

Screens of Law: Three Caves and the Totalitarian State. Law Philosophy and XR/VR 360°



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The analysis of Fuller's 1949 fictitious legal case, the speluncean explorers, - Five men who, in order to survive in the cave, become cannibals and are found guilty - leads one to reflect on the Platonic metaphor of the cave to understand the evolution of the contemporary metaverse and VR 360°. The concept of the screen opens up to practices of virtual reality aimed at appropriate creation research to support in-presence teaching through artistic experimentation: the creation of two short 360° VR films and maps. The notion of arche-screen, coined by Carbone, allows for the identification of the central role of the image in normative phenomena, thereby recovering the traditional humanistic sense of law.

1 Introduction: Research-Creation in VR 360°

The paper presents three research-creation activities in VR 360° conceived by professors of philosophy of law with two directors, one an expert in documentaries and the other in VR 360°.

The first two activities, two short films in 360° VR, were conceived and produced by the directors, under the scientific supervision of the professors, with Italian university students of philosophy, law, and communication, during Summer Schools held in Cannes in 2024 and 2025 at the George Méliès campus of the UCA (Université de la Côte d'Azur). The campus is dedicated to the use of new film technologies in 360° VR. The first short film was presented in October 2024 at an international film festival, where it won the award for the 360° VR section. The second short film will be previewed during 2026.

The third activity concerned the creation of 360° VR maps and emblems for textbooks, with the same educational content on the philosophy of law as in the two short films. It was conducted in Italy during the 2025/26 academic year, using Oculus Meta and immersive rooms. It is still ongoing.

The first two research-creation activities refer to two short films in VR 360° based on two famous legal cases: the fictional case of Lon Fuller's speluncean explorers (1949) and the case of the grudge informer (Fuller 1964), the subject of the famous debate between natural law theorist Lon Fuller (Harvard) and legal positivist Herbert Hart (Oxford), published in the Harvard Law Review.

The case of the speleologists is set in 4200 AD and involves four speleologists who are sentenced to death by the state supreme court for eating, after a month of forced imprisonment, a fifth speleologist who was trapped in the cave with them. The case is used in law schools around the world to introduce different theories of legal interpretation, as each judge on the court presents an argument. Since 1949, analysis of the

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case has given rise to a veritable ‘game’ in universities, aimed at finding ever-new legal solutions. In the 360° VR short film, instead of providing a new legal solution to the case, the students ‘entered the cave’, immersing themselves in the role of speleologists, overturning the traditional perspective, which focused not on the judges’ arguments, but on the speluncean explorers who is devoured, and the moral dilemma. Obviously, overly violent and realistic images were avoided. This activity had both artistic (the creation of the short film) and educational (understanding the case study) purposes, serving as an example of creative research using VR 360°.

The article starts from this short film to analyze the scientific link between Lon Fuller’s speluncean explorers’ cave, the analysis of Plato’s cave myth in *The Republic*, and the normative and constrictive use of new immersive technologies by corporations (Google glasses, Oculus Meta, Apple Vision Pro) in the VR 360° ‘third cave,’ to use the metaphor, and the metaverse.

The second short film (provisional title “Order out of chaos”) refers to the case of the grudge informer, in which five consultants to the first justice minister of a democratic state that has just emerged from totalitarianism suggest five different solutions to the problem of how to deal with those who, during the previous totalitarian regime, denounced opponents of the regime for personal gain. In fact, they had carried out an activity permitted by the totalitarian regime at the time the act was committed. The fictional case is based on real cases from Nazi Germany during World War II and revisits the legal dilemmas of the Nuremberg trials.

The teaching activities of the Summer School and students’ research-creation have, once again, reversed the perspective with which to approach the case, posing the question of how a democracy can be transformed into a totalitarian regime, and not the other way around, as in the real case, which refers to the overcoming of totalitarian regimes after World War II. Today, the situation seems to have reversed: the ongoing erosion of democracy suggests that Western democratic systems could become authoritarian (Sherwin 2023). To show the dynamics of the formation of a shared common sense emerging from a regime change, the documentary drew on the famous dormitory revolt sequence from Jean Vigo’s *Zéro de Conduite* (1930). In the sequence, Vigo shows young students rebelling in the dormitory, and a new order emerges from the chaos: they leave the dormitory in single file behind a flag that will be hoisted on the institute’s roof to symbolize the creation of a new political order. The short film currently in production reimagines the famous revolt scene in 360° VR, showing the original on one side as part of the set design, and, on the other, the scene recreated by students in the studios of the Méliès Campus. The desired effect is to highlight the connection between the origins of cinema (Jean Vigo) and the origins of 360° VR representations, conceived in relation to the social and political transformations that are taking place in contemporary society.

The problem faced by Vigo and the problem facing our democracies today is the same: how to conceive of a new artistic use for a device that

is both technological and artistic (cinema in the 1930s, VR 360° today) without neglecting the political and social effects that a new technology of image, communication, and text reading implies.

The third activity refers to the revival of the legal tradition of emblems by Andrea Alciato (1530-1534). In “Emblemata” (1530-1534), a collection of legal emblems that quickly spread throughout Europe, Alciato pairs an image with a motto and a poetic composition (later, in 1555, a philosophical commentary by Cousteau was added).

Drawing on Lon Fuller’s cases and books on the philosophy of law as the course’s source material, the research project aims to revive this ancient, emblematic technique, transported into the third cave: 360° VR. Itineraries for texts, images, and maps are thus constructed for students in annual courses in 360° VR to simplify and communicate educational content in philosophy of law through 360° VR texts and images, including excerpts from the books.

2 The Three Caves: Fuller, Plato, VR 360°.

The global legitimacy crisis democracy faces us with a classic problem posed by Plato in his text dedicated to the myth of the cave, pointing out that a new kind of cave is social networks, and the metaverse. I will approach the topic from a limited point of view: from an aesthetic legal perspective (Heritier 2012), in relation to a recent aesthetic reading of the Platonic myth by Carbone, who highlights its relevance to the reading of the notion of philosophy (Carbone 2019, Carbone e Lingua 2023) and the law (Heritier 2019, Heritier 2025-2026). Superimposing other caves on the Platonic one, I will try to extend his reasoning first from the sphere of philosophy to that of law, a place where equally the image and screens have not - at least in modernity - found great fortune, starting from the idea that law was a positive, textual, rational, logical phenomenon and therefore far from the irrational spheres of the iconic, left to the political. I will therefore refer to the cave in Fuller’s famous case of the speluncan explorers. Indeed, the problem of returning to the Platonic cave arises in relation to the possible political and instrumental uses of social networks and image in the crisis of contemporary democracies.

The U.S. global order can be configured, synthetically, as to the Western version that resulted from World War II, as characterized by three main elements (Dupuy 2015, Goodrich 2013) thought to be closely coordinated:

- 1) the universal theory of human rights as overcoming the conflict between jus-positivism and natural law - and the subsequent gradual emergence of an economic (indeed technical, scientific, and economic) order potentially replacing the state legal order in post-1989 globalization;
- 2) the rise of the “Planet Hollywood” model of imagery and its developments (media system, social networks);
- 3) cybernetic knowledge and its developments (knowledge of neuroscience and genetics, the emergence of IT&IA, the horizon of robotics).

That this framework is now being radically called into question in its political assumptions seems hard to deny, in the context of the return of the specter of a new bloc opposition, looming on the horizon as a crisis of power relations between the old West in crisis and the emergence of new global players, in a complex interplay between economic, political, technological, and even (again) military factors, on the very borders of a United Europe.

The observatory point represented by the cave, or rather of the intersection of different caves, represents an interesting perspective to try to read the complexity of the interdisciplinary intersection of the political and legal, the technological-scientific, and the narrative problem.

3 Fuller's Speluncean Explorers in Chauvet's Cave

The proposed itinerary is therefore intended to traverse three caves, seeking to draw some anthropological lines between the three places, held together by a single reference: the figure of the cave as a place of origin and gestation of the human, in its distinction from the animal.

Lon Fuller's fictional case, set in 4200 AD, features five speluncean explorers who, following a cave collapse, are forced to feed on one of their own and, once rescued, are judged and sentenced by five judges based on different arguments. The case, aimed at teaching law students about the main theories of legal interpretation (natural law, legal positivism, legal realism), has received 30 different legal solutions at universities around the world, resulting in numerous scholarly publications.

It is not only, however, the legal question - the answer to the legal case - that matters here. Relevant is what happens in the explorers' cave and, by extension, in the earliest human-inhabited caves, Lascaux and Chauvet. Here, the human had a flash, a reminder of the Platonic myth of the cave. The reason, we propose, why Lon Fuller sets his didactic fictional case *in the cave*: in the background of the speluncean explorers' case, we want to glimpse the *Platonic Republic*, with its myth of the cave. This aspect has been little explored in the extensive bibliography on Lon Fuller's legal case, which has mainly focused on its legal significance and new solution hypotheses in the courtroom, without dwelling on where the fact occurred. Starting from this hypothesis, we could, in turn, extend the game of finding not new solutions but new places, new 'caves' in which to place the problem, not only legal but also moral and aesthetic. We can thus transfer to another enclosed place what Fuller sets in the cave of the legal case where the speleologists find themselves.

The problem Lon Fuller poses is thus legal, but also anthropological and aesthetic: this, I think, is the significance of placing his fictional case in a cave. In the cave, the distinction between the animal and man is delineated. The latter traces and invents signs and paints on the walls long before the emergence of an alphabet on the basis of a condition of fear. Whether it is a fear of being in the world, primal anguish, fear of the beast, or of dying, or a sense of the precariousness of life, it is a manifestation peculiar to contemporary man as well. Thus, in the active

imaginary testimonies of Lascaux, the act of killing appears linked to primary impulses, and the repeated act becomes ritual, sacrifice.

The art fundamentally says this: the sacrificial rite is brought back to the pure action of the symbolic. In the cave, man defines, figuratively creates, and sacrifices the divine animal.

When approaching Lon Fuller's cave of the explorers, it does not seem possible to forget this, in analyzing the conflict between positivist Judge Keen, who would like to convict the speluncean explorers accused of cannibalism out of respect for the letter of the law, and natural law scholar Judge Foster, who instead believes that positive law is not in force in the cave and would therefore intend to absolve the four remaining speluncean explorers.

Therefore, the first primordial cavern we are invited to enter is Lon Fuller's cave of cavers, written in 1949: not forgetting, however, the human origins in caves and the sacrificial origins of the legal.

The apparent abstraction and virtuality of the scientific and technological context in which we are immersed, of which immersion in the "cave" in which the virtual or augmented reality of VR/AR360° is a part, should not lead us to believe that we have strayed far from the cave of Lascaux or Chauvet.

Fuller deals with a fictional legal case, but one based on actual historical cases used in American universities and beyond to introduce the problems of legal interpretation. The main interpretative theories of law (strict juspositivism - Judge Keen -, an individualistic natural law close to Fuller's own thinking - Judge Foster, and a legal realism that almost anticipates a kind of contemporary populism - Judge Handy) are represented in the case. At the same time, the case represents a kind of ethical dilemma in moral philosophy, and precisely because of this aspect, it raises fundamental questions about the notion of *relationship* that appears to be involved in it.

The argument of the natural law judge in the case of the cavers, Judge Foster, is precisely provided by the identification of a thick and non-transparent screen between the cave world and the external legal mode: what allows him to specify how the extension of positive law cannot identify a boundary only in a geographical sense (the boundaries of a state, beyond which the law is no longer in force), but also in a moral sense.

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I only intend to point out how the rock wall is a non-transparent screen, allowing us to return to the aesthetic, phenomenological, and anthropological problem of visibility. While the critiques of Judges Tatting and the radical positivist Keen focus on the weakness of this argument, I believe that the aesthetic legal, but also phenomenological

anthropological problem of visibility is central, leading us to the second cave: the Plato's cave.

4 Plato's Cave

The second cave to enter is the Platonic cave, which has become digital and immersive, moving from the reading provided by Mauro Carbone and transported into the world of law. I will limit myself to interpreting, in a philosophical-legal key, Carbone's reading of the myth. Carbone, following the iconic turn in philosophy, reads, from Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Bergson, Deleuze, Lyotard, the Platonic critique of images in the key of a philosophy-cinema (Carbone 2019, Carbone e Lingua 2023). If the images of the Platonic cave, as is well known, are projected onto a wall, which is a screen on which the faded forms of ideas appear, Carbone reads the Platonic myth in the key of arche-screen, preferring the concept of screen to the Albertian concept of "window" and then projecting it as a theme for understanding contemporary philosophy projected "between and through screens."

The chained inhabitants of the cave are protected by a small wall, behind which a fire appears, in which copies of the objects carried by the men behind the wall are formed, figures of the sophists. Carbone interprets the wall as a screen (*teikhion* functioning from *paraphragmata*), in the double sense of the term, (a) screen as a surface on which the copies of ideas are projected; (b) screen as a protection of the chained ones from knowing the theatrical and fictional truth they believe to be the truth of things (hence the mere opinion character of the images as opposed to true knowledge). On a closer reading of the Platonic text, however, the wall performs the dual function of concealing by offering protection and of selecting what is to be shown, that is, the dual function characteristic of an 'arche-screen' (the screen as the surface that conceals and the screen as the surface that shows, without the two functions being able to be separated from each other) (Carbone 2019).

The question is to understand whether it is possible to refer the reading Carbone provides of the functions of the arche-screen as a delimitation that exceeds only to the function of philosophy and thought, or also to the specific function of law and the norm: from the recognition of the fictional foundation of the norm and positive law (observable, for example, in the concept of legal person), in other words from a perspective of legal aesthetics.

From this view, the dual function identified by Carbone in the Platonic cave can be extended to an aesthetic legal conception of the norm and law, capable of recognizing the communicative and manipulative value of images and the foundational role of the image played in the history of law through the image of the *Corpus Iuris* (*Civilis* and *Canonici*) before the *Systema Iuris* of modernity and codes. Law, as a whole, and the norm in the positivist conception, is a selective abstract scheme that, by superimposing on the "territory" of facts a "map" of norms (the legal system) at one time "show-screen-projects" the law in a virtual horizon, in

an “arche-screen” that *delimits* but *necessarily exceeds positive law*, and, at the same time, “protects” the consociated citizens.

The concept of the arche-screen seems to be a place where it is possible to locate historically the succession of representations of the *Corpus Iuris* as the iconic foundation of law (from the Roman Emperor to the medieval Pontiff, to Hobbes’ Leviathan as the fictional body of the State and the Sovereign, to the body images of dictators and the normative bodies of advertising, sports, and social media stars in contemporary society).

In summary, the basic idea is that the great question of the separation between law and morality, debated in many books on the general theory of law, lacks an aesthetic-figural conception capable of articulating the nexus between them. A “screen,” which intends to introduce the role of ‘aesthetic’ judgment by posing it as a relation posed between law and morality, from a ‘new’ discipline, legal aesthetics (if thought in relation to the twentieth-century philosophy of law, characterized by the overbearing entry of legal epistemology and then legal hermeneutics), is actually very old. Within an anthropological conception of law, understood as overcoming the classical figure of conscience proper to the ‘moral’ judgment of natural law and the ‘scientific’ one of positive law, in fact, a *space that connects*, a screen that *separates by connecting*, is interposed between law and morality.

From the point of view of an aesthetics of law, precisely this emphasis on the concept of the boundary appears important in indicating how the problem of the separation of law and morality implies both a connection and a distinction, and how this contradiction, which calls into question the concept of the *screen* at once as an element of *protection* and *projection* of norms – as the images are projected on the wall of Plato’s cave (Plato 2000) - cannot be resolved in the terms of logic or even of the principle of non-contradiction. The screen can be read as an element that at once connects and distinguishes, in which two distinct functions of the norm are linked: *Law as protection*, exemplified by human rights theory and *Habeas Corpus*, and the function of individual and social protection that it enables, and *law as projection/image*, linked to making man believe in a foundation that transcends him in a *Corpus Iuris* (whether in a so to speak horizontal and collective dimension, i.e., the state, or in a mythical-ontological-perceptual dimension).

5 VR 360°’s Cave

As is well known, the movie theater has been understood as a technological form of a Platonic cave in relation to identification processes via mirror neurons (Gallese Guerra 2019) that allow one to identify with the actors represented on the screen. Gallese and Guerra’s book on cinema begins with Chauvet Cave and Herzog’s film *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*, in which the investigation of the first images painted by man in the cave highlights their role in conveying a sense of movement to the viewer: these are not just animals reproduced on the walls, but actual scenes

aimed at communicating to the observer a dynamic sense of event, of action that is in some way purposeful.

Michele Cometa (2024) provides an example of this immersive projection of the viewer into the painting, as seen in the Chauvet Horse Panel, where the viewer's shadow is projected onto the cave's background. Quoting Herzog himself, he points out that the row of lanterns used for lighting was positioned so that, standing near the Horse Panel, your shadow becomes part of the image, seeming integral to the scene. This theatrical technique has long been known, as in Samuel van Hoogstraten's engraving, inspired by Plato's cave, in the text *Introduction to the Academy of Painting or the Visible World*.

Fig. 1. Left: Werner Herzog (2010) *The cave of forgotten dreams*. The viewer's immersion in the cave. Right: Samuel van Hoogstraten (1678) *Image of the cave*.



As Gallese and Guerra point out, cinema creates the most credible overlap between the camera's gaze and the viewer's point of view. The camera simulates the immanence of a human body within the frame. We might add that it also echoes the emblem's aesthetic-legal technique, as a process of "throwing" (*em-ballo*) the viewer into the picture, already present in the famous frontispiece of Hobbes' *Leviathan*.

Gallese introduces the notion, fundamental to our purposes, of *embodied simulation*, a basic mechanism in the system of interactions between the brains and bodies of primates and humans.

The mechanism is a direct, non-linguistic relationship established with space, objects, actions, emotions, and the sensations of others, through the activation of sensorimotor and visceromotor representations in the observer's brain, which are involved in the generation of human imaginative abilities (Gallese and Guerra 2019).

The first application of the concept of a "cave" to virtual reality was in connection with the CAVE project in 1992 (Cruz-Neira et al. 1992, Beji et al. 2025). In his 1991 film, Wenders uses rudimentary virtual reality headset to "see dreams" (Wenders 1991).

The 360-degree cinema represents a technological evolution of the movie theater, with a much greater potential for identification; thus, greater advertising and regulatory power, which explains the interest of corporations such as Google, Meta, and Apple. However, the educational use of 360-degree virtual reality seems likely to be very different.

Images from the advertisement on Apple's website for the Vision Pro visor, as an introduction to the era of *spatial computing*, take us to the living quarters of an elegant woman, who in the luxurious setting of a metropolis home is immersed in her visor, which allows her to enter-

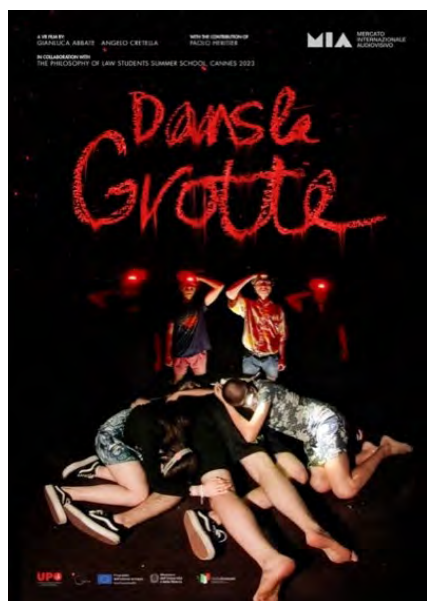


Fig. 2. Short film poster and award ceremony.

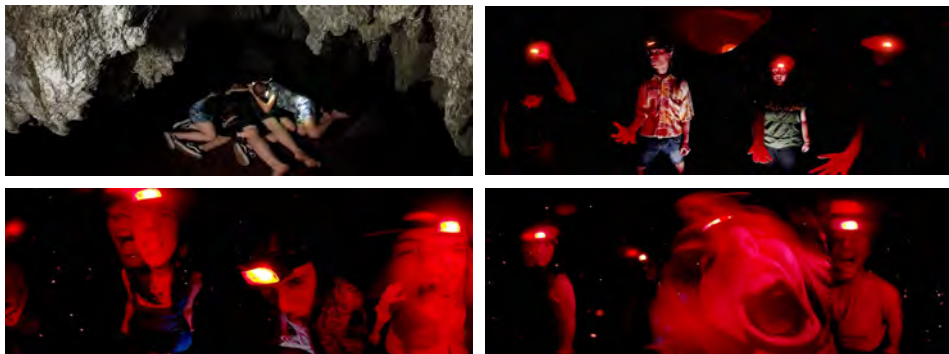
tain herself, interact with people physically near and those at a distance, work and immerse herself in recreational activities through huge virtual screens, video telephoning with virtual images reconstructed by AI.

What may seem like an idyllic condition is actually a scenario similar to that experienced during the Covid period, in which screens forcibly mediated contact with the outside world. In Apple's Vision Pro advertisement, living within the home is presented as a choice at once inspired by convenience and voluntary. Yet, the analogy to the Covid times is discernible, almost as if the model of sociality being inspired should be one mediated primarily by screens, as an evolution of the model of social interaction proper to social networks.

However, nothing about the inevitability of using virtual reality technologies appears to be already written. The educational initiatives carried out over the years with Oculus META, starting with the immersive use of traditional cinema through documentaries and short films in 360° VR, indicate the possibility of conceiving differently, even through virtual reality technologies. These are traditional and virtual-reality 360° documentaries on legal cases studied in courses at the Universities of Turin and Eastern Piedmont, produced by law, philosophy, communication, and psychology students.

During several Summer Schools in Law and Humanities held at the University of the Côte d'Azur, first in Nice then in Cannes at the George Méliès Campus, in collaboration with the University of Nantes and in particular with prof. Gilbert, prof. Vignon, prof. Campo and doctoral student of the Turin University, filmmakers Abbate and Cretella, some experiments in traditional screenwriting and VR 360° were carried out, finally a video game project related to the legal case of the cavers by Lon Fuller. In the fictional case, set in 4200 AD, five speluncean explorers, locked in a cave following a cave collapse, are forced to feed on one of their own and, once rescued, are judged and sentenced by five judges based on different arguments. The case, aimed at teaching law students about the main theories of legal interpretation (natural law, legal positivism, legal realism), has attracted different legal solutions from universities around the world, resulting in numerous scholarly publications. In the Cannes Summer school, we used the case to "enter the cave" by integrating the perspective of analysis (from the arguments of the judges alone to the "immersive" experience of the speleologists) by delving into the ethical and relational profiles related to the legal case, making screenplays, making short films, a video game project and maps for dyslexic students. Specifically in 2023, the students, guided by the two directors, within a national research project LET IN LAW on the educational use of immersive technologies, made an immersive short film titled "Dans la grotte" which was presented at the Universo Corto International Film Festival in October 2024 and went on to win the VR section of the short film festival.

Fig. 3. Images from the VR 360° short film.



6 The Grudge Informer and Vigo's *Zéro De Conduite*

The case of the grudge informer, a fictional case rooted in 20th-century history, presented in Fuller's book *The Morality of Law* (Fuller 1969), presents, similarly to the case of the speleuncan explorers, five different opinions from expert delegates, to be submitted to the Minister of Justice following the transition from a tyrannical regime, in which a political party, the Red Shirts had democratically taken power, following elections that were the result of a campaign of reckless promises and ingenious falsifications, but also physical intimidation by the Red Shirts' night riders, who frightened many people who would have voted against the party, inducing them not to vote. Fuller's description points out that, in the process of establishing the "Red Shirts," there was no removal of public officials from office, nor was there any suspension of elections, which continued to be held regularly, without preventing the country from living under a regime of terror.

The problem addressed in the Summer School's short film "Order out of Chaos" is how it can happen that, while maintaining existing laws, a regime can change: both in the case described by Fuller, in which a democracy emerge from a totalitarian state, and, in the opposite case closer to the problems of Western democracies, how a democracy can degenerate into a totalitarian regime. This is the problem already expressed in Böckenförde's famous dilemma:

"The liberal, secularized state is sustained by conditions it cannot itself guarantee. That is the great gamble it has made for the sake of liberty. On the one hand, as a liberal state it can only survive if the freedom it grants to its citizens is regulated from within, out of the moral substance of the individual and the homogeneity of society. On the other hand, it cannot seek to guarantee these inner regulatory forces by its own efforts— that is to say, with the instruments of legal coercion and authoritative command— without abandoning its liberalness, and relapsing, on a secularized level, into the very totalitarian claim it had led away from during the confessional civil wars." (Böckenförde 2020, 167)

The creation-research led to the representation of coordinated collective movement as the foundation of practice and order, as depicted in the famous sequence from *Zero for Conduct* by the anarchist film director Jean Vigo, which Carbone references in *Philosophy-Screens* (Carbone 2019).

Coordinated collective movement can indeed provide direction for action, as in the scene in the boarding school dormitory in the film, where the boys in their nightshirts stage a revolt and then, through the use of *slowed rhythm* and the reversal of the direction of the soundtrack, jump into the dormitory amid flying feathers from the pillows. By slowing down the images and reversing the flow of sound, Vigo, in a sequence that would become historic, achieves a derealizing effect: Carbone points out that here the perception in cinema is no longer realistic: “By reversing the sounds and switching to slow motion, this sequence from *Zéro de Conduite* tries to elude precisely that perceptual logic, thus producing an effect of derealization.” (Carbone 2019, 25).

During the Summer, we then moved from the derealizing effect in cinema proposed by Vigo to the derealizing effect obtained through filming with the use of 360° VR, trying to reproduce the scene in which, from the chaos of the revolt, a direction and a purpose are constructed: in *Zéro de Conduite* in order to get out of the room to hoist the flag on the roof of the institute. The element I want to point out is that in slowing down the ‘coordinated collective movement’ of a riot by children in a dormitory, precisely through the perceptual reference to being inhabited by a transcendence, appears that movement which constructs and founds institutions, which Böckenförde’s dilemma illustrates. It is no coincidence that the film shows, in the subsequent image, the formation of a queue - a classic source of customary law - to leave the room, the ideal prospect of a direction, a metaphorical purpose that orients and guides. Dance as a collective movement establishes a necessarily ambiguous collective liturgical transcendence, which creates roles and leaders ‘spontaneously’ in the group, in the line that is created, and which will inevitably have to endure an ambiguous history (in the film, but also in real life, of the institution, of the movement created). Here, the supposed anarchism of Jean Vigo’s social cinema paradoxically reaches Böckenförde’s dilemma and underscores the importance of ritual and dance for society, showing how a composition of bodies that constructs a figure of free order is possible and how the humanities are therefore the true cultural foundation of the law. We have never seen a society hold together, as Legendre’s legal aesthetics point out, without rituals, symbols, and representations: “We have never seen, nor will we ever see, a society live and govern itself without a founding scenario, without totemic narratives, without music, without choreography; in short, without the ceremonial forms that take charge of a fantastic chaos (the delirious crucible of Reason). We have never seen, nor will we ever see, a society that lives and governs itself without precepts and prohibitions; in a word, without legal forms and case law. We have never seen, nor will we ever see, a society that lives and governs itself without a ‘glue’ that holds these disparate registers together and makes them communicate, in other words, without making ‘opposites coincide’ (Nicola Cusano). Westerners call this ‘glue’ politics (Legendre 2012, 90). In the short film, we depicted this aim.

Fig. 4. Jean Vigo's *Zéro de Conduite*,
The revolt, The queue.



Fig. 5. Images of the Summer School
set design, Cannes, Campus
George Méliès, 2025.



7 VR 360° maps and VR 360° Legal Emblems

The third didactic experiment consists of creating conceptual maps and legal emblems in 360 ° VR. The creation of VR 360° maps fits into an immersive teaching methodology that poses the question of a humanistic use of VR 360° technologies, aiming to explore the future status of textuality in a virtual dimension. The way the text document is conceived in VR 360°, as seen on the Apple Vision PRO advertising site, presents text in its “classic” dimension: a page of text presented frontally to the screen. Instead, a deeper understanding of the history of textuality from papyrus to legal emblem and hypertext leads to the question of how to think about text in the Metaverse (Tagliagambe 2022) and, simultaneously, how to rethink the educational scene using the immersive XR/VR technologies of 360°.

The statute of textuality and text in a VR horizon is thought to be related to the representation of immersive patterns in VR 360 °. Precisely, the traditional notion of the legal emblem already shows its immersive character: the function of the emblem, and therefore of the image within

the text, is to “throw in” (Greek word: *Em-Ballo*) the reader into the text, realizing a technique well known to jurists since the time of Justinian and then Andrea Alciato, and brought to light in the twentieth century by Pierre Legendre (Legendre 1988) and then, variously, by Peter Goodrich (Goodrich 2014), and Richard Sherwin (Sherwin 2011, Wagner and Sherwin 2014).

This second research direction takes the novelty of 360° immersive representation seriously by considering transforming text into a horizon not mediated by a perspective screen, but by a screen that spans the entire 360° surface, as in the Oculus META.

The collective vision of these patterns moves from the research of Leclerc, Vignon, Gilbert, Abbate as it has been experienced and applied by students in various editions of the Summer School in Nice and Cannes. The basic idea is to read in terms of the evolution of the history of immersion between literature, law (letter and spirit), figural hermeneutics of the biblical 4 senses, invention of perspective and machine eye (computer vision), vision of the Go Pro in terms of the VR 360°: with the aim of reactivating the educational scene thought in presence and not at a distance and online.

Photos of the first teaching experiment of the creation of these diagrams, in Summer 2022, show the idea of the creation of diagrams summarizing course content and lectures in VR 360, which are explained by a student positioned within the *Oculus*, but connected to a traditional blackboard-screen, so that it was visible to other students the path of navigation of the diagrams from the student wearing the virtual glasses. The point of this experimentation is to proceed in exactly the opposite direction of the proprioceptive capture mode proper to VR 360° viewers: to allow the *Oculus* vision to be “socialized,” to allow the way of exploring the sphere of the “360° cave” of those who are using the device to be made visible in the traditional classroom composed by the students. We could say that this didactic methodology assigns to the relationship between those who are immersed in virtual reality and those who are in the classroom observing what he or she is doing the configuration of the meaning of the work being done: which does not mean that AI cannot be used to prepare the work, which nevertheless remains linked to the *bodily* dimension of student learning. The path is opposite to the direction of *online* teaching, which implies the substitution of real, bodily presence. The use of technology is carried out alongside the traditional classroom.

From this experience, the current experiment is drawn, which involves creating 360° VR text diagrams and exposing one’s way of constructing an order as a form of “creative” expression in the text.

However, the methodology avoids the common simplification of paper-book content among university students, namely the use of summaries from online sources or AI-generated summaries to prepare for exams. If the regulatory effect intended for VR 360° tools by digital corporations is to exploit the immersive effect to persuade and control, the educational experience is based on opposite assumptions:

1) Firstly, reading the emblematic content of the courses is not intended to replace reading the printed books, but represents a different and additional path, limited to the images in the text and the textual explanations relating to the images. This could enrich the study experience and encourage the activation of individual paths of in-depth study:

2) Secondly, it is literally a matter of ‘pulling the student out of the cave’: from immersion in the ‘cave’ of 360° VR, carrying out the reading of maps in 360° VR back to the traditional face-to-face teaching scene, as we shall see in paragraph.5. During the experience, the process of reading and exploring the 360° VR emblems using the Oculus headset is linked to a screen visible to other students in the classroom, who interact and discuss with those ‘inside the cave’. If the Greek term ‘em-ballo’ (‘em’ + ‘ballo’) means ‘to throw inside’ (into the cave) and activate proprioception instead of heteroception, the aim of the discussion with those outside has the meaning of pulling out (we could propose the neologism ‘ekballatica’, from the Greek term ‘ek’ plus ‘ballo’).

3) Thirdly, educational experimentation aims to assign a place to the written text within a virtual environment dominated by the logic of the image, raising the question of what will become of text and writing in the metaverse and virtual reality. As is well known, whenever a technology that changes the form of the book is introduced, the political organization and form of the state also change (think of the invention of the printed book and the contemporary emergence of the modern state).

These experiments aim to enable both informational and affective learning, linked to experience, while also enabling the collective and artistic expression of content developed by students.



Fig. 6. Students in the Summer School in Law and Humanities in Cannes, 2023

8 Conclusion

The article presented a research methodology for university teaching that combines 360° VR cinema and the philosophy of law through immersive, expressive experiences involving students, professors, and filmmakers. Two short films were made based on legal cases, parallel to traditional teaching activities, and were taught at Sumer School. Image maps were created that reflect the long-standing tradition of legal emblems.

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