

# Introduction

In September of 2020, the Society for Phenomenology and Media held its 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual International Conference. This conference was unique in two ways. First, it was an all-virtual colloquium; second, it was a conference set aside to address a specific theme: COVID-19 and Media.

Originally an idea of the President of SPM, Gerardo de la Fuente, the conference was enthusiastically adopted by SPM leadership, and, a host university was quickly found: Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla. Prof. Marleni Reyes and Dean Eloísa Sheng-li Chilián Herrera, who had successfully arranged and implemented the all-virtual SPM 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual International, once again took up the task of implementing President de la Fuente's idea.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual International Conference is better considered a "colloquium" because it was not an open call for papers. Rather, the conference/colloquium chose to invite nine speakers who represented pandemic conditions worldwide: Bas de Boer, Nokta Celik, Gerardo de la Fuente, Junichiro Inutsuka, Olya Kudina, Obiageli Pauline Ohiagu, Duygu Onay-Coker, Sarah Lwahas, Paul Majkut. These speakers assured that the virtual gathering represented truly international perspectives from Africa, Asia, North America, Latin America, and Europe (Belgium, Turkey, Mexico, Ukraine, Nigeria, and the United States).

In addition, four exceptional papers that were not presented at the

meeting are included in this special number of *Glimpse*. As we all now know, COVID left a number of loose ends for academic societies worldwide, and SPM is no exception. Therefore, rather than postpone the publication of these additions to the next *Glimpse* in 2022, it was decided to include them in this number so that they could receive the scholarly attention they deserve.

As you read these essays, please note that they reflect on the pandemic conditions of *the time they were written*. They capture that *moment* and were not intended to predict the course of events that COVID-19 would take, the twists and turns of future events. This conference/colloquium is a snapshot of the time, a time when little was understood, panic was endemic, and confusion prevailed in political, social, and cultural spheres.

These conditions made our project difficult for the nine speakers who presented their thoughts. Information was incomplete. Some speakers rushed into the sociological work of surveys in order to establish an empirical base for their thoughts, although it is clear that the thirst for data in a climate of political demagoguery that surrounded the pandemic was itself pandemic. Others chose to reply on historical precedent. Still others attempted a purely phenomenological analysis. It is this diversity of thought and approach that makes this number of *Glimpse* memorable.

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June, 2021