



Editor's Introduction

The Affective Modalities of Media and Technology

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The six essays in this issue of *Screen Bodies* explore what we might call the affective modalities of media, that is, each author examines the potential of emerging and traditional media to transform individual and collective relations through the strategic use of embodied affective experience. Three essays in the issue focus on new and emerging technology. In, "The *iAnimal* Film Series: Activating Empathy Through Virtual Reality," Holly Cecil examines the potential power of virtual reality to generate empathy in users. In particular, she looks at the way animal advocacy organizations combine documentary film and virtual reality to communicate the embodied experience of living and dying in a factory farm to provoke feeling and widespread opposition to the industry.

While Cecil engages with theories recently developed in animal studies, David John Boyd turns to the philosophy of Deleuze, Guattari, and Virno to examine the political potential of *otaku* culture in his "Affective Anachronisms, Fateful Becomings: *Otaku* Movement and the Joan of Arc Effect in Type-Moon's Transhistorical Anime Ecology." Boyd offers a Deleuzian take on the transmedia franchises of the Japanese game studio Type-Moon. Boyd considers *otaku* artists' deployment of the "anime machine," focusing in particular on Type-Moon's Fate series, and their potential to harness the affective forces of "the Joan of Arc effect" through embodied and tactile experience to accomplish oppositional political ends.

Whereas Cecil and Boyd offer analyses of cases where media arts and technology have been used to evoke feeling to motivate oppositional action, Linda Kopitz considers a case where the affective potential of technology is used to allay oppositional feeling and discourage action. In her study, "Alexa, Affect, and the Algorithmic Imaginary: Addressing Privacy and Security Concerns Through Emotional Advertising," Kopitz finds that ads for digital voice assistants use emotion as a narrative strategy to counteract concerns that voice assistants pose a threat to privacy, particularly by representing them as "an embodied object."

This issue of *Screen Bodies* also features three excellent essays on film, in particular on cinemas of embodiment. In "Modernist Embodiment: Sisyphian

Landscape Allegory in Cinema,” David Melbye considers the haptic dimensions of global postwar cinema. He examines how embodied metaphor is employed allegorically in cinema to convey existential futility from a modernist perspective and to forward a visceral form of social critique.

Jeremy Tirrell investigates cinema’s potential power to offer a new concept of the self. In “A Body of Texts: *Memento* and *Mētis*,” Tirrell applies materialist rhetorical theory to interpret Christopher Nolan’s film. By presenting its protagonist, Leonard Shelby, as an exemplar of *mētis*, or one who uses cunning embodied strategies, Tirrell suggests that the film makes it possible for the viewer to better understand how our “selves emerge from networks of objects both physical and virtual.”

Turning from contemporary to nineteenth-century media technology, Anthony Enns offers a fascinating introduction to the bygone science of “optography,” which he explains was “based on the idea that an image of the last thing seen at the moment of death would be imprinted on the retina.” In “Optography and Film: Prosthetic Vision and Postmortem Cinema,” Enns examines mechanistic conceptions of the eye as a camera and analyzes the power of cinematic representations of optography to both reinforce and challenge the mechanistic notions of visual perception that are the basis of cinema.
