

introduction

In February of 2012, we had the privilege of holding our fourteenth annual conference for the *Society for Phenomenology and Media* in San Diego, California. The venue was held at the National University campus in Torrey Pines, California and hosted by the founder of the Society, Dr. Paul Majkut. There were well over forty presentations, with attendees from all over world. This year we were delighted to host one of the largest conferences for our Society in recent times. In order to provide you with a general idea of the conference papers, I have endeavored to capture briefly the eclectic themes that were discussed.

In his presentation, *Taking Kant to the Picture Show: A Prolegomena to Any Future Film Theory*, Jason Wesley Alvis asks his audience to consider the implications of - *What is film?* In order to explore this question further, the author explores Kant's thinking on "Fine art" and "Philosophy", and discusses how we can use these concepts to rethink and imagine "film" as an artistic medium.

Dr. Polona Tratnik, *Biotechnology for Medicine: Intervene to Make Live*, draws our attention to the growing importance of biotechnology for power over life and body. Her discussion centers on the belief that biotechnology preserves and extends life by helping to improve health and enabling active aging. A key consideration in her argument is how regenerative medicine as well as the other branches of biotechnology support biomedicine.



In this collaborative piece, *Is there Metonymy in Film? Metz and the Rhetorical Figures in Cinema*, the authors argue that there are compelling reasons for questioning the idea of rhetorical figures in cinema. Their discussion begins by questioning "cinematographic" metonymy, as it is understood by Metz and Jakobson. By questioning the idea of "rhetorical figures in cinema," the authors draw our attention to the narratological stance which consists in approaching cinema on the basis of linguistic and literary criteria and categories. In *Machines of Loving Grace, Social movements*,

New Media and Cybernetics, Dr. Miguel Garcia draws our attention to the humane-scientific dimension of cybernetics. Rather than viewing persons as being of typological and individual character, the author discusses how individuals can be understood as complex function mechanisms which do not differ fundamentally from machines. In this regard, cybernetics attempts to combine different areas of knowledge, including the human sciences, in order to understand further how this integration takes place.

Dr. Melinda Campbell paper, *Epistemic Error and Experiential Evidence*, ask us to consider how the epistemological problems that have challenged Western philosophy, especially radical skepticism and an eternal impasse between the speculative insight of philosophy and the practical answers of science—have arisen. Her paper discusses the Kantian theme of cognitive and perceptual structures and then proceeds to show how this epistemological view while taking into account the nature of experience, fails to accord it the ontological importance it deserves.

In *A critical discourse analysis of the policy versus practice on the rights of women in Ethiopia: a phenomenological perspective*, Dr. Tekabe discusses the implications of her survey findings which show significant wage discrepancies between female and male workers in Addis Ababa. Dr. Takabe findings are derived in part from focus group discussions, questionnaires, and structured observations. Her findings demonstrate that even though the Ethiopian Constitution grants women equal rights with regard to their participation in political, social and economic life, the ability to attain such equality has been significantly affected by cultural barriers which tend to favor men and devalue women.

Dr. Stacey O. Irwin's article, *Re-mediation: Reframing Media In Pedagogy*, takes the reader through a hermeneutic phenomenological exploration of remediation by linking media to a learning management system in an online class. Faced with the reality that online learning education continues to increase around the world, there is a greater urgency to understand further the realities and potential of on-line learning. One key consideration is how we can gain further insight through remediation since it can move us one step closer to understanding to the way digital

content is used in the online environment.

In her second article for our journal, *Seeing As an Online Educator*, Dr. Irwin draws upon the writings of Gadamer, Heidegger, Ihde, Merleau-Ponty, Wittgenstein and others to move toward seeing as an online educator. In contrast to a traditional classroom setting, an on-line educator looks at what can be done based on the named areas, portals, and tabs available through the Learning Management System (LMS). This new learning environment asks educators to reflect on new ways of thinking about online education while also pointing out that both modes of teaching share are some commonalities.

Jessica Jacobson-Konefall explores how the digital image, as a medium of self-portraiture, has become an ever growing presence of contemporary social life in *Facebook and Fetishism: The Digital Image as Fantasy, Disavowal, and Reification*. This paper discusses how these online self-images maintain the gestural quality that we often associate with interpersonal experience. The self-image on these social networking sites, such as Facebook, functions as a fetish that conforms itself to the desires of the subject toward a particular social aim. In this regard, the user's identity gains performative force when brought into visual legibility via the fetishism of the image.

Kurt Cline's *Twisted Shadows: Lon Chaney, Tod Browning and the Grotesque Personae of Circus and Sideshow*, takes the reader on both an aesthetic and psycho-social dimensions of the experience of alienated man through the symbol of the mask. According to Cline, the image of the mask goes back to the beginnings of human history and was probably first used as a tool by shamans for psycho-physical transformation. Later, Greeks used it as an aesthetic device of the dramatic arts, allowing for a depersonalization of actors playing individual roles. The use of the mask continues in multifarious forms today as a sort of doubleness.

In his paper, *Representing Presence: Interrogating the Real in Beginning Design*, Michael Lucas provides an overview of his studio-based application findings over a three year period, 2009-2012. Drawing on Heidegger's essays, including *The Origin of the Work of Art*, and *Building, Dwelling, Thinking* as a point of departure, the paper addresses the challenges of

creating a portable structure for a new Beginning Design course at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo.

Mindaugas Briedis' article, *Phenomenology of Medical Imaging: Constitution of Judgment and CAD (Computer-Aided Detection)* focuses primarily on reinterpreting some key Husserlian notions, especially those fundamental phenomenological insights that are applicable to any "region" of knowledge to a higher-order testing. Going through different stages of Husserlian thought, the author explores how phenomenological investigations support the improvement of concrete diagnostic software.

In *Monotheist capitalism reticular décloison. An endless ideological fall back?* Marta G. Trógolo and Alejandra Fernández begin their discussion with the "May of 68" protests and discuss the complex and lingering problems that these events pose for those who dedicate themselves to philosophy. Of special interest is how these protests reflect a desire to dismount capitalism, or at least destabilize it.

In today's world, it seems normal to consider any kind of action as mediated by a technological device, or at least having some relation to it. Nicola Liberati's paper, *Between Leib and Technology: a Phenomenology of the Living Body's Constitution*, focuses on how the natural Leib of the subject should be considered as culturally embedded and how the classical conception of the "nature" of the Leib is related to the subject's cultural context. The second part of her paper addresses the necessity of this "naturalness" and the relation with our contemporary world.

In *Towards an Understanding of the Formal Framework of Art Cinema. Haneke's The White Ribbon*, Victor Gerardo Rivas López brings to light some assumptions regarding "art cinema" and the role of the filmmaker. Rather than seeing the filmmaker as a true creator, he is often seen as a kind of illustrator philosopher, or at sometimes simply as an ideologist. The paper explores how this evaluation of cinema stems from viewing the film as a narrative. The author argues that this approach to this form of art is flawed because it is based upon a *literary bias* instead of pointing at the *integral* definition of its object.

Sharon Santus' paper centers on the consequences that both the September 11th 2001

attacks and the 2008 economic downturn have had on anti-immigration rhetoric by white-supremacy groups, especially on internet sites. Her paper, *Targeting Immigrants: A Discourse Analysis of Extremist Group Messages On Immigration in a Troubled U.S. Economy*, explores how a number of extremist groups are capitalizing on anti-immigration sentiment in order to recruit new members. In effect, groups such as a National Socialist Movement (NSM), the Knights Party of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), and Numbers USA are co-opting the language and symbols of American patriotism in order to further either own white supremacist agendas.

In the not too distant past, the most pressing political problems seemed to involve the struggle for identity and recognition. However, this struggle to possess a proper name has shifted in recent times to a desire for anonymity. Stephen Crocker's paper, *Being Anonymous/Anonymous Being*, proposes that there is a new kind of class struggle taking shape. There is a shift from desiring to have a proper name to one that seeks to have the freedom to escape from it—to be anonymous. The implications of this shift are explored within our contemporary, political landscape.

In *Its Laying and its writing: A Philosophical Study of Food Culture*, Matti Itkonen discusses the ways that recipes and cookery books function as mirrors of national identity or mindscape. From this premise, the author explores such questions as what kind of Finnishness can be found in its food culture. Or, how is the display of food able to communicate to later generations the spirit of a bygone age or place?

Our last paper of this issue, *Media, Illusion and Virtual Reality*, explores the sensation produced when dealing with figurative cultural objects. The authors examine how different kinds of images such as paintings, sculptures, films, and digital games, specifically those displaying moving images, provide a *subjective perspective* that looks and feels as we ourselves are moving in the space represented by the images. In these instances, we suffer an illusion of either observing or participating in an illusionary situation. The paper examines the concept of illusion in order to arrive at a characterization of what is known as *immersive experience*.

In closing, I would like to thank all the contributors to this issue of *Glimpse*. Your efforts have made my experience as editor enjoyable and worthwhile. I also want to thank Kurt Cline and Shannon Calder for their collaborative efforts in reviewing these submissions.

Luis Acebal, Editor
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