cinéaste: Une caméra visible*, Vol. 2., *Les films de la période américaine* (Paris: La difference, 2001).
- ²² Gilles Deleuze, *Das Bewegungsbild*, Vol. 1 (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1989), 283-289.
- ²³ See also: Oliver Fahle, *Jenseits des Bildes. Poetik des französischen Films der 20er Jahre* (Mainz: Bender, 2001); Oliver Fahle, *Bilder der zweiten Moderne* (Weimar: vdg, 2005).
- ²⁴ Heinz von Foerster, *Cybernetics of Cybernetics* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1974); Von Foerster, *Understanding Understanding. Essays on Cybernetics and Cognition* (New York: Springer, 2003).
- ²⁵ See Fahle, *Jenseits des Bildes. Poetik des französischen Films der 20er Jahre & Bilder der zweiten Moderne*.
- ²⁶ Hicethier, 85ff.
- ²⁷ George Spencer Brown, *Gesetze der Form* (Bremen: Bohrmeier, 1997).
- ²⁸ Paul Nipkow, quoted in Hicethier, 15.
- ²⁹ See Slavoj Žižek, *Die Furcht vor echten Tränen. Krzysztof Kieslowski und die „Nachtstelle“* (Berlin: Volk und Welt, 2001).
- ³⁰ Béla Balázs, (1923) *Der sichtbare Mensch oder die Kultur des Films* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 2001), 59ff.
- ³¹ Deleuze, *Das Bewegungsbild*, 22-25.
- ³² Kühnert, "Tagebuch einer Fernsehacht," 14.
- ³³ Stanley Cavell, "The Fact of Television," in *Cavell on Film*, ed. William Rothman (New York: State University Press, 2005,) 59-86, 75 ff.
- ³⁴ Fahle, *Bilder der zweiten Moderne*.
- ³⁵ Michel Foucault, *Die Ordnung der Dinge* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1974), 35-43ff.
- ³⁶ Dennis Meadows, *Die Grenzen des Wachstums. Bericht an den Club of Rome* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1972).
- ³⁷ Jean Baudrillard, *Die Agonie des realen*, 44ff.
- ³⁸ John T. Caldwell, *Televisuality: Style, Crisis, and Authority in American Television* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995).
- ³⁹ Barnouw, *Tube of Plenty*, 426.