

# *In Medias Res*

"In the Middle of Things"

*The Newsletter of the Media Ecology Association*

January, 2002

[www.media-ecology.org](http://www.media-ecology.org)

Vol. 3, No. 2

## **3rd MEA Convention: June 21-23, 2002 Marymount Manhattan College New York**

Conference coordinators David Linton and Laura Tropp have been busy with the convention publicity and scheduling details. Unfortunately, Marymount has rented out its Manhattan dorms for the summer, so they will not be available, although other dorm space outside of Manhattan may be. Up-to-date information will be mailed out closer to June, and you can also check the web site. Deadline for submissions is/was Monday, Feb. 4, 2002.

### **Inquires or submissions should be directed to:**

Professor Laura Tropp  
Communications Arts Department  
Marymount Manhattan College  
221 E. 71st Street  
New York, NY 10021

[Ltropp@mmm.edu](mailto:Ltropp@mmm.edu)

(212) 774-4868

### **President's Message**

## **A Journal is Born: *Explorations in Media Ecology* Lance Strate, Fordham University**

I am pleased to be able to inform you that the Media Ecology Association is launching its own journal in 2002, *Explorations in Media Ecology*. The title pays tribute to Marshall McLuhan and Edmund Carpenter's pioneering periodical, *Explorations*, which was published from 1953-1959. Our title also forms the acronym *EME* (-eme is defined as "a suffix denoting a basic structural element in a language"), appropriately enough for a journal of media ecology. The first issue (Spring 2002) of *EME* will feature articles by Walter Ong, Camille Paglia, Douglas Rushkoff, Robert Logan, and Richard Barbrook, and a probe by Paul Levinson. And our goal is to make *EME* a journal that MEA members can continue to take pride in.

The question of medium is an important one for contemporary journals, and while there are many advantages to online journals, we have decided that *EME* will be a print journal for a number of reasons. Print is the traditional form for scholarly journals, and it continues to

(Continued on p. 2)

## **President's Message (cont.)**

be invested with a kind of legitimacy that online journals lack. Print has been our most successful medium for intellectual discourse, our most left-brained of media as it were, and most certainly the easiest to read. Print balances portability with permanence, and there is much to be said for the look of a series of journals lined up on a bookshelf, and for the pleasant surprise of receiving the latest issue in the mail. And, of course, it will still be possible to archive *EME* in electronic and/or online form in the future.

### **The decision to go with print has its cost. Our regular membership fee has been raised to \$40, and our student fee to \$20 to cover the cost of the subscription to the journal.**

Under the new arrangements, annual membership will entitle individuals two issues of *EME* (as the journal will initially be published biannually), two issues of our newsletter, *In Media Res*, and our annual convention. While I would expect that few would welcome an increase in dues, I hope you will agree that the new fees are still quite reasonable for an association such as ours, and now provide a reasonable return for your investment. It is, after all, an investment in the future of media ecology as a discipline, as we now have a means for refining our thought, disseminating the best of our work, keeping our membership abreast of developments in our field, and establishing media ecology within the larger scholarly community. And it is an investment in the MEA itself, as the addition of an official journal is the last major hurdle in establishing ourselves as a scholarly society.

So please send in your dues if you have not done so already, to support your association, and to insure that you receive your copies of *EME* as soon as they are available. I also want to invite our members to submit their work to *EME*, and to encourage others to do so.

*In Medias Res* is a benefit for MEA members. Inquiries about and/or contributions to this newsletter should be addressed directly to its Editor. The images used herein were obtained from IMSI's MasterClips (c) Collection, 75 Rowland Way, Novato, CA 94945. This newsletter was supported by a generous grant from Dean Thomas Bohn of the Park School of Communications, Ithaca College.

#### **Editor**

Raymond Gozzi, Jr., Ithaca College

[gozzi@ithaca.edu](mailto:gozzi@ithaca.edu)

Mailing Labels

Janet Sternberg, Fordham University

#### **MEA Executive Committee**

President, Lance Strate, Fordham University

Vice President, Casey M.K. Lum, Wm. Paterson University

Treasurer, Thomas F. Gencarelli, Montclair State University

Executive Secretary, Susan Barnes, Fordham University

Historian, Janet Sternberg, Fordham University

#### **MEA Board of Directors**

##### **One Year Terms**

Susan Drucker, Hofstra University

Mary Ann Allison, Allison-Labue Group

Casey M.K.Lum, Wm Paterson University

Robert Logan, University of Toronto

##### **Two Year Terms**

James Morrison, MIT

Douglas Rushkoff, New York University

Susan Barnes, Fordham University

Lance Strate, Fordham University

##### **Three Year Terms**

Thomas Gencarelli, Montclair State University

Janet Sternberg, Fordham University

Stephanie Gibson, University of Baltimore

Raymond Gozzi, Jr., Ithaca College

#### **Appointed Officers**

Internet Strategist, Mary-Ann Allison, Allison-Labue Group

List Owner, Stephanie Gibson, University of Baltimore

Webmaster, Paul Kelly, Ontario, Canada

Web Editor, Jim Morrison, MIT

Art Director, Mark Lipton, Vassar College

Elections Officer, William Petkanis, Western

Connecticut State University

## Call For Papers -- *Explorations in Media Ecology*

*Explorations in Media Ecology*, the journal of the Media Ecology Association, is an international journal dedicated to extending our understanding of media and media environments. *EME* welcomes diverse theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of media environments, including (but not limited to) philosophical, aesthetic, literary, historical, psychological, sociological, anthropological, political, economic, and scientific investigations, as well as applied, professional, and pedagogical perspectives. In addition to scholarly articles, *EME* also publishes essays, commentary, and critical examinations relevant to media ecology as a field of study and practice.

**Guidelines for Submission.** Prospective authors should send four (4) copies of the manuscript to either of the co-editors: Judith Yaross Lee, School of Interpersonal Communication, Lasher Hall, Ohio University, Athens, OH 45701 ([leej@ohio.edu](mailto:leej@ohio.edu)), or Lance Strate, Department of Communication and Media Studies, Fordham University, Bronx, NY 10458 ([strate@fordham.edu](mailto:strate@fordham.edu)). Generally, manuscripts should be no longer than 25 pages (including tables and figures), but submissions of different lengths will be considered. Authors should retain their original manuscripts, as submissions will not be returned. All submissions should be the author's original work, previously unpublished, and not under consideration by another publisher. Manuscripts must conform to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed., 2001) or the MLA Style Manual (2nd ed., 1998). Authors of accepted manuscripts must provide a final version in both paper and electronic formats. Authors are responsible for obtaining permission to reprint copyrighted material. Double space the entire manuscript, including title page, abstract, text, quotations, acknowledgements, references, appendixes, tables, figure captions, and footnotes. To facilitate blind review, the first page of the manuscript should include only the article title and an abstract of no more than 100 words. A separate, detachable cover page should be provided that includes the title of the article, the complete name of each author as it is to appear in the journal; the current and complete mailing address, telephone, fax, and e-mail address of each author.

*EME* welcomes **submissions focusing on teaching strategies and resources, pedagogical concerns, and issues relating to media ecology education.** Such submissions should be sent to the *EME* Teaching and Education Editor: Sal Fallica, Department of Culture and Communication, New York University, 239 Greene St., Suite 735, New York, NY 10003 ([sjfl@is4.nyu.edu](mailto:sjfl@is4.nyu.edu)).

**Submission of Materials and Books for Review.** *EME* publishes reviews of books and other materials, such as audio and video recordings, computer software, etc. Send copies of all materials and/or all correspondence to: Thom Gencarelli, *EME* Review Editor, Department of Broadcasting, Montclair State University, Upper Montclair, NJ 07043 ([gencarelli@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:gencarelli@mail.montclair.edu)).

### **The Media Ecology Association Internet Discussion List**

To subscribe to the MEA online discussion list, send an email with blank subject to: [listserv@ube.ubalt.edu](mailto:listserv@ube.ubalt.edu). In the body of the message, write: subscribe mediaecology Your Name.

**Visit the Media Ecology Web Site at [www.media-ecology.org](http://www.media-ecology.org)**

## **Members' News**

**Paul Levinson** <PaulLevinson@compuserve.com> writes:

\* **The Consciousness Plague**" (2nd Phil D'Amato novel -- my 3rd novel, counting "Borrowed Tides") is in production for March 2002 publication by Tor. I think it's my best fiction so far. (Phil D'Amato is a NYPD forensic detective.) Tor will be publishing my 3rd Phil D' novel (now entitled "**Last Takes**") and a new standalone time travel novel ("**The Plot to Save Socrates**") in 2002 and 2003.

\* I'll be turning in "**Realspace: The Fate of Physical Presence in the Digital Age, On and Off Planet**" to Routledge in a few days. (I wrote a special concluding chapter: "Realspace in an Age of Terrorism").

\* St. Martin's will be publishing my next nonfiction book (after "Realspace"), "**Cellphone: The Jangling Savior**". (I'm still thinking about the subtitle) in early 2003.

\* I had a piece in The Chronicle of Higher Education in October about September 11 -- "**Images of Unmediated Ugliness**" -- and I've been CNN, Fox News (two different shows), Inside Edition, NPR, and more than twenty other TV and radio programs in the past few months, talking about the frightening new world we inhabit

\* I make a major appearance on a **History Channel** special about science fiction -- to be aired in February or March.

**Anthony Pennings** <Anthony.Pennings@marist.edu> writes:

I will be leaving Marist College to go to the **McGhee School at NYU** to teach and design a new program in digital media and telecommunications. Effective January 15, 2002.

**Bill Bly** <bbly@infomonger.com> writes:

At the MEA Convention last June, house band members **John McDaid** and **Bill Bly** presented a florid canticle of media theory, **Media Ecology Unplugged**. The first batch of CDs containing these songs has been baked to perfection in our CD kitchen, and is just cooling on the window sill. For particulars on how to get your hands on this priceless artifact of media ecology, send e-mail to: **info@infomonger.com**. Alternatively, if you've got the download time and an MP3 device, you can get the tunes for "free" (i.e., less phone charges &/or ISP service rates) at: **http://www.infomonger.com/meunplug/** Come & get 'em! --Bill & John

**Paul Soukup** (psoukup@scu.edu) is the new managing editor of **Communication Research Trends**, published by the Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture, which will now be housed at Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA 95053-0001.

**Pamela Peeters** ([pamela\\_peeters@hotmail.com](mailto:pamela_peeters@hotmail.com)) was the only non-United Nations woman present at a ceremony where Kofi Annan was presented with a petition signed by 9 million people. The petition called for support for "sustainable development policies which integrate social equity and environmental awareness within global economic development." As an eco-consultant, Peeters seeks to promote awareness of sustainable economic development options internationally. (continued on p. 5)

## **Members' News--Cont'd**

**Tom Farrell** <tfarrell@d.umn.edu> writes:

\* **An Ong Reader: Challenges for Further Inquiry** will be going to the printer soon. This 584-page collection of 28 selections by Ong also includes a 10-page Foreword by Lance Strate and a 68-page Introduction by me. I had the honor of co-editing this volume with Paul A. Soukup of Santa Clara University. The volume will be published by Hampton Press in the Media Ecology series.

\* You might include a note about a panel that I was on at the recent MLA convention in New Orleans. The session was entitled Walter J. Ong's Oral Hermeneutic and Rhetoric. The three speakers were, in the order of the presentations, Thomas J. Farrell of the University of Minnesota at Duluth, Thomas M. Walsh of Saint Louis University, and Thomas D. Zlatic of St. Louis College of Pharmacy.

**Arlindo Lopes** ([gabinfo@teledata.mz](mailto:gabinfo@teledata.mz)) sent an email in response to the editor's request for information; however, the editor couldn't open it and a reply to the above email address came back undeliverable. Maybe next time!

### **Editors and Editorial Boards Explorations in Media Ecology**

**Editors:** Judith Yaross Lee, Ohio University, and Lance Strate, Fordham University.  
Review Editor: Thomas Gencarelli, Montclair State University. Teaching and Education Editor: Sal Fallica, New York University

**Associate Editors:** Richard Barbrook, University of Westminster; Susan B. Barnes, Fordham University; Ronald J. Deibert, University of Toronto; Susan Drucker, Hofstra University; Thomas J. Farrell, University of Minnesota, Duluth; Stephanie Gibson, University of Baltimore; Raymond Gozzi, Jr., Ithaca College; Paul Grosswiler, University of Maine; Paul Levinson, Fordham University; Robert K. Logan, University of Toronto; Casey Man Kong Lum, Paterson University; Paul A. Soukup, Santa Clara University; Rosemarie Truglio, Sesame Workshop

**Editorial Board:** James Beniger, University of Southern California; Jay Bolter, Georgia Institute of Technology; James W. Carey, Columbia University; Frank E. X. Dance, University of Denver; Kenneth Gergen, Swarthmore College; Jack Goody, Cambridge University; Bruce E. Gronbeck, University of Iowa; Gary Gumpert, Communication Landscapers; Ethan Katsh, University of Massachusetts at Amherst; Alan Kay, Squeezeland; Neil Kleinman, University of the Arts; Pamela Laird, University of Colorado, Denver; Eric McLuhan, University of Toronto; Joshua Meyrowitz, University of New Hampshire; David Olson, University of Toronto; Walter J. Ong, Saint Louis University; Camille Paglia, University of the Arts; Mark Poster, University of California, Irvine; Neil Postman, New York University; Douglas Rushkoff, New York University; Denise Schmandt-Besserat, University of Texas; Joseph W. Slade, Ohio University; Anthony Smith, Oxford University; Paul Thaler, Mercy College; Donald Theall, Trent University; Edward A. Wachtel, Fordham University; Julia Wood, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

**If you are interested in:**

- the nature, history, and impact of technology, media, and symbol systems;
- the study of communication, consciousness, and culture;
- technological determinism, media evolution, information theory and cybernetics;
- the study of media codes, media literacy, and media education;
- orality, literacy, secondary orality, and post-literacy;
- oral, scribal, typographic, and electronic cultures;
- the graphic revolution and image culture;
- scholars such as Marshall McLuhan, Harold Innis, Walter Ong, Neil Postman, Lewis Mumford, Susanne Langer, Jacques Ellul, and Erving Goffman,

then you should be  
a member of the  
**Media  
Ecology  
Association**

**To subscribe to the MEA Listserv:**

Send an email with blank subject to:  
listserv@ube.ubalt.edu  
In the body of message, write:  
subscribe mediaecology Your Name

You should receive a subscription acknowledgment shortly thereafter from the University of Baltimore list processor, containing additional instructions.

**2002 Membership Application/Renewal Form (January 1, 2002 – December 31, 2002)**

Feel free to photocopy and distribute this form to others and please **print or type all information.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Institutional Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Title/Rank (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip+4 \_\_\_\_\_ + \_\_\_\_\_ Zip+4 helps us save postage:  
[http://www.usps.gov/ncsc/lookups/lookup\\_zip+4.htm](http://www.usps.gov/ncsc/lookups/lookup_zip+4.htm)

Country \_\_\_\_\_

Email(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Telephones — Work \_\_\_\_\_

Home \_\_\_\_\_

Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership dues through December 31, 2002**

(please check one):

- \_\_\_\_\_ US \$40 (regular members)
- \_\_\_\_\_ US \$20 (full-time students only; please include a photocopy of your full-time student card)

I also enclose my donation of US \$\_\_\_\_\_.

**NEW for 2002!**  
Membership dues include annual subscription to our print journal,  
**Explorations in Media Ecology (EME)**, published biannually

Please make check payable to **Media Ecology Association** and mail to:

Thom Gencarelli, MEA Treasurer  
Dept. of Broadcasting  
Montclair State University  
Montclair, NJ 07043-9987  
email: gencarellit@mail.montclair.edu  
973-655-7339 973-655-5432 (fax)

**Thank you for joining and supporting the  
Media Ecology Association**  
<http://www.media-ecology.org>

## **New Member Spotlight**

# **Orality in the Popular Cinema of India**

**Sheila J. Nayar**

English & Communication Studies, Greensboro College, Greensboro, NC  
(snayar@gborocollege.edu)

For several years now, I have been researching and writing about Indian popular film from a pseudo-anthropological (for lack of a better term) angle. Then, **the serendipitous happened: I came upon Walter Ong's book "Orality and Literacy,"** and realized how fundamental orality had been (and still is, really) to shaping the popular films of India. Virtually every characteristic of oral narrative and oral performance, it seemed, applied to the popular film medium of India. Ever since, I have dedicated myself to the study of orality, literacy and visual media.

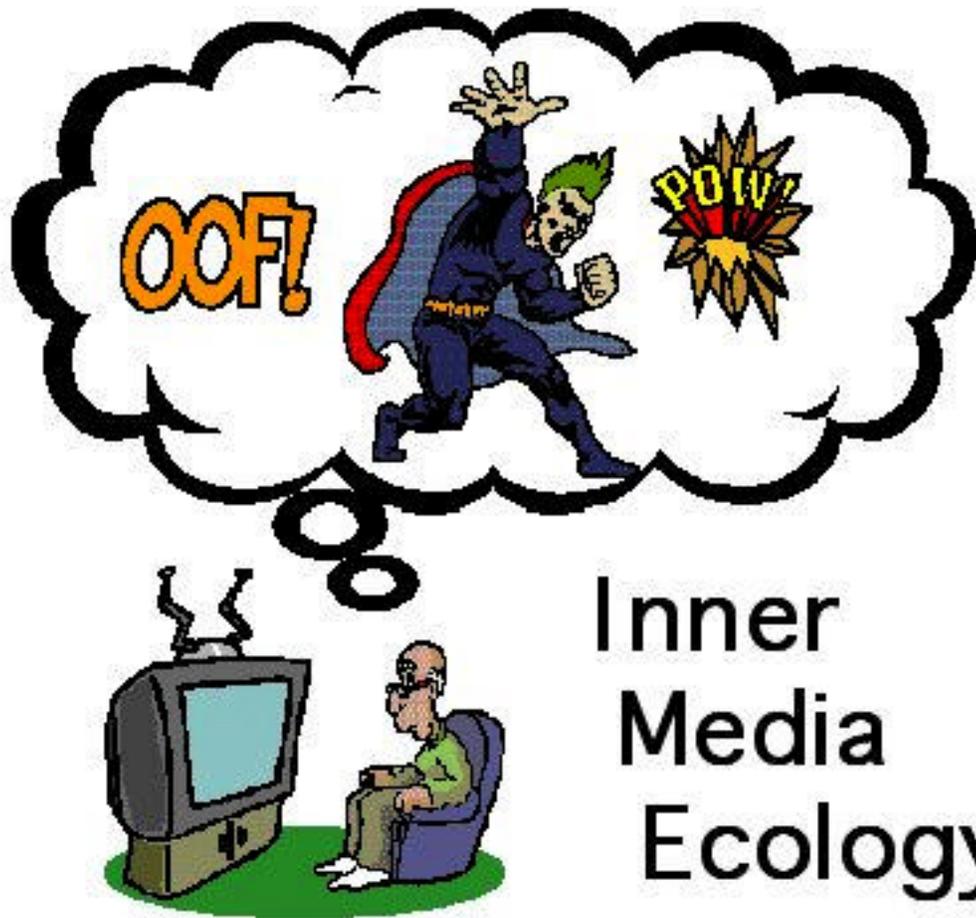
I believe that this is the first time the characteristics of orality have been applied paradigmatically to popular visual media (I am aware of Fiske & Hartley's work vis-a-vis television, but those authors handle the topic somewhat schematically and only in terms of Western media). Further, what I am proposing with respect to Hindi film suggests -- contrary to the claims of many analysts of narrative today -- that orality continues to persist in visual culture in "primary" ways. This has been missed to some degree, I think, because the popular cinemas of third world countries (where one is more likely to

find populations that have been historically oral, residually oral and/or oral-privileging) have gone largely unstudied.

Here is the abstract of my article in the volume 14 2001 edition of the journal Visual Anthropology, pp. 121-153, **"Cinematically Speaking: The Impact of Orality on Indian Popular Film."** *Drawing from the conceptual studies of oral tradition, this paper extends previous analysts' tracings of the "oral residue" that unconsciously marks literature into the realm of visual media, positing that there are very clear characteristics of oral performance and orally-transmitted narratives ("the oral epics") operating within, and indeed formatively shaping, the popular cinema of India. These include not only broad psychodynamic characteristics of orally-based thought, such as aggregative rather than analytic elements, and a conservative-traditionalist rather than experimental mindset, but as well specific devices and motifs common to orally-based storytelling—from the use of clichés and the portrayal of gross physical violence, to the significance of the verbalized oath, the reliance on "heavy" characters, and the acceptance of—in fact, preference for—formula.*

**Pamela W. Laird** ([plaird@carbon.cudenver.edu](mailto:plaird@carbon.cudenver.edu)) excerpt from ME listserv:

"Media" is—or at least began--as a plural noun. By using singular nouns for complex, multi-dimensional systems, we run the risk of simplifying, homogenizing, and even reifying those systems. Historians and analysts of technology have long been concerned with popular trends to use "technology" as if it referred to a single factor in determining the course of events. Beyond the problems of technological determinism that this usage engenders, it also blurs the complexities of the material world and its systems. People--collectively and as individuals--construct, use, alter, and abuse untold numbers and types of technological devices \*and\* systems of knowledge that qualify as technologies....



# Inner Media Ecology

**Raymond Gozi, Jr.**  
Newsletter Editor  
TV-Radio Dept.  
Ithaca College  
Ithaca, NY 14850-7253