

Editor's Note

MINERVA'S *Owl Takes Flight* is the title of these peer-reviewed and electronically published proceedings from the Media Ecology Association's Conference at New York University in June 2001. This collection is organized so that each item may stand alone, or you may read from the "beginning" to the "end" starting with Lance Strate's insightful Presidential Address, followed by Joshua Meyrowitz's inspiring Keynote Address, which is followed by the five diverse papers from scholars in the United States, France, and Canada whose works were selected for inclusion.

The electronic format of the proceedings allows readers to literally see the argument in Jean-Paul Fourmentraux's paper, "Internet Artwork, Artists, and Computer Analysts: Sharing the Creative Process." The format also allows for a more fluid editing process where the British spelling in Canadian author Norman Steinhart's work was not forced by the bias of print journals to be Americanized. The biases of the electronic publication format allow for visually and culturally rich presentations that are not flattened by the printed form of delivery. This is an appropriate form for papers in the media ecological tradition.

IN Lance Strate's Presidential Address we are introduced to "MinErvA's Owl." Lance Strate took listeners, and now takes readers, on an underground journey to the deep roots of Media Ecology as embedded in the works of Canadian theorist and economic historian Harold Adams Innis. Strate uses humor to demonstrate how "Minerva's Owl" took a belly flop when Innis first presented the speech before a group of economists at Oxford University in 1948. Strate discusses how those ideas are now taking flight in all disciplines.

In Joshua Meyrowitz's Keynote Address, "Morphing McLuhan," readers are introduced to a variety of ways in which Innis's roots infused the work of Marshall McLuhan, who was a maverick and a giant amongst scholars of his time. Meyrowitz warns media ecologists not to gloat as they stand on the head of the giant, and always to remember that even a flea, on the head of the giant, sees farther than the giant. Meyrowitz ends the Keynote Address with a look at ways in which the work of McLuhan is currently being morphed into necessary new directions.

THIS collection is an example of the useful ways in which the work of founding media ecologists is being morphed by current interdisciplinary scholarship. Media Ecologists have never cared much for academic boundaries, and as presenters morphed McLuhan at the Convention in 2001, it was clear that many of these papers soared in many directions atop Minerva's wings. The papers selected for publication in these proceedings are radically different from one another and come from scholars working in fields as disparate as physics, sociology, medical science, and communication and cultural studies. These diverse scholars depart from the same Innisian roots atop McLuhanesque wings. As these scholars from the United States, Canada, and France meld Media Ecology with their own scholarship on theory, history, religion, art-work, and the Internet, Minerva's Owl flies at the speed of light around the globe on electrified bits of layers of codes.

Many readers may already be familiar with the work that Paul Grosswiler has done demonstrating the compatibility between a humanistic Marxist tradition and the work of Marshall McLuhan (see Grosswiler's *The Method Is the Message*). On these pages, readers are fortunate that Grosswiler applies the same theoretical insight and intellectual care as he demonstrates an inherent compatibility between the ideas of Jürgen Habermas and those of Marshall McLuhan. Cheryl Ann Casey's case study of on-line religious practices acts as an interesting empirical application of ideas from media ecology to illuminate the emerging phenomenon of on-line religious communities. Readers familiar with the works of Robert Logan (see *The Alphabet Effect*) are treated to his discussion of "The Extended Mind" ushered in by "Notated Language" (literacy). The theoretical and empirical analysis of "Internet Artwork, Artists, and Computer Analysts: Sharing the Creative Process" presented by Jean-Paul Formentraux is a powerful demonstration of the biases of new media in fostering new relationships (artists and computer analysts) that require collaboration in new artistic processes. Finally, the theoretical exploration by Norman Steinhart of "The Interactions of Contextualization and Abstraction Within and Between Media" provides an abstract analysis of visual, auditory, spatial, and temporal biases of media in particular historical contexts.

THESE papers are shining examples of the mutability and insightful utility of ideas first explored by Innis and McLuhan, and now merged, morphed, and catapulted into flight over the electrified and digitized World Wide Web. Enjoy.

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