

Introduction

We had the good fortune of having our seventeenth annual conference for the *Society for Phenomenology and Media* at the National University campus in Torrey Pines, California. The conference was hosted by Dr. Melinda Campbell. We had over forty presentations, with attendees from all over the world. By all accounts, it was an overwhelming success due to the collegiality and active participation of all. In the following paragraphs, I have attempted to provide you with a very general outline of the papers that we selected for this year's edition of *Glimpse*. Though the articles included in this journal provide an important representation of the themes covered at our conference, I would encourage you to review as well our *Proceedings* which adds to our understanding of the eclectic nature of the topics addressed at our conference.

Carl Boggs' "Technological Rationality and the Post-Orwellian Society" examines the reality of an expanding security apparatus and a highly evolved surveillance state in the United States. Beginning in World War II, growing through the decades of the Cold War, and now heating up in the ongoing War on Terrorism, this system of surveillance, espionage, covert operations, and security operations at all levels of government has morphed into "a sprawling apparatus of control extending to virtually every realm of society, driven by novel forms of technological and bureaucratic rationality." Boggs argues that we now dwell in a post-Orwellian world in which constant surveillance becomes a form of domination that is

so insidious as to be imperceptible. We are left to ponder whether it is still possible to bring about a collective political solution to our post-Orwellian predicament.

"The Significance of Meaningless Gestures in Derrida and Husserl" by Rachel Elliott explores how certain events, in this case the Mandela memorial, provides us with an opportunity to consider the role of "meaningless gestures" in the signifiatory process. Through close readings of Derrida's *Speech and Phenomena* (1973) and Husserl's *Logical Investigations* (1914), the author provides us with a two-part thesis: meaningless gestures are capable of entering into signifying relationships with other signs, and they also possess a special capacity to *resist* entry into such relationships.

In "On Becoming Present to the Spectators. A Phenomenological Approach to Theatrical Performance," Raluca Mocan outlines a description of stage performance that focuses on acting in practice, drawing from concrete stage experience—compartment, bodily rhythm, and other expressive mannerisms—the suggestion of a phenomenological theory of acting and, by implication, expression. This essay could easily serve as an introduction to a phenomenology of performance interactivity and intersubjectivity and its different uses on the specific stage medium on which acting is performed.

Rebecca Hardesty, in "Living-into, Living-with: a Schutziian account of the Player/Character Relationship," provides a compelling argument as to why we should resist viewing the Player/Character relationship in

gaming as an either/or proposition. The Player/Character relationship is normally understood in terms of the player's in-game presence; however, this approach assumes that living-into a game-world is an all-or-nothing affair. Either the player is "present" in the game-world, or she is not. The author argues there is a constitutive phenomenology which reveals the Player/Character relationship to be a multi-dimensional matter and not simply a binary relationship of presence or non-presence.

Huhtinen provides informative insights into cyberwarfare in this astute account of how warfare is being waged through the Internet and social media, comparing them to "loaded weapons within a laid-back, easy-going setting." Making constructive use of the metaphors of rhizome, soft power, and barbed wire, Huhtinen alerts us to the hybrid nature of information—it can be a mode of knowing, but information in its present state of evolution is losing its transparency through sheer volume overload and taking on "a life of its own." In this cogent and insightful assessment of the state of warfare in the twenty-first century, Huhtinen provides a sobering view of the state of information technologies, politics, and human socio-psychological reality today.

Though we may be tempted to view death as a detachment from life, the death of others provides an ontological understanding of our own life. In "Phenomenology of Digital Ontology," Hye Young Kim suggests that the phenomenon of death is actually a reversed time movement. Instead of moving from the present

to the future, the separation life begins a journey from the present to the past. However, in our digitalized world, the dead appear to continue in a living way through their active accounts of social network services or avatars. In either realm, the importance is in understanding how our existence in the world stems necessarily from co-existence with others.

Though our senses have limited capabilities, they can be greatly enhanced through the use of technology. Stanley C. Kranc in "The Artificial Messenger: Indirect Perception via the Instrumental Display" explores how our ability to use technology broadens our perceptual abilities as well as other senses. Technology allows us to transcend the perceptible environment and permits us different ways of seeing the world. It not only expands our horizons but changes our understanding of the world by attaining perceptual contact with parts of reality otherwise hidden. The author considers how this expanded view that technological instrumentation provides can also blind us to other ways of seeing.

In Nicola Liberati's "Wearables, Borg, and a Common Living Body," the idea of wearable technology is examined. In order to elucidate his ideas on the relationship between wearables and the living body, Liberati uses the real-world example of Google Glass, which provides wearers the possibility of having constant access to the Internet wherever they go. Google glass and other such technologies that are worn on the body go beyond the function

of perceptual tool to actually become part of the subject's perceiving body. The author considers the ontology and epistemology of the "subject-plus-technology" interacting with the world and envisions the possibility of multiple subjects connecting to a single device, creating a new collective perceiving body with intentions and actions that represent and satisfy its own particular needs and goals.

In "The Artist as a Split-Self. Toward a Definition of the Individual Bodily Sphere in Contemporary Art," José David Romero Martín begins with a phenomenological review of the role of the artist's body as a medium in contemporary art. The author begins by discussing the pathological-phenomenological notion of the artist as a "Split-self," followed by a consideration of the artistic practice as auto-ethnographical on the other. The discussion will then proceed to the concept of the "Individual Bodily Sphere" which leads us to consider the artist's body-world-spectator relationship as a way to understand further better understand the personal space by the artist.

"What lies behind modern technology? The approaches of Marshall McLuhan and Vilém Flusser," Melentie Pandilovski considers how the approaches of both McLuhan and Flusser in understanding the visible appear to be different but are complementary. As Dr. Pandilovski points out, McLuhan identifies three major technological innovations that connect Flusser's belief in the pendulum swing that allows for "linear-text type culture" to be pushed into the background.

McLuhan's and Flusser's thinking begins with a shift from oral histories towards the inherent logic of the alphabet and its subsequent molding of human thought processes. The discussion proceeds to the ontological questions about the nature of technology come into being.

These articles attest to the wide spectrum of issues that the fields of phenomenology and media address. With each passing year, we have had the good fortune of witnessing not only a deeper exploration of traditional issues associated with these fields but the introduction of other themes that connect and expand our knowledge of phenomenology and media. I want to thank everyone who contributed to *Glimpse*, and give a special thanks to Dr. Melinda Campbell for her dedication to this journal. We look forward to many more successful publications.

Luis Acebal, Editor
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