

## Preface

Collected in this double volume of *Glimpse* are papers presented at the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> International Conferences of the Society for Phenomenology and Media held, respectively, in Arlington, Virginia, in 2009, and Puebla, Mexico, in 2010. Together, they represent an intellectual break from previous SPM conferences.

Presentations at 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> International Conferences of the Society for Phenomenology and Media focused, to a degree not found in earlier events, on media practice. The importance of philosophical parameters and the applicability of phenomenological theory to media, in earlier conferences often more concerned with questions of epistemology, ontology, metaphysics, and hermeneutics than media, was greatly diminished both in number of papers as well as general interest. Although Husserlian and Heideggerian scholarly exegeses continued to play a role at the Arlington conference, though to a lesser extent than in the past, they were mentioned only in passing in Puebla.

The 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> International Conferences of SPM saw a significant increase in the discussion of concrete contemporary and historical media practice and media theory. The epistemological rupture that occurred within the Society came about not only because of the influx of a large number of new, younger participants, but also a shift in thought among many long-time members. In earlier meetings, Husserl, Stein, Ingarden, Merleau-Ponty, Schutz, Heidegger, and others routinely discussed in the phenomenological tradition, were venerable academic touchstones. Underlying philosophical problems that were commonplace in other societies with phenomenological focus dominated SPM meetings as well. Efforts in these earlier conferences were either given to finding media examples as evidence that demonstrated already held phenomenological positions, whether eidetic, existential, or transcendental, or to coerce these examples into a tentative “phenomenological” schema for media practice. Some of these papers received attention outside of the Society, but by-and-large they broke no new ground, despite valuable insights, and were generally ignored.

After the rupture, discussion of McLuhan, Flusser, Iser, Ong, Ecco, Deleuze, Bazin, Barth, Ihde, Baudrillard, Postman, and other thinkers who specifically dealt with media and technology replaced the influences of earlier conferences. Concrete studies of specific media replaced board, underlying dry philosophical concerns over which members had formerly fretted—the same problems that were found to trouble phenomenologists in meetings and publications of academic groups in the “movement.” Phenomenology was not so much repudiated as found irrelevant, stale, or of little interest to younger thinkers who found their intellect challenged by pertinent questions brought up in other systems of thought about media—the *Annales* school as applied to material production, cultural materialist views of media artifacts, and Marxist analysis. Work on the history of books, manuscripts and early print, aspects of photography, silent film, radio, and television jostled with papers on new media. Concrete media studies of Lucien LeFebvre, Roger Cartier, Jacques Ellul and others displaced epistemological and ontological overly ripe hermeneutics.

Increasingly, presentations eschewed theory altogether in favor of concrete analyses of media, particularly contemporary media: analogue film, digital film, YouTube, comix, emblem books, television, the Internet, Blogs, mobile phones, and so on.

The 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> International Conferences represent a turning point in the history of SPM: the turn from philosophical to understanding media practice — a near-complete move away from classical phenomenology.

While the tittles and iots of traditional phenomenology were, for the most part, absent from the papers of the two conferences here collected, you will still find a few very strong Husserlian and Heideggerian ontological and empirical studies in these pages from the transitional Arlington meeting.

Not all presentations at the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> SPM Conferences are included in this volume. This decision was made by choice of the authors themselves in consultation with the editors or by

the authors alone. Some authors have two essays in these pages because they presented papers at both conferences.

The essays in these volumes are arranged in alphabetical order according to the last names of the authors.

A last word of thanks to the current President of the Society of Phenomenology and Media, by Alberto J. L. Carrillo Canán. During his leadership, we have seen the Society grow and prosper. We are

also in debt for the intellectual and scholarly support of Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla, Mexico. The relationship between SPM and Puebla is profound and strong.

**Paul, Majkut**  
Editor

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