COMMENTARY

Mediatization, Suffering and the Death of Philosophy

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In this brief intervention the contributor makes the case that our preoccupation with media and cultural analysis has alienated/detached us, as scholars of media and cultural studies, from a key experiential moment: a philosophical pre-moment. In a world of chronic crises (economic, ideological, ecological), we have forgotten what it means to encounter suffering through the face of the sufferer. We seek refuge in Plato’s cave again – not because of inability to tell the real from shadowy reflections, but because the reflections (as mediatised experience) offer us refuge, comfort and distanciation. Our forgetfulness of suffering and the face of the sufferer have immersed us deep into a kind of ‘sequestration’ where language (academic language/language games/turf wars) take precedence over experiencing a world in crisis. Heidegger was wrong: we have not forgotten about being-in-the-world, we have remorselessly turned philosophy on its head – philosophy has itself become a tool of sequestration – a shelter from the face of the sufferer.

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The author has no competing interests to declare.

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The author of Cultural Encounters in the Arab World: On Media, the Modern and the Everyday (2010), Dr Sabry is the editor of Arab Cultural Studies: Mapping the Field (2012) and coeditor of Arab Subcultures: Reflections on Theory and Practice (2016). His research interests include Arab audiences, Arab children and the media, Arab popular cultures, Arab contemporary philosophical thought and cultural policy.