



**The Aura of Decay: The Concept of the  
Book in the Age of Hybridity**  
*Edward Erikson*

**Seeing the Specter: A Gothic Metaphor of  
Subjectivity, Popular Culture, and Consumerism**  
*Clifford D. Deaton*

**An Uncertain Text: Reliving  
Shakespeare's Creative Milieu in the  
Modern World**  
*Eric M. Johnson*

**wants moar: visual media's use of text  
in LOLcats and silent film**  
*Jed R. Brubaker*

**The Pleasure of Death: The Construction of Masculine  
Citizenship in Military Recruitment Ads**  
*Patricia J. Fancher*

**What's in a name? That who we call a king by any  
other name would rule as supreme**  
*Hannanah Mobashir*

*Volume 8, No. 2 • Spring 2008*



## *gnovis* staff – 2007/2008 academic year

*Managing Editor*  
Brad Weikel

*Assistant Managing Editor*  
Theodora Danylevich

*Peer Review Manager*  
Jessica Vitak

*Assistant Peer Review Manager*  
Ashley Bowen

*New Media Editor*  
Nicole Guerra

*CCT Advisor*  
Garrison LeMasters

### *gnovis* mission

*gnovis* is an online academic journal and forum that cultivates new ways of seeing and understanding culture through critical inquiry. *gnovis* presents work by graduate students pioneering interdisciplinary perspectives on issues in the arts, politics, media, and technology.

*gnovis* publishes biannual issues of its peer-reviewed journal, periodic multimedia pieces, a weekly blog featuring reflective academic discussion pieces, and occasional gallery and conference reviews.

*gnovis* is sponsored by Georgetown University's graduate program in Communication, Culture & Technology (CCT).

## Submission Information

*gnovis* welcomes the submission of articles in any discipline concerned with contemporary topics in communication, culture and technology. Articles should be 3000 to 7500 words, excluding abstracts, citations, and appendices. All submissions will undergo a double-blind peer review process.

Our contributors are typically graduate students, but not exclusively so, and we welcome qualified submissions from all sources.

Further details about our submission guidelines, peer review process, resources for graduate students, and additional publications are available on our website, [www.gnovisjournal.org](http://www.gnovisjournal.org).

“copyleft”

Except where otherwise noted, the contents of this journal are licensed under the **Creative Commons Attribution + Noncommercial 3.0 License** (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/>).



*Contents*  
*gnovis journal*  
*Volume 8, No 2 • Spring 2008*

<i>Editor's Note</i>	83
The Aura of Decay: The Concept of the Book in the Age of Hybridity <i>Edward Erikson</i>	85
Seeing the Specter: A Gothic Metaphor of Subjectivity, Popular Culture, and Consumerism <i>Clifford D. Deaton</i>	95
An Uncertain Text: Reliving Shakespeare's Creative Milieu in the Modern World <i>Eric M. Johnson</i>	109
wants moar: visual media's use of text in LOLcats and silent film <i>Jed R. Brubaker</i>	117
The Pleasure of Death: The Construction of Masculine Citizenship in Military Recruitment Ads <i>Patricia J. Fancher</i>	125
What's in a name? That who we call a king by any other name would rule as supreme <i>Hannanah Mobashir</i>	134

## *Editor's Note*

Last December, with the release of the Fall 2007 issue of *gnovis*, I wrote “[though] these papers are somewhat disparate in topic, there is nonetheless much that they have in common: a vitality of purpose (...), a commitment to interdisciplinary rigor and ambition, and a distinct awareness of the relationship between the present and the past.” The same sentiment holds true for this Spring 2008 issue, as well, and I am pleased to say that I believe this is our strongest issue yet, thanks both to the increasing quality and volume of submissions and a substantially improved—but still imperfect—peer review process.

This issue begins with “*The Aura of Decay: The Concept of the Book in the Age of Hybridity*,” from Edward Erikson. Edward was first published in *gnovis* more than a year ago (“The Representation of Homelessness in the Nightly News”), and I would like to personally thank him for his tireless support of our journal as a peer-reviewer, a collegial advisor, and a contributing author. In this, his second published paper in *gnovis*, Erikson not only provides an astute analysis of the place of the book in this evolving era of media hybridity, he also presents his work in a hybrid form. Weaving hypertext and images into what might otherwise be considered conventional scholarly writing, his paper—even as it explores nostalgia for the book—challenges norms of academic publishing.

From Clifford D. Deaton of the University of Illinois, Chicago, comes “*Seeing the Specter: A Gothic Metaphor of Subjectivity, Popular Culture, and Consumerism*.” Drawing principally from Baudrillard and Foucault, Deaton proposes a theory of “the Specter”, “a negative symbolic exchange between the subjective viewer and the commodity form.” With sweeping strokes across contemporary culture, ranging from indiepop band The Postal Service to Edgar Allan Poe, Deaton's paper is a challenging but delightful read.

The first half of this issue is completed by Eric M. Johnson, with “*An Uncertain Text: Reliving Shakespeare's Creative Milieu in the Modern World*” Johnson argues that, in terms of process and milieu, contributors to Wikipedia share more in common with Elizabethan playwrights and performers than either group share with modern authors in print. He gives us both a very sound theoretical argument and, more pragmatically, a useful primer on the oft-misunderstood workings of wikis.

“*wants moar: visual media's use of text in LOLcats and silent film*,” by Jed R. Brubaker,

continues the trend of comparative historical analysis of media forms, but using texts that are infinitely more . . . well . . . *cute*. LOLcats, popular on the Internet since 2007, are photos of housecats with comical captions. Brubaker's analysis compares the captions used in LOLcats to intertitles from the silent film era.

From here our issue departs somewhat from itself. In “*The Pleasure of Death: The Construction of Masculine Citizenship in Military Recruitment Ads*,” Patricia J. Fancher provides a psychoanalytical reading of a recent National Guard advertisement, featuring the band Three Doors Down, and argues that the ad seduces recruits using a glorified notion of citizenship-through-depth.

Finally, Hannanah Mobashir gives us “*What's in a name? That who we call a king by any other name would rule as supreme*,” a snapshot study of media coverage of Pakistan's Parvez Musharraf during the six months after September 11<sup>th</sup>, focusing on trends in media use of various appellations, and the role that these appellations play in framing Musharraf in a particular light.

I'd like to take a moment to thank our peer reviewers and contributing authors for their patience, hard work, and dedication on this issue, as we made adjustments to our procedures. I'm very pleased with the outcome, and look forward to continue working with many of you on future issues.

This summer, as the 2008 US Presidential Election approaches, we will publish a special issue on “New Media, Technology and Democracy,” our first themed issue. We'll also continue, as we have throughout the last year, to post regularly to our critical blog. Our podcast, which has stagnated of late, is far from abandoned, and we have big plans to resume podcasting in the coming year.

Details about future issues, as well as our blog, podcast, and resources for graduate students, can be found on our website at [gnovis.georgetown.edu](http://gnovis.georgetown.edu).

*Brad Weikel*

