

Cultural Research and Political Theory: New Intersections

Preconference at ICA's 60th annual conference,
Singapore

Tuesday 22 June 2010
9 – 5

SUNTEC International Convention Centre
Level 3, Rooms 305 and 307

Organising division

Philosophy of Communication

Co-sponsoring divisions

Political Communication, Popular Communication, Journalism Studies

Organisers

Nick Couldry, Goldsmiths College, University of London; Chair, PhilComm Division

Penny O'Donnell, University of Sydney, Journalism Studies Division

Major Sponsor

Department of Media and Communications and Centre for the Study of Global Media
and Democracy, Goldsmiths, University of London

Schedule

8.30-9.00am	Coffee/ Registration
9.00-9.10am	Introduction: Nick Couldry
9.10-10.00am	Keynote: Clive Barnett
10.00-11.15am	Session 1. Participation and public life Gerard Goggin, Heikki Heikkila, Jinsun Lee
	Session 2. Reframing participation: The missing politics of work David Hesmondhalgh, Melissa Gregg, Matt Stahl
11.15-11.30am	Morning Tea (provided)
11.30am-12.45pm	Session 3. Voice and everyday practice Nick Couldry, Jo Tacchi, Terry Flew
	Session 4. Emerging domains of the political Jostein Gripsrud, Zizi Papacharissi
12.45-13.30pm	Lunch (provided)
13.30-15.15pm	Session 5. New publics Vivian Chen, Tim Markham, Frances Shaw, Ying Li
	Session 6. Popular communication and the renewal of democratic theory James Hay, Alex Macmillan, Chris Russill, Srinath Jayaram
15.15-15.30pm	Afternoon tea (provided)
15.30-16.30pm	Panel — Listening interventions Tanja Dreher, Catherine Thill, Justine Lloyd, Penny O'Donnell
16.30-17.00pm:	Open plenary, discussion and concluding comments

Notes:

- Session Chairs: Nick Couldry, Penny O'Donnell and Laurie Ouellette (Vice-Chair PhilComm Division).
- Where paper is jointly authored, only first named author is listed.

Rationale

Exciting potential intersections are emerging between research into communications and culture and theoretical work on political norms. Alongside well-known experiments with new forms of public deliberation and debates on the public sphere in the 1990s and 2000s, there has been much new work in political theory that rethinks the reference-points of political practice:

- Expanding the range of those who are treated as political actors (Benhabib, *The Rights of Others*; Fraser, 'Reframing Global Justice')
- Transforming the scales on which political decisions are appropriately taken, and the network of deliberations appropriate to those scales (Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*; Fraser, *Transnationalizing the Public Sphere*) and in media's specific role in enabling this (Bohman, *Democracy Across Borders*; Pauly, *Media Studies and the Dialogue of Democracy*);
- Improving our understanding of what counts as political 'voice', what practices sustain it, and the broader ends which voice serves (Norval, *Aversive Democracy*; Honneth, *Disrespect*)
- Expanding the domain of the political, often in the cultural or aesthetic spheres, as suggested in recent work in Canada on 'acts of citizenship' (Isin and Nielsen, *Acts of Citizenship*).

Meanwhile, researchers in cultural studies and communications have become increasingly interested not only in questions of citizenship and democracy in general, but specifically in the role that popular culture and everyday communications play in helping us imagine, enact and sustain the new forms of practice that political theory proposes, for example:

- Work on popular culture and queer citizenship (Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City* 1997; Warner, *Publics and Counter-publics* 2001)
- Work on 'voice' within contexts of development communications (Jo Tacchi and others);
- Recent work on the practices of 'listening' across political, cultural and artistic fields (see special 2009 issue of journal *Continuum* on the Australian 'Listening Project'), and
- Work on fan practices, social networking sites and politics (Jenkins, *Convergence Culture*).

This preconference aims to bring together researchers and communication practitioners interested in how cultural research can invigorate political theory, and vice versa. Its specific focus is on examining the terms and means of contemporary politics within and beyond the horizon of neoliberalism. The preconference will be limited to 40 participants, with discussion either in a 'round-table' format or through a mixture of plenary and parallel sessions. Participants are invited who are interested in reflecting on the preconference's themes, whether from the sponsoring divisions or beyond, including participants at the Association for Cultural Studies' 2010 Crossroads conference in Hong Kong for whom this event is intended as a 'post-conference'.

Abstracts and Bionotes (listed alphabetically)

Clive Barnett

Abstract

Emergent publics

This lecture will challenge assumptions about the decline of the public sphere in the face of 'neo-liberal' challenges to public institutions, shift to individualization, and transformations of collective solidarities. It does so by reorienting analysis towards understanding the development of new practices, sites and definitions of publicness, and how these enact new normative sensibilities as they unfold.

Bionote

Clive Barnett works on the geographies of democracy and public life. He is author and editor of books and scholarly articles on colonial and postcolonial discourses, critical theory and the public sphere, political philosophy, popular media cultures, poststructuralism, and social movements. This includes empirical research on the UK, South Africa, USA, and Europe. His current research focuses on emergent forms of public action and their implications for practices of democracy.

Clive is a member of the OpenSpace Research Centre, and an Associate Member of the Centre for Citizenship, Identities and Governance (CCIG) in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the OU. He is also a Member of the Open University's Ethics Centre.

Clive has previously held posts at Salford University, the University of Reading, and the University of Bristol. He has held Visiting Positions in Geography at Ohio State University, in Cultural and Media Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, in Political Science at the University of Copenhagen, and in Intercultural Communication at the Copenhagen Business School.

Vivian Hsueh-Hua Chen and Tee Yock Sian

Abstract

Narrative transparency in Korean television dramas and the reception of Korean dramas in East Asia

The increased popularity of East Asian cultural products within the region has led to researchers speculating about the rise of an East Asian popular culture (Chua, 2004). However, such a conceptualization of a relatively homogenous cultural space fails to take into account East Asia's cultural diversity. As Hyun (2007) pointed out, the recent Korean wave within East Asia has come about although Korea does not have a shared history, religion, language or culture with most of East Asia. This, in turn, contradicts the assumptions of cultural proximity inherent in the concept of a geolinguistic cultural region put forth by scholars such as Sinclair (2000) and Straubhaar (1991).

This study borrows Olson's (1999) concept of narrative transparency to explain the cross-cultural popularity of Korean television dramas in East Asia. The transparent nature of the Korean television dramas makes them polysemic in nature, easily allowing for alternative readings by audiences across East Asia, resulting in the popularity of Korean dramas in East Asia. This study suggests that the reading by the audience depends on the recipient country's perceived level of industrialization vis-à-vis Korea. This will be shown through a text analysis of two Korean television dramas, *Winter Sonata* and *Stars In My Heart*, which kickstarted the Korean Wave in three East Asian countries, Japan, Vietnam and Taiwan, will be done.

The study will be examining how *Winter Sonata* was consumed retrospectively by Japan while *Stars In My Heart* was consumed prospectively and contemporaneously by Vietnam and Taiwan respectively.

References

- Chua, B.H. (2004) Conceptualizing an East Asian popular culture. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 5(2), pp. 200- 221.
- Hyun, K. (2007). New Asian Cultural Proximity, Korean Modernity in between, and Reception of Korean TV Drama in the East Asia. *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, San Francisco, CA, May 23, 2007*
- Olson, S.R. (1999) *Hollywood planet: global media and the competitive advantage of narrative transparency*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Sinclair, J. (2000). Geolinguistic region as global space: the case of Latin America. In G. Wang, J. Servaes and A. Goonasekera (Eds.) *The New Communication Landscape: Demystifying Media Globalization*. London: Routledge, pp. 19-32.
- Staubhaar (1991) Beyond media imperialism: Asymmetrical interdependence and cultural proximity. *Critical Studies in Mass Communications* 8, pp. 39-59.

Bionotes

Dr. Vivian Hsueh-hua Chen is an assistant professor in Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. She received her PhD in Communication from Arizona State University, USA; M.S. degree in Speech Communication and M.A. degree in English from Syracuse University, USA; and a B.A. in Philosophy from National Chengchi University, Taiwan. She is an associate editor of the *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*. Her academic training came from the field of Communication, English Literature and Philosophy. Her research interests include the interplay between culture and communication, the construction of identity, how media brings changes in communication behaviors, the social impact of digital media.

Yock Sian is currently a graduate student at Nanyang Technological University's Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information (WKWSCI). Yock Sian graduated with a bachelor of communication studies (first class honours) from WKWSCI. After working as a political research analyst with the Ministry of Defence (Singapore), she is now back in school pursuing a masters by research under the supervision of Dr Vivian Chen. Her research interest lies in fan culture. Her current research investigates the role of identities and the interaction of identities in the fan activity of cosplaying. Yock Sian is also interested in research related to interplay between culture and communication, which includes issues of globalisation of media content.

Nick Couldry

Abstract

Voice: culture and politics beyond the horizon of neoliberalism

My talk will start out from the way neoliberal discourse's absolute prioritization of market functioning over and above other political and social values generates a crisis of voice in what we might call neoliberal democracies, a crisis that operates along many dimensions: in the economic sphere, in politics, and in culture. After outlining aspects of that multiple crisis, I will explore what values are available from which a counter-rationality (in Wendy Brown's term) to neoliberal discourse can be developed; in this, I will draw on various sources from Amartya Sen's criticism of the assumptions of neoliberal economics to Axel Honneth's theory of recognition. While drawing particularly on the dilemmas faced within the UK's governance culture, I will reflect also on their relevance for other countries that have adopted neoliberal discourse to a significant degree. I will end by reflecting on the implications of my argument for current priorities for media and cultural studies research.

Bionote

Nick Couldry is Professor of Media and Communications at Goldsmiths, University of London. He is the author or editor of seven books including most recently *Media Consumption and Public Engagement: Beyond the Presumption of Attention* (Palgrave 2007, new edition out early 2010, co-authors Sonia Livingstone and Tim Markham) and *Listening Beyond the Echoes: Media Ethics and Agency in an Uncertain World* (Paradigm 2006).

Tanja Dreher

Abstract

Listening for media justice

The highly influential recent debates on recognition in political theory have highlighted uneven patterns of value, esteem and attention as fundamental questions of justice. The politics of recognition insists that cultural injustices of misrecognition and disrespect are as significant as, and inextricably intertwined with, injustices in the distribution of resources and rights. Although rarely deployed in media research, the recognition framework suggests that media justice requires not only access to resources and to airtime, but depends also on the value and attention afforded different voices, forms of media and cultural productions.

Les Back (2009) advocates the development of 'global attentiveness' to correct the sociological 'ear' focused on western histories and interests. Recent feminist scholarship on the other hand has examined 'listening' as a crucial metaphor for rethinking political theory and communication studies, which have usually focused on 'speaking'. Susan Bickford's (1996) work on listening in political theory turns our attention to intersubjectivity and agonistic respect, while Krista Ratcliffe's (2004) re-appropriation of 'eavesdropping' provides strategies for shifting unearned privileges. The listening framework expands the politics of recognition beyond policy interventions and the affirmation of group rights, instead highlighting ongoing processes, complex negotiations and interconnections across differences.

Working at the intersection of the politics of recognition and recent work on the neglected dynamics of listening, this paper explores possibilities for expanding the media justice agenda beyond a conventional emphasis on speaker's rights through listening for privilege and shifting entrenched hierarchies of attention.

I argue that media justice requires not only the recognition of marginalised 'others', but also recognition of naturalised privileges, colonial histories and a commitment to decentring conventions of proximity and distance, interest and relevance.

Bionote

Dr Tanja Dreher is a Research Associate in the Transforming Cultures Research Centre at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) and a co-convenor of The Listening Project. Her research focuses on the practices and politics of 'listening' in the context of media and multiculturalism, drawing on recent debates in feminisms, political theory and critical race and whiteness studies. Tanja has recently published on community media interventions and the politics of listening (Media Culture & Society 2010), media and multiculturalism beyond the politics of voice (Continuum 2009) and on eavesdropping with permission (borderlands ejournal 2009).

Terry Flew

Abstract

Public broadcasters, online news media and questions of 'voice': developments at Australia's Special Broadcasting Service

Debates around online news media are frequently constructed in terms of binary oppositions, between traditional journalists and bloggers, 'old' and 'new' media, and industrial journalism versus DIY citizen journalism. These are in turn overlaid upon dichotomies between commercial and public service media, and mainstream versus alternative journalism. A recurring feature of such debates is their characteristic lack of attention to empirical detail and institutional specificity, preferring instead to engage in meta-discourses surrounding "the future of the media".

This paper will aim to counter such speculative accounts with a detailed empirical overview of how such developments have been playing themselves out at the Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) in Australia. SBS was established in the 1970s as Australia's multicultural radio and television service, and has been a unique media institution over its 30+-year history. It has been developing its online services, in the context of particular questions of *voice* that arise from both its obligations to represent Australia's cultural diversity and its remit as a public service media organisation, as well as the challenges it faces through its mixed founding model of commercial advertising and government funding.

The paper will focus upon two aspects of SBS's online news media strategy in particular. The first is the approach taken within SBS to user-created content, and how it compares to the strategies of other public service broadcasters such as the BBC in Britain and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. Second, the paper will look at trends in user participation at SBS's online news and current affairs sites, such as *Dateline*, *Insight*, *The World News* and *Living Black*. These findings will be considered in the context of a major Review of National Broadcasting initiated by the Rudd Labor Government in Australia in 2008, and possible policy changes for public service media in Australia from 2010.

Bionote

Terry Flew is Professor of Media and Communications in the Creative Industries Faculty at the Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia. He is the author of *New Media: An Introduction* (Oxford, 2008 – third edition), *Understanding Global Media* (Palgrave, 2007), and *The Creative Industries, Culture and Policy* (Sage, 2011 (forthcoming)). He has a wide range of research interests and research experience, and

has been an author of eight research monographs, 28 book chapters, 50 refereed academic journal articles, and has been an editor of nine special issues of academic journals and refereed conference proceedings. He is a chief investigator in the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation, the ARC Cultural Research Network, and the Smart Services Co-operative Research Centre. He has led research projects on citizen journalism and “creative suburbia”, and was part of a team researching the rise of creative industries in China. He is currently President of the Australian and New Zealand Communications Association (ANZCA), in which capacity he has advised the Australian Research Council and the Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, and participated in international panels on the history and future of communication and media studies as a discipline in Singapore and Tokyo.

Gerard Goggin

Abstract

Listening with disability: challenges for citizenship and media

Disability is an excellent instance of an area that has been overlooked in both cultural research and political theory (despite people with disabilities numbering up to twenty per cent of populations), yet offers intriguing perspectives on their intersections. Accordingly, this paper looks at the implications of disability — not only for expanding our concepts of political actors, but also for reconceptualizing the operations and nature of power.

Firstly, I set out an account of the relations between culture and power when it comes to disability. This is something of a fraught exercise still, because much recent theorizing on disability, especially under the influence of the British ‘social model’ of disability, has been reticent to give too much emphasis to culture. Here I draw upon British, US, and Australian work to suggest how we could fruitfully approach the intersections between culture and power — and the new kinds of citizenship suggested via disability.

Secondly, to explore I look at new practices of listening, devised by people with disabilities using digital technologies. In particular I look at the field of blogging, the distinctive architectures and uses people with disabilities developed, and how these have changed in response to the new emphasis on social media.

Rather than disability and media being simply a matter of talk about access — important though this is — this paper seeks to reflect upon the use and significance of everyday media and communication in constructing disability as highly significant political category and set of cultural dynamics, no more so than in the area of emerging media.

Bionote

Gerard Goggin is Professor of Digital Communication and deputy-director of the Journalism and Media Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. He has a long-standing interest in disability, power and media, with books including *Digital Disability* (2003) and *Disability in Australia* (2005) -- co-authored with Christopher Newell, and the forthcoming collection *Disability and Listening* (with Cate Thill and Rosemary Kayess). Gerard is also widely published on mobile media, with books including *Global Mobile Media* (2010), *Cell Phone Culture* (2006), and the forthcoming collection *Place and Mobiles* (with Rowan Wilken). Current projects include a comparative study on Internet histories in the Asia-Pacific, and a national study of youth and mobile media in Australia (both funded by the Australian Research Council).

Melissa Gregg

Abstract

The politics of online social networking

Scholars in communication and cultural studies have been quick to recognise the relationship between theories of neoliberal subjectivity and the self-broadcasting practices taking place through online social media platforms (Hearn, Andrejevic, Coté & Pybus). This paper will draw on ethnographic and empirical research of social networking sites Facebook and Twitter to show how new media platforms correspond with wider shifts in white-collar employment in the move to a “projective city” (Boltanski and Chiapello).

Online social networking has developed to alleviate the growing experience of alienation among educated knowledge workers in the West as class mobility has become an ordinary expectation. Facebook friends have become the security blanket needed to navigate the changing life chances and experiences of an aspirational elite. In the process however they have also become the site for new kinds of labour and exploitation in a growing number of information and communication jobs.

Pierre Bourdieu’s taxonomy of capital illustrates the manifold literacies that social networking sites perform and consecrate, just as his idea of “habitus” explains how online platforms become part of everyday life for a certain fraction of users. If the performance of social and cultural capital offers the foundation for these educated and literate knowledge workers navigating their prospects in an era of network capitalism, this paper asks what these practices mean for political theory, and particularly the forms of ethical subjectivity needed to reflect the interdependence of information “haves” and “have less” (Qiu).

Bionote

Melissa Gregg teaches in the Gender and Cultural Studies Department at the University of Sydney. She is the author of *Cultural Studies’ Affective Voices* (Palgrave 2006) and co-editor of *The Affect Theory Reader* (with Gregory J. Seigworth, Duke UP 2010). Her writing on gender, affect, digital culture and labour has been published in a range of journals including *Convergence*, *Cultural Studies*, *Continuum*, *Cultural Studies Review* and *Feminist Media Studies*.

For 5 years Melissa worked in the Centre for Critical and Cultural Studies at the University of Queensland. Her research examined the impact of online communication technologies on professional work practices, culminating in her ARC Discovery project, *Working From Home: New media technology, workplace culture and the changing nature of domesticity*. Using an innovative methodology that combines workplace and home-based interviews, ethnographic web research and textual analysis of print media, this three year study provides an in-depth account of how online technologies become part of everyday life for white collar workers in information jobs. The book documenting this project, *Work’s Intimacy*, is forthcoming with Polity Press.

Melissa’s current work investigates theories of labour in the knowledge economy, with a focus on gender and geography.

Jostein Gripsrud

Abstract

Culture, politics and « *la longue durée* »

Theories of the public sphere and deliberative democracy have much to say about politics and political discourse but very little about the relation between politics and culture in the sense of the arts, high and low. Valuable publications in this area, which in their title seem to indicate they might touch on the issue, do not (e.g. Seyla Benhabib (ed.), 1996: *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*). Jürgen Habermas is in fact one of the few who consistently have shown an interest in what he initially referred to as the literary public sphere. Still, while he in his 1962 book made the point that the literary public sphere emerged before the political and remained essential to the classical public sphere by way of preparing the subjectivities of citizens, he now, in his most recent model, relegates the arts to the “wild” part of the public sphere, where there are only what Nancy Fraser called “weak publics”. The problem is that the model is synchronic rather than diachronic and centres on argumentation leading to specific political decisions rather than attitudes and hermeneutic frames. It does not account for longterm structures and slow processes, resembling what the Annales School in history called *la longue durée*.

The paper will argue by way of theoretical discussion and key historical and contemporary examples (apartheid, the US civil rights movement, women’s lib, gay rights) that the cultural public sphere’s impact in the form of political change is best understood and studied as long term processes, and that the same would apply to conservative or reactionary impact. This leads to a discussion of methodological consequences for empirical studies of historical as well as current phenomena in the so-called digital era.

Bionote

Jostein Gripsrud is Professor in the Department of Information Science and Media Studies at the University of Bergen and a researcher at the Centre franco-norvégien en sciences sociales et humaines in Paris. His first two books were about the two major popular movements in Norway 1890-1940 considered as public spheres. He has since published extensively on the theory, history, sociology, politics and aesthetics of media and culture. His most recent publication is *Media, Markets and Public Spheres* and his forthcoming publications this year include *Relocating Television: Television in the digital context* (Routledge), *The Digital Public Sphere: Challenges for Media Policy* (Nordicom) and *The Idea of the Public Sphere: A Reader* (Lexington Books/Rowman & Littlefield).

James Hay

Abstract

‘Popular culture’ in a critique of political reason

No term was more at the center of conceptualizations of power and politics in “critical” theories of communication during the mid- and late- twentieth century than “popular culture.” The term figured into the work of Leftist intellectuals such as Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, and Richard Hoggart who were shaping a “cultural studies” in Britain before the 1970s, but after the 1960s the term became pivotal in explanations about the object of Cultural Studies, particularly among theorists who invoked the newly translated writing of Antonio Gramsci to argue that popular culture is the terrain on which and over which hegemonic struggle occurs—an argument famously elaborated in Hall’s “Notes on Deconstructing the Popular.”

The pre-conference intervention that I am proposing asks, in part, to what extent the preoccupation with popular culture overly narrowed the ways that a “critical” Communication Studies and a Cultural Studies have understood (media) power and politics. The title of my intervention turns to the title of Michel Foucault’s essay, “Omnes et singulatim: A Critique of Political Reason”—one of the points of reference for Nikolas Rose’s and Mitchell Dean’s proposal for a study of governmentality, and indirectly for Tony Bennett’s argument about the limitations of a Gramscian Cultural Studies and the usefulness of a Foucaultian Cultural Studies.

From this latter perspective, I ask not only how and if popular culture matters in a critique of political reason, but also what might be involved in an analysis of media/power that focuses on “popular rationalities” and “popular technologies” of government and citizenship. This line of questioning follows Bennett’s account of “cultural technology” (though his use of the term applied to schools and museums rather than to media); it focuses attention on and seeks to overcome the legacy in Communication Studies of C.P. Snow’s famous distinction between science and culture; and it provides an alternative to the former practices of political economy and interpretive/textual analysis from which critical studies of media and Cultural Studies have tended to explain media/power. Following Foucault’s emphasis on “omnes et singulatim,” as well as Paolo Virno’s (and secondarily David Oswell’s) account of “the multitude,” my intervention also will address what is both useful and problematic about a study of media/power (and political rationalities/technologies) whose path to understanding government and citizenship rely on old terms such as “the popular,” “populism,” and “the people.”

Bionote

James Hay is an Associate Professor in the Institute of Communications Research, the Department of Media & Cinema Studies, and the Unit for Criticism & Interpretive Theory at the University of Illinois--Champaign-Urbana. His most recent book (with Laurie Ouellette) is *Better Living Through Reality TV* (Blackwell, 2008).

David Hesmondhalgh

Abstract

Media work and social justice: questions of autonomy and self-realisation

This paper concerns political theories of work, especially of ‘meaningful work’ and ‘good work’, and their relation to analysis of labour in the media and cultural industries. It focuses on two terms that regularly feature in discussions of ‘good work’ and ‘bad work’ and which also feature in discussions of the desirability of cultural labour: autonomy and self-realisation. While recognising problems associated with both terms, the paper questions Marxist and post-structuralist claims that these ideas can be reduced to ideology or to seductive technologies of the self. I criticise Marxian conceptions of work, and refer to a debate in the sociology of work and organisations to show that post-structuralist management analysis has considerable problems with regard to questions of normativity and agency.

The main aim up to now is to mount a defence of the idea of using a normative framework for assessing work, of formulating a conception of ‘good work’. The paper then draws on recent social theory in order to develop such a conception. This includes not only good experiences for workers, including questions of pay, conditions, autonomy and potential for self-realisation, but also good work in the sense of work that is done well or excellently, and good work in the sense of work that contributes to the well-being of others, including (potentially) the common good.

The Aristotelian notion of 'practices', as mediated by Alisdair MacIntyre and Russell Keat, plays a central role here.

The challenge is to combine these three understandings of good work, and this is part of a wider goal of combining notions of individual well-being with questions of equality and social justice in relation to work, including cultural, creative and media work.

Bionote

David Hesmondhalgh is Professor of Media and Music Industries in the Institute of Communications Studies at the University of Leeds, where he is Director of Research, Head of the Media Industries Research Centre (MIRC), and Head of the Media Industries MA Programme. His publications include *The Cultural Industries* (2nd edition, 2007), and five edited volumes, including *The Media and Social Theory* (with Jason Toynbee, 2008), *Understanding Media: Inside Celebrity* (with Jessica Evans, 2005) and *Western Music and its Others: Difference, Appropriation and Representation in Music* (with Georgina Born, 2000). *Creative Labour: Media Work in Three Cultural Industries*, co-written with Sarah Baker, is to be published by Routledge in August 2010.

Heikki Heikkilä, Risto Kunelius and Laura Ruusunoksa

Abstract

A cause for concern: news and politically-oriented everyday talk in social networks

This paper is based on the project studying how social networks operate as platforms for political talk. By focusing on the ways in which news consumers use news and make sense of public affairs in their social networks, the study aims at updating our understanding on how the 'public' is embedded in interactions of everyday life. This terrain of sense making, and the particular role social networks play in the construction of relevance for news, is studied empirically through interviews and group discussions (with some 80 Finnish citizens) over a period of 1,5 years.

Our first findings (Autumn 2009) suggest that people tend to express their politically-oriented views in the form of worries, anxieties and morally loaded questions about social values. Such types of concerns are generic at the level of life-world, but these are rarely addressed as such in public and media discourses. Thus, one starting point of our analyses is the discursive mismatch between the sense making practices embedded in networks of everyday life and the discursive logics of politics and media representations.

The further analysis will aim to shed light on whether we should be concerned about this discrepancy and ask politicians and journalists to tap more deeply into philosophical soul-searching in the same vein as people in their social networks do. Or, should we treat citizens' political talk and public discourse as separate realms of meanings and think more positively about the role of social networks in translating facts and political rhetorics into their own political language? While the case is hardly as simple as that, it is clear that these hypotheses suggest very different ideas about journalism and media and their roles in and for democracy.

Building on this developing empirical base, the paper will connect to topical discussion about media consumption and public life (cf. Couldry et al.), and the networked public sphere or publics (Friedland et al., Benkler, Habermas). The goal is to understand better how news consumers in a network society increasingly become part of the distribution systems of media. This is an idea, which has deep roots in modern sociology and media studies (Tarde, Dewey, Katz & Lazarsfeld, etc.).

Bionotes

Heikki Heikkilä is Senior Research Fellow at the Journalism Research and Development Centre at University of Tampere, Finland. He is interested in comparative journalism research (mostly at the European level). Currently he is the project leader of the audience research project Towards Engaging Journalism and involved in the European study Media Accountability and Transparency in Europe (MediaAct).

Risto Kunelius is Professor at the department of Journalism and Mass Communication and Director of the International School of Social Sciences at University of Tampere, Finland. His current field of interest relates to transnational tendencies in journalism. He has recently co-edited the book *Transnational Media Events: The Mohammed Cartoons and the Imagined Clash of Civilizations*. Now he works with a number of international projects related, for instance to journalism and climate change and journalism and innovations.

Laura Ruusunoksa is Research Fellow at the Journalism Research and Development Centre at University of Tampere, Finland. Her research focuses on the development of public journalism in Finland. Currently she is working in the audience research project Towards Engaging Journalism.

Srinath Jayaram

Abstract

Biotechnopolitics: new worlds and other worlds

Biotechnologies have disrupted notions of the sovereign self so crucial to modern maps of the political. In the critiques of so-called “neoliberalism” we find familiar laments of the “erosion” of rights over one’s own body. But we also see postcolonial states, such as India, generate exemptions within international trade agreements to regulate economies of positive discrimination. Consequently, politics based on the assumption of a sovereign state committed to its role as a neutral guarantor of rights, and/or to a monopoly on legitimate violence are in need of rethinking. These manifold disruptions of the modern-political can’t be reduced to a singular logic such as “neoliberalism”. Cultural Studies might then offer a conjunctural, empirical mode of analysis that might offer a way into the problem.

My paper conducts a discursive analysis of what I call biotechnopolitics. I analyze biotechnologies on three different axes: (1) I engage critics of the rhetorics of biotechnological reason, who critique the reductionism and DNAcentric accounts of emergent life sciences. I argue that these critiques underestimate the philosophical complexities inherent to contemporary life sciences. (2) I engage the value of political critiques that combat the subordination of public resources and “pure sciences” to the dictates of private interests in “crude technologies”. (3) I work through the deployment of “ideological critique” in the struggle against biotech economies for its conceptions of the relations between science, technology, and society. Given the radical and irreducible technicity of human ecologies, I argue that the hermeneutic paradigm of cultural and political critique is always already off-center. I am doubtful though if we have to agree that technical objects have marched into the bastions of sovereignty. The category of hegemony and culture, remain instrumental to the practice of politics as immanent critique.

Bionote

Srinath Jayaram is conducting his doctoral research in the Department of Communication Studies, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Jinsun Lee

Abstract

Cultural production as political participation: Reconsidering social movements in the New Media Age

Previous studies on social movements tend to focus more on collective action led by institutionalized agents, such as social movement organizations and interest groups. This tendency is likely to fail to explain new phenomena arising in Internet-based activism; particularly (1) movement entrepreneurs (Earl & Schussman, 2003) that, not affiliated with any specific political organization, appear as new agents of social movements, and (2) the fusion of political and sub-cultural discourse (Chadwick, 2006, 2007) produced and disseminated online by lay citizens. As the boundaries between private and public, professionals and amateurs, and political and cultural actions are becoming blurred, a variety of novel forms of social movements and political participation are emerging. This research aims to offer a better understanding about social movements in the new media age, focusing on lay citizens engaged in alternative cultural production and dissemination through Web 2.0 tools. As new technologies, including blogs, flickrs and Youtube, enable Internet users to emerge as “accidental journalists” (Papacharissi, 2009) that are intermittently involved in news production and distribution, those technologies also encourage citizens to become movement entrepreneurs by sharing, producing, and distributing counter-hegemonic culture through horizontal and decentralized online networks. Sub-cultural discourses in the form of satire, parody, black-humor, and culture jamming are more frequently created and circulated by individual Internet users. Using the Internet as a discursive battlefield of culture and knowledge, citizens are empowered to promote social movements for grassroots politics.

Identifying cultural production by lay citizens as a crucial part of political participation, this study proposes to articulate Internet activism as Internet usage for (1) the mobilization of civic action, (2) virtual struggles to attack target personnel and/or institutions online, (3) the construction of collective identity, and, more importantly, (4) the production and circulation of alternative knowledge and culture.

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Bionote

Jinsun Lee (Ph.D., Rutgers University, Media Studies, 2009) is Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication and Theatre Arts at the Old Dominion University, Virginia. Her research focuses on digital media and civic activism. Her study examines how lay citizens and non-professional news creators utilize the Internet as a non-hierarchical network by which alternative ways of resource mobilization, knowledge production, and information gathering/distribution are created. Her studies explore how new media technology has affected communication forms, leadership, and movement repertoires of civic action in the context of social movement history. Her current work includes articles on conceptualization of Internet activism, a case study of Twitter and civic action, and a comparative study on Western and non-Western Internet activism.

Jinsun Lee is also interested in collaborative learning processes using Wikimedia tools. She has developed an experimental teaching method of cross-national collaborative projects based on Wikis. In the projects, students are required to collaborate with non-US students to publish and edit articles on Wikipedia. She examines the extent to which the Wiki-based collaboration promotes students' active involvement and mutual understanding, and the ways in which the collaboration encourages them to learn a democratic process of knowledge production.

Ying Li

Abstract

Development communication as subpolitics: exploring the non-political power of societal influence in developmental states

The concept of the "developmental state" has curiously eluded development communication scholarship over the years. The past three decades have witnessed China following a state designed developmental path that is characterized by a strong, interventionist state, evolving public-private partnership, increasingly competent state administrative elites, and miraculous growth records in the economy. Amidst the success stories, the dark underside of the developmental state model, namely the extreme subordination and exclusion of workers, environmental degradation, and deeply institutionalized corruption practice etc., are the critical tests to the viability and transferability of the model. Vaguely termed as the "Beijing Consensus," China's developmental path seems to project an alternative to the neoliberal development model propagated as the "Washington Consensus".

This paper focuses on how to conceptualize development communication that can contribute to political change towards welfarism and democratization in developmental states. This paper first draws insights from Arturo Escobar's postdevelopment theory and the poststructuralist approach to development communication that emphasizes the notion of power. It critiques the discursive silence on communication processes in localized and pluralistic grassroots movements in developmental states in East Asia, and advocating for bringing politics back into development communication. Different from the poststructuralist paradigm, however, this paper also highlights the structural aspects of development using the concept of "subpolitics" developed by sociologists like Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens.

The author argues that the effectiveness of the subpolitical ultimately lies in the social influences exerted by subpolitical actors, which naturally makes subpolitical struggles a communication issue. This paper uses the example of environmental movement in China to illustrate how a subpolitical perspective helps generate a set of normative discursive practices about political changes in developmental states. Implications on a subpolitical approach to development communication are discussed.

Bionote

Ying Li's research mainly focuses on strategic public communication to promote social and cultural change. She is interested in grassroots and participatory media and communication practices developed for the purpose of civic engagement, community organizing, cultural renovation, and networked advocacy beyond real and imagined boundaries. She approaches this line of inquiry through blending theoretical frameworks like public relations, participatory approach to development communication, globalization theories, as well as critical approaches to media studies and media technologies. Her recent research projects include investigating public diplomacy efforts by Chinese networked activists overseas in 2008, cultural re-branding of Macau as a tourist destination, and research and design of public communication campaigns on the light rail project in Macau.

Justine Lloyd

Abstract

Listening acts

My research on Sydney as a globalising city seeks to understand how global capital flows produce underdevelopment, while at the same time new media technologies contribute to spatial restructuring in 'world cities' and disrupt the relationship between urban centres, regions and peripheries. This paper looks at tactical media interventions as intersubjective 'acts of citizenship' as defined by Isin and Neilsen. I draw on fieldwork in western Sydney to investigate the symbolic and social performances of mediated citizenship within a defined locality to argue that in themselves such acts are primary to understanding the power relationships of contemporary social life. However, I also want to interrogate the effectiveness of such interventions along the following lines of inquiry: to what extent their disruption of dominant discourses from a position outside powerful media and social institutions need constant and ritual repetition to perform alternative imaginaries of citizenship? Precisely how does ongoing localisation within the global establish a horizontal everyday consumer-production that resists hierarchical relations to offer citizen-consumers as the privileged category? Important distinctions can be made between sites of interventions and impact across community media which are in need of urgent attention by scholars and practitioners alike. I suggest that these cases are critical to understanding how community media can be understood in an age of proliferating technologies, but a narrowing of cultural forms in which collective claims can be negotiated and listened to.

Bionote

Justine Lloyd is a lecturer in Sociology at Macquarie University, Sydney. She has published in the areas of feminist cultural history and media studies, including the co-authored book with Lesley Johnson, *Sentenced to Everyday Life: Feminism and the housewife* (Berg, 2004). She is on the editorial board of the journal *Space and Culture* and was a member of the ARC Cultural Research Network 2007-2009. She has been a visiting fellow at the Department of Sociology, University of Lancaster, UK, and will be a visiting scholar at the Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany in 2010.

Alexandre Macmillan

Abstract

Communication and culture in Montesquieu's typology of government

The intersections between communication and politics should not be limited to considerations on new technologies and the emergence in the public sphere of new actors or new types of politically relevant action. In order to assert the theoretical legitimacy of communication studies to address political questions it seems important to re-appropriate some of the main traditions in political philosophy from a communications perspective. This re-appropriation could help rethink the ontology of communications, and its relation to politics. The works of Montesquieu have already been considered from a wide variety of perspectives (law, politics, sociology, literature...). It however appears that Montesquieu's work and, in particular, the *Spirit of Laws*, has been generally ignored by communication scholars. This omission occults an interesting way to think about the role of culture in the constitution of a political body – and by extension about the ways in which communication and politics can be considered as coextensive to the realm of government.

The primacy of culture over forms of government is one of the main arguments of the *Spirit of Laws*. Culture, for Montesquieu, consists of forms of association and also involves the general system of practices and beliefs. This understanding of culture could

consist in a point of entry for a political consideration of communication. Communication cannot be reduced to mediation and representation in the political space, but becomes a radically productive political process. This presentation will develop a “communications” reading of Montesquieu’s account of culture and politics in the *Spirit of Laws*. By doing so, it will suggest new ways to approach the intersections between communication and politics. Finally, this interrelation of communication, culture and politics could suggest new ways to account for a republican and democratic government in the context of a liberal economy.

Bionote

I have completed an M.A. in Political Science at Simon Fraser University on Media and International Relations Theory. I then completed a Ph.D. in communications in the joint program at Université de Montréal under the supervision of Brian Massumi. My dissertation considered the production of otherness in the French-speaking world between the 16th and 19th centuries. I analyzed the ways in which different typologies of language-use constructed the figure of Japan during that period. My postdoctoral research consists of an analysis of Montesquieu’s *Spirit of Laws*, and more particularly the discursive function taken by Japan in Montesquieu’s political typology and general discussion on despotism. Montesquieu’s poetic and symbolic account of Japan suggests that his political typology cannot be simply reduced to an epistemic attempt to reproduce political reality through his discourse, but is rather a productive process, which is inseparable from a moral and critical endeavor. I have published articles on mediation and language in the works of Roland Barthes, and on discourse, power and social interaction in the works of Michel Foucault. Aside from my current work on Barthes, Montesquieu and otherness, I am currently rewriting and expanding my dissertation for publication.

Tim Markham

Abstract

Giving Voice as De-Authorization: Recognition, Misrecognition and Audience Participation

This paper draws on a discourse analysis of comments posted on the website Gawker.com to explore the distinct aspects of recognition in online self-presentation. It begins from Axel Honneth’s model of recognition, emphasizing (after Nancy Fraser) the importance of expanding formal recognition of citizenship to incorporate activity, autonomy and competence. However, mutual recognition of cultural competence is predicated on a symbolic economy whose operational logics – extant symbolic forms of authority and the cultures of practice through which these are appropriated – are misrecognized as non-economic. In fact, and in line with Alasdair MacIntyre, the analysis reveals a symbolic economy not of authority but of authenticity, predominantly in an affective, individualistic form.

The paper argues in political phenomenological terms that one function of this symbolic economy is to establish as given and unproblematic hierarchical structures of authorization. While political theorists tend to pathologize disconnection from public discourse, the *illusio* which sustains a collective interest in engaging in mediated practices of subjectification can be seen as what Bourdieu would term the institution of symbolic violence. ‘Giving voice’ can then be interpreted as a form of de-authorization, the rationalization of an absence of delegation. What is misrecognized as expressive of an authentic self, particularly in affective terms, is instead the expression of position that precedes and exceeds the substance of what is said. The paper concludes with a corrective to the overstatement of mechanistic market logic which characterizes some

work on misrecognition, using as an example from the discourse analysis performative alienation, whose reduction to symbolic capital neglects the fluidity and haphazardness which underpins its embedding in the active pre-reflexive apprehension of cultural context.

Bionote

Tim Markham is a political sociologist whose recent work has focussed on issues of authority and authenticity in professional journalism and non-professional new media production. His background is in political theory, focussing in particular on the political phenomenology of Pierre Bourdieu. This forms the basis of empirical research into the practical mastery of naturalized, embodied authority in war reporting, which is the subject of a book to be published by Manchester University Press later in 2010. The same theoretical model has been used to investigate both how aspects of digital media practices are experienced as given, and how status in citizen journalism is related to the mastery of perceived amateurism. Ongoing work looks at the intellectual history of recognition and misrecognition, and how we can rethink Bourdieu's linkage of the taken-for-granted aspects of cultural practices and symbolic economy. Tim previously worked on the ESRC/AHRC research project *Media Consumption and the Future of Public Connection* at the London School of Economics, and is co-author with Nick Couldry and Sonia Livingstone of *Media Consumption and Public Engagement: Beyond the Presumption of Attention* (Palgrave Macmillan). He is Lecturer in Journalism and Media at Birkbeck, University of London.

Penny O'Donnell

Abstract

Journalism and the capacity to listen

While journalistic resistance to press reform — the habit of turning a 'deaf ear' to critics — is a well-rehearsed theme in cultural research, recent efforts in political theory and journalism studies to foster critical conversations about press performance can be seen to open up debate about the possibilities for meaningful change in mainstream multicultural journalism. Concepts of access, dialogue and deliberation are now central to journalism criticism as scholars seek ways of making journalism more publicly accountable or, perhaps more specifically, of persuading journalists to talk to their critics, including the marginalised communities they report about but rarely interact with. In addition, the emergence of alternative Internet-based news providers has increased the circulation of ideas about content co-creation, online interactivity and media innovation for social justice, raising public expectations about the flexibility of journalistic practices in relation to the reporting of social and cultural inequalities, and also the market power of news users who know no masthead loyalty and want more culturally diverse news.

This paper suggests that what we might call 'rising social aspirations' for journalism need to be extended and supported by development of a framework or theory of journalism criticism. James Carey's (1974) seminal argument that criticism and democracy are 'indissolubly connected' has stimulated extensive work on discursive models of press criticism. Wendy Wyatt (2007) offers a compelling recent example that draws on the theory of communicative action in developing suggested procedures, venues and agendas of criticism aimed at democratic engagement between journalists, critics and the public. Where Wyatt acknowledges the need for journalists 'to talk less and listen more' (Anderson, Dardenne & Killenberg 1996), Kate Lacey's (2009) work on democracy and 'listening publics' more fully addresses this theme by posing listening as

'inescapably political', that is, as a neglected critical communicative practice that should be seen as intrinsic to the normative ideal of freedom of expression.

The paper will argue attention to journalism criticism provides a means for better understanding the capacity to listen in journalism and, by extension, the possibilities for press reform based on achieving a more open hearing for press critics and their recommendations for improving multicultural reporting.

Bionote

Penny O'Donnell is Senior Lecturer in International Media and Journalism at the University of Sydney. Her research focuses on change in journalism, including newspaper futures, the history of journalism research and education, multicultural journalism, and journalism and criticism. She has recently edited two special issues on journalism and media history (*Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, forthcoming September 2010 and *Australian Journalism Review*, June 2010), and a special issue of *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* (with Justine Lloyd and Tanja Dreher) on 'Listening – new ways of engaging with media and culture' (2009).

Penny co-convenes The Listening Project with Tanja Dreher (UTS), Justine Lloyd (Macquarie), and Cate Thill (Notre Dame). She is currently writing a monograph on journalism, listening and criticism.

Zizi Papacharissi

Abstract

A Private Sphere: Democracy in a Digital Age

Online technologies remediate the civic landscape, by converging technologies, spaces and practices and rearranging our understanding of public and private. In doing so, they afford political uses removed from citizen models of the past and suggest newer political habits that are emerging. This developing civic vernacular reflects a citizen reified not in public, but in private. The proposed essay suggests that most civic actions in contemporary democracies emanate from the locus of a private sphere, as opposed to a public sphere. This private sphere presents the focal point of all civic activity that develops, whether it remains within private confines or whether it is broadcast to publicly positioned audiences and entities. Privately contained activities with a public scope, like online news reading, lurking in on political conversation, or following opinion leaders' blogs or tweets take place within the locus of the private sphere. Publicly oriented activities, like posting a blog, sharing a political opinion, voting on or signing a petition to support a cause, or uploading exclusive news content on YouTube, are also increasingly enabled within the locus of a digitally equipped private sphere. Thus, in contemporary democracies, it is frequently necessary for the individual to return to the private realm in order to practice these newer civic habits with greater autonomy, flexibility, and potential for expression. Via the affordances of technological environments, individuals fraternize from the privacy of their own spheres, practicing a form of networked yet *privée* sociality that is formulated within a private social sphere.

Five new civic habits are examined in support of the proposed Private Sphere model, and include: a) The networked self and the culture of remote connectivity and social network sites, b) A New Narcissism: Blogging, c) The Rebirth of Satire and Subversion: YouTube, d) Social Media News Aggregators and the Plurality of Collaborative Filtering, and e) The Agonistic Pluralism of Online Activism. These five habits are explicated through the use of empirical data and analysis to understand how a digitally enabled citizen acts politically from a private sphere of reflection, expression, and behavior. Alone, but not lonely or isolated, the digitally enabled citizen connects autonomously and civically from a political sphere that is founded on the tension

between public and private. Primarily still monitorial in orientation, the citizen is able to become an agonist of democracy, if needed, but in an atomized mode.

Bionote

Zizi Papacharissi (PhD University of Texas at Austin 2000) is Professor and Head of the Communication Department at the University of Illinois-Chicago. Her work focuses on the social and political consequences of online media. Her book, *A Private Sphere: Democracy in a Digital Age* (Polity Press, 2010), discusses how online media redefine our understanding of public and private in late-modern democracies. She is also presently completing an edited volume on online social networks, titled the *Networked Self: Identity, Community, and Culture on Social Network Sites* (Routledge, 2010). She is author of three books, and over 30 journal articles, book chapters or reviews.

Chris Russill and Chad Lavin

Abstract

The Epidemic/Epidemiological Imaginary and Neo-Liberal Politics

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in discourse dealing with disease, infection, and catastrophic epidemic in fictional, historical, and contemporary terms, which suggests a pervasive anxiety about communicable diseases. Political discourse has also been marked by the broad re-conceptualization of long-standing social and political problems in terms of infection, contagion, and epidemic mechanisms. Obesity, violence, happiness, terrorist recruiting, global finance, voting behavior, democracy in the Middle East, and media influence have all been re-described and studied as contagious and infectious processes. We build on cultural studies and communication research to illuminate the contemporary "epidemic imaginary" (Erni, 2006), or "epidemiological imaginary" (Russill, 2008), in order to demonstrate its pervasiveness, and to discuss its political implications. First, we examine how the series of images and metaphors involved in this imaginary can be bent to the requirements of security states and global information industries in times of spatial disruption. We discuss this point through reference to the politics of "viral sovereignty," Google's influenza tracking initiative, and the individualist term in environmental politics. Second, we describe how the recoding of problems and cultural processes as infectious and contagious is often intended to render suspect or ineffective the democratic norms of deliberation and dialogue. A range of contemporary political communication campaigns engage people as objects of management, and as susceptible to contagious influence through viral media, not as subjects of democratic dialogue or participation. Third, we examine alternative and progressive expressions of this epidemic imaginary, as suggested by Erni's (2006) work. We emphasize the possibilities found in imagining political problems through a lens of spatial dynamics, rather than individual actions, and investigate how to evade, challenge, and transcend neo-liberal appropriations of this imaginary.

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- Chris Russill, "Tipping Point Forewarnings of Climate Change: Some Implications of An Emerging Trend," *Environmental Communication* 2.2 (2008).

Bionote

Chris Russill is an Assistant Professor in the School of Journalism and Communication at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. I have taught previously at University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, at Penn State, and at University of Otago, New Zealand.

My research interests include communication theory, climate change, weather media, environmental and earth-observing media, and intellectual history (primarily continental philosophy and pragmatism, but also ideas of social and communicative contagion).

My current research is concerned with many aspects of global environmental communication, its earth observing media infrastructure, and its developing information, climatic, weather, and ecosystem industries. My most recent work examines the emergence of ideas of “tipping points” in the climate discourse. My interest in these topics includes the way climate change communication, as a general concern, has become an object of disciplinary appropriation by experts seeking to intervene into a wide range of cultural practices. I have also studied contemporary environmental media, including Weather Channel, The Weather Network, Whale Wars, the 350 campaign, James Hansen’s warnings of climate danger, and Climate Central, an experiment with climate change TV, found @ <http://flowtv.org/?author=332>

Frances Shaw

Abstract

(Dis)locating feminisms: political blogging as crisis response

The Australian feminist blogging community is engaged in discursive politics in Australia, drawing upon existing feminist discourses but also framing new discourses in response to media events. This paper provides an exploration of online social movements, and explores political blogging in reference to agonistic democracy or new discourse theory.

The paper looks at social movements from a poststructuralist and feminist perspective. In particular it draws on understandings of political subjectivity and agency from both of these viewpoints, drawing them together. Some feminist writers have been critical of poststructuralist perspectives that minimise possibilities for political agency and problematise the subject, however both feminist and new discourse theory provide ways to understand political subjectivity that recognise the constructed and contingent nature of identity and discourse.

The concepts of *dislocation* (Ernesto Laclau), and *rupture* (Jacques Ranciere) are discussed in relation to discursive politics. Silencing and invisibilisation are key problems for contemporary feminisms. I argue that there is a link between silencing and invisibilisation, and dislocation, crisis, and rupture. In both concepts, subjectivity is central. Rupture and dislocation provide points of subjectivisation and political agency. Feminist political theory can also contribute to an understanding of subjectivity in which there is a space for political agency and capacity to affect counterhegemonic change. The paper also draws on theories of affect and politics of listening to provide an understanding of political action that places emotional investment and embodied political practices centrally. A politics of listening provides a model for blogging in which blogs are not understood simply as allowing for new political *voices* but also as ways that individuals can respond to discursive dissonance or dislocation. Practices of blogging can provide ways for people to respond to hegemonic dislocations and ruptures, enabling new ways of thinking and living politics.

Bionote

Frances Shaw is a doctoral candidate at the University of New South Wales in Politics and International Relations. Her main research interests surround the relationship between cultural production and politics, and as such her research is informed by the intersections of cultural and political theory. She has responsibility for the “discursive legacy” component of the Mapping the Australian Women’s Movement ARC project.

This research focuses on the political significance of feminist discourse in Australian blog networks. Some of the main themes of inquiry for the project include the application of social movement theory to online discursive activism, and the use of agonistic democracy and new discourse theory in the study of online political communities. She is currently exploring new discourse theory, feminist political theory, and theories of affect and listening to help make sense of the discursive political activism that takes place in the Australian feminist blogosphere. This research project brings together concepts of (not) being heard, listening, consonance, assonance and dissonance, and asks how these metaphors relate to political theory, in particular the concepts of crisis, rupture, and dislocation as featured in the work of new discourse theorists like Laclau, Mouffe, and Ranciere.

Matt Stahl

Abstract

Denaturalizing Employment and the Project of Democratization: Creative Work in the Cultural Industries as an Illuminating Case

The employment contract, Carole Pateman writes, is not an exchange of properties; “[a] worker cannot send along capacities or services by themselves to an employer,” as if they were alienable bits of property. Because the contract “always generates political right in the form of relations of domination and subordination,” the broad political project of democratization will remain incomplete until it encompasses relations between employers and employees.

These arguments are often overpowered by centuries of sedimented liberal common sense regarding the meaning of freedom, the nature of contracts, the “privacy” of economic relations, and so on. However, public struggles over the work and property relations of creative workers in the cultural industries – of particular concern to communication researchers – render more widely legible the deep-seated tensions between democracy and market society perceived in democratic theory. When U.S. record companies, for example, invoke their legal rights as employers to control contracted recording artist labor and appropriate its products, artists, accustomed to significant degrees of autonomy and robust property claims, fight back in ways that throw the legitimacy of employers’ legal powers into doubt. This research focuses on legislative struggles between recording artists and the Recording Industry Association of America over the alienability of certain rights in labor law at the state level, and in copyright law at the federal level. Political-theoretical analyses of employment not only help explain these struggles, they are indispensable in sensitizing communication scholars to the capacity of these marginal “limiting cases” to illuminate and denaturalize consensual “private” subordination. Such analyses help legitimize the democratization of realms normally seen as “economic” but not “political.” At the same time these limiting cases may offer political theorists a world of compelling empirical material.

Bionote

Matt Stahl is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Information and Media Studies at the University of Western Ontario. His published work concerns the social relations of popular cultural production and their representation in film and television, and has appeared in *Popular Music*, the *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, and *Labor: Studies in the Working Class History of the Americas*, as well as in several edited collections. He is currently working on a book on power, labor, and property in the production of U.S. popular music.

Jo Taachi

Abstract

Voice, development, and listening

This paper revisits research data from a research project called Finding a Voice (FaV), where we experimented with participatory content creation activities across 15 sites in Asia (India, Indonesia, Nepal and Sri Lanka - see <http://findingavoice.org>). The focus was on how new digital and traditional technologies can be used to promote participation and voice (especially amongst marginalized groups). In development discourse, participation is considered to be a cornerstone of democracy, and of international development - a building block of democratic reform and progress. Issues that can be encompassed by the concept of 'voice' can be understood as central to this notion of participation, and thus of democracy. But the history of 'participation' as a trope in mainstream development paints a gloomy picture in which current concerns about participation and empowerment, democratic governance, and rights-based approaches to development are simply re-castings of earlier ideas of participation, all of which lack close attention to the underlying causes and power effects of poverty and inequality (Cornwall 2006:78). The ideal of 'participation' needs to be closely scrutinised to understand whether it can ever be used to enable the poor to participate meaningfully in the decisions that affect them.

For FaV we defined 'voice' broadly as inclusion and participation in social, political and economic processes, meaning making, autonomy and expression. We worked with a notion of voice as a right to communication and participation in processes that affect ones life. In this paper I consider our research data in terms not just of 'voice', but of 'listening'; the ways in which practices of voice are articulated into wider practices of social and/or political action. I question the usefulness of working towards 'participation' and 'voice' if due concern is not given to the articulation through listening of social change. Debate and dialogue can clearly be seen to have happened in many of our FaV research examples, but how is this translated into action, and by whom? Who is actually listening?

Bionote

Jo Tacchi is a Centre Fellow in the Australian Research Council's Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation at the Queensland University of Technology, Australia. She is joint Leader of the Asian Creative Transformations group within the centre, leading research into the everyday uses of new technologies. Trained as an anthropologist, Jo's research is mostly concerned with media, communications and development. She also has a long standing interest in media and affect, and the role of radio and new audio technologies in domestic spaces. Jo has developed methodologies that combine ethnographic principles with action research cycles (ear.findingavoice.org), and is the co-author of *Action Research and New Media* published in 2009 by Hampton Press. Her current work in Asia explores issues of voice and participation in relation to information and communication technologies (ICT), media and development.

Catherine Thill

Abstract

Empirical approaches to listening

Research into listening productively builds on what has been identified as the third generation of audience or reception studies (Alasuutari, 1999). By foregrounding the diversity of listening positions and practices, it challenges the idea of audiences as discrete social phenomena. A listening methodology, then, seeks to analyse practices of mediated listening from the perspectives of actors who occupy multiple listening positions within 'circuit of culture'. For example, as audiences that listen to media representations and, at the same time, practitioners who listen to user groups. Rather than focus on moments of transition and reception, it traces everyday practices of attention. But listening also goes beyond a third generation audiences studies concern with media reception in ordinary life to theorise listening as a significant mode of democratic engagement that is mediated in multiple and complex ways.

This paper brings together recent research in audience studies with work on the politics of listening. I argue that a focus on listening shifts the empirical site of analysis from marginalised groups (to speak up or speak back) to the institutions, norms and practices that structure whose point of view can be heard in the public sphere.

Bionote

Cate Thill is Lecturer in Sociology and Associate Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Notre Dame Australia. Cate was the project officer for The Listening Project in 2008 and then joined Justine Lloyd (Macquarie), Tanja Dreher (UTS) and Penny O'Donnell (USyd) as co-convenor since 2009.

With Professor Gerard Goggin (UNSW) and Rosemary Kayess (UNSW), Cate is completing an edited collection on disability, democracy, media and listening.

Cate is also working on the Methodologies to 'Capture' Listening project with Tanja Dreher (UTS) and Kate Crawford (UNSW). This project explores the tension between the use of listening as metaphor and an aural capacity, the distinction between audience studies and listening research as well as the relationship between the outcome of recognition and the intersubjective practice of listening.

Cate has most recently published an article 'Courageous listening, responsibility for the other and the Northern Territory Intervention' in a special issue on 'Listening – new ways of engaging with media and culture' edited by Penny O'Donnell, Justine Lloyd and Tanja Dreher (Continuum: Journal of media & cultural studies, 2009).

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