



In This Issue


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Welcome to the Fall 2011 issue of [Mediascape](#). The theme of our newest issue is "space," which has spawned a range of approaches in cinema and media studies. "Space" is a nebulous concept, but the very difficulty in pinning down how a spatial discussion of media should proceed is why [Mediascape](#) thought this would be an appropriate discussion to tease out in our non-traditional format. With media today relegated less and less to traditional modes of exhibition, the space in which one views or even makes a film, TV show, or video game is changing rapidly. Indeed, it is becoming increasingly impossible to find a space in our daily lives that is not dictated or saturated by some kind of media technology. While some might argue that our society is becoming "hypermediated," there is a need, as Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin remind us, to see how older media forms persist and continue to reinvigorate themselves for new audiences. The ways in which we view, consume, play, and analyze media, moreover, will continue to change in reaction to the evolution and interaction of all media forms.

The collision of old and new media is encapsulated well in the three pieces of our Features section. We begin first with the cinema and the tail end of the classical Hollywood era. Bryan Wuest, in his essay, "Watching the River: Mise-en-scene and Safe Space in [Night of the Hunter](#)," examines the ethereal "river scene" in Charles Laughton's dramatic thriller. Wuest's detailed analysis shows how this 13-minute sequence manages to create its beautiful, but bizarre, atmosphere through precise stylistic choices which isolate this "space" from the rest of the film's dangerous world. Moving forward to the present, Diana Pozo examines video games, specifically first-person combat series such as [Halo](#) and [Call of Duty](#). Her essay, "War Games at Home, Home Games at War: Geography and Military First-Person Shooting Games," looks at two "gamespaces:" the domestic space of "soldiers" playing from their consoles at home while fighting off numerous play interruptions in the form of technological inequalities, and the military space which focuses on American soldiers playing combat games as a form of leisure in Iraq and Afghanistan. Taken together, these two analyses of player conditions complicate our understanding of the relationship between video game players and war. Helen Morgan Parmett's essay, "Disneyomatics: Media, Branding, and Urban Space in Post-Katrina New Orleans," in some ways looks to the future of "transmedia" space. Parmett describes how the mega-corporation's rebuilding efforts in New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina are an important departure from previous "Disneyfication" strategies which eliminated local culture and identity for the sake of the Disney brand. Here, a variety of media employed by Disney show how the corporation can work with local leaders to usefully promote the brand without sacrificing the distinctiveness of a unique community in the process.

"Reviews" covers the small screen with Ioana Literat's analysis of David Simon's landmark HBO television series, [The Wire](#). In her essay, "Between Heaven and Here: Inner-City Apartheid and Socio-Spatial Marginalization in [The Wire](#)," Literat describes how the show's examination of marginalization and social divisions in the city of Baltimore are mirrored and enhanced by the show's chronicling of Baltimore's urban space. Through a documentary-like attention to the real-life details of Baltimore's streets and public servants, [The Wire](#) creates a social geography of an inner city environment that both enhances its fictional drama, but also provides a social forum where those who have been marginalized can voice their concerns and options for change can be considered. Moving away from traditional media formats entirely, Dr. Jerome Keating reviews

his book in the essay, "The Driving Forces and Scope of the [The Mapping of Taiwan](#)." Keating fleshes out concepts from his upcoming book, which tells Taiwanese history through an unorthodox visual record: the maps of the nation from the 16th century to the present. Keating's essay clarifies just how maps can provide visual "footprints" and "tracks" of economic, social, and political events that form the nation, while also showing how the visual itself can become its own record, in this case of Taiwan and its history of colonial confrontations.

"Columns" has approached space from the perspective of fiction film genres. In his essay, "Christopher Nolan's [Inception](#): The Oneiric Intruder and the Architecturalism of Space," section co-editor Andrew Young looks specifically at the construction of the film's oneiric, or "dream space." The puzzles of [Inception](#)'s dreams are intrinsically linked to the film's characters, but Young argues that the very construction of a dreamscape by the film's architects becomes an oneiric meta-act. From the sci-fi blockbuster to the sci-fi hit TV series, Annie Dell'Aria looks at the construction of starship space in the Sci-Fi network's [Battlestar Galactica](#). Her essay, "Negotiating Utopia and Dystopia: Space and Architecture in [Battlestar Galactica](#) (2004-2009)," examines how the show's unique blend of architectural schemes and detailed [mise-en-scene](#) not only invests viewers in the [BSG](#) universe, but also allows for a critical commentary on the post-9/11 policies and attitudes of America. Katie Moylan extends this question of whether spaces can function directly as critique and commentary in her essay, "Is Space Political? Oppositional Strategies in [Treme](#)." Similar to David Simon's use of space in [The Wire](#), the actual spaces of the city of New Orleans are depicted to provide veracity to the setting of a devastated and impoverished community, its struggling inhabitants, and the various public figures who abuse or defend it. Set in a post-Katrina New Orleans, however, Moylan argues that the series can be read allegorically in order to decipher how the displaced are currently struggling to regain their homes, families, livelihoods, and dignity.

META has delivered a range of essays that creatively tackle how to write on the video game, arguably that most malleable of mainstream media today. Section co-editor James Fleury begins with his essay, "Revenge of the (Angry Video Game) Nerd: James Rolfe and Web 2.0 Fandom," on the fandom surrounding [The Angry Video Game Nerd](#) website. Through a participatory ethnographic model, derived from fan studies scholars such as Henry Jenkins, Fleury becomes an active user and follower of James Rolfe's popular site, fan forums, and blogs in order to understand both the popularity of Rolfe's fanbase, as well how Rolfe has employed a transmedia strategy that has enabled him to move from writing a blog to producing his own films. Fleury shows how media producers today benefit more and more from a close relationship with their fans. Continuing from the perspective of a fan gamer, Harrison Gish takes on the bullet ballet of Hong Kong action cinema and gaming in his essay, "Media Boundaries and Bullet Time: A [Hard-Boiled](#) Fan Plays [Stranglehold](#)," through a comparison of the phenomenological effects of both John Woo's seminal action film and the Xbox360 game that functions as its video game heir. Gish foregrounds how his own unique perspective as a fan of Woo's film informs how he will experience (and uniquely appreciate) Woo's game. Games and software are a major form of media that comprise the urban art in the [Art in the Street](#) exhibition at the Geffen Contemporary in Los Angeles. Nettrice Gaskins, in her essay, "Urban Metaphysics: Creating Game Layers on Top of the World" examines this exhibition and a range of street artists and their work, especially in game worlds, in order to challenge how existing discourses do not provide a satisfactory framework for analyzing urban metaphysics and street art.

META also has continued what has become a welcome [Mediascape](#) tradition – a roundtable discussion with respected scholars in the field. David O'Grady moderated this latest with Steve Mamber, Peter Lunenfeld, and Eddo Stern in the spring of 2011 in order to discuss the many issues revolving around the space of video games in our collective consciousness, from today's purported "golden age" of gaming, to the relationship of academia to games, to how games today are rapidly changing with the proliferation of social networks and open source technology.

Which brings us to this journal, [Mediascape](#), which you may be reading on a laptop, iPad, Kindle, smartphone, or even an antique desktop PC. In the next decade, print of all forms will increasingly become relegated to the realm of digital text, so how will we as consumers, scholars, players, readers, and citizens respond? Will the space in which we consume our books and media matter less or more because of the new mobility with which we find ourselves? These essays, which deal with space through film, television, video games, and installation spaces, and through a range of critical theories and methodologies, provide, if not answers, some ideas for debate. At the very least, this issue offers some ways to look at these old and new spaces critically, but also with curiosity and hope.

-- Bryan Hikari Hartzheim and Katy Ralko, Co-Editors-in-Chief

