2nd
ONLINE TERRITORIES
COLLOQUIUM

11th of May 2010
Uppsala University
Sweden

Organized by the *Media and Community Research Group* at
Karlstad and Uppsala universities,
supported by: Riksbankens Jubileumsfond

Contacts:
christian.christensen@im.uu.se
miyase.christensen@kau.se
andre.jansson@kau.se

ABSTRACTS

Johan Fornäs

Materiality and Meaning: Spatial Interpretations in Cultural/Media Studies

Hermeneutics is marginalised in cultural studies and "new" media theories. This is unfortunate, since there are crucial advantages in Paul Ricoeur's late modern, critical textual hermeneutics, not least when it comes to understanding media and communication in a context of time and space. The anti-hermeneutic gestures of Foucault, Kittler, Latour and others are justifiable in so far as it is necessary to abandon the romantic biases inherent in much of classical hermeneutics. However, there is also a hidden romantic and reductionist tendency in some recent thinking on materiality and spatiality, where a renewed interest in Ricoeur's ideas would contribute a more useful polydimensional understanding. This presentation will compare different styles of theorising, outline the challenges of and for hermeneutics, and briefly discuss three key topics for cultural/media studies: text/meaning, agency/identity and context/spatiality, thus ending with ideas on how to conceptualise mediatisations of space and territory.

Shaun Moores

Embodiment, Orientation, Habitation: On Merleau-Ponty and Everyday Media Use

I'm going to be talking about everyday media use, which is something that I've been talking and writing about for a long time now, but I'm going to be approaching it in a way that's still relatively new to me. Over recent years, I've become increasingly interested in developing a phenomenological approach to the study of everyday media use, and, more specifically, I've become interested in aspects of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception and its relevance for doing media studies. As the title of my paper indicates, I'll be focusing on three closely related matters: embodiment, orientation and habitation. That is, I'll be focusing on bodily knowledge and habitual everyday practices, on finding one's way around in the course of everyday living, and on inhabiting or dwelling in everyday environments. I'll also be reflecting on how this particular sort of phenomenological approach differs from some other approaches to everyday media use.

Maren Hartmann

(Mediated) Social Space, Mobility and Privacy

In this presentation, I want to explore some of the basic questions that we face when we are dealing with mediated practices and social space. Those questions concern the issues of mobility (and especially mobile media) and privacy. While none of these issues is new, they are facing new challenges – especially when seen in combination. In order to explore these issues, I will refer to a study on wireless cafes and the social interaction taking place therein. What conclusions can we draw from this example concerning the questions of space, mobility and privacy? Are there other examples that would be equally or more useful to explore these challenges? And especially how far do the concepts we use describe actual mediated practices? Rather than answering all these questions, I would like to explore future concepts and research approaches.

Charlotte Kroløkke

How Babies are Made: Online and Outsourced

Fertility clinics turn biological matter and babies into online commodities and infertile individuals learn about their options and share their stories in digital environments. This presentation expands on the work by feminist theorists and new media scholars. Feminist theorists note that narratives of reproduction reiterate fantasies of patriarchal culture in which the egg and the sperm are performers of conventional heterosexist gender ideologies. New media speeds up communication between key stakeholders encouraging new forms of interactions and shaping the telling of reproduction. The focus of this presentation rests on the outsourcing of fertility treatments to one of India's leading fertility clinics, Malpani Infertility Clinic. Located in Mumbai, India, this clinic attracts foreigners as well as the Indian Diaspora—offering IVF e-learning courses, online success stories, and doctor-patient interactions in Second Life. Of particular interest is how IVF, (in)fertility, and gender is staged in the online material.

Myria Georgiou

A contradiction or a way to make sense of place?
The place-ness and placeless-ness of the mediated city

This paper looks at the complex system of making sense of place in the mediated cities, with a particular focus on mediated networks. Every city is a unique place and every city has a long history of juxtapositions of difference and mobility to and from its territory. In recent research - and especially as a result of the intensified trade and communication networks in and across global cities - the place-ness of cities has attracted less interest than its placeless-ness. In this paper I argue that we need to study the placeless-ness of the city as one of the elements of the city's current cultural and social significance; its placeness is an equally important component of its current significance. The role of the city as a node in global networks, its construction as a globally recognisable brand, and its uniqueness as an imagined place of excitement and fear constitute some of the elements of the mediated city and its current meanings. Only if we look at place-ness and placeless-ness in their continuity we can make sense of (trans-)urban mediated networks and understand how networked communication is not just a way out of place but also a way in it.

Thomas Tufte

Mediápolis, Human (In)Security and Citizenship:
Communication and Glocal Development Challenges in the Digital Era

In this paper I assess communication for social change from a citizen's perspective. Based on an example from Tanzania, of a civil society driven media platform which seeks to enhance processes of empowerment, influence good governance and promote social change, I explore three analytical perspectives: Firstly, I use Roger Silverstone's concept of 'mediapolis' to explore the mediated public sphere as a space for civic action and participation. Secondly, I present and discuss the concept of 'human (in)security' which refers to how cultures of fear and insecurity permeate public discourse and the public sentiment. Finally, I discuss how to theorize communication for social change in a digital era, approaching it from a citizens perspective and connecting contexts outlined in this paper – human (in)security, mediápolis and citizenship - with the Tanzanian reality.

NO REGISTRATION, NO FEE!

VENUE

Uppsala University, Universitetshuset, Biskopsgatan 3, Room 4,
see http://www.uu.se/en/node131

SCHEDULE

*** SESSION 1 (09.30-11.30):**
Social and Theoretical Intersections of Online and Offline

Johan Fornäs, Södertörn University, Sweden
Materiality and Meaning: Spatial Interpretations in Cultural/Media Studies

Shaun Moores, University of Sunderland, UK
Embodiment, Orientation, Habitation: On Merleau-Ponty and Everyday Media Use

*** LUNCH**

*** SESSION 2 (13.00-15.00):**
Questioning Privacy and Identity in Online Territories

Maren Hartmann, University of the Arts, Berlin, Germany
(Mediated) Social Space, Mobility and Privacy

Charlotte Kroløkke, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark
How Babies are Made: Online and Outsourced

*** COFFEE**

*** SESSION 3 (15.30-17.30):**
Transnationalism, Place and Community on the Brink of the Online and the Offline

Myria Georgiou, London School of Economics, London, UK
A Contradiction or a Way to Make Sense of Place? The Place-ness and Placeless-ness of the Mediated City

Thomas Tufte, Roskilde University, Denmark
Mediapolis, Human (In)Security and Citizenship: Communication and Glocal Development Challenges in the Digital Era