

A Philosophical Investigation of Multi-Modality

Fourth assignment

(1) Please reflect upon the ways in which issues regarding gesture are exemplified in the context of a 3D virtual reality such as Second Life.

When you are dealing with virtual reality there are a few things worth considering. First of all, virtual reality isn't reality. This is a crucial statement although it might change in the future since technology is always improving and we don't really know what the future will bring us. Because this virtual reality isn't the real deal, people will behave differently. But even though they will behave differently up to a certain point, the most interesting thing is to take a closer look at the behavior that doesn't change.

One thing I noticed after I created my Second Life account was that people interacted in much the same way they do in real life. They chatted about similar things, although abbreviations were more common (although I wonder sometimes, maybe we are just used to hearing things like "omg" and "asap" in our language that we don't really notice that those aren't words until we **see** them on the computer screen). and they grouped together on islands that were relative to their interests just like people do normally.

Some things were different though, people in Second Life look really good, too good to be true in fact. I haven't **seen** a single obese person nor anyone that is disabled or abnormally tall or very short. People **seem** to create an avatar of what they want to become instead of who they are presently. This is quite interesting as they either interact with people they know or people they don't know, these are really the only two groups.

The people they know do really know what the person behind the avatar really looks like so it shouldn't matter at all. The people they don't know aren't going to find out how you really are but since you don't know them, why should you care? It **seems** to me that this virtual ego boosting is primarily done by yourself for yourself. It reminds me of a cheap, functional, self helping program.

It is certain that technology combined with the internet has made some drastic changes to the world we live in and it will continue to revolutionize the way we communicate, be it with multi-modality or something even more complex.

(2) Please share any insights into philosophy and multimodality which you feel you have acquired as a result of this course.

I learned a lot from this course, even though the timing wasn't the best for me personally. It helped me understand how something like music could be mixed together with philosophy. It also helped me, in some ways, understand how linguistics can be tied with philosophy, when we were talking about the piano notes as a language. I must say though that my favourite day was day four, since we got into a bit more classic, and you might even say mundane, philosophy.

When I signed up for this class I didn't know anything about it except that it was a bit philosophical and a bit music oriented with some unorthodox teaching methods. I didn't even know what modality meant, I had to google it after the first day. But it was a pleasant surprise, I acquired some interest in classical music (I found myself going on youtube after each class and checking out some of the works Bill played for us) along with a deeper understanding concerning music and how we can use it as a tool to help us reach our goals regarding the task of communicating and expressing our feelings and opinions.

Furthermore it was interesting being in a class taught entirely in English, my first one since I started my advanced education and it was very enjoyable since I haven't had a chance expressing myself in English since, well, never (only read a few books and learned some grammar in high school, no real communicating or using words/music/gestures as a tool for expression). So that was a big part of the course for me personally, since it's quite different expressing yourself in different languages and I learned a lot from these few short papers I have written. So I would just like to thank you both for a wonderful week here with us at Bifröst.

This class also helped me understand multimodality better, what it is and how we can use it to express ourselves in different ways that were impossible or at least very implausible a few years back. It was also quite interesting **seeing** how we use our language regarding art, expression and general gestures. It **seems** as we have developed a keen sense of using our eyes as a measure for everything; what can't be seen can't be at all.