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**DOCTOR IN DE INTERDISCIPLINaire STUDIES: COMMUNICATIE WETENSCHAPPEN EN FILOSOFIE**

van

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*Relating Through Our Selves: Situating Media Literacy With Intrasubjective Mediation*

14 SEPTEMBER 2020, 14U
Campus Etterbeek
ABSTRACT

We are immersed in a world mediated by information and communication technologies (ICTs), both hardware (smartphone, smartwatches, home assistants) and software infrastructures (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat). We are transformed by the ICTs in our lives—both invited and uninvited. What does it mean, then, to be media literate, able to navigate this dynamic, fast-changing world of technology? Media literacy has thus far focused mainly on developing the skills to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media messages, and has not focused sufficiently on the impact of the actual technological medium, how it enables and constrains both messages and media users. Additionally, a more fully developed media literacy would situate media investigations in such a way as to allow for a deeply practical analysis without losing a holistic, theoretical perspective. In order to accomplish this, a simple framework is proposed, based on an interdisciplinary study of postphenomenology, media ecology, philosophical posthumanism, and complexity theory. The framework is realized by proposing six groupings of relations: technological, sociocultural, time, space, mind, and body, with a main emphasis on technological relations. How these relations, as well as their interrelational effects, contribute to the constitution of the human subject is explored through the concept of intrasubjective mediation, which is the idea that we are—and continue to be—mediated by the constituting aspects of all of our relations. I engage this framework through an analysis of a museum selfie, developing an instrument in the process that can be used for media literacy. Utilizing the framework in such a manner brings to the foreground the contributing influences that continually constitute human subjects in everyday media environments, allowing people to make more informed decisions on which media they invite into their lives. The human subject is understood here as a posthuman subject, as opposed to the standalone, exceptional being with its roots in the Enlightenment. This subject is constantly becoming through the myriad of constituting relations in their life. While it is not possible to completely understand the complexity of all interrelations that constitute us, the more we can become aware of them, the greater chance we will have for reclaiming some of our agency, which arguably is the main point of media literacy.