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The Meaning of Artificial Faces

ERC Consolidator FACETS, directed by Massimo LEONE, PI

Abstracts

Introduction: Digital Cosmetics

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The earliest extant depictions of the human face are not simply realistic but represent it through specific technologies (means) and techniques (styles). They probably idealize it in order to empower its agency through simulacra. The history of art sees humans become increasingly aware of the impact of technology and technique on the production of visual representations of the face. With photography, and even more with its digital version, technology is developed, hidden, and miniaturized so as to democratize and market technique. The result, however, a naturalization of technology, is increasingly problematic in the era of algorithms: artificial intelligence absorbs the social bias of its engineers. That is particularly evident in the domain of 'digital cosmetics': successful apps are used to process and share billions of facial images, yet few critically reflect on the aesthetic ideology underpinning them. That is an urgent task for visual, social, and cultural semiotics.

Key-words. Face; Digital Semiotics; Digital Cosmetics; Orientalism; Discrimination.

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for Advanced Studies, South Eastern Europe (Croatia), Visiting Senior Professor at the Polish Institute of Advanced Studies, Warsaw (PIAST), Senior Visiting Professor at FRIAS (Freiburg Institute of Advanced Studies, Freiburg, Germany), and Visiting Fellow at CRASSH, University of Cambridge. His work on the semiotic study of cultures, with particular enphasis on religion and images. Massimo Leone has single-authored ten books, _Religious Conversion and Identity: The Semiotic Analysis of Texts_ (London and New York: Routledge, 2004; 242 pp.), _Saints and Signs: A Semiotic Reading of Conversion in Early Modern Catholicism_ (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010; 656 pp.), _Sémiotique de l'âme_, 3 vols (Berlin et al.: Presses Académiques Francophones, 2012), _Annunciazioni: percorsi di semiotica della religione_, 2 vols (Rome: Aracne, 2014, 1000 pp.), _Spiritualità digitale: il senso religioso nell'era della smaterializzazione_ (Udine: Mimesis, 2014), _Sémiotique du fondamentalisme : messages, rhétorique, force persuasive_ (Paris: l'Harmattan, 2014; translated into Arabic in 2015), and _Signatim: Profili di semiotica della cultura_ (Rome: Aracne, 2015, 800 pp.), _A Cultural Semiotics of Religion_ (in Chinese) [Series "Semiotics & Media"] (Chengdu, China: University of Sichuan Press, 2018, 210 pp.), _On Insignificance_ (London and New York: Routledge, 2019, 226 pp.; Chinese translation 2019), edited forty collective volumes, and published more than five hundred articles in semiotics, visual studies, and religious studies. He has lectured in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and the Americas. He is the chief editor of Lexia, the Semiotic Journal of the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on Communication, University of Turin, Italy, and editor of the book series "I Saggi di Lexia" (Rome: Aracne) and "Semiotics of Religion" (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter). He directed the MA Program in Communication Studies at the University of Turin, Italy (2015-2018) and is currently vice-director for research at the Department of Philosophy and Educational Sciences, University of Turin, Italy.

Traces of Facial Emanations in Multimedia Art.

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Abstract. The chrono-topological coordinates of this text are distributed in a variable axis of the contemporary art highly characterized by the interpenetration between the new medias and the human physiological nature. Starting from the study of the general panorama of Multimedia in art, and after a quick overview of outstanding artists that represent this practice, we will discuss the case of Heather Dewey-Hagborg who using hairs, cigarettes and chewing gum of the street, programs and build 3D faces through the DNA encountered in them; on the other hand we will also focus into Janez Janša group and in the specificity of their piece "Un, uno, una". Furthermore, the analytical urgencies reported by these kinds of aesthetic proposals, cover such a high degree of agreement about the growing need to articulate the semiotic sensibility in order to assume and understand how and why these new identities emerge. Assuming them to be part of a polyphonic semiosphere, we can recognize as some example flourish from the tangibles but often ignored traces leaved everywhere by humans during the daily life, while the others emerge as symbolical actions in order to test, destabilize and re-organize in an innovative way parts of the cultural complexity. Both offer a *syncretic situation* that can be analyzed with semiotic approach, neurophysiological tools, bio-anthropological ground. Divergent weights of similar elements make us reflect into the relation between the intimate meaning of our faces and their emanations in a sort of *anticlockwise*, but also into the convergence between macro cultural orientation with the technological magnitude.

Key-words. Multimedia Art; Body Semiotics; Facial Emanations; Non-Human Agency; Human Physiology.

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Identity and Social Networks. A Dramaturgy of the Face in Digital Environments

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Abstract. In this paper we propose a semiotic reinterpretation of Paul Ricœur's theory of identity, in order to study social network's images and analyse the role played by faces. With the diffusion of social media, the meaning of people's identity is profoundly changing in consequence of two different shifts pertaining to social interaction. On the one hand, experience-based communication such as the acts of liking, following, and sharing, together with the diffusion of representations such as selfies, point of view shots, and live videos, have led to the dissemination of instinctive forms of identity expression. On the other hand, the profiling of people's social and political circles (Facebook), entertainment tastes (Netflix), and even of their sexual partners (Grindr and Tinder), has led to the delegation of behavioural identity management to algorithms. According to our reading of Ricœur's theory, we can frame the experiential shift of digital media in relation to *identity-sameness*, the permanence of "involuntary" human characteristics, such as dispositions and irreflexive habits. On the contrary, the algorithmic shift can be positioned under the sphere of *identity-selfhood*, the behavioural self-management in the long run. Following Ricœur's claim that identity meaning is the result of a narrative negotiation between these two dimensions, our hypothesis is that in the current mediatic situation, every image on social network express a negotiation strategy between these two tensions, by exploiting the specificity of visual languages. In this context, faces play a crucial role, as they act at the intersection of somatic experience and cultural interaction. By analysing some of the new genres emerging on social network — such as face reveals, reaction videos and children game channels — we will conceive faces as the main narrative device to negotiate the tension between identity-sameness and identity-selfhood. In these productions, even if verbal contents represent a key semiotic component, their role is often limited to prepare the frame of reference for narrative somatic performances. Starting from these assumptions, we will advocate for a dramaturgy of the face on social networks.

Key-words. Semiotics, Social Networks, Identity, Media Studies, Visual Studies

Bionote. Enzo D'Armenio is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Liège, where he conducts a research project on the languages of images on social networks. During its PhD in Semiotics at the University of Bologna he worked on the rhetorical strategies of intermediality, analysing a corpus of fiction films, documentaries and TV series. In the field of communication, aesthetics and philosophy of language, he has published papers for international scientific journals (including *Versus, Rivista di Estetica, Médiation Et Information*) and book chapters in collection such as "Perspectives in Pragmatics" for Springer and "Extensions sémiotiques" for Academia-L'Harmattan. He is the author of the monograph

Mondi paralleli. Ripensare l'interattività nei videogiochi, published by Unicopli in 2014. He recently got a Marie Skłodowska-Curie scholarship (Individual Fellowships) for his project *IMACTIS* — Fostering Critical Identities Through Social Media Archival Images.

Deepfake Videos between Singularity and Generality. A Mereological Approach

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Abstract. My talk will focus on the relationship between Big Data and deepfake videos. I will address the way in which the characteristics of a face can be studied using computational tools in order to build a specific diagram (relation of relations) identifying a singularity that can be transposed to other faces. The face of an individual thus becomes a model that can then be applied to other bodies and be related to other gestures through manipulation (e.g. accumulation and superimposition). I will proceed in two stages: after exploring the relationship between face and ground in the traditional portrait in painting and photography, I will study the relationship between face and gesture in deepfake videos, trying to highlight two different ways of constructing an effect of totality. In this sense, I will explore two enunciative strategies aimed at linking the whole and the parts and the parts to each other in order to construct an effect of totality (mereology). In the case of the so-called "still" image such as painting and photography, I will analyze the tensive relationship between conflicting forces aiming at striking a balance between figure and ground (centripetal totality); in the case of videos, I will analyze the way in which facial expressions are related to the gestures of the body (centrifugal totality).

Key-words. Portrait, Deepfake videos, Mereology, Diagram, Totality

Bionote. Maria Giulia Dondero is a Senior Research Associate of the National Belgian Fund for Scientific Research (F.R.S.-FNRS) and she is professor of Visual Semiotics at the University of Liège. She is the author of four books: *Les langages de l'image. De la peinture aux Big Visual Data* (2020, Engl. Transl : *The Language of Images. The forms and the forces*, Springer, 2020), *Des images à problèmes. Le sens du visuel à l'épreuve de l'image scientifique*, with J. Fontanille (2012; Eng. trans. *The Semiotic Challenge of Scientific Images. A Test Case for Visual Meaning*, 2014); *Sémiotique de la photographie*, with P. Basso Fossali (2011); *Le sacré dans l'image photographique* (2009). She has published around 80 peer-reviewed articles in French, Italian, English; some of her works have been translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Polish and English. She has directed 20 collective works and special issues on photography, scientific images, syncretic discourses and the enunciation theory in semiotic tradition. She is Co-founder and Editor-in-Chief of the peer-reviewed Journal *Signata Annales des Sémiotiques / Annals of Semiotics* (https://journals.openedition.org/signata/) and Co-director of the collection 'Sigilla' at Presses universitaires de Liège (https://books.openedition.org/pulg/1696?lang=fr).
She is a member of the editorial board of several scientific journals, such as *Actes Sémiotiques*, *MEI* (*Médiation et Information*), *Interfaces numériques*, *CASA - Cadernos de Semiótica Aplicada*, *Texto Livre: linguagem e tecnologia*. She is General Secretary of the International Association for Visual Semiotics

(IAVS) since 2015 and Vice-President of the French Association for Semiotics (AFS) since 2013. She has been Visiting Professor at the University of Manouba, Tunisia (2012 and 2013); at the UNESP-Araraquara University, Brazil (2014, 2016 and 2019), at the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH), Mexico City, and at Paris 2 Panthéon-Assas (2019). Academia.edu: https://frs-fnrs.academia.edu/MariaGiuliaDondero

Fake Faces and Digital Forgeries: On the Uses and Misuses of Symbolic and Digital Manipulation.

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Abstract. The relation of reality to illusion, that is, the study of the relation between reality to its modelling, has been a main concern for semiotics. Today, we must come to terms with the idea that one of the major contributing factors in shaping people's lives and in constructing semiotic realities is the use of digital screens. A plethora of digital media, from smartphones to computers, constantly broadcast a tremendous amount of data and project onto screens visual imagery, audio, video, and written texts that compete for people's attention. In this scenario, it is not surprising to notice the emergence of pseudo-realities that are altered and constructed ad hoc in order to confuse or mislead the public. Today, deception has reached its pinnacle. What we see is not necessarily what is underneath. Just as there is fake news there is also digital fakes, facial forgeries, false identities and altered selves. The so called "deep-fake" is a case in point. The use of AI technology coupled with machine learning has marked the beginning of a new phase of synthetic media that has boosted symbolic manipulation. A new generation of computer-generated videos altered by means of various synthetic techniques (generative adversarial networks, face-swapping, etc.) came into being. Deep-fakes purport faces, people, speech, and deeds that never really occurred. These forgeries are hard to distinguish from the originals and can be used for different purposes (malicious or benevolent) and in various contexts (political, journalistic, satiric, comic, etc.), posing tremendous challenges to humanity that are worth pondering. The analysis reveals the need for an evaluation of the value of truthfulness inscribed in such cultural texts. Are we heading towards a loss of the signifier in which the truth values of signs have been gradually lost?

Key-words. Fake Faces; Digital Manipulation; Deception; Deep-Fake; Facial Forgery

Bionote. Remo Gramigna is a Post-Doc at the University of Turin, within the ERC research project FACETS led by Prof. Massimo Leone. His academic research to date has focused on semiotics and culture studies, cognitive theory, and communication studies. He holds a Ph.D. in Semiotics and in the last two years he has been a Research Fellow in Culture and Cognition Studies at the University of Tartu (Estonia). His latest monograph tackled the philosophical problem of the sign in tandem with deceptive forms of communication. His interests include strategies of lying and deception in human interactions, deception in science, distorted communication, manipulation, insincerities, make-believe, fakes and forgeries, masks and disguise. Remo's most recent article explores the role of prediction in deception. He has

published in such journals as Journal for Communication Studies, Frontiers of Narrative Studies, Lexia, Sign Systems Studies, DeSignis, and Versus.

Colon + Hyphen + Right paren: Emoticons to Snapchat, the Semiotics of the Face in Internet Memes.

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Abstract. Anticipated by experimental typography and speculations of writers such as Ambrose Bierce or Vladimir Jakobson (who imagined a kind of "emotional punctuation"), born in 1972 on PLATO, the first generalized computer-assisted instruction system, and spread since 1982 on the pre-Web Internet via UseNet, a precursor of forums, emoticons (short for emotion icons) were originally metasigns conveying paralinguistic traits so as to disambiguate computer mediated communication. After emoticons, digital faces proliferated, differentiated and acquired more complex functions and, most notably, started contributing in the general meaning of a given message as well in the construction of whole narratives. Today, our experience online is literally filled with more or less stylized digital faces, through which we comment on something, express ourselves and, more broadly, interact with other people in the digital environment: avatars, emojis, so-called rage comics, animated GIFs, selfies, Snapchat filters, and many viral phenomena and Internet memes in general (which are based upon a striking element, a *punctum*, in Barthesian terms, that may be often embodied by peculiar somatic traits). These signs are not merely of the audiovisual kind, but rather have penetrated communication habits in the respect of being powerful cultural templates; as TV series *Brooklyn 9/9* character Gina Linetti would put it (episode S1E22, *Charges and specs*, 2014): "The English language cannot fully capture the depth and complexity of my thoughts, so I'm incorporating emojis into my speech to better express myself. Winkie face". Contemporary social media stand as a "facial society" (according to Austrian philosopher Thomas Macho) reinforcing the pivotal role of "faciality" (*visagéité*; according to French thinkers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari) in the definition of subjectity and identity, both at an individual and communitarian level. The paper will present a philogenetic review of the role and value of the face in contemporary social media, with a specific focus on Internet memes and the implemented facial strategies thereof.

Key-words: Cultural Templates; Emoticons; Face; Internet Memes; Social Media.

Bionote. Gabriele Marino (1985) graduated in Communication Studies from the University of Palermo and holds a Ph.D. in Semiotics from the University of Turin. He has been working with universities, research institutes, and private companies mainly dealing with music, social media, design, and digital marketing. His publications include: the essay about music criticism 'Britney canta Manson e altri capolavori' ('Britney sings Manson and other masterpieces'; Crac, 2011) and the monographic issue of

the international journal of semiotics "Lexia" dedicated to online 'Virality' (No. 25-26, 2017, co-edited with Mattia Thibault).

The Face in Digital Branding: The Construction of Three Different BBC's Profiles on Instagram and Their Branding Identity.

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Abstract. The role of digital faces in societies becomes important when building a digital identity. The human being is preponderantly visual and its perceptive structure is anchored in the image. For this reason, Instagram is a tool that helps to establish the emotional connections inherent in the power of the image. Each face that appears on the Internet can be made up of different images, in the form of a story, and each sign constitutes a narrative element. In Instagram, the narrative does not take place in a conventional linear way, but instead, the linearity is build upon a collection of images and texts. The narrative becomes shareable and it is the social network the one that transports that narrative. In the creation of this digital identity, Instagram shows an identification of the relational self where each individual or, in this case, brand, recognizes his own self as the product of a social interaction, tying it to a particular context and audience. As the main purpose of the BBC remains as a public servant, the BBC carries the weight of representing an identity that is linked to being British, both abroad and within the United Kingdom, seeking to represent all the communities of the different countries that make up the BBC and that make up -in fact- that "united- kingdom". The BBC is thus configured as a face that is hidden behind other faces. This research seeks to understand the building blocks of the brand identity profiles of BBC News, BBC Three and BBC Stories on Instagram. Being able to understand the effective use of the BBC brand in the different Instagram accounts and the use of brand storytelling becomes relevant as each social network forms its own language and few brands understand how to communicate according to each typology required by the different networks.

Key-Words. Branding; Instagram; Brand Identity; Faces

Bionote. Irene Radulovich (1990) graduated in Image and Sound Design from the University of Buenos Aires and holds postgraduate studies con Branding from the University of Business and Social Sciences; and a Master in Journalism from the University of Buenos Aires; and recently awarded by the University of Turin as a visiting Scholar by the Department of Excellence, Philosophy and Educational Studies, to continue the research for the Master thesis.

The True Meaning of Deep Fakes: How We Talk about Them and Their Role in the Public Discourse about Truth, Media and the Internet

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Abstract. Deep fakes are much discussed for what concerns the formation of public opinion. They have to do with post-truth and the role of the Internet in our society. Many perceive the anxiety of entering an era in which it will no longer be possible to distinguish the true from the false. Given the ease with which machines will make it possible to produce and receive deep fakes, fraud and propaganda may proliferate, to the detriment of increasingly helpless and lost citizens. However, as Lorusso (2018: 101) writes, truth is always the effect of a discourse, the result of a convincing story, the consequence of an agreement and a potential lie. One could argue the general validity of these statements, but they surely apply to all media, because media have always mediated our relationship with reality. Deep fakes, therefore, have the effect of unmasking these mechanisms and forcing us to think about our strategies to construct audiovisual texts that appear to be true, or our procedures for believing true what we are told. It is no coincidence, after all, that they are widely used in the world of satire and that they become easily viral, since this kind of content requires strong inter and meta-textual skills (Jenkins, Ford and Green, 2013). By analysing how we talk about deep fakes and use them, it will be tried to demonstrate that in the wake of that disintermediation in our relationship with knowledge and that individual responsibilization in the search for truth, which are for many (e.g. Baricco, 2018) the most important effect of the Internet in our lives, they should be interpreted as an occasion to strengthen our ability to orient ourselves in today's world of communication, making us more aware and firm in our convictions.

Key-words. Deep Fakes; Post-Truth; Public Opinion; Internet; Awareness.

Bionote. Antonio Santangelo is assistant professor at the University of Turin, where he teaches *Semiotics* and *Semiotics of Television*. He also teaches *Semiotics and Philosophy of Language*, *Textual Semiotics* and *New Media Languages* at the University eCampus of Novedrate. He is the executive director of the Nexa Ceter for Internet and Society at the Politecnico of Turin. He is the author of many articles published in Italian and international rewiews, of many book chapters and of *Handbook of tv quality assessment* (UclanPublishing 2013), *Sociosemiotica dell'audiovisivo* (Aracne 2013), *Le radici della televisione intermediale* (Aracne 2012) and *Il gioco delle finte realtà* (Vicolo del Pavone 2012). With Gian Marco De Maria, he has edited *La Tv o l'uomo di immaginario* (Aracne 2012); with Guido Ferraro, *Uno sguardo più attento* (Aracne 2013), *I sensi del testo* (Aracne 2017) and *Narrazione e realtà* (Aracne 2017).

Semiotics of Digital Face-to-Face in Contemporary Tourism.

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Abstract. In contemporary tourism, the disembodied 'tourist gaze' (Urry & Larsen, 2011) has been replaced by the valorization of face-to-face contact with local culture and life-style. For instance, Airbnb's communication strategy relies on the rhetoric of "unlocking people's homes", as entailed by the "live like a local" motto. By eating home cooked meals, sleeping in someone's house and other "making-home rituals" of sort, holidays are supposed to become a truly belonging experience. Paradoxically, while becoming increasingly digital, contemporary tourism seems to deny such intermediation and claims for a disintermediated experience of the place. In this new scenario, face devices have been increasingly proliferated in tourism service platforms as a vehicle of immediateness and authenticity-related values. Arguably, in online marketplaces such as Airbnb and its clones, facilities and furniture images are no longer sufficient for advertising and promoting accommodation structures. Yet, is the digital face of the digital host in charge of providing the tourism experience with meaningfulness. Ultimately, even when the host is not "putting his/her face", human faces is otherwise figurativized and thematized within the setting representation. Through the analysis of a series of Airbnb's promotional campaigns, the Airbnb website, affiliated blogs and promotional materials, the present communication aims at scrutinising the role of the digital human face and its surrogates in tourism platforms as drivers of an allegedly authentic experience.

Key-words. Digital Face; Tourism Semiotics; Figurative Semiotics

Bionote. Elsa SORO graduated in Semiotics from the University of Bologna and she hold a PhD in Sciences of Language and Communication (University of Turin, Autonomous University of Barcelona). She has been working as adjunct professor in Semiotics and Media at Autonomous University of Barcelona and at Istituto Europeo del Design (IED). She has been involved as contract researcher and a consultant in several international research projects on tourism and cultural heritage. She has been teaching Marketing and New Media at Ostelea University of Tourism Management (Barcelona), where she worked as Master Coordinator and International Relations Manager.

Figure, Figural, Disfigurement: Semiotics of the Disfigured Face in the Cinema

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The Japanese metropolitan legend of Kuchisake-onna tells of a beautiful woman who wanders through the dark city streets, her mouth covered by a mask. She approaches her unlucky victims coyly, asking them "am I beautiful?", then reveals her horribly lacerated mouth and kills them gruesomely. She is the spirit of the concubine of a jealous old Samurai, who mutilated her in order to mar her beauty. The notion of disfigured face is generated by antithesis with a solidly figurative visage. That is, it is composed by a figure, the foundation of a social discourse which the disfigured face, a fracture of a linguistic order, shatters, thanks to the power of the *figural*, which "not only deconstructs the discourse, but also the figure as a recognisable image or good form" (Lyotard 2008, 388). In the disfigured face the gradient of otherness acts as a threshold, promoter of difference compared to faces that are whole. The "disruptive incursion of the figural" (Eugeni 1999, 45) in the disfigured visage reveals the face to be an Echian "semiotic threshold", under which "difference […] the primary process, the principle of disorder, the drive to enjoyment" (Lyotard *ivi*) is situated. What is significant is that the difference lies *under* and not *above* the figural. It is in the imperfection of the unexpected (cfr. Greimas 1987), the unformed-deformed broken face, that semiosis, in an aesthetics that is also ethics, abides. There is a peculiar agency in the disfigured visage, in which its cinematographic success resides, capable of concretizing the acrotomophiliac craving for the macabre, since "Everyone Loves a Good Train Wreck" (Wilson 2012). *The Black Dahlia* (De Palma 2006), the Joker in *The Dark Knight* (Nolan 2008), *Circus of Horrors* (Hayers 1960), *Scarface* (Hawks 1932, then De Palma 1983), *The Elephant Man*, *Lost Highway*, *Inland Empire* (Lynch 1980, 1997, 2006), *Mask* (Bogdanovich 1985), *Maps to the Stars* (Cronenberg 2014), *Darkman* (Raimi 1990), *Abre los ojos* (Amenábar 1997) and its American remake *Vanilla Sky* (Crowe 2001), *The Man Without a Face* (Gibson 1993), *Johnny Handsome* (Hill 1989), *Les Yeux sans visage* (Franju 1960), *Mr. Sardonicus* (Castle 1961), the *Nightmare on Elm Street* saga (starting with Craven 1984), the filmic versions of *The Phantom of the Opera*, and many others form an assorted cinematographic landscape from which it is possible to draw up a typology of the semiosis of facial disfigurement: faces that have been opened up, lacerated, scarred, which give access to the inaccessible behind/inside the face; faces that are burnt, disarranged, decomposed, modified in their outer "envelope", whose epidermic membrane refuses to be a mere portal and claims its right to signification; deformed visages, disfigured *ab origine*, whose deviance is ontogenetic.

Key-words. Disfigured Face; Figural; Semiotic Threshold; Film Semiotics; Figurative Semiotics.

Bionote. Bruno Surace is a Ph.D in Semiotics and Media at the University of Turin, Research Fellow for the ERC Project FACETS (headed by prof. Massimo Leone), Adjunct Professor in Semiotics and in Cinema and Audiovisual Communication. He published the book "Il destino impresso. Per una teoria della destinalità nel cinema" (Kaplan, Turin) in 2019. He has written articles for numerous peer reviewed journals, co-edited books, participated in European summer schools, and given lectures in conferences and seminars in Europe, the USA and China.

"Make Your Profile Yours": Spotify for Artists and Musical Uploading. Media Transformations in the Link of Musicians and Public.

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Abstract. This paper investigates the proposals for transforming the link between artists and audiences proposed by the application *Spotify for artists.* It is a tool that offers the artist, both the construction of his public profile, and the possibility of expanding the number of listeners by providing access to consumer data and users and followers, that is, to professionalize what is known as *music uploading.* These services are provided by various platforms today, of which the most important is BandCamp. To account for the above, first, it is necessary to reconstruct a historical periodization about the relationships between the musicians with marketing and music industry. In a second moment describe the user experience offer that the Spotify for Artist interface offers to musicians, including the different instances that the user must go through in the music uploading process. Spotify proposals will be compared with those from BandCamp. The study is carried out from the point of view of the Sociosemiotics of mediatizations that investigate the discursive exchanges in the media platforms.

Key-Words: Mediatizations; Platforms; Spotify; Musical Uploading

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Nonfacial Portraits: The Face In-Between Artificial and Human Agency

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Abstract. The aim of the paper is to contribute, from a semiotic perspective, to the contemporary debate on artificial and human agency. The field of analysis will be digital art understood as a human field that implies algorithms as a material, as tools for the creation of an artistic piece. The phenomenon in analysis will be the complex sign of faciality, as a system where the plan of expression of the face is recognized as capable of signifying on the plane of content of the identity. A system that is, at the same time, of signification and subjectivization (Deleuze & Guattari 1980). It is in the system of faciality where certain materials will be included and others excluded by human and non-human languages for the capture, analysis, and recognition of the face and for the capture, analysis, and recognition of the identity. In this regard, I will analyze the installation Nonfacial Portrait realized in 2018 by Shinseungback Kimyonghun, a Seoul based artistic duo, and commissioned by Seoul Mediacity Biennale. The duo asked ten painters to make the portrait of one same person. The painters had one rule to follow: the painting of the face of must not have been detected by three different face detection algorithms — that monitored the pictorial practice - but the final piece would have had to be formally and compositionally recognizable within the portrait artistic genre, a genre associated with identity. The result of this tricky exercise in style was organized in an installation that deals with faciality as a territory of semiosis where the different aesthetic, visual and cognitive meanings that rise around face and identity can make visible the tensions that exist between artificial and human agency.

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