“Witnessing” or “Mediating” Distant Suffering? Ethical Questions across Moments of Text, Production, and Reception

Jonathan Corpus Ong


This article identifies that the current literature on “distant suffering” lacks a nuanced account of the relationship between televised representations of suffering and the audiences that encounter these in their everyday lives. Text-centered studies overemphasize how news narratives cause compassion fatigue, while audience-centered studies enumerate audience responses with inadequate references to the textual elements and social factors that shape these responses. While recent theorizations about “media witnessing” have provided a guidepost in thinking about the ethical consequences of showing and seeing suffering in the media, it however obscures the normative from the descriptive and universalizes the experience of the “witness” it speaks about. To address these gaps and develop a holistic approach to examine televised suffering, the article proposes the use of mediation theory to account for the distinct ethical questions that arise from the specific “moments” of mediation and how they should altogether inform the ethical critique of media.

The Humanities without condition: Derrida and the singular oeuvre

Derek Attridge


In an important lecture on the function of the Humanities, ‘The University without Condition’, Jacques Derrida asks what it means to ‘profess’ the truth and advocates a commitment to the oeuvre – the work that constitutes an event rather than just a contribution to knowledge. I examine a few phrases from the lecture, focusing on questions of the unconditional, the ‘as if’, singularity, the future, and the impossible.

Language Familiarity, Expectation, and Novice Musical Rhythm Production

John G Neuhoff

Language and Speech, February 12, 2014 [Published Online].

The music of expert musicians reflects the speech rhythm of their native language. Here, we examine this effect in amateur and novice musicians. English- and French-speaking participants were both instructed to produce simple “English” and “French” tunes using only two keys on a keyboard. All participants later rated the
rhythmic variability of English and French speech samples. The rhythmic variability of the “English” and “French” tunes that were produced reflected the perceived rhythmic variability in English and French speech samples. Yet, the pattern was different for English and French participants and did not correspond to the actual measured speech rhythm variability of the speech samples. Surprise recognition tests two weeks later confirmed that the music–speech relationship remained over time. The results show that the relationship between music and speech rhythm is more widespread than previously thought and that musical rhythm production by amateurs and novices is concordant with their rhythmic expectations in the perception of speech.

Database
SAGE journals
### Title

**THE OPTICS OF INTERRACIAL SEXUALITY IN ADRIAN TOMINE’S SHORTCOMINGS AND SHERMAN ALEXIE’S THE LONE RANGER AND TONTO FISTFIGHT IN HEAVEN.**

### Author

Jolie A. Sheffer

### Source


### Abstract

This essay focuses on the racial and sexual politics undergirding interracial relationships between men of color and white women. Alexie and Tomine’s works reveal how legal and cinematic histories of interracial romance continue to shape ethnic men’s sense of individual and community identity. An example of comparative ethnic-studies scholarship, this essay explores how minority subjects in the US are shaped by distinct racial logics. Alexie’s collection reflects the influence of the cinematic tropes of the Western and the history of US government attempts to weaken tribal ties on contemporary Native American male characters. Tomine’s graphic novel reveals the racial and sexual conventions of mainstream pornography and the individualist logic of the model minority myth on Asian-American men. Both authors suggest that queerness functions as an alternative ethical relation between parties, one grounded in equality rather than domination and relatively free of the visual logic of racialization.

### Database

Education Research Complete

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### Title

**Transferring Morality to Human–Nonhuman Chimeras**

### Author

Monika Piotrowska

### Source


### Abstract

Human–nonhuman chimeras have been the focus of ethical controversies for more than a decade, yet some related issues remain unaddressed. For example, little has been said about the relationship between the origin of transferred cells and the morally relevant capacities to which they may give rise. Consider, for example, a developing mouse fetus that receives a brain stem cell transplant from a human and another that receives a brain stem cell transplant from a dolphin. If both chimeras acquire morally relevant capacities as a result of transplantation, and if those capacities are indistinguishable, should the difference in cell origin matter to how we classify these creatures? I argue that if morally relevant capacities are easy to detect, cell origin is irrelevant to how the chimera ought to be treated. However, if such capacities are hard to detect, cell origin should play a role in considerations about how to treat the chimera.

### Database

Routledge

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### Title

**Biotech aesthetics: Exploring the practice of bio art**

### Author

Anne Byerleya and Derrick Chong

### Source

*Culture and Organization*, February 17, 2014 [Published Online].

### Abstract

Advances in biotechnology include contemporary artists working in laboratories to create living and semi-living works of art. This paper offers an account of how bio art can be read as an emerging contemporary art practice of the early twenty-first century. This draws on the art-historical precedent of Marcel Duchamp, who transformed objects from commonplace existence into works of art, and contemporary theories of art. Empirical data, in the form of interviews with leading bio art practitioners Oron Catts, Eduardo Kac, Kira O’Reilly, Stelarc and Paul
Vanouse, are used to study how artists navigate between disciplines. In doing so, we discuss bio art as a critical practice based on a communal ethos.

**Title**: Why the Capacity to Pretend Matters for Empathy  
**Author**: Line Ryberg Ingerslev  
**Source**: Topoi, April 2014, vol. 33, Issue 1, pp. 201-213.  
**Abstract**: A phenomenological insight in the debate on empathy is that it is possible to directly perceive other people’s emotions in their expressive bodily behaviour. Contrary to what is suggested by many phenomenologists, namely that this perceptual skill is immediately available if one has vision, this paper argues that the perceptual skill for empathy is acquired. Such a skill requires that we have undergone certain emotional experiences ourselves and that we have had the experience of seeing the world differently, which is a form of pretence. By investigating how we retain knowledge of what is real while pretending, that is, how we anchor the experience of pretence in something that is not pretended, the paper argues that we split our experiential perspective into a double perspective, which differs from the cognitive act of understanding what a perspective is. With this notion in hand, we can return to the debate on empathy. It is argued that in order to have the capacity for direct empathic perception, one must have undergone experiences involving a double perspective.

**Database**: Springer Link

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**Title**: Directed self-placement questionnaire design: Practices, problems, possibilities  
**Author**: Christie Toth and Laura Aull  
**Source**: Assessing Writing, April 2014, vol. 20, pp. 1–18.  
**Abstract**: Over the last fifteen years, directed self-placement (DSP) has become a widespread approach to writing placement in US postsecondary settings. However, to date, the theoretical underpinnings of DSP instruments have received little scholarly attention. Drawing on survey design principles, this study analyzes a corpus of thirty DSP questionnaires to identify the range of theoretical concepts underlying DSP questions, as well as the dimensions used to measure those concepts. Arguing that the validity of DSP in local contexts depends to a great extent on the initial theoretical and empirical basis of the instruments used to structure DSP processes, the researchers discuss the problems as well as the possibilities of the concepts and dimensions currently used in DSP questionnaires. Finally, they offer the example of one of their own universities’ DSP questionnaires, which is grounded in rhetorical genre theory, as a case study for how attending to questionnaire concepts and dimensions can contribute to the thoughtful design of locally situated DSP instruments.

**Database**: ScienceDirect