E-Seminar 40
**Loose Ends: Lines, Media and Social Change**
by

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Discussant

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19 June - 3 July 2012

**Abstract**
In this paper, I provide a sympathetic critique of certain aspects of the work of a leading anthropologist, Tim Ingold. My aim is to pull on what I see as some of its loose ends, and, in doing so, to thread together a productive argument about lines, media and social change. I will identify three closely related things in his recent writings that I find interesting and helpful for my purposes. First, I point to a crucial question that he poses about meaning in the absence of symbolic representation, suggesting that it would be helpful to ask precisely this question in media studies. Secondly, I am interested in his insistence on the primacy of movement, and in his relating of matters of dwelling or habitation to matters of movement. Thirdly, I find Ingold's concept of inhabitant knowledge to be valuable for an understanding of media uses, as well as for an understanding of day-to-day practices and experiences more generally. I will also identify a couple of things in Ingold's recent writings which frustrate me, and which present an obstacle to the incorporation of his ideas into media studies. My first criticism has to do with the lack of any serious consideration of contemporary media of communication in his work on life lived along lines. The most likely explanation for that absence is his implicit understanding of long-term social change, and I will argue that Ingold offers an overly pessimistic view of what he calls modern metropolitan societies. He tends to associate modernity predominantly with transport rather than wayfaring, and with upwardly integrated rather than alongly integrated or storied knowledge.

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**Jens Kjaerulff** is a Social Anthropologist (PhD, Aarhus University, Denmark). His research has focused on change in contexts of economic practice. His book 'Internet and Change' (Intervention Press 2010) is based on fieldwork among people working via the internet from their homes in rural Denmark. Jens has held faculty positions in anthropology at University of Victoria and Simon Fraser University (both Canada), and at University of Manchester in (UK). He is presently preparing an edited volume on 'Flexible Capitalism'.

Stephen Lyon          s.m.lyon@durham.ac.uk          Tue Jun 19 00:15:25 PDT 2012

Dear All,

Welcome to the 40th working paper of the EASA Media Anthropology Network: "Loose ends: lines, media and social change" by Shaun Moores http://www.media-anthropology.net/index.php/e-seminars

To start things off, here are the initial comments from our discussant Jens Kjaerulff. We will now wait for Shaun's initial response and then we can open up the discussion to everyone.

Dear Shaun, and seminar audience

I have been asked to act as discussant in this seminar, and I wish to thank the network organizers for the opportunity, and Shaun for delivering this highly stimulating paper on a very timely topic. By way of introduction I should say that I am an anthropologist, having worked (as far as media goes) with questions of change related to the internet, particularly in contexts of economic practice.

Shaun invites us to consider some ways in which Tim Ingold's work may illuminate media engagements in terms apart from the 'symbolic representation' approach that more conventionally, in different guises, takes centre stage in media related studies. It is from this perspective that Shaun develops some of Ingold's analytical tropes as they may apply to studies involving media. At the same time Shaun takes issue with some aspects of Ingold's work, notably his lack of sustained attention to contemporary media, and his pessimistic outlook regarding the contemporary straight-ness of lines, as it were.

When I read the paper, I became a little worried that I might not be able to find much to raise for discussion, as I share several aspects of Shaun's orientation, in particular the approach to media as only part of wider living, and the phenomenological inspiration (especially readable phenomenology that is, and in that regard I also enjoy Ingold's writing). But for the present purpose I suppose my job is to raise points for discussion, so I will leave agreements aside, at least in this posting.

One thing that strikes me, especially given the paper's stated aim of 'understanding media and their uses within wider circumstances of everyday living and social change', is the lack of a more sustained engagement with a specific empirical context. One way the problem with this is brought out, is the way Ingold's dwelling/movement perspective is exemplified. The examples Shaun gives us are indeed closely focused just on media (watching Australian television, narrative as movement). I miss a wider context of 'everyday living and social change', in terms of which to situate the significance of media. Early in the paper, Shaun mentions a recent study he has done on trans-European migrants and their media uses. I am of course aware of the constraints of space in a paper, but in the course of this seminar then, I would like to hear more about (e.g.) this study, as it may variously relate to and illuminate the paper. As just one example that springs to mind, for such migrants 'movement' surely is more than a trope? How might their literal movement be related to the trope of movement in the context of their media engagements?

Another thing I noticed, given that 'Social Change' is in the paper's title, is the lack of sustained attention to matters of social change in the paper, except in terms of the critique of Ingold's pessimistic view of ostensible contemporary 'straight' linearity, which is caste in rather generalized terms. I think Shaun's critique here is important, since some version of the view he critiques has become axiomatic in an enormous range of literature variously dealing with 'change'. But I wonder then, how Ingold's writings may help us to approach change any differently. Again, some empirical examples of substantial social change, where media in some way are at issue, might be a helpful line along which discussion could be pursued through the seminar.

The last point I want to raise, at least for now, is whether some of Ingold's reflections 'along lines' not covered by Shaun, might be useful in approaching media and social change, and worth taking up over the seminar. As an example, without having thought carefully about this, the chapter on 'Traces, Threads and Surfaces' (Ingold 2007: 39-71, see full reference in Shaun's paper), strikes me as an interesting resource in this regard. It offers a 'taxonomy of lines', and centers on the ways different kinds of lines make up different kinds of fabrics, and on their transforming relations. I think it might be interesting to probe this dimension to Ingold's work a little further than Shaun managed to do it within the confines of the paper. Incidentally, this might also be a way to open up for a discussion of how Ingold's tropes relate to other works, where tropes bearing affinity to Ingold's have been explored: e.g. landscapes, media-scapes, networks, meshworks, rhizomes, traces, etc. This is not to open the floor for a random listing of sexy tropes, or to say that the tropes Shaun did consider may not work, but rather to open for a collective and focused exploration of 'how so' in contexts of media and social change.

I will leave it at that – I look much forward to a rewarding debate.

Jens


| **LYON S.M.** | s.m.lyon@durham.ac.uk | Tue Jun 19 08:42:02 PDT 2012 |
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**Shaun Moores' reply:**

I'm grateful to Jens Kjaerulff for agreeing to act as the discussant, and for managing to read and respond to my paper so soon after it was delivered to him. I'll do my best to reply here to Jens's helpful comments. I'm also grateful to John Postill for inviting me to contribute a paper to this EASA Media Anthropology Network e-seminar series. I very much welcome opportunities to speak with those outside my field (media studies), in this case with anthropologists. In fact, John's initial invitation arrived just as I was preparing to give an earlier paper, which included some discussion of Tim Ingold's work, at the annual conference of the Association of American Geographers, so I saw the invitation as my chance to develop that discussion with those in Ingold's own discipline.

It's good of Jens to begin by identifying the broad areas of agreement between us. I take him to share my commitment to what David Morley has called 'non-media-centric media studies', and I also take him to be sympathetic to my interest in non-representational or more-than-representational media studies. Perhaps when I'm addressing media anthropologists on these matters, I'm preaching at least partly to the converted? At any rate, I suspect that the problem of media-centrism is far more common in my own field, along with the problematic assumption that it's only through representation that the world can be made to mean. For me, Ingold's recent writings (as well as certain other writings in geography, philosophy and social theory) have been important in drawing attention to the ways in which meaning emerges out of a practical engagement with lived-in environments. In particular, Ingold's work on life lived along lines draws attention to the ways in which dwelling is bound up with movement. My paper is concerned to explore the possibility of developing what I'd like to call a 'habitation/orientation paradigm' for the study of media in everyday living.

Let me come now to one of Jens's main critical points, which is about 'the lack of ... sustained engagement with a specific empirical context' in my paper. On this occasion, it's certainly true that my writing is more of a theoretical-engagement piece, although I hope that I've also managed to indicate (in the paper's quite lengthy introductory section) how a good deal of my earlier work has been concerned precisely with specific empirical contexts. Indeed, Jens kindly asks me to say a little more about the recent empirical research project that I was involved in with Monika Metykova, which was an investigation of the 'environmental experiences' of some trans-European migrants, and I'm pleased to be able to do that now. The key point I want to stress here is that, from the outset, this

project didn't centre media technologies or even media uses (significant as those uses were for the twenty young people who participated in the research). What we ended up centring instead were the migrants' varied place-making practices or mobilities in a situation of having moved across Europe, from a number of the new EU states, to live and work in Britain. Their mobilities included, in John Urry's terms, forms of 'imaginative', 'virtual' and 'mobile-communicative' travel, but Monika and I were very much interested in how these movements got tied in with 'corporeal' travel of various sorts (walking, running, cycling and travelling by bus, train or plane, for example) and with the physical movement of objects (such as foodstuffs, plants, postcards and a range of other things). In relation to all of this intertwined movement, we also ended up centring people's knowing how to get around, although at the time of that project I wasn't making use of Ingold's concept of 'inhabitant knowledge'.

Jens makes the point, too, that the examples of dwelling, movement and inhabitant knowledge offered in my paper (like the story of my initial experiences of watching television in Melbourne, having moved to the other side of the planet) are actually focused on media and their uses. This is a fair point (although that personal story of getting to know my way around the television channels and schedules in a new country was also, partly, about gradually coming to feel at home and comfortable on a borrowed sofa in a rented house). I suppose that I was just trying to show the potentially helpful applications of some of Ingold's concepts for looking at issues of embodied perception and habit in media use, by giving examples of television viewing, newspaper reading and internet use. However, I hope it's also clear from my paper that, say, knowing how to make one's way about on a keyboard or in familiar online settings is only part of a wider capacity for moving around everyday environments 'without first having to think how to do so' (as Nick Crossley puts it). What I was attempting to centre, then, was pre-cognitive familiarity with environments rather than simply media and their uses.

Jens has spotted that my attention to matters of social change in this paper is largely confined to a critical engagement with what I refer to as Ingold's 'overly pessimistic view' of modern metropolitan societies (and of course I have no trouble in accepting that there is much more to be said about matters of media and social change, although I should add that I do find some accounts of historical transformations to be too media-centred for my liking). I thank Jens for acknowledging that it's important to engage critically with Ingold's perspective on modernity, and I certainly agree with Jens that roughly this sort of perspective can be found elsewhere too. For example, I mention towards the end of my paper similarities with Marc Augé's thesis on the 'non-places' of 'supermodernity' (and I could also have cited older versions of that thesis, including Edward Relph's problematic arguments about the way in which technologically mediated mobilities necessarily lead to an increasing 'placelessness'). What I'm interested in doing, though, is in separating out what I regard as different elements of Ingold's work. On the one hand, then, I'm highly sympathetic to his ideas about meaning 'in the absence of symbolic representation', about 'the primacy of movement' and about inhabitant knowledge, but I want to insist that these insights don't have to come attached to his distinction between, say, wayfaring and transport.

As for Jens's interesting point about the potential relevance of Ingold's 'taxonomy of lines', I'd need to think more about this. For now, though, that's quite enough from me, and I look forward to hearing others' views. No doubt some will pull further on the 'loose ends' in my writing!

| LYON S.M. | s.m.lyon@durham.ac.uk | Tue Jun 19 08:46:23 PDT 2012 |
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Dear All,
Now that Jens and Shaun have had a chance to exchange some initial comments and responses, the discussion is now open to all.

I'm sure there's a lot in the paper, Jens' comments and Shaun's reply that we might want to pick up in the discussion.

Best,
Steve


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Dr Stephen M. Lyon
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| **Jens Kjaerulff** | [jk@socant.net](mailto:jk@socant.net) | Thu Jun 21 05:41:06 PDT 2012 |
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Sometimes these e-seminars take a little while to gain momentum.  At this time of the year, most list members with university affiliation should have finished their teaching, marking, bureaucratic commitments, and such, so let's hope it picks up over the weekend.
In the meantime, I would like to throw a few additional thoughts out there, picking up on the third point I raised in my initial comments.

One reason I think Shaun's Ingold-inspired 'habitation/orientation' approach to the study of media is interesting, has to do with the way the perspective opens for perspectives not developed by Ingold himself. Let me exemplify this by referring to two books.

The first is Kelty's "Two Bits" (Kelty 2008). Kelty discusses the internet's perceived affordances in the formation of 'publics', and as such it might, with a bit of imagination, be seen as a 'habitation/orientation' approach to media, concerned with how 'the public' indeed is inhabited. On the one hand, I could see Ingold's phenomenological orientation richly complement and expand on Kelty's take on the habitual ways which underlie Kelty's informants' outlooks and practices. On the other, What Ingold does not seem to engage much with, is the kinds of contestations over the configuration of public matters and platforms which Kelty so brilliantly brings out in this book and shows are at the heart of the internet's transformative potential, e.g. in terms of copyright and participation. Perhaps 'wayfaring' inherently entails a dimension of 'contestation' and transformation which, in the context of media, is more significant than Ingold would suggest, even though I don't see why Ingold's wayfaring approach could not be used to engage with this dimension. In the book I wrote about internet and change (Kjaerulff 2010), I intended the analytical trope of "knowledge" precisely to simultaneously engage these two dimensions (habitation and transformation, as it were).

The other book that springs to my mind, given Shaun's focus on 'movement', is Anna Tsing's 'Friction' (Tsing 2005). Tsing exploits the multiple senses of the English word 'to move', to explore how movement in the sense of directionality, action and common effort inherently entails an emotional/motivational dimension - people are 'moved', seek to move others, and collaborate while being differently moved. Again, this dimension to "movement" seems to complement Ingold's approach. It also opens up for a simultaneous examination of so-called representational and non-representational dimensions to media, and the significance of these dimensions' relatedness in contexts of social change.

These are just most brief examples, but a general merit of Ingold's work is the way it stimulates further imagination, which is why I thought the third point in my initial comments was worth raising.

References:

Kelty 2008: Two Bits (Duke U Press)
Kjaerulff 2010: Internet and Change (Intervention Press)
Tsing 2005: Friction (Princeton U Press)

**Mark Pedelty**        [pedeltmh@umn.edu](mailto:pedeltmh@umn.edu)        Thu Jun 21 11:17:00 PDT 2012

Dear Shaun,

I enjoyed reading your paper very much. It is not only insightful, but also clear and compelling. I have to confess that I have not yet read Ingold, but having just returned from several media-related conferences at which his name was mentioned, I see that his work has travelled very well across disciplines. Looking forward to reading his work, especially after reading your essay.

It seems that Elizabeth Bird's media work regarding audiences would nicely add to your analysis as well.

I have a simple question regarding your stated desire to center on "everyday living practices" in media studies. I think that makes your work very anthropological, but can it lead to a problematic stance when "scaling up"? Or, put in more positive terms, given the fact that we all see to want make broader claims based on our studies of everyday media practices, how can we do it in truthful way?

Context for the question: as ethnographers we almost invariably want to do make wider scale claims with our very particularistic, relatively microscale community work. Media studies almost demands it. One problem is that everyday lives are incredibly variable, and a individual or community focus at any one of almost infinite sites might tell us little to nothing about larger structures, especially if we simply assume that we and our informants have a great deal of agency (that is, after all, the modern/Western bias, right?). Granted, if studied in comparison with other ethnographies of media practices we might be able to achieve wider scale understandings, but even then there is the possibility that ethnographers are making an a priori fetish of individual and community agency and distinctiveness that occludes larger cultural, economic, infrastructural, political, and institutional (structural) commonalities and realities. It seems that a great deal of statistical, and thus broad data must also be considered for context when making wider scale claims in conjunction with the illustration and analysis of the individual and group focus?

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**Sarah Pink**        [S.Pink@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:S.Pink@lboro.ac.uk)        Thu Jun 21 12:09:44 PDT 2012

It is a very busy time of year right now, but Shaun's paper was a welcome read and first I would like to thank him for inviting us to consider his perspective. It was very nice to read something that I can largely agree with, so the following is more of a response to some points.

I am very sympathetic to Shaun's approach and I agree that we have much to learn from the work of Ingold in terms of the way his ideas can inspire us to understand media as part of everyday life. I also believe that if we want to understand media then an approach that moves away from media content and symbolism to situate media as part of a wider experiential environment is essential.  Linking up with Shaun's focus on movement, in relation to media I have also found Ingold's approach really interesting for considering questions that bring together an understand of movement with video and photographic practice, amongst other things (Pink 2011, 2012).

One thing that interests me is the relationship between practice theory and non-representational theory in the context of the study of media in everyday life. Shaun writes:

"I note that in Nick Couldry's newly published book (I consider him to be one of the sharpest commentators in my field, and he is also known to media anthropologists), there is a dismissal of Thrift's non-representational theory, for roughly the reasons set out here, as 'deeply unhelpful for studying media' (Couldry, 2012, p. 31). This is despite the fact that Couldry (2012, p. 43; and see Couldry, 2010) is arguing, quite rightly in my view, for a focus on matters of practice or on 'what people are doing in relation to media'."

In my own work I have drawn on Ingold's ideas to develop an approach that crosses applied and academic scholarship, which attends to environment/place, movement/practice and perception/the senses as a way to approach research questions through different but interdependent analytical prisms. I believe that approaching everyday life in this way enables us to evade some of the limitations of practice theory and balance its dominance in some fields of scholarship. While practice theory (as discussed by the contributors to Brauchler and Postill 2010, along with others including the work of Schatzki, Reckwitz and Warde) can in some ways be seen as being coherent with a NRT approach, it rather ironically creates its own dependence on representation. By this I mean that methodologically if you apply practice theory to ethnographic materials representations are central to your practice in that you cannot 'do' practice theory with ethnography unless you create representations (i.e. practices), attend to these as entities, and group ethnographic materials into their categories. By focusing on concepts of place, movement and perception we can instead (or as well) attend to the ways that the activities we engage in are experientially, incrementally and individually produced in relation to the complex contingencies of ecologies of place. Obviously as academics we constantly create representations so it would be ironic to believe that we can be 'really' non-representational. All of our analytical categories are representations. I do research 'practices' myself, but in a way that is reflexive about these issues. I firmly believe that we should be applying the same analytical and critical perspectives to our ethnographic 'practices' as we do to ethnographic 'findings'. Although of course you have to have done ethnography to be able to do this (I will come to that in a minute). As an aside I think that more attention needs to be paid to the tension between representations and the non-representational and it is in media studies or media anthropology that this issue becomes particularly salient.

My argument is that NRT and Ingold's ideas are as (if not more) helpful for understanding what people do with media, than is practice theory. I share Shaun's insistence on a non-media-centric approach to studying media and from experience I would argue that it is in fact very difficult to actually study media practices as everyday life practices in their own right. This is precisely why ethnography is important and one of the issues that anthropologists frequently bring into the debate. This is perhaps the case for any "practice", but I believe that it is markedly the case for media practices, partly because of the way that media tend to become appropriated into our everyday lives in complex ways.

Having read Jens' discussion I was not at all surprised to see that he would have liked some ethnographic examples: I would have too, one of my first thoughts was that while I found the discussion convincing I would have like to see how these ideas are played out in everyday experiences. Some things come to mind. For example, we can see how media can be part of bed-time routines in my work with Kerstin Leder-Mackley published in Sociological Research online, and I have some forthcoming work with Lisa Servon in which we discuss an example of how place is constituted through movement that is partially mediated. Not to mention the very interesting work of Edgar Gomez Cruz.

To end, a couple of thoughts about the relevance of this for media anthropology since there is also a way that this discussion needs to come back to anthropological debates. People who have read

Ingold's debate with David Howes in the Journal Social Anthropology 2011, which followed on from my own debate with Howes in 2010 should have a sense of this. In this debate, which is about the senses in anthropology, Ingold outlines with great clarity what it is that makes his approach to anthropology distinct to the cultural anthropology of Howes – in terms of the distinction between a non-representational approach and one that is precisely concerned with representations. Therefore, within media anthropology there is a further question relating to the theoretical trajectories of the discipline and how different scholars connect to and contest these different strands. Following other anthropological trajectories leads us to a very different form of engagement with media studies.

Sarah

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| **Mark Pedelty** | pedeltmh@umn.edu | Thu Jun 21 12:47:36 PDT 2012 |
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Hi Shaun,

A quick extension of my earlier question "everyday practices" and scale to the main topic of your essay: social change. Specifically, rereading your essay I don't see an explicit argument linking everyday practices, media structures, and mediated activism, although you seem to be working toward one? I am particularly interested in your view as a self-professed non-anthropological (media studies?) observer of anthropological writing. In general, what do you see as the most important links between media anthropology, social change, and activism? Or, conversely, what are the missing links?

Once again, I apologize for my ignorance of Ingold's work; it would appear that, like Geertz, Ingold's work is becoming a cipher for "anthropology," at least when speaking with environmental communication scholars outside the discipline. As an anthropologist working mainly outside the discipline, I therefore need to get up to speed! Thanks for getting me started.

Mark

| **Postill, John** | J.Postill@shu.ac.uk | Thu Jun 21 15:31:10 PDT 2012 |
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Like Jens and others, I have thoroughly enjoyed reading Shaun's paper but noticed that there isn't much in it about social change. So I'd like to ask Shaun about media and social change in connection to his own work as well as Ingold's work on lines and movement.

Lately I've been reviewing the media anthropology literature and it seems to me that so far we've done a lot more thinking about media and 'social changing' than media and social change. By this I mean that we tend to discuss *how things were changing* at the time of our fieldwork rather than how they actually *changed*, say, in the 1990s, or in 1939-1945, in any given country or locale.

In this we are no different from most other media and communication scholars who study contemporary social worlds: we write about media (practices) in the present continuous. This marries well, I think, with phenomenological approaches such as Ingold's in which human beings are perpetually in a state of 'becoming', forever work in progress. The trouble with this, I would suggest,

is that we end up with oddly ahistorical accounts that can tell us a great deal about social changing but less so about social change.

Shaun mentions at the outset his oral history research on the domestication of radio in NW England in the 1920s and 1930s. My question is: can an Ingoldian approach be applied to such historical periods - or indeed, to more recent times - without falling into accounts in which everything is always 'emerging' and no socio-technical processes ever run their course? What significant difference, if any, did radio make to people's lives after it had been domesticated for several years? In turn, how did the socio-economic upheavals of the inter-War period shape people's radio practices, e.g. post-1929?

I think these kinds of diachronic/historical questions should be asked not only by social historians of media, but also by ethnographers interested in media and social change (see also Postill 2009).

(Indeed, I'd be very interested to hear if anyone knows of any existing collaborative projects between media historians and media ethnographers.)

John

Reference

Postill, J. 2009. 'What is the point of media anthropology?' Social Anthropology 17(3), 334-337, 340-342.

| Shaun Moores | shaun.moores@sunderland.ac.uk | Fri Jun 22 03:55:12 PDT 2012 |
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I thank John, Sarah and Mark for reading my paper, and for entering into this e-seminar discussion at what Sarah rightly describes as 'a very busy time of year' for many of us (and thanks also to Jens for his further contribution to the discussion).

On the matter of busy-ness, I should explain that I was teaching on our research centre's MA programme yesterday evening until nearly 9 o'clock (I run a course in the summer term on media in everyday living). After two train rides and a walk, it was late when I got home and even later when I eventually managed to get off to sleep. So it's been a bit of a slow start for me this morning.

Still, I've now read through the various comments and the questions raised, and I'll do my best to respond to at least some of these things later on. I want to try to reflect carefully on the feedback that I'm getting, though, as there are some important issues here.

More soon!

Shaun.

| Lyon, S.M. | S.M.Lyon@durham.ac.uk | Sat Jun 23 02:49:48 PDT 2012 |
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**Shaun's replies:**

Here are my replies to at least some of the comments so far...

Sarah, I think it's important for me to begin by acknowledging that in your own research and writing you've been drawing for a while now on Ingold's work. With reference to his work, you've already said things about the significance of movement for investigations of media and their uses, and so it's

clear to me that I'm playing catch-up in terms of a critical engagement with Ingold. In this context, it's good to hear that you're broadly sympathetic to the paper I wrote for the e-seminar.

In your comments, you mention non-representational theory (NRT) a few times and, since I make a case in my paper for media studies that are non-representational as well as non-media-centric, perhaps it'd be helpful if I say a bit more now about my view of NRT.

I explain in the paper that it was in Nigel Thrift's work (more specifically, in an essay on what he calls 'an ecology of place') that I first came across references to Ingold, and it does seem to me that what Thrift attempts to do in geography is in some ways quite close to Ingold's anthropological project. For example, Thrift's concerns with practical knowing and the pre-cognitive are similar to Ingold's, although I have to say that I find Ingold a far more enjoyable read!

I want to insist that a founding feature of NRT is what Thrift calls his 'obsession ... with the sensuousness of practice', and, as Ben Anderson (who's part of a younger generation of NRT folk in geography today) has put it, NRT is an attempt to explore 'the taking-place of practices'. I haven't made reference directly in my paper to the work of Schatzki and others in 'practice theory', and I'm not entirely sure if I'm in danger (as you suggest) of conflating that work with NRT, but it's surely evident that Thrift does regard Bourdieu's theory of practice or de Certeau's work on 'the practice of everyday life' as part of the longer NRT tradition. Thrift also notes that a dwelling perspective involves an assertion of 'the primacy of practices'. Of course, it's fair to say that there's a lot more to NRT than this, and to be honest I've never been wholly won over by the discussions in and around NRT of 'affect', but one of the crucial things that I take from NRT (from Ingold's perspective on dwelling too) is that valuable insight into how meanings emerge out of practice (in Ingold's terms, out of practical engagement with lived-in environments).

I do agree with your suggestion that it's important to consider carefully how to approach representation after NRT, although I'm not sure that I'd necessarily pose this in terms of a tension.

As I try to explain in my paper, the NRT folk in geography are, as I understand it, not rejecting the study of representations but rather insisting that things like images, speech and writing have to be approached as 'in and of the world of embodied practice' (it seems to me that this strikes a chord with your own proposal, in Situating Everyday Life, that 'representations are part of everyday life'). As John Wylie has put it, representation is not 'anterior to' or 'determinative of' everyday practices, as the structuralists might once have said.

Coming from an academic field in which representation is so often (too often) centre stage, I've been wondering for a while now, since discovering writers like Thrift and Ingold, how best to reconceptualise people's engagements with what have usually been thought of in media studies as 'texts' of various sorts. For me, one possible way forward is to pursue (extend) Ingold's comments on the page of the book as 'an inhabited landscape' and on reading as wayfaring, so that media uses are more generally understood in terms of getting around and finding one's way about in environments, just as everyday experiences can be more widely understood in terms of dwelling and movement or habitation and orientation. In order to do that, of course, it's necessary to question Ingold's view of long-term social change (what I call his pessimistic view of modernity).

Finally Sarah, regarding the references to your recent research with Kerstin Leder-Mackley and with Lisa Servon, I must check those pieces out, because, as both you and Jens have said, my arguments could benefit from more ethnographic detail. Also, Jens, thanks for pointing me to other writings that you feel may be helpful in developing the 'habitation/orientation paradigm' that I mentioned in my response to your earlier comments.

Mark, one of the things in your comments stood out for me. You said that you'd been to several media-related conferences recently (presumably in the US) at which you heard Ingold's name. I find this interesting because, although I'm not a great conference-goer myself, I very rarely hear Ingold being mentioned in media-studies circles on this side of the Atlantic, and none of the immediate colleagues that I have in media studies, at the university where I work, are familiar with his work. You also asked about matters of social change (I'll come to social change shortly in my reply to John) and about what you call problems of 'scaling up'. Forgive me, but I don't have the time right now to get into a broader discussion of research methodology (qualitative/quantitative methods, etc.), although I would welcome some further discussion of a point that I made at the end of my paper, which has to do with the methodological challenges facing media studies/media anthropology in the exploration of a mix of bodily and technologically mediated mobilities in everyday living.

John, I'm interested in the distinction that you make between 'social changing' and 'social change', and I think you may be right that talk of 'becoming' might potentially lead to what you've called 'oddly a-historical accounts'. Having said that, Ingold does end up arguing in Lines that big things have changed (for example, that the line has become 'straight'). Anyhow, I get the sense that what you're wanting in media anthropology is for greater attention to be paid to particular instances of social change involving media, and I assume that this is the sort of thing that's going to be discussed further at the meeting in France next month.

I would say that I feel it's a complex issue (the media and social change one), and that the danger to be avoided is once again media-centrism. You asked me about that research I did many years ago on radio's incorporation into household settings and routines in the 1920s and 1930s. Well, I should say once more that this was a final-year undergraduate dissertation, and so it had its limitations! However, what I came to realise in doing that small-scale oral history study is that it's impossible to understand radio's significance in that period without also taking account of a range of things like the design of domestic interiors, the arrival of mains electricity, shifting patterns of work and leisure, and government policies on health and social welfare. What we'd need, then, are non-media-centric media histories that situate media uses within wider social processes.

Shaun

| Peter Hervik | peter.hervik@gmail.com | Wed Jun 27 06:51:14 PDT 2012 |
|---|---|---|

Dear List/Shaun

My exam was over yesterday and finally I can send a response to Shaun. The paper is very interesting not least from the perspective of media anthropology as a contact field, where some of the participating disciplines and interests position differ as to where and how to locate and understand "meaning." Unfortunately I am not so familiar with Tim Ingold's work, yet the issues and even words are familiar but derives from a totally different tradition.

In your writing about "thinking", "consciousness", "forethought", "knowledge" and "action with or "without" any of these, I miss the question: what do we know about how these phenomenon are organized? In particular, I thought most anthropologists and neighbors today would agree that cognitive, interpretive schemas and their more complex organizations into "cultural models", "figured worlds", "semantic densities" and even habitus (as cognitive and corporeal schemes), must be included in how they work. Schemas offer hypotheses, or meanings, about what goes on around them, most often out of awareness. People do not consciously deliberate about what to do most of the time. Schemas are the product of regularities in the real world and themselves the site of meaning construction re-imposed on the world. In Lakoff's terminology "interactional properties." According to such a focus we would have to look at regularities in popular understandings to have an opportunity

11

to understand how meanings are formed and work. Much of this focus on cultural schemas and similar has been dealt with substantially not least by Claudia Strauss, Naomi Quinn, Dorothy Holland and others, particularly in the 1990s, who build on a critically analysis of both Geertz and Bourdieu.

The short version of the question then is, do you see a role for cognitive schemas in absence of symbolic representation?

Best regards,

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| LYON S.M. | s.m.lyon@durham.ac.uk | Thu Jun 28 07:28:42 PDT 2012 |
|---|---|---|

**Shaun's reply:**

Thanks Peter, for taking the time to read my paper and for joining the conversation.

It's interesting for me, as someone from outside the discipline of anthropology, to find that at least some anthropologists are, in your words, 'not so familiar with Tim Ingold's work'. It's also interesting to hear your point (I hope I've understood it correctly) that Ingold's approach seems to draw on a 'different tradition' (that is, in relation to the tradition/s you're more familiar with). I hope that the paper I've written, although it is critical of Ingold in certain respects, might persuade you to take a closer look at some of his writings. Given your mentions of 'cognitive schemas' and 'cultural models', you might find it helpful to begin with Chapter 9 of Ingold's The Perception of the Environment, which is entitled 'Culture, Perception and Cognition' (and which is the first essay in the section of that book devoted to matters of dwelling). There, Ingold provides a critical overview of some past developments in social, cultural and cognitive anthropology (referring partly to the work of those academics you cite in your comments), and he explains his interest in the ecological psychology of Gibson and the phenomenological philosophy of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. Ingold would indeed regard writers such as Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty as coming out of a different tradition, in which there is an emphasis on being-in-the-world and on embodied perception.

Now, as a non-anthropologist, I can't claim to have the same understanding that anthropologists will have of those past developments (the ones Ingold is critical of in the essay that I refer to above). However, I can identify with his critique because there are at least some parallels with my own field of media studies, in which there has been a similar focus on, to borrow Ingold's words, 'a framework of symbolic meanings ... which gives shape to the raw material of experience and direction to human feeling and action' (in media studies, this began with debates about ideology and representation back in the 1970s). Like Ingold, I became interested in phenomenology precisely because it provides a way of going beyond that notion of meaning as something imposed on the world via systems of significant symbols, focusing instead on how 'it is through being inhabited ... that the world becomes ... meaningful ... for people' (that is, how meanings emerge from people's practical engagements with lived-in environments).

It's particularly interesting here to consider Bourdieu (you mentioned him in your own comments). Ingold writes of Bourdieu's concept of habitus that: 'Whereas cultural models are supposed to exist independently of, and prior to, their application in particular situations of use ... the habitus exists only as it is instantiated in the activity itself ... the habitus is not expressed in practice, it rather subsists in

12

it'. He adds that Bourdieu is concerned with a 'kind of practical mastery ... that we carry in our bodies'. One of the most insightful pieces of Bourdieu's that I've read comes from a book of his, Pascalian Meditations, and it's Chapter 5 of that book, which is entitled 'Bodily Knowledge'. What I find interesting there is that Bourdieu refers to Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty (note that Bourdieu's initial academic training was in the discipline of philosophy), although, as I try to explain in my paper, Bourdieu also wants to find a way 'to sociologize ... phenomenological analysis' by dealing with matters of social difference and power.

Shaun

| **Mark Pedelty** | pedeltmh@umn.edu | Thu Jun 28 08:36:14 PDT2012 |
|---|---|---|

Hi Shaun,

My apologies, I was not asking you to go into a discussion of qualitative vs. quantitative methods. Instead, I continue to seek articulations between the ethnography of everyday media practices and political action. There is somewhat of a sublimated tension in anthropological history around what and where we study on the community level and what we want to do in terms of informing political action and policy.

These questions may not be of interest to you, but my interpretation of your work has lead me to think that you are seeking the political and practical dimensions of research of everyday media practices. Frankly, I am not sure that there are any practical uses of such research without connecting ethnographic research, foci, and practices to critical investigation of larger scale institutions, structures, ideologies, as well, many of which are beyond the ethnographic purview. Please don't feel compelled to deal with this fairly intractable question, but what it boils down to for me is this:

What can the ethnography of everyday media practices do, if anything, to assist media-oriented movements acheive more just, equitable, and humane media systems?

What can ethnographers of everyday media practices do--methodologically, theoretically, or in terms of representation--to make their work more relevant to actual movements for positive social change?

Many post-structural theorists chose to sidestep these questions, but it seems that a new generation has swung the pendulum back a bit to engagement, thankfully. I believe Bruno Latour's recent critique of the critique was produced in a similar spirit, the fear that our academic "politics" are often irrelevant, at best, because they articulate with nothing outside of ourselves and, at worst, feed into the relativizing proclivities of the present (e.g., all that matters are individual consuming practices and every telling and interpretation or reality is equally accurate and valid; essentially, politics become irrelevant). I guess I am wondering if there is any danger that the extreme privileging of everyday media practices runs that same danger that Latour identified? Or, are there ways to place everyday media practices in meaningful contexts that achieve more critical structural, institutional, national, and global understandings? Do you feel Ingold provides an example of this? Are there other good examples?

Once again, no need to answer if that is not of interest.

Mark

| **LYON S.M.** | s.m.lyon@durham.ac.uk | Fri Jun 29 06:20:45 PDT 2012 |
|---|---|---|

Dear List,

See below Shaun's latest comments in response to some of the discussion. I just wanted to alert everyone to the fact that we're more than halfway through the e-seminar so it would be a perfect time for those who have been lurking in the background to offer their thoughts on either the paper or some of the discussion points that have been raised in the past 10 days. The e-seminar will close at the end of Tuesday of next week, so things posted today stand a good chance of actually getting meaningful replies since people will have a chance to think a bit about the answer before firing it off.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed so far. I think it's been really interesting and a very useful set of debates to mull over.

Thanks,
Steve
Chair of the E-Seminar

-----------------------------------------------------------------

**Shaun Moores' comments:**

Thanks Mark, for your further contribution to the e-seminar discussion. I think I see where you're coming from (although I don't know the piece of Latour's that you're referring to), and I do feel that the politics of all this is worth considering. Ingold's primary concerns, at least as I understand them, are not directly political ones, but I suppose there's a (problematic) politics of a sort in his pessimistic take on modern metropolitan societies. As I admitted openly in my paper, my sympathetic critique of his work is not primarily concerned with political issues either, partly because there's already a lot to explain about his concepts of dwelling, movement, wayfaring, inhabitant knowledge and so on (and about what I see as the difficulties with his view of modernity). With reference to Bourdieu's social theory of practice, both in my paper and in my response to Peter, I've touched on issues of social difference and power, and I've also hinted at how Bourdieu encourages us to move beyond what he calls at one point an 'unreconstructed phenomenology'. He wants to 'sociologise' phenomenological analysis. At the same time, though, I feel it's important to guard against what Bourdieu calls 'social physics', in which people's everyday actions and interactions are thought to be determined straightforwardly by external social and symbolic structures.

In my new book, Media, Place and Mobility, I discuss Bourdieu's sociologising of phenomenology and I also discuss other academic work that is compatible in some ways with his approach (for example, Simon Charlesworth's phenomenological ethnography of working-class experience in a northern English town called Rotherham, and Iris Marion Young's classic philosophical essay on 'throwing like a girl', in which she critically appropriates Merleau-Ponty's work on the body for the political project of feminism). These authors are dealing with a 'body politics' of a sort that I feel is important, even if the political issues they're raising are rather different to those being raised by, say, more conventional 'political economy' approaches in my own field of media studies. Indeed, in my new book I also discuss at length the work of geographers (the best known of these is probably Doreen Massey) who've developed a politics of place and mobility, which, in my view, could be used to extend Ingold's themes of dwelling and lines.

Anyhow, what I'm trying to get at here is the way in which my own writing (and empirical research, for example on the experiences of young eastern European migrants living in the UK) has been concerned with political matters to some extent. Political matters are maybe not as central for me as you'd like them to be, but I want to insist that I haven't forgotten about them and I want to insist, too, that ethnographic work on day-to-day practices, including practices of media use, is not necessarily

taking us away from issues of social difference (or away from issues of political activism). Sarah Pink's work is a good example here, and she clearly finds Ingold's approach helpful.

Shaun

| **Sarah Pink** | S.Pink@lboro.ac.uk | Fri Jun 29 07:01:47 PDT 2012 |
| --- | --- | --- |

Dear list

Just to follow on from Shaun's mention of my work: as Shaun has noted, I have also found that Ingold's work is very inspiring for thinking about questions about how we experience, make and are part of environments, and as such really useful for thinking about everyday life. I have also found Massey's work important in that she directly engages with questions concerning the politics of space and the relationship between the global and the local (see for example her book For Space (2005) as well as other works). I think that for anyone interested in thinking about the sets of theoretical strands that their work is associated with (that is e.g., place, space, movement, perception) it is interesting to read the works of both these scholars, as well as other related literatures in human geography.

I think the key thing happening here is that we have a set of related theoretical discussions that span across anthropology and human geography, which offer us ways of thinking about the place of media in everyday life and about activism that are alternatives to existing categories and approaches which have dominated anthropology and sociology – such as network, community, ritual, etc. and which have also been central in media anthropology and media sociology.

On the question of activism and movements: as recent global events have shown us, yes of course activism is something that can be witnessed and experienced as a form of public event, and large-scale mobilisations of people and things that have obvious temporalities. Yet the everyday is also an important site for activism and we should not forget the ongoingness of what I call 'indirect' activism, which is practiced by for example, the slow movement. Not all activism involves direct action and large changes, and not all movements are seeking to make change come about in this way. And not all activism is necessarily about protest. In this sense the study of media in everyday life can tell us a lot about how media is implicated in everyday forms of activism, or simply everyday ways of living that seek to make change come about.

Sarah

| **Mark Pedelty** | pedeltmh@umn.edu | Fri Jun 29 10:10:47 PDT 2012 |
| --- | --- | --- |

Sarah,

Good points, although I am not sure who wrote that all activism has to protest? Important that we don't "straw man" each other in these discussions.

The concept that seems to be in favor in environmental movements is "radical incrementalism." It has been used in an attempt is to link liberal arguments for micro scale incrementalism with left traditions of radical institutional and structural change, neither of which tend to be very successful in isolation.

Mark Pedelty

**Peter Gloviczki**               [glovi002@umn.edu](mailto:glovi002@umn.edu)          Fri Jun 29 13:57:30 PDT 2012

Hi Mark and everyone,

Thanks for this good discussion. It is thought-provoking. I wanted to suggest Sherry Turkle's ALONE TOGETHER (Basic Books), as something that might be of interest for the online activism element of this work. Turkle doesn't address activism specifically, but some of the points about the online world-- esp. individual vs. community—might be especially worth exploring.

Peter


**Philipp Budka**         [ph.budka@philbu.net](mailto:ph.budka@philbu.net)        Sat Jun 30 03:15:17 PDT 2012

Hi List, hi Peter,

I don't want to lead the discussion completely away, but the Turkle book / idea is highly problematic, as she is more or less continue to propose an isolation theory towards digital media practices. In doing so she is stark contrast to most of the sociological / anthropological research in this area that sees online activities closely related to offline social practices (e.g. extension of "offline" social relations online). For a brief discussion on this see, e.g., http://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2012/05/14/reaction-turkle-tufekci-and-marhe-on-the-diane-rehm-show/

All the best,

Philipp


**Peterson, Mark Allen Dr.**       [petersm2@muohio.edu](mailto:petersm2@muohio.edu)  Sat Jun 30 03:23:39 PDT 2012

And Turkle's position is already influential among a lot of US journalists writing about the Arab revolution who want to imagine the bloggers and other activists working in isolation, connected only by their computers and smart phones until they magically came together in Tahrir Square. A lot of us find ourselves deliberately writing against it when we describe Egyptian activism and its on-line extensions.

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**Peter Gloviczki**               [glovi002@umn.edu](mailto:glovi002@umn.edu)          Sat Jun 30 06:02:56 PDT 2012

Hi, Mark and everyone,

Thanks for writing. Turkle's work is far from perfect, I agree, and I think Alone Together is perhaps not as strong as her landmark early work Life on the Screen, but she is very highly regarded, generally speaking, within Internet studies. Revolutions happened long before technology, of course, but I still think it is important to at least consider the role of technology in the ongoing political movements.

For another view on technology/politics, Phil Howard's The Digital Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Information Technology and Political Islam might be of interest as well. I was trained in a journalism school, so I am admittedly coming to this discussion as an outsider. :-)

Kind best, Peter

**Peterson, Mark Allen Dr.**         petersm2@muohio.edu  Mon Jul 2 03:23:13 PDT 2012

Dear Peter

Wait a minute.

Being wary of Turkle's approach, which Philipp rightly categorizes as an "isolation approach," and which many of us fear contributes to a narrative that overemphasizes the agency of social media, is not at all to say we should not attend to the role of social media in this revolution, or in contemporary revolutionary movements generally.

This is the Medianth group and considering "the role of technology in the ongoing political movements" is (part of) what we do. Philipp is pointing out that the general trend among scholars (especially in anthropology) is away from approaches that focus almost exclusively on people's social media activities toward holistic approaches that examine (among other things) how those media are integrated into wider media ecologies how social media practices aimed at political outcomes are linked to other social media practices the extent to which media practices are embedded within the contexts of the users' lives offline (including, here, especially political activities)

This is not a new approach for anthropologists. Just compare it to economic anthropology. Economists are interested in economic activity so they look at economic transactions--and almost exclusively at the distribution of goods, with little attention even to production and consumption--and describe and analyze these activities in isolation from the everyday lives of the people engaged in these activities. Anthropologists have at least for the past century insisted on looking at economic activity within the larger web of human activities and institutions. This conceptual difference leads to such dramatically different results that it is difficult to even read and compare a mainstream economic account of phenomena with an ethnographic study of the same place

When I was a journalist, if I was assigned a story on "the role of social media in the revolution" I would immediately look for revolutionaries who used social media, and academics who have something to say on the subject. This would lead me, almost inevitably, toward a position more like Turkle's than the one Philipp is proposing (and I endorse). I'd write a very good story, but the while not "wrong" in the sense of facticity or empirical description, it would necessarily leave out much that should (from an anthropological perspective) be necessary for a good analysis of  "the role of technology in the ongoing political movements."

This is not just a disciplinary difference; there can be real consequences in adopting one stance over another for the political movements themselves.

A recent article in the (Danish?) media studies journal Mediakultur entitled "Wearing shades in the bright future of digital media: Limitations of narratives of media power in Egyptian resistance" by Karin Gwinn Wilkins, argues that in their news coverage of the Egyptian uprising, "U.S. media rely on Orientalist narratives, not only essentializing complex communities to a reductive tale of hero, victim, and villain, but also privileging the role of social media as an anthropomorphic heroic sidekick, indispensable to the success of the movement."

In other words, global media reduced the story to a handful of young, attractive underdog heroes (the youth revolutionaries) who battle a master villain (Mubarak), who has all the power of the state and its media at his command, thanks to their special, seemingly insignificant weapon (the One Ring— oops, I mean Social Media).

Whether or not these narratives have real-world consequences in shaping the interpretive frames of their readers/viewers/listeners, they certainly have consequences for the revolutionaries.

While some Egyptian revolutionaries, like Wael Ghoneim, deliberately contribute to these narratives, the majority are keenly aware of the extent to which narratives that privilege the agency of social media underplay the decade-long work of laying the foundation for this uprising, work that includes a lot of very interesting media efforts, some wildly successful, some very much less so, but also a lot of legwork, face-to-face meetings, work with opposition political parties, passing out flyers in working class areas and so forth.

One of the strengths of the medianth list is that we have so many media practitioners among us, and we can discuss these issues.

Okay, enuff said. I have now officially led this discussion away from Sean Moore's very interesting paper, which Philipp was rightly wary of doing. I'll try to contribute to that discussion before the e-seminar ends.

Best,

Mark Allen Peterson


**CHRISTA SALAMANDRA** CHRISTA.SALAMANDRA@lehman.cuny.edu      Mon Jul 2 05:30:41 PDT 2012

Mark raises and interesting point:

"When I was a journalist, if I was assigned a story on "the role of social media in the revolution" I would immediately look for revolutionaries who used social media, and academics who have something to say on the subject. This would lead me, almost inevitably, toward a position more like Turkle's than the one Philipp is proposing."

Given that, arguably most media anthropologists would endorse the latter position, why is it likely (and I don't doubt that it is) that a journalist would find academics promoting Turkle's?

Christa

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**Philipp Budka**       ph.budka@philbu.net       Mon Jul 2 06:09:43 PDT 2012

Dear List,

Just a very brief comment: Turkle is a highly respected scholar who has done a lot of important research in the field of computer mediated communication and the understanding of the self, for instance.  Nevertheless she is more or less supporting the idea that digital media technologies increasingly isolate us from peers, family, friends, etc.  And this view is in sharp contrast to some other research on digital media (including mine), e.g.

Hampton, K., Goulet, L. S., Rainie, L., Purcell, K. 2011. Social networking sites and our lives. Pew Internet Report, Jun 16, 2011.
http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Technology-and-social-networks.aspx

Baym, Nancy. 2010. Personal connections in the digital age. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Woolgar, Steve. 2002. ed. Virtual society? Technology, cyberbole, reality. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Her "isolationist" views are also not in line with Boellstorff's work, who propose that "virtual worlds", such as Second Life, can be ethnographically examined on their own terms without being contextualized to the "actual world". And I agree with him, and John, on that.

Just my two cents.

Thanks,

Philipp

**Shaun Moores**       shaun.moores@sunderland.ac.uk       Mon, 2 Jul 2012 06:29:54 PDT 2012

I've been happy to sit back and let others have a conversation over the past two or three days. As the seminar nears its end, though, I'd like to comment on a couple of the points that others (Mark and Jens) have made...

Mark, although you suggest that you've taken the discussion away from the concerns of my paper, I'm not sure that you have. The sort of approach that you're advocating seems to me to be in line with what I'm calling (with reference to David Morley's work) 'non-media-centric' media studies. I'm absolutely with you when you say that you're interested in how 'media practices are embedded within the contexts of ... users' lives'. The problem that I've got with my own field of media studies, then, is that too often it's too much focused on media (and, by the way, too much focused on symbolic representation). In fact, I should confess that I wonder - particularly when I'm involved in the kind of conversation that we're having in this e-seminar - whether I should be calling myself a media anthropologist and looking to 'jump ship'. But then I'd be equally tempted to call myself a media

geographer or a media sociologist, and one of the things that I do appreciate about working in a field like media studies (with its interdisciplinary origins) is that it's given me a good excuse to read and relate to work from right across the humanities and social sciences.

Jens, you raise a question about how Tim Ingold's anthropology relates to ethnography. It's certainly true that, in the final chapter of his Being Alive (BA), he argues that 'anthropology is not ethnography', making the case that the two 'are not the same'. It's also true that at times Ingold's writing bears a resemblance to philosophy. Indeed, right at the start of BA, he declares that he would not object if anyone was 'to consider my endeavour to be closer to philosophy than anthropology'. Still, I referred in my paper to the 'phenomenologically inspired' fieldwork that he did with Jo Lee (now Jo Lee Vergunst - see their co-edited volume on Ways of Walking) on various practices of walking in NE Scotland, and, whilst I had some issues there concerning their emphasis on walking as place-making (why not also consider a range of other corporeal and technologically mediated mobilities that are involved in the constitution of places?), it seems clear that this research project was an attempt to give some empirical grounding to Ingold's anthropology/philosophy of 'dwelling' and 'lines'. Although my own paper on Ingold's work does have a 'theoretical feel' to it, I've been very much committed to empirical investigation myself, and for me the interesting methodological issues now are precisely to do with how - as ethnographers - we might be able to follow the lines or trails not just of walking but also of activities like, say, driving and internet use. There are a few helpful pointers in some of the recent discussions of 'mobile methods' (e.g. a collection edited by Buscher et al.), but the discussion - and the development of research practices - has further to go, I feel.

Shaun.

| **Peter Gloviczki** 2012 | glovi002@umn.edu | Mon Jul 2 08:13:48 PDT |

Good morning, everyone,

Thanks for this lively discussion, and I agree with Mark that one of the real strengths of this list is that we have a variety of professionals, from media positions and elsewhere, that contribute to the richness of the conversation.

Happy 4th of July to everyone in the US,

Peter

| **LYON S.M.** | s.m.lyon@durham.ac.uk | Mon Jul 2 08:26:03 PDT 2012 |

Thanks to all for this recent thread in the conversation. I think it's been particularly useful to thrash out some of the tensions in what gets foregrounded and why. Others have already articulated what I might have said on the subject, so this isn't me jumping in to the conversation, but rather me saying we've got one more day of the e-seminar, so this really is the time to make any last minute posts if you want to get a response within the bounds of the e-seminar! It is, of course, always possible to correspond with people independently from the e-seminars and the list, so no doubt there will be a few follow up conversations going on from all of this.

Best,
Steve

**sally**              saa26@kent.ac.uk                Mon Jul 2 10:56:34 PDT 2012

List,

I would also add here that amongst younger scholars in sociology and communications, in particular, I've found increasing dismissal of Turkel's proposition.

My own thoughts seem to be that the age of the researcher, their experiences and the location, age and education of their subjects tend to influence their positions as well.

Turkle's isolation work has been losing points in these groups because she is perceived to be "out of touch" and "disconnected" from people that are increasingly using social media to communicate.

There are gaps of 4 days, 13 days, 10 days on her Twitter feed -- an interesting trend and for those who are connected, she's the one who is isolated!

(Just under the wire -- thanks Philipp for the great references.)

-Sally

**Samuel Zwaan**              samzw@xs4all.nl              Mon Jul 2 11:23:35 PDT 2012

Hi,

I was following the discussion on Turkle. I realize that Turkle's recent ideas have received some critical comments. However, I do believe that what she is touching upon are some very big questions many people have. So in that sense very interesting.  What is the difference between face to face contact or for instance skype? What makes the book weak sometimes, in my perspective, is that she relies too much on examples. To me, there seems to be less theory and more practice.

Indeed she has been writing more on this isolation perspective in her latest book. However, she still acknowledges that there is a lot of potential for social media and digital media. She argues that we just need a healthy digital diet. So perhaps we shouldn't immediately put her in the isolation corner.

I don't know if it's okay to add this but I wrote a paper during my studies on Turkle's work Alone Together and tried to relate this to Albert Borgmann's device paradigm and Benjamin's aura. You can find it here if you are interested:
http://mediawetenschappen.nl/PDF/device%20paradigm%20and%20aura%20final.pdf

Or you can go to my website www.mediawetenschappen.nl and then to articles.

This is actually my first email within this group so maybe it's good to introduce myself a bit. My name is Samuel Zwaan, 25 years old. I have studies in Utrecht (media and performance studies) and I'm leaving to Georgia Tech in a couple of weeks to study Digital Media.

Regards,

Samuel

| **sally** | saa26@kent.ac.uk | Mon Jul 2 10:59:17 PDT 2012 |

SORRY… T-u-r-k-l-e

Typing fast.

| **Postill, John** | J.Postill@shu.ac.uk | Sun Jul 1 05:53:12 PDT 2012 |

By regarding online practices as merely an 'extension' of offline social practices, as suggested by Philipp Budka in his post, we risk falling into the trap of what we might call 'offline determinism', i.e. the assumption that online practices are determined - rather than *shaped* - by offline practices.

In his study of the 3D virtual environment Second Life, Boellstorff (2008) in fact shows that online worlds have their own logics, their own dynamics, and must be therefore understood on their own terms, not merely as pale reflections - or extensions - of the offline. Second Life is not entirely isolated from other sites (both online and offline) but it is not entirely merged with them either.

Yes, Second Life users who live in different time zones find that this can be a problem but this and other wider-world circumstances cannot explain the intra-world everyday practices that have emerged over time.

John

| **Gabriela Vargas-Cetina** | gabyvargasc@prodigy.net.mx | Sun Jul 1 08:20:32 PDT 2012 |

Dear all,

First, thanks to Shaun Moores for a good and provocative paper, and to all of you for this interesting discussion.  I'll be quick: While I agree that the online world has its own bearings, the way in which it has connected with great contingents of people around the world (including the #YoSoy132 in all of Mexico) definitely shows how it is impossible to separate online from offline experiences today, and vice-versa.  I think we cannot reify 'online' as something completely separate from other realms.  Probably most of you have experienced how young undergrads do not know how to navigate the web in search of academic materials.  I spend most of my introductory courses teaching undergrad students how to read books in academic ways, how to best make use of the possibilities afforded by the online library catalogues and journal databases, and in general how to apply online technologies to anthropological research.

My point is that even Second Life, as Tom Boellstorff shows, connects our offline experiences with online similes, and a visit to Second Life will make clear the fact that it is all built taking the offline world as a direct reference: there are houses, streets, lawns, shopping malls, cars, businesses, sex clubs (LOTS of them!), and the avatars walk and fly around fully clothed and communicate in languages existing offline.

Maybe the problem here is that we are failing to recognize that we all function and continuously move (in a form of 'travel') in several virtual environments, besides the computer-related ones.  Library (and in the past microfiche) catalogues, for example, have been one such virtual world for a very long time: one can wander from a book description to another following the path of a particular search.  This is why it is so easy for academics to transpose biblio searches to the online world.

It is probably similar with cars: in highland Sardinia shepherds herd sheep from their cars. The communal territories are all crisscrossed by the paths left by car tires. This is very different from riding on a road, although sometimes the sheep do go on roads: you have to know where you are going in the absence of clear roads, and know the terrain by heart, lest you fall off cliffs or crash against massive rock formations while you pay attention to the animals. If the shepherds didn't know the terrain well enough before hand, they could not herd the animals by car.

I think that no 'virtual' world can be understood within itself, but no 'real' world can be understood either as separate from our virtual universes.

Have a good Sunday,

Gaby Vargas-Cetina

| **Jens Kjaerulff** | jk@socant.net | Sun Jul 1 11:34:37 PDT 2012 |
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As we are nearing the end of the seminar, allow me to pick up a few things that have emerged from the discussion, which to me seems worth pursuing a little further before we close.

1) the matter of change:

Both because it is in Shaun's seminar title, and because of the upcoming EASA workshop of this network on "Theorising media and social change": http://www.nomadit.co.uk/easa/easa2012/panels.php5?PanelID=1344 and because this dimension at least in my view has so far only received limited attention despite Shaun's title - I would like to probe Ingold's conceptual arsenal a little further on this account.

Earlier in the seminar, John Postill actually raised what at least to me seemed a very interesting question, but it was never really engaged much on the list. He posed a difference between to approaches to change, an anthropological and a historical one, i.e.:

> ... we tend to discuss *how things were changing* at the time of our > fieldwork rather than how they actually *changed*, say, in the 1990s, > or in 1939-1945, in any given country or locale.

John asked how the two might be thought together, and how Ingold's approach might help here (see John's posting from June 22, entitled "Media and social changing").

As I see it the core issue here is ontological, not only in terms of what constitutes "change", but also what constitutes the object of study that allegedly changed or is changing, where anthropologists and historians tend to embrace quite different approaches. These arguably quite central dimension to the study of change surprisingly rarely seems engaged in much depth. I have developed this point slightly further in a recent posting on a website of this network: http://mediasocialchange.net/2011/05/04/getting-a-grip-on-change-and-continuity/ and at greater length in my book: http://www.internetandchange.com/ but evidently these are just thoughts "in a state of becoming" as John has it.

Ingold's tropes intrigue me in thinking about these things, but I have not done the work. A collective seminar effort here might useful in anticipation of the workshop in France.

2) Empirical research in Ingold's scheme of things.

Shaun has, a couple of times, invoked the fact that Ingold is an anthropologist, but evidently anthropologists among themselves also have disagreements. At least as I understand it (from my personal communication with Tim Ingold on this matter, as discussant where he presented), Ingold does not see a significant place for ethnography in his theoretical work. Indeed, one could say that his book on Lines has the character of philosophy, or what in our discipline is called "arm-chair anthropology". This is a point on which I fundamentally disgree with Ingold. Still, his tropes appear interesting for the kind of ontological reflection I mentioned above. But what I miss a sense of how it relates to the kind of concrete empirical field research on entities that indeed "change", which for me distinguishes our discipline and remains at it's core.

I will cut a longer story short here and invite others' input - I don't expect this issue to be resolved in this seminar (or indeed at all), but in anticipation of the upcoming workshop in France, it might be useful to raise it, in the context of thinking about "change".

| **Elisenda Ardévol** | eardevol@gmail.com | Mon Jul 2 13:01:36 PDT 2012 |

Dear list,

I have enjoyed Shaun's paper very much and also the extended reflections about Ingold's complex and exciting thoughts. I myself am now reading some Ingolds papers  for thinking about my ethnographic fieldwork around creative practices and digital media.

As Shaun Moores and others have suggest,  Ingold readings are splendid companions for opening our minds, and is in that sense that I agree that his work can be considered as a special kind of philosophy of science. In Levy-Strauss dictum, his papers are  "good for thinking", specially about the core of anthropology matters... and, as we have noticed, good for opening discussions as those we are having.

Besides, I also agree with Sarah Pink that  practices approach as well as its kin non-representational theories span across anthropology, media and geography as well, providing a set of ideas for de-stabilizing our conceptual tools and the way we tend to fix our object of study such as "media", "technology", "space", "nature" or "humanity".  In that direction, I found specially clarifying the introductory chapter of Anderson and Harrison (2010) about the main points of non-relational theories approach in which Ingold thoughts are included. Non-representational theory takes representation seriously: for example and quoting tehm: "representations are apprehended as performative presentations but not taken as reflections of some a priori order waiting to be unveiled, decoded or revealed. It is not against representation but is a 'more-than-representational theory" proposal (p.19). Non-representational theories offer a theoretical framework that is worth-full to explore for an ethnography based on everyday life.

Back to Shaun Moores comments, I also found specially inspiring the Lee and Ingold's chapter in Coleman and Collins "Locating the field" (2006). In "Fieldwork on foot", they propose to think about ethnographic fieldwork through the walking experience. Concretely, it helps me to evade the online/offline divide. Because as Gabriela Vargas-Cetina pointed out, it is difficult nowadays to analyse Internet activity as a world apart (although, as John Postill suggested, virtual worlds trace their own dynamics).  It also helps in talking about doing "on foot"  ethnography instead of the uncanny "offline". Besides, the image of the pedestrian ethnographer introduces a new way of thinking about participant observation, in as much  "to participate is not to walk into but to walk with –where 'with' implies not a face-to-face confrontation but heading the same way, sharing the same vistas, and perhaps retreating from the same threats behind" (p. 67). It renders the idea of the field not as place but as a trajectory drawn by an open walk with our respondents and their environments.

Finally, I am taking seriously Jens Kjaerulff comments about to explore media and social change through Ingold's creative thought -among others-, as a challenge for Nanterre. By the way, Creativity and Cultural Improvisation of Elizabeth Hallam and Tim Ingold could be a minor but suggesting start point. I found revealing their point of view that there is no script for social life and challenging their notion of creativity and its correlates "innovation" and"improvisation" to understand social change.

Yours,
Elisenda

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Lee, J. & Ingold, T. 2006. "Fieldwork on foot: perceiving, routing, socializing". In S. Coleman and P. Collins (ed). Locating the field. Berg.
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| Postill, John | J.Postill@shu.ac.uk | Mon Jul 2 15:50:54 PDT 2012 |
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Elisenda Ardévol has suggested that "Creativity and Cultural Improvisation" by Elizabeth Hallam and Tim Ingold could be a useful entry point to the study of media and social change, including their observation that "there is no script for social life". I haven't read this work, but the question of social scripts connects nicely with Peter Hervik's earlier remark about (partly shared) cultural schemas as being fundamental to human sociality.

I am with Peter on this one. One common finding that media ethnographers have made in different parts of the world is how people will sometimes perform social scripts (or schemas) 'as seen on TV', e.g. children using a cardboard box to pretend they are TV presenters, adults creating quiz shows based on a TV format, etc. More often, people will selectively incorporate media contents or elements into their existing social scripts, e.g. a catchphrase from a TV comedian used as a greeting, or private firms offering weddings with Hollywood or TV themes.

Socio-biographical life is not an unbroken path of skilled wayfaring through an emerging landscape, as Ingold suggests. Rather it is broken into chunks of social interaction in which we rely on learned embodied schemas (or scripts) to know what to do, e.g. when entering a restaurant, boarding a bus or joining an e-seminar most people will try to follow the appropriate script - a human universal with stark cultural variants that comedians have relentlessly exploited. If we're not sure what to do, e.g. in a foreign (sub)culture, it's generally wise to imitate those around us.

What does this have to do with how to study media and social change? (to take up Jens Kjaerulff's challenge). By way of example, a longitudinal comparative study of, say, households in locale X would yield interesting data on the continuities and changes in their key mediated scripts over time ('key' as defined locally, i.e. those social scripts that really matter to local people, e.g. those scripts related to paid employment or to migrant family members). It would also tell us about new forms of remedial script and when they were adopted, e.g. webcams used for family gatherings in areas with a high rate of outmigration ("We had a decent broadband connection for once. It was almost as if they were in the room with us").

My parting question to Shaun and others is similar to Peter Hervik's: Is a phenomenological approach to media in day-to-day life compatible with this idea of human life being segmented into social scripts influenced by media scripts and contents?

John

| Shaun Moores 2012 | shaun.moores@sunderland.ac.uk | Tue Jul 3 03:33:02 PDT |
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Hi John,

My answer to your 'parting question' is: probably not.

All of the examples that you give (children playing at being TV presenters, people using a TV comedian's catchphrase as a greeting, and so on) are interesting for me, and it's certainly worth trying to work out what's going on there when these sorts of thing are taking place. However, Peter's use of terms such as 'cultural models' and 'cognitive schemas' was problematic, I feel. This is because, as I did my best to explain in my initial reply to his comments (with reference to specific parts of Ingold's writings), those concepts have tended to come with the assumption that such 'cultural models ... exist independently of, and prior to, their application in particular situations of use' (Ingold's words from TPotE). I suspect that much the same difficulty accompanies the notion of 'scripts' (even if you're now referring to these scripts as 'embodied').

Something that I came across fairly recently on YouTube - a recording of a lecture that Ingold gave at the LSE, entitled 'To Learn is to Improvise a Movement Along a Way of Life' - might be of interest to list members, partly because Ingold offers a helpful summary there of some of his arguments about skilled practice, and partly because his talk is full of interesting examples with which he attempts to illustrate those arguments. He begins by reiterating the difficulty that he has with perspectives on learning which separate out the 'acquisition of knowledge as information from its practical enactment' (Ingold prefers to see knowing and doing as intimately bound up with each other). He goes on to argue that 'learning in practice, even when it involves ... copying, is a creative process' and 'that creativity lies ... in improvisation'. Now, my sense is that this is probably the basis (the start of one, anyway) for a more promising way into understanding your own examples - that is, more promising than notions of cultural models or schemas or scripts. The kids playing at being TV presenters, then, don't really have a script that they're following, do they? Rather, their performance involves a creative improvisation, in which there's what Ingold calls an 'alignment of movements' and a 'coordination of action'.

Of course, because Ingold doesn't deal with practices of contemporary media use such as TV viewing, he doesn't include examples like yours in his talk (or in his writings). But I feel that his approach can nevertheless help us to find better ways of conceptualising such media-related practices.

Finally (?), depending on whether there are other comments on the list that I feel the need to respond to before the end of today, I'd like to say that - for me at least - it's been a pleasure to be involved in this e-seminar. Thanks John, just once more, for inviting me to contribute a working paper to the series, and thanks to all of those who've (so far) contributed to the discussion.

Best wishes,
Shaun


| Peter Hervik 2012 | peter.hervik@gmail.com | Tue Jul 3 04:52:32 PDT |
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Dear Shaun/John/ list

Thanks John for helping to clarify some of the points I made earlier.

In a chapter referred to by Shaun, Tim Ingold writes about one of the authors I that I emphasize in my comment:

"Claudia Strauss completely misunderstands what Bourdieu means by Habitus when she describes it as just another species of cultural model, comprising a set of mental structures, unconsciously extracted from practice, internalised through informal learning, and applied in novel situations. She fails to realise that in placing the habitus at the centre of his theoretical project, Bourdieu's purpose is to demolish the oppositions between mind and world, and between knowledge and practice, upon which the whole programme of cognitive anthropology is founded (1992:9). The same error is reproduced by D'Andrade (1995:147-8)."

May be Ingold is bit too fast here. For one, I am positive Claudia could not recognize her work in this caricature, just like many other readers of her work couldn't either. Secondly, Wacquant (for example) refers in the same year (1992) in his book with Bourdieu directly to the habitus as a "cognitive" and "corporeal schema", which is of course not to say notions of field and capital, for instance, is excluded.

I think the comments about dismissing cultural models and related concepts as being prior to practice and existing independently is out of touch with what these practice-oriented researchers stand for. In fact it looks like you (echoing Ingold) are applied a Geertzian "models of" and "models for" to this part of psychological anthropology, which is precisely what schema theory is bouncing away from.

My own use of these authors like Holland, Hanks, Bourdieu and Strauss, particularly in "The Danish Cultural World of Host Guest Relations" is exactly the kind of reasoning that Danes draw upon when they meet the prototypical "non-Western" migrants. This reasoning in the shape of packaged poignant schemas may of course be revised and adjusted in practice, just like some us try to change it as activists. Obviously, Danes didn't learn this from social interaction with migrants (because mostly they do not interact) but through the media, which for 15 years have been dominated by negative talk of migrants. Why else would a Norwegian guy tell us in an interview that on the city bus he wanted so much to talk with the Somali lady next to him, but couldn't think of anything else to talk about but circumcision.

Best regards,

Peter Hervik

**Shaun Moores**          shaun.moores@sunderland.ac.uk          Tue Jul 3 05:45:55 PDT 2012

Thanks Peter, for your carefully argued and forceful response.

I will endeavour to read your work on the Danish cultural world of host-guest relations (alas, this will be after the e-seminar ends). I'll also endeavour to read more of the anthropological literature that you've referred to.

I'm tempted to return to some points about cognition, the pre-cognitive and our relationships with media, but I'll take a pause...

I hope our paths may cross again at some point, either online or off. I must try to get along to a future gathering of media anthropologists.

Shaun.

| Peterson, Mark Allen Dr. | petersm2@muohio.edu | Tue Jul 3 08:58:46 PDT 2012 |
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There is a longer, more nuanced version of my post on Turkle now available on my blog www.connectedincairo.com if anyone is interested
http://connectedincairo.com/2012/07/03/social-media-and-the-egyptian-revolution-redux/#more-4620

Phil, I did not identify you by name (I refer to you as my "colleague") in case you did not like my characterization of your comments, but I will happily do so if you'd like me to

Best,
Mark


| Mirca Madianou | mm499@leicester.ac.uk | Tue Jul 3 15:09:23 |
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| PDT2012 | | |

Hi everyone,

I'm coming very late to this seminar - I've enjoyed Shaun's paper and the discussion, which I've had to follow with interruptions because of other commitments -- but I wanted to add a thought on John's comment on studying social change or 'social changing'. Although not a media historian, I've become very interested in oral histories of media use as I have seen in my research that an excellent way to gauge the difference new media make is to compare them with historical accounts.  In our recent book 'Migration and New Media' (Madianou and Miller, 2012) we compared the ways members of Filipino transnational families (both migrant mothers and their left behind children) maintain long distance relationships and care for each other using a range of communication technologies (which we understand as an environment of polymedia). We compared this contemporary situation to the ways in which our participants remembered communication at a time when it was expensive and infrequent (via letters, recorded audio tapes or international calls). Many of our participants experienced this situation for 2-3 decades before the advent of the mobile phone in the 1990s. Some of the most poignant stories in our research came from the memories of this early migration when the left-behind children were very young and the need to keep in touch was intense and yet communication was frustratingly slow and expensive. Still our participants had fond memories of letter-writing which they often romanticised. This was partly due to a genre (a script?) of letter-writing which concealed problems and only reported the good news. By contrast it is becoming increasingly difficult to suppress problems through new media - as there is a proliferation of social cues which can be revelatory. In a sense our participants experience more 'real' (albeit often fraught) relationships through new media compared to the idealised ones of the period of letter-writing. There are two interconnected histories of 'change' here: the ways transnational families change over time (as a result of migration and other social factors but also because of the media used to connect their members); and how media themselves evolve vertically as remediation - see Bolter and Grusin 2000 - and as a consequence of their horizontal integration through consumption).

I'd be interested to hear more from other list members working on oral histories of media use (even after the seminar is over...).

Mirca

References:
Bolter, J. D. and R. Grusin (2000) Remediation: understanding new media. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Madianou, M. and Miller, D. (2012) Migration and New Media: Transnational families and polymedia. London: Routledge.


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| **LYON S.M.** | s.m.lyon@durham.ac.uk | Tue, 3 Jul 2012 23:32:14 PDT 2012 |
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Dear List,

Technically, I should have done this late last night, but in the interests of inclusiveness, I wanted to wait till there weren't many time zones still lurking in Tuesday. The e-seminar is now officially closed, though no doubt there will be more conversations to be had on these themes in the near future. It remains just for me to thank Shaun for providing such an interesting paper, Jens for such useful comments, all the members of the list who participated in the discussion and, as always, Phiipp and Nina for their on-going work in organising the e-seminars.

The next e-seminar will take place in September and will be a paper by Daniel Miller (UCL) and Jolynna Sinanan (RMIT Melbourne). Look out for more details in August. I hope to see many of you in Paris at EASA next week!

Best,
Steve


| **Nick Couldry** | n.couldry@gold.ac.uk | Wed Jul 4 01:05:17 PDT 2012 |
|---|---|---|

Hi everyone

Can I also add a late thought - and apologies that, due to a trip to Australia and having to pick things up on my return, I also was not able to respond in the timescale of the seminar?

Shaun's paper was excellent in opening up the debate here. My own response is that Shaun is possibly too generous, at least to Nigel Thrift's version of non-representational theory, since, a) when Thrift discusses media eg in his book Non-Representational Theory, he reduces it to 'affect', saying nothing about media's representational content, and b) Thrift's approach, even against his better instinct (and Shaun quotes some passages that are more cautious), forces us into an unhelpful polarity between prioritizing representation or prioritising 'non-representation'. From Shaun's reading, I get the sense that Ingold does not make this same mistake.

One key root of both (so-called) 'non-representational theory' and my own work on media as practice (which in a different way expresses the desire to avoid media-centrism that Shaun shares) is Wittgenstein's approach to practice, and linguistic practice in particular. My recent book, which Shaun kindly mentions - Media Society World: Social Theory and Digital Media Practice (Polity 2012) - is interested in thinking about media as practice, that is, as heterogenous bundles of practices, some practices from which are representational and some of which are not.

So I differ from Shaun when he runs together a 'non-representational' and a 'non-mediacentric' approach to media, since I don't think the latter implies the former, and I'm not sure whether the former, understood narrowly, is coherent.

What is excellent however in Shaun's paper is the open way in which he poses the question of what type of understanding media we need. That is exactly right, and I see no reason to suppose that a phenomenological approach is at all incompatible with tracking multiple practices related to media (some representational, some not) within their wider context (whose dynamics extend far beyond media).

Shaun's image, borrowed from Ingold, of wayfaring is interesting. My only question is whether our 'wayfaring' online often gets cut off by instrumental need, where representational content (search terms) may play a key role. How do we resolve these contrasting dynamics, even conflicts, between different types of ordering? That seems to me a key question, and clarifying our response to it may not be helped by the term 'non-representational theory', at least if construed a certain way.

best wishes - and thanks again to Shaun for his paper

Nick

| Shaun Moores | shaun.moores@sunderland.ac.uk | Wed Jul 4 11:24:29 PDT 2012 |
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Just when I thought it was all over...

Thanks Nick, for your (only slightly late) intervention in the debate. (I hope you had a good time in Australia.) In my paper, I describe you as 'one of the sharpest commentators in my field' - because you are - and I'd like to recommend your new book (Media, Society, World) to all list members who haven't yet read it.

Within the field of media studies, I think our perspectives are actually quite close in some ways, aren't they? As you suggest, we're both committed to 'non-media-centric media studies' (I guess partly because we've both been influenced by Dave Morley's work, as well as by Roger Silverstone's). We're both interested in exploring a range of media-related practices, in the context of other social practices too. The main disagreement, then, seems to be over non-representational theory (NRT).

I don't want to re-open things too much here, because it's already been quite a long (and lively) seminar, but I'd like to say just a few things in response to what you have to say about Thrift and NRT...

- Like you, I'd have no interest in reducing media studies just to a concern with 'affect', although I would want a concern with, say, our emotional attachments to environments of different sorts to be part of the larger non-media-centric-media-studies package. Actually, to be frank, I've got rather more time for what phenomenological geographers like Yi-Fu Tuan and David Seamon had to say about the affective dimensions of everyday experience (senses of place, etc.) than I have for the more recent writings of Thrift and his colleagues, certainly when it comes to matters of affect. (BTW The work of Tuan, Seamon and others is discussed at length, alongside writings by Thrift and Ingold, in the middle, pivotal chapter of my new book - Media, Place & Mobility).

- As I've tried to make clear all along, an interest in NRT doesn't necessarily lead to a lack of interest in representations, but it does mean approaching representation in a rather different way - as 'in and of the world of embodied practice', in John Wylie's words (that is, in a manner which moves away

decisively from the sort of structuralist approach that helped to shape our field back in the 1970s). Having said that, clearly one of Thrift's frustrations in the 1990s, when he came up with the term 'non-representational', was with what he saw as an overemphasis in cultural geography on issues of symbolic representation. It's perhaps the same sort of frustration that I felt a couple of weeks back, when a colleague in my own department distributed the list of working titles that undergraduate students have come up with for their honours dissertations next year. I was struck by quite how many of their titles included the term 'representations of'. In this sense, I'm with Thrift in wanting to challenge an overemphasis on representation. (Within geography, Hayden Lorimer proposed a few years ago that the term 'more-than-representational' might be more helpful here, realising that there are some potential difficulties with the 'non-' prefix.) And since I've always been interested in the everyday, Thrift's pointing towards the significance of embodiment, practical knowing and the pre-cognitive strikes a chord with me (it chimes in, too, with the interests that I've developed over recent years in phenomenology - particularly in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception - and, of course, in Ingold's writings on dwelling and movement or habitation and orientation).

- It's also important to be clear, leading on from my last point, that the term non-representational gets used in a related but slightly different way, which links with debates in philosophy (where 20th-Century European philosophers like Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, as well as Wittgenstein, have sought to develop a critique of rationalist approaches, which enables us to develop a critique of later 'cognitivist' perspectives, too, in which there's been a problematic focus on 'mental representations'). In fact, I notice that a well-known North American philosopher, Charles Taylor - in discussing phenomenology - has used the term non-representational in exactly this way. There, he emphasises what he refers to as an engaged, embodied agency, which has to do precisely with 'moving around' and practically 'dealing with things' - with knowing 'one's way about' everyday environments (note the similarities here with Ingold on orientation and wayfaring).

So, I hope that this helps to explain a little my willingness to adopt the term non-representational, alongside the term non-media-centric. I'm not against the study of media representation (although I do want to reconfigure it somewhat), but I'm definitely for a greater emphasis on practice, movement and what Ingold calls 'inhabitant knowledge'.

Best,
Shaun.


**E-seminar closed**