



Geographies of Communication

The Spatial Turn in Media Studies

Jesper Falkheimer & André Jansson (eds.)

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Contents

Chapter 1	
<i>André Jansson & Jesper Falkheimer</i>	
Towards a Geography of Communication	7
I Mapping the Field	
Chapter 2	
<i>Birgit Stöber</i>	
Media Geography.	
From Patterns of Diffusion to the Complexity of Meanings	27
Chapter 3	
<i>Richard Ek</i>	
Media Studies, Geographical Imaginations and Relational Space	43
Chapter 4	
Göran Bolin	
<i>Electronic Geographies.</i>	
Media Landscapes as Technological and Symbolic Environments	65
Chapter 5	
<i>André Jansson</i>	
Textural Analysis. Materialising Media Space	85
II Mediated Spaces	
Chapter 6	
<i>Inka Salovaara-Moring</i>	
“Fortress Europe”. Ideological metaphors of media geographies	105
Chapter 7	
<i>Jesper Falkheimer</i>	
When Place Images Collide. Place Branding and News Journalism	123
Chapter 8	
<i>Åsa Thelander</i>	
Blank Spaces. The Mediation of Nature in Travel Advertisements	139

Chapter 9	
<i>Anne Marit Waade</i>	
Armchair Travelling with Pilot Guides.	
Cartographic and Sensuous Strategies	155
III Mediatized Spaces	169
Chapter 10	
<i>Magnus Andersson</i>	
The Flexible Home	171
Chapter 11	
<i>Stina Bengtsson</i>	
Media and the Spaces of Work and Leisure	189
Chapter 12	
<i>Johan Fornäs</i>	
Media passages in urban spaces of consumption	205
Chapter 13	
<i>Tom O'Dell</i>	
Magic, Health and the Mediation of the Body's Geography	221
IV A Mediatized Sense of Space	241
Chapter 14	
<i>Jonas Larsen</i>	
Geographies of Tourist Photography.	
Choreographies and Performances	243
Chapter 15	
<i>Amanda Lagerkvist</i>	
Terra (in)cognita. Mediated America as Thirdspace experience	261
Chapter 16	
<i>Jenny Sundén</i>	
Digital Geographies. From Storyspace to Storied Places	279
Chapter 17	
<i>Orvar Löfgren</i>	
Postscript: Taking Place	297
The Authors	309

Chapter 1

Towards a Geography of Communication

André Jansson & Jesper Falkheimer

The linkage between geography and communication lies in the fact that all forms of communication occur *in space*, and that all spaces are produced *through representation*, which occurs *by means of communication*. In other words, theories of spatial production must also to a certain extent be understood as theories of communication and mediation. Maps and architectural drawings, as well as the built environment, are instances of mediation between spatial experience, visions and material (pre)conditions (cf. Lefebvre, 1974/1991) – though are rarely defined as such, nor very often included in media and communication studies. However, due to the nature of modern communications such demarcations are contested. The implementation and appropriation of digital ICT networks blur the boundaries not only between geographical regions (households, cities, etc.), and between types of regions (local-global; private-public, etc.), but also between the dimensions that constitute regions themselves – such as material, symbolic and imaginary spaces. Accordingly, contemporary media studies must not only ‘cope’ with new spatial ambiguities. It is also *the discipline* that has as its very object of study the technological and cultural processes that *produce* spatial ambiguities, particularly in terms of globalisation.

This book departs from the assertion that the ephemeral character of contemporary culture and society calls for *a spatial turn* in media studies. There are clear signs that such a turn is on its way: spatial theory and media theory are combined more often today than just ten years ago. But no account has yet been formulated for the full potential of this. Gathering new analyses from leading Nordic media scholars, geographers and ethnologists, this book provides a broad view of the perspectives that emerge from the spatial turn. Together, the chapters map out what might become a new sub-field within media and cultural studies: *the geography of communication* (or communication geography).¹ The overarching question for such a research field is about *how communication produces space and how space produces communication*.

Is this, then, an anticipation of the abolishment of media studies? We do not believe so. It would be just as naïve a forecast as to argue that media

and communication studies would absorb fields like cultural geography and anthropology due to the expansion and integration of media in all areas of culture and society. However, there are reasons to believe that the geography of communication will produce a semi-autonomous field within the broader terrain of cultural studies, manifested through collaborations between geographers and media theorists. As the forthcoming chapters show, the new sub-field would also be closely related to other expanding areas of research such as urban studies, tourism studies, visual (culture) studies and the study of material and consumer culture.

In this introductory chapter we will delineate the socio-cultural background of the spatial turn, pointing particularly to the new spatial ambiguities of media culture. In relation to this, the limitations of the transmission and ritual models of communication will be highlighted. We will also outline and give examples of the spatial turn beginning in the 1980s and onwards, and, finally, by means of a presentation of the chapters, position this book within the geography of communication.

Dilemmas of Space and Communication

In *The Bias of Communication*, Harold Innis (1951/1964) explores the historical relationship between society's predominant means of communication and prevailing patterns of knowledge and power. His analyses range from the earliest of civilisations to 20th-century industrial society, and revolve around the groundbreaking distinction between *time-biased* and *space-biased* media. While the former are marked by heaviness and durability (such as stone), the latter are light and transportable (such as papyrus). Through this distinction, Innis associates the use of different means of communication with different goals that have governed the exercise of socio-political power in societies. While the durability of time-biased media has served the ambitions of religious empires in their quest for eternal monopolies on knowledge, space-biased media have typically served the interests of expansionist military empires.

While it is difficult to pinpoint any objective distinction between a time-biased and a space-biased medium, the conceptualisation is a good thing to visualize. If we borrow the terminology of Raymond Williams (1974), the 'bias of communication' provides a clear notion of not only *technological assets*, but also the broader ideologies that circumscribe and articulate media as *cultural forms*.

So how can we think about contemporary Western/global media culture? The diagnosis Innis performed is clear. In the essay *A Plea for Time* he argues that industrial society over-emphasises spatial concerns, neglecting more enduring social values pertaining to traditions and communion in time. Innis contends that "the tragedy of modern culture has arisen as inventions in commercialism have destroyed a sense of time" (1951/1964: 86), and that

“the essence of living in the moment and for the moment is to banish all individual continuity. [...] Sculpture has been sacrificed to music” (ibid: 90). Thus Western, industrial society is a society whose ideological superstructure sustains ephemeral, space-biased communication.

There is indeed a conservative tone to these conclusions. Innis builds his forecast on rather sweeping claims regarding the historical deficiencies of societies failing to strike a *balance* between governments of time and space. His analyses also reproduce nostalgia of a slower past. However, this kind of nostalgia – people’s experiences and conceptions of a speeding reality – might also provide support for Innis’s arguments. Within the social sciences, thinkers like Joshua Meyrowitz (1985) and Paul Virilio (1990/2000) have analysed the social consequences of new media and transportation technologies, pointing to altered perceptions of past-present-future, as well as space and place. Manuel Castells has sketched the contours of an ‘information technological paradigm’ (Castells, 1996/2000: 69-76), which binds emerging technological potentials, that is, digital media, to a particular ideological form, that is, the cult of networks, flows and instantaneous (trans)actions (see also Mattelart, 1996/2000). As a result, a new ephemeral geography of symbolic flows is created beyond the realm of geopolitical space. Perhaps less akin to Innis’s arguments, but just as suggestive, Zygmunt Bauman (2000) has described society of the early 21st century as an ongoing shift from *solid* (heavy) to *liquid* (light) *modernity*.

Communication must be understood here in terms of *both material and symbolic* fluidity, with increasingly vague distinctions between one another. Light communication within the symbolic realm, *mediation*, presupposes and reinforces light communication within the material realm, *transportation*, and vice versa – a process through which the regime of space-biased communication is legitimised and globalised (cf. Virilio, 1990/2000: Ch 2). The lightness of media is paralleled in lightness and flexibility in terms of clothing, belongings, housing, and so on. Work and leisure, production and consumption, are saturated with the ideology of mobility and connectedness, which is essentially a matter of transcending and/or erasing spatial boundaries by means of communication.

If industrial society was a space-biased society, informationalisation implies an extension of this bias, making space itself a less reliable category. We may thus speak of a regime of *hyper-space-biased communication*. While older theories of media and communication, particularly the transmission model, were outcomes of the ‘mass society’ and presupposed clear boundaries between media producers and audiences, between texts and contexts, hyper-space-biased communication embodies a range of *spatial ambiguities* that shake the epistemological foundation of ‘media studies’ (see Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998; Livingstone, 2004).

First, we have the dilemma of *mobility*. While media research has traditionally dealt with media practices occurring in particular contexts, predominantly the domestic sphere (e.g. Morley, 1986; Lull, 1991; Moores, 1993), the saturation of media texts in everyday life implies that a large share of

them are consumed *on the move*. People walking through an ordinary cityscape, or driving their car on a suburban highway, encounter innumerable texts of various kinds, most of them commercial. Although the majority of publicity images are locally fixed, people's own movement creates a sense of *streaming* or *flowing* messages. As John Berger put it in his pioneering work on visual culture, *Ways of Seeing* (1972: 130), "one has the impression that publicity images are continually passing us, like express trains on their way to some distant terminus".

The picture is further complicated if we combine the mobility of people with the increasingly mobile character of *media technologies*. The 'mobile medium' is not an invention of our time; books and magazines can be held up as symbols of the travelling cultures of heavy industrialism, associated with the leisure time on trains, steamliners, etc. In the age of informationalism, however, stationary and immobile media seem more and more obsolete, like *exceptions* to the rule. And as technologies become more portable, they also become more closely *attached to the moving body* – through headsets, ear-phones, palm pilots, laptops, etc. The epistemological issues of a 'mobilised' society have been widely acknowledged during the last years, articulated in attempts to formulate new research approaches, such as 'mobile sociology' (cf. Urry, 1999; 2003). From a media studies point of view, the intersection of mobile people and mobile media raises ambiguities foremost regarding the status of *texts* and *contexts*. Through material and/or symbolic mobility a text may be transformed into a context, and vice versa.

Secondly, the regime of hyper-space-biased communication involves spatial ambiguities in terms of technological and cultural *convergence*. The first kind has been scrutinised by writers such as Castells (1996/2000) and Bolter and Grusin (1999). It refers to the development of multimedia networks, through which technologies are connected and re-articulated as nodes, or hubs, of digital information flows. Technological convergence creates not only new modes of production and consumption, but also rapid alterations within private and public surveillance, for example (cf. Norris et al., 1998; Newburn, 2001). Altogether, particular media technologies, and particular forms of representation, become difficult to separate from one another. This is also to say that one of the traditional starting points for media studies, *the text*, is no longer the given that it used to be – absorbed in complex, open-ended inter-media/inter-text patterns.

Cultural convergence points to the blurred boundaries between 'media texts' in their traditional sense (newspapers, movies, etc.) and other cultural artefacts. By means of the aestheticised post-Fordist logic of production, the contemporary appearance of consumer culture, or image culture (Jansson, 2002a), fosters an evaporation of the distinctions between symbolic and material artefacts, between 'texts' and 'commodities'. The boundaries between imaginary, symbolic and material spaces become negotiable and volatile.

Third, there is a dilemma of *interactivity*, pointing to the new opportunities for interaction at-a-distance, that is, *online*. The term interactivity has thus

far been predominantly associated with Internet-related phenomena, such as MUDs and online communities. Given the process of convergence, however, it is reasonable to speak of interactivity in a much broader sense. An increasing share of contemporary TV programming, for example, involves interactive components. And within certain genres, such as the 'reality-show', the interaction between 'audience', 'producers' and 'participants' is essential to the narrative (as well as to profit-making). The demarcation lines between 'producers' and 'consumers', between contexts of production and consumption, are problematised. Interactivity might also be understood in terms of materialisation, as expressed through the mutual reflexivity among commodity producers and consumers. Refined market research, segmentation and image-making on the one hand, and identity-work and life-styling on the other hand, make way for increasingly 'tailor-made' products. The materialisation of commodity signs is 'narrow-cast' rather than 'broad-cast'; 'personalised' rather than 'massified'. This is not to say that the logic of Fordism has turned altogether obsolete; that consumers are now free to create 'their own' free-floating sign systems – rather that the circuits of cultural classification and materialisation are pluralised and less easily predicted. What media research has to deal with, then, is not just cultural mediations, but also *spatial mediations*, that is, the transformations of sites of production/consumption.

Altogether, the era of hyper-space biased communication imply that media studies are faced with increasingly *ephemeral geographies of communication*, involving at least three epistemological dilemmas: the *ephemerality of texts*; the *ephemerality of contexts*, and the *ephemerality of text-context relationships*. These dilemmas motivate a spatial turn.

The Legacies of the Transmission and Ritual Models

Who says what to whom, through which channel, and with what effect? The classical transmission view of communication was long the dominant theoretical underpinning of (mass) media research, beginning in the 1920s. Analyses of media and communication were predominantly, and explicitly (Lasswell, 1948; Schramm, 1963), functionalistic, emphasizing the distinct 'uses,' 'gratifications' and 'effects' of distinct media 'messages'. In other words, the transmission view of communication is concerned with the linear *extension of messages in space*. And due to its functionalistic, quantitative, even experimental, stance, its full virtues can be reached only through the theoretical *isolation of texts and contexts* – that is, symbolic, social and material spaces – in terms of independent *variables*. The perspective is thus not suited to enlighten the complexities of everyday life, nor the composite cultural transformations of society. In addition, the hyper-space-biased character of late modern communications asks for a rethinking of the categories *text* and *context*.

If we turn to the main competitor of the transmission view, the *ritual view of communication*, we encounter dilemmas of an entirely different kind. Explicitly formulated by the American cultural theorist James W. Carey in his essay *A Cultural Approach to Communication* from 1975 (1989), the ritual view was founded upon a critique of Western, space-biased society. Revitalizing the heritage of pragmatism, the perspective shares many common denominators with the analyses of Harold Innis. According to Carey (ibid: 15-16), ever since the onset of the age of exploration and discovery, Western societies in general, and American society in particular, have epitomised a view of communication as *spatial transmission*. This bias constitutes a social structure through which the older, religiously grounded view of communication as ‘sharing’, ‘participation’ and ‘communion’ has been underplayed in Western thought. Carey asks for a revision, that is, a renewed interest in *communication in time*:

A ritual view of communication is directed not toward the extension of messages in space but toward the maintenance of society in time; not the act of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs (ibid: 18).

What must be underscored, however, is that Carey never goes as far as to argue that the ritual view is to *replace* the transmission view. And although the ritual view involves a critique of space-biased communication and ideology, the perspective is not indifferent to questions of space – quite the opposite. The *cultural turn* towards “ritual action in social life” (ibid: 22) – also inspired by Raymond Williams’s (1961/1980) writings on culture and communication as *common knowledge* and *experience* – is also a turn towards *the meanings of place* and the *places of meaning*, which are continually shared through communication. It is, we may summarise, a turn *from text to context*.

From this follows that the particular acts of writing (encoding) and reading (decoding) become secondary to the socio-cultural contexts, and their history, in which communication takes place. The ritual view stresses broad cultural patterns as they are reproduced in contexts, rather than the meanings of particular texts. Additionally, the context of production is no longer seen as the opposite of the context of consumption; places of encoding are not the antipodes of places of decoding. Rather, encoding/decoding processes are seen as immersed in broader structures of historical continuity.

An empirical example of how this shift affected media studies can be drawn from David Morley’s two major works from the 1980s: *The ‘Nationwide’ Audience* (1980) and *Family Television* (1986). The first study was a continuation of Stuart Hall’s (1980) encoding/decoding model, which in its form, albeit informed by interpretative theory, assembled the transmission view. Morley conducted a number of focus-group interviews in order to unveil how different social groups interpreted the current affairs TV programme *Nationwide*, and how these patterns of reception articulated social experience.

Despite its relevant elaboration of Hall's theory the *Nationwide* study was, as Morley (1992) himself later argued, relatively artificial, isolated as it was from the 'natural contexts' of viewing. In *Family Television*, then, Morley – by means of longer, 'ethnographic' interviews in British working class households – explored the negotiated character of television viewing as *a socially and spatially located praxis*. The focus shifted from the interpretation of particular texts to the social rituals (cf. Carey, 1989) and cultural negotiations that took place in relation to television. *Family Television* testifies that the cultural turn is also a *contextual turn*, which is also an *ethnographic turn*, responding to the breeding social experiences of television culture. If the modern bias of transmission over communion, information over experience, resembled the dominant cultural form of print media, the visibility and domesticity of late modern television revived the ritual, even sacred, aspects of communication.

In conclusion, from a ritual perspective, the ephemerality of texts, the ephemerality of contexts, and the ephemerality of text-context relationships, are no longer significant epistemological dilemmas. Accordingly, the ritual view has often proved problematic when it comes to explaining how communication in itself *produces* spatial ambiguities, and how spatial ambiguities, in turn, affect communication (whether conceived of as 'transmission' or 'ritual'). Morley's epistemological shift from *The 'Nationwide' Audience* to *Family Television* involved, for example, a reconsideration of *media in space*. But it did not problematise the boundaries of this (domestic) space, or how communication might have altered its constitution. The same thing can be said about most ethnographically oriented audience studies of the 1980s and 1990s (e.g. Silverstone and Hirsch, 1992; Gauntlett and Hill, 1999). The contextual turn must therefore not be confused with the later *spatial turn*.

The Spatial Turn in Media Studies

An early account of how media studies and geography might be joined was presented in 1985 by geographers Burgess and Gold in the collection *Geography, the Media and Popular Culture*. In the books' introduction the authors state that "over the last fifteen years, there have been various occasions on which geographers have acknowledged the importance of the media but, by and large, the quality of the ensuing analysis has been inadequate" (ibid: 5-6). They also assert that the contribution of geographers to debates over the social and cultural influence of the media "has been disappointingly small" (ibid: 6).

At that time, the same might have been said of media researchers' inclination to problematise space. But it was also in 1985 that the first important contribution to a spatial turn in media studies was published. In *No Sense of Place*, the social psychologist Joshua Meyrowitz took up the medium theo-

ries of Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan and combined them with Erving Goffman's interactionism. Meyrowitz asserted that electronic media not only changed people's perceptions of space, but also contributed to the alteration of social roles and communities. Since then, these arguments have been widely discussed and often accused of technological determinism. Nevertheless, the book is one of the most influential within media studies – and perhaps even more so in the digital age (see Nyiri, 2005).

Two other books from the same period that had great impact within media studies are Benedict Anderson's (1983) *Imagined Communities* and David Harvey's (1990) *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Anderson's historical study applied a ritualistic view on how media representations, especially print media, had contributed to the production of nation states as imagined communities (and spaces) in early modern Europe. In a Nordic context similar discussions were taken up by ethnologists such as Orvar Löfgren, whose article *Medierna i nationsbygget* (*The Media in the Building of a Nation*) from 1990 is probably one of the most cited works in Swedish media studies (see also Frykman and Löfgren, 1987). Harvey's geographical analysis, in contrast, introduced the concept of *time-space compression* as a means for grasping how late 20th-century media and communications contributed to perceptions of a shrinking world and blurred geopolitical boundaries. Together, Anderson's and Harvey's analyses point to the two-sided geopolitical influence of mediation – its potential to reproduce, as well as alter, pre-existing spatial configurations and understandings.

Within the discipline of media studies, a broader concern with spatiality can be discerned beginning in the mid -1990s and onwards. Once again, the works of David Morley – who published the books *Spaces of Identity* (with Kevin Robins) in 1995 and *Home Territories* in 2000 – is representative of this trend. While *Spaces of Identity* is concerned with the new (imagined) cultural geographies of Europe in the era of global media and political integration, *Home Territories* can be seen as a more direct continuation of *Family Television*, now problematising the concepts of home, household and family. Surveying a range of empirical material from across the globe, Morley moves from the (seemingly) confined domestic spaces of the British working class to the open-ended identities of 'cosmopolitan' and diasporic communities. Space is no longer a given, but is a negotiable, mediated structure, in which the interplay between imaginary, symbolic and material dimensions provides the preconditions for identity work.

Home Territories is also emblematic for an overarching epistemological development, in which media studies are joined with globalisation studies. Other significant works in this tradition include Arjun Appadurai's (1996) *Modernity at Large*, Ulf Hannerz's (1996) *Transnational Connections* and John Tomlinson's (1999) *Globalization and Culture*, as well as anthologies such as *Global Encounters* (Stald and Tufte, 2002), and recently launched journals like *Global Media and Communication* and the *Global Media Journal*.

Another significant aspect of the spatial turn – which is captured well by Morley (2000) – is ethnographic fieldwork in which the spatial frameworks of media practices and media flows are problematised. Two illustrative examples are Nick Couldry's (2000) *The Place of Media Power*, which focuses upon the experiences of people who have themselves entered the scenes of mediation (as 'witnesses' or 'pilgrims'), and Anna McCarthy's (2001) *Ambient Television*, which explores the integration and use of television in public spaces. Integral to this trend is a development towards interdisciplinary work. In the *Passages Project*, Swedish researchers study the patterns of mediation that emanate from and (re)produce a suburban shopping mall in Stockholm (see Becker et al., 2001, 2002; Fornäs in this volume). As the distance between anthropologists, sociologists, geographers and communication scholars decreases, media studies also become intertwined with specialised areas such as urban studies (e.g. Graham and Marvin, 1996, 2001; Sassen, 2002) and tourism studies (e.g. Strain, 2003; Crouch et al., 2005). Other examples of interdisciplinary collaboration are provided in anthologies such as *Virtual Geographies* (Crang et al., 1999), *Media Worlds* (Ginsburg et al., 2002) and *MediaSpace* (Couldry and McCarthy, 2004).

MediaSpace must also be advanced as the most promising attempt thus far to delineate the contours of a spatial theory of communication. In the introductory chapter, Nick Couldry and Anna McCarthy outline *MediaSpace* as a *conceptual realm*, discerning five analytical levels, ranging from the study of "media representations" to the study of "how media-caused entanglements of scale are variously experienced and understood in particular places" (ibid: 5-8). This is a valuable systematisation. What is not highlighted, however, is the new agenda that spatial theory might bring to media studies. *MediaSpace* does not only demarcate a new conceptual realm. It anticipates the geography of communication.

Crossroads

The chapters of this book discuss *communication as spatial production*. Taken as a whole, the book promotes a perspective that transcends the opposition between ritual and transmission, and attempts to resolve the often underestimated relationship between material and symbolic aspects of communication. Within the production of space, transmission and ritual are always interwoven – as are material, symbolic and imaginative processes. The different chapters also draw attention to crossroads where ideas and concepts meet. These crossroads may be interpreted as dimensions of geographies of communication.

First, there is an obvious *ideological and political dimension*. Through the convergence of public and private spheres, as well as global and local ones, ideological issues develop. Geographies of communication produce battles over images and discursive framings of spatial realities. This dimen-

sion is highlighted in several chapters. Richard Ek emphasises a critical perspective on how geopolitical discourses are represented and legitimised through communication. Inka Salovaara-Moring analyses how the spatial metaphor “Fortress Europe” has been used to construct a border between “us and them”. Falkheimer and Thelander, in their respective chapters, give examples of how strategic communication – place branding and tourism advertising – works as an agent of dominant contemporary discourses and stereotypes. Johan Fornäs discusses the commercialisation of public space, and points to how this process is interlaced with struggles over the power of space. But also at a micro-level, as in analyses of the media saturation of private homes, the political dimension is significant. Magnus Andersson shows examples of how political issues in society (division of labour, gender issues, etc.) also saturate private homes. The spatial turn in media studies implies an ideological perspective, since representations, as producers of space, are powerful.

Second, there is as a *technological dimension*, which emphasises at different levels how media technologies shape and are shaped by social relations and communication processes. This dimension is especially linked to the notion of mobility, as mentioned earlier with reference to Harold Innis. The spatial turn is thus also a return to some of the grand ideas of the school of medium theory (with McLuhan and other theorists), but resists the technological determinism that is the weakness of this theory. The focus is laid upon the well-known idea that the cultural forms and uses of media technologies are fundamental in the creation and development of different communities, as Benedict Anderson (1983) stated in his work on “imagined communities”. In this book, Göran Bolin discusses the ways in which media technologies and representations interrelate with geographical landscapes. Jenny Sundén founds her chapter upon digital media geographies (hypertext fiction, computer games, etc.) and shows how they are constructed in dialectic movements between online and offline places.

Third, one might talk about a *textural dimension*. The main focus of interest here is how space is materialised through culture. This implies a position in which social and cultural analysis resists traditional dichotomies between structure and agency. Texture is produced and interpreted through enactment and negotiation. As mentioned in André Jansson’s chapter, there is thus a link between texture and Anthony Giddens’s (1984) structuration theory, aiming to analyse the interactive space between social structures and human agency. Texture is a communicative space, material and symbolic, in which structure may be reproduced as well as altered; decoded as well as recoded. Similarly, in his analysis of tourist photography, Jonas Larsen stresses the power of human agency and describes people as producers, rather than consumers, of visual space. Stina Bengtsson uses Erving Goffman’s theory to challenge the division of private and public (back and front region) in the mediated modern home. In her analysis of travelogues, Amanda Lagerkvist shows how representations, travelling and experience are embedded in one

another, producing a mediatised sense of space. Anne Marit Waade goes into the aesthetic aspects of the textural dimension by focusing upon televisual representations of tourism.

Ideology, technology and texture are wide concepts with interdisciplinary reach. But, as we try to show in this book, it is reasonable to view the geography of communication as a knowledge field in which these concepts are used in a distinct way. Their uses may take on different shapes, but can all be linked to one crucial issue: What *importance* do media production, representation and consumption have in the shaping of different spaces?

Mapping and analysing the field

This anthology is organised around four themes. Firstly, authors from media studies and geography map out and reflect upon the epistemological *field* of geography of communication. Secondly, four writers focus upon the theoretical and empirical problems of *spatial mediations*. This includes analyses of the growing cultural convergence (see above) in place branding and visual culture. Thirdly, the focus is moved towards theoretical and empirical analyses of the *mediatisation of space*: how the media have become omnipresent in contemporary society, and how they are used in negotiating the boundaries between private and public spheres, between work and leisure. Fourth, the book moves into the fields of imagination and a *mediatised sense of space*. Through different empirical cases, the discussions explore spatial decoding and recoding processes based upon concepts such as phantasmagoria, navigation, coordination and mobility. The three latter parts of the book are inspired by Lefebvre's (1974/1991) triadic model of spatial production, and correspond to the dimensions of *representations of space* (II), *spatial practices* (III), and *spaces of representation* (IV). Lefebvre's model must be regarded as a cornerstone for future investigation of the geographies of communication. This also implies that there are no clear boundaries between sections II-IV of this book – only variations of perspective. As most chapters will demonstrate, space is produced through a complex interplay between spatial practices, mediations and imaginations.

Mapping the field

The human geographer Birgit Stöber describes how the field of media geography has developed in human geography. She agrees with Nigel Thrift's (2000: 493) statement that there exists "remarkably little direct work on the media in geography", but also shows that it is a field that is now receiving increasing attention. Her chapter outlines some of the work on mass media done by human geographers, and gives an insight as to the relevance of this

sub-discipline for both geographers and other social theorists. Geographical studies on media are influenced primarily by the technological progress of the media over time, but also by changing mass media policies, and, to a certain extent, by developments in media research. Stöber also shows that there have been few links thus far between media and communication research and the sub-discipline of media geography.

Richard Ek, also a human geographer, elaborates on the ontological and epistemological issues of space, place and communication. He takes his position within the contemporary re-theorisation of space, which deconstructs modernist thought. First, this means focusing upon how space and knowledge of space are used as a geopolitical discourse and power source. Second, it means that traditional spatial ontology (as absolute) is questioned in favour of a fluid spatial ontology based on the notion of relational space. This re-theorising of space, epistemology and ontology, has resulted in two major propositions. The first is that space is produced or constituted through action, performance and interaction. The second is that space cannot be held in fixed sections or regular geometries, since it is transformed by a multitude of productions, practices and performances and therefore necessarily entails plurality and multiplicity. Ek also points out the need for discursive reflexivity among communication geographers, since their work cannot be separated from the production of space itself.

Göran Bolin discusses media landscapes, as structures of media technologies on the one hand, and as structures of texts on the other. Starting from the fundamental concept of media, not often defined, Bolin analyses the relationships between concepts such as terrain and map. The theoretical discussion is linked to a case study of the role of the media in social and cultural change in Sweden and Estonia. Bolin argues for the use of spatial metaphors and concepts in understanding these late modern processes, and points especially to the social power embedded in the media's function as a creator of "landscapes of representations".

Finally, André Jansson presents a theoretical analysis, which introduces the concept of texture. He advances the concept as a way to adapt to contemporary social and cultural transformations, notably the eroding boundaries between material and symbolic structures of space. Texture points to the communicative fabric of space, produced at the intersection of communicative/spatial praxis and the structural characteristics of space and place. Texture is thus an intermediary and dynamic concept that allows us to think of space in terms of a communicative "fullness", rather than as a container or a mere sign.

The Mediation of Space

Anne Marit Waade provides insight into the aesthetic strategies and modes of reception represented in *Pilot Guides*, a televised British backpacker travel series. Using Urry's (2002) concept of "the tourist gaze", as well as Jansson's

(2002b) “hyper tourism”, Waade reflects upon tourist experiences in global culture. Instead of speaking of representation, staging or mediation of reality, she argues that mediated tourism places should be seen as fantastic and real at the same time – as hyper reality.

Jesper Falkheimer goes into the field of strategic communication, constituted by the intentions of different actors or organisations. The increase of place branding and marketing campaigns aimed to create attention and compete in a global imaginative space is an empirical fact. Falkheimer analyses the field of place branding from a communicative angle, especially the collision between local journalism and the cosmopolitan advertising discourse. Using the case of the Öresund Region, a trans-national brand emanating from the building of the Öresund Bridge between Denmark and Sweden, dominant place branding theory is confronted with empirical complexity. Falkheimer argues for a political perspective on place branding and an integration of media and cultural theory in its theory and praxis.

Åsa Thelander analyses the visual aspects of tourism advertising. Using ads from a Swedish daily newspaper, she shows how Nature becomes Culture through different stereotypes. The traditional idealisation of “exotic places” is mainly a visual convention that influences image destination formation. In one way, it is a simple process of making nature a commodity. But Thelander also shows how these images may be recoded and (re)negotiated by audiences and tourist photographers.

Finally, Inka Salovaara-Moring provides a theoretical and empirical case study of the relations between spatial metaphors and strategic political discourses. She argues for a closer association between media and communication studies and human geography, and explains the historical aversion to spatiality in media studies as caused by the historical dominance of functions, systems and social structures over time and space dimensions. The empirical case she presents deals with the construction of “us and them” within the European Union. The media discourse is shown here to be an agent of dominant political-economical conceptions of space.

The Mediatisation of Space

Magnus Andersson approaches the communication geographical field from a micro-level, the private home. Using qualitative interviews, he closes into the backstage of everyday life and finds a place that is challenged by late modern technologies. The private sphere is also, sometimes, a semi-public space where communication technologies connect private life to global flows. One may call it a process of domestic globalisation. People’s everyday uses of the media can be regarded as strategies for fixing the meaning of the home, balancing between alteration/expansion and stability/closure. This does not merely mean increased individual liberty and empowerment, according to Andersson. Instead, he shows how global cultural processes influence peo-

ple's lifestyles and perceptions of home in relation to pre-established political and social divisions.

Stina Bengtsson also enters the domestic sphere, but focuses upon how mediatisation contributes to people's ritual construction of temporal and spatial boundaries between work and leisure. Bengtsson's case study deals with three individuals working from home. Using Goffman's social psychological concepts, such as "frame" and "region", she explores how media use takes on symbolic meaning as it defines spaces, roles and behaviour. As in Andersson's chapter, the media are not only treated as forces that blur modern divisions between work/leisure and public/private, but also as means for re-establishing the very same categories in a more fluid symbolic space.

Johan Fornäs takes his analysis into a late modern shopping mall. His chapter is based on the media-ethnographic and interdisciplinary *Passages* project. Studying consumption and communication in a shopping centre, the researchers pointed out the crucial importance of space and place in understanding media use and circulation. Fornäs's analysis highlights commercial urban spaces as sites of communication, experience and power. They frame complex flows of communication between individuals, texts and institutions. The density of flows also makes shopping malls arenas of contemporary power struggles.

The final chapter in this section takes place in another expansive late modern experience arena, the spa. Ethnologist Tom O'Dell examines how spa spaces are constructed and mediated. Comparing how spas take shape in their promotional material and actually organise themselves materially and spatially, O'Dell shows how "old" values and structures are re-reproduced, albeit within a new discourse. The relation between the mediated medical rational logic and realms of magic and mystery is, according to O'Dell, not a collision but a logical combination.

A Mediatized Sense of Space

Jonas Larsen explores and rethinks the role of photography in tourism. Larsen suggests that the nature of tourist photography is a complex and "theatrical" one, of corporeal, expressive actors, scripts and choreographies, staged and enacted "imaginative geographies". Instead of seeing tourist photography as pre-formed and framed, Larsen emphasises that it is performed, and is an issue of active framing. Furthermore, the influence of digital photography has increased this performative side of tourist photography.

Amanda Lagerkvist discusses the most mediated nation in the world, the US, in terms of a "thirdspace". Based on how imaginary America was constructed in Swedish travel writing during 1945-1963, Lagerkvist focuses upon how spatial experience was related to the massive exposure of mediated images and ideals. The analysis confronts late modern theory about post-tourism with the historical fact that "lived textuality" of distant places was,

already in the mid20th century, a cultural characteristic of everyday life and travel experience.

Jenny Sundén argues against the image of Internet as a placeless medium, located everywhere and nowhere. Instead, she examines the strong relationships between digital storytelling and spatially located media use, using examples from three environments: hypertext fiction, text-based virtual worlds (MUDs) and computer games. These media genres do not only represent space, but become new spaces in which users navigate their way. They create new virtual senses of place, somewhere between reality and fiction. Sundén argues for a stronger emphasis on grounded place instead of universal space in cybercultural studies. At the very end, the Swedish ethnologist Orvar Löfgren provides a postscript in which he reflects upon the main arguments of the book...the changes in media studies, the proposed spatial turn and interdisciplinary perspectives...

Note

1. The term "communication geography" has been used sporadically in a manner similar to what we propose here. Notably, there is a specialty group within the Association of American Geographers (<http://www.communication-geography.org>) dealing with this field. Within media and cultural studies, however, no similar arena seems yet to exist, although there are relevant fora for discussing space and culture in general (e. g., <http://www.spaceandculture.org>).

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I

Mapping the Field

Chapter 2

Media Geography

From Patterns of Diffusion to the Complexity of Meanings

Birgit Stöber

Since their emergence, mass media have had a decisive impact on perceptions of time and space on different scales – global, national, regional and local. Despite the fact that several geographers have hinted at mass media's significance in constructing space and communities, there exists "remarkably little direct work on the media in geography" (Thrift 2000:493). Nevertheless, beginning a number of years ago, "a geography of media does now exist, albeit in fragmentary form" (ibid). As further proof several seminars and workshops can be mentioned, among them the workshop "Geographies and the Media" in summer 2005, organised by the IGU Commission "The cultural approach in Geography".

This chapter outlines work on mass media, conducted by human geographers, that has been of vital importance to the development of the field. Providing an insight into this new sub-discipline and its methodological development will highlight its relevancy for both geographers and other social scientists. We begin with a concise introduction to the geography of media, describing the main developments in the field in more or less chronological order. It will be shown that geographical studies on mass media are influenced by the technical progress of the media over time, but also by changing mass media policies and, to a certain extent, developments in media research.

Before summarising the selected geographical literature and its main approach to mass media, this chapter presents an attempt to explain the relatively weak engagement in media research among geographers.

Mass Media and Geographers

There is no straightforward way to delineate the work done on mass media by geographers, but as Burgess and Gold (1985:8) suggest, "for convenience, we may observe a distinction between research which emphasises media

flows and that which focuses primarily upon media content". Early geographical studies on media were concerned primarily with the spatial organisation of media institutions, but the focus has recently shifted increasingly to media products and the spatial relevance of their content. Methodologically, this has entailed a move from diffusion studies and probabilistic models to the interpretation of texts and images. The variety of content studied has also broadened: Thrift (2000) finds an increasing amount of attention being paid to sound, touch, smell and taste.

In the context of globalisation, both aspects of mass media – flow and content – are attracting the attention of researchers who study mass media as not only a branch of a growing global industry but also as powerful cultural products. In other words, media geographers with an interest in globalisation are concerned with both the economic consequences of multinational media activity and the socio-cultural impacts of the production and worldwide distribution of standardised images and texts (see, e.g., Morely and Robins 1995). Another line of inquiry focuses on the new digital media and their impact on geography under the catchword 'cyberspace' (see e.g. Dodge and Kitchen 2001).

Media geography is thus a highly fragmentary field, which makes it difficult to review its literature without getting mired down in a dull exercise in stock-taking. Therefore, the focus in this chapter lies on the main stages of the field's development. The following presentation primarily embraces explicitly geographical work on newspapers, radio and television, and thereby on texts and images in a more general sense.

From Patterns to Processes

No single scholar, unique event or specific publication can be seen as the initiator or commencement of a geography of media. In contrast, traditional studies in transport geography and communication geography, such as diffusion studies and work on time-space compression, can be seen as forerunners to a geography of media.

Already by the 1950s, a few German geographers¹ were concerned with mass media, more explicitly newspapers, with regard to their spatial organisation and distribution. A prominent exponent of diffusion studies is Swedish geographer Hägerstrand, whose work on diffusion patterns "springs from the long tradition in European cultural geography and cultural history going back to the work of Ratzel" (Hägerstrand 1965:27).

In his article *Aspects of the spatial structure of social communication and the diffusion of information*, Hägerstrand writes "diffusion of innovation is by definition a function of communication. One cannot adopt an innovation which is not one's own invention unless one has first seen it, heard of it, or read about it" (ibid). In this article, Hägerstrand aims "to understand – and

perhaps predict – the time-space course of diffusion of innovation through society”. This he attempts through stochastic sampling, because as a social scientist, as he calls himself, he is mostly interested in processes of a probabilistic nature. Hägerstrand empirically mapped the diffusion of Rotary Clubs in Europe from 1922 until 1950 and studied the more precise relation between time of adoption and size of city in Sweden to illuminate “the function of social communication in diffusion of innovation”.

He concludes that the pattern of growth was not fundamentally different from what he had observed on a much smaller scale when examining the diffusion of information within a farming population. Mapping the spread of an innovation through a farming community, he discovered that “the links between individuals in circles of acquaintance and friendship play a remarkably important role for directing information and influence” (Hägerstrand 1965:28).

Hägerstrand’s work on diffusion of innovations provided first and foremost a basis for statistical modelling of such processes, though it also paved the way for work extending beyond a simulation or forecasting framework such as *time geography*.

Place Name Counting and Some Media Theory

Related to the idea of diffusion, in the beginning of the 1980s the geographical coverage of news reporting had relevance for some geographers. Since “news reports constitute a major source of spatial information” for Australian geographer Walmsley, he published articles on both *Spatial bias in Australian news reporting* (Walmsley 1980) and on *Mass media and spatial awareness* (Walmsley 1982). In these articles, he outlines the role of the mass media as a source of public information and discusses different approaches that have been used in the study of media impact. With this work, Walmsley was among the first geographers to refer to media research.

Interested in understanding how media-based information flows can contribute to spatial awareness, Walmsley examines the spatial information contained in Australian mass media during a period of ten days in spring 1978, selected through random sampling. In order to analyse the spatial information content of the news, Walmsley (1980:344) suggests *place name counting* as the “most convenient technique”, since it gives an “indication of the intensity as well as the geographical spread of news reporting. Moreover, the frequency with which a news item is repeated positively influences the audience’s ability to recall the item” (ibid). At the same time, Walmsley points to some disadvantages of this technique such as the fact that *place name counting* “pays no attention to whether the news about a given location is favourable or unfavourable. Nor does the technique take account of the fact that the format of the news and even the language used can be symbolic” (ibid). Though Walmsley seeks to describe how media informa-

tion flows can contribute to spatial awareness, his use of quantitative methods like *place name counting* may be ill-suited for exposing the underlying meaning(s) of content or any effects on the spatial awareness of the audience.

In the mid-1980s, a number of geographers claimed a lack of interest in mass media among the geographic academia; this included German geographer Blotevogel (1984) as well as British Burgess and Gold (1985), who published the first comprehensive anthology of media and popular culture. Before we focus on the work of Burgess, who, according to Barnett (1998:380), is one of the new “master weavers” closely identified with the ‘cultural turn’ since the early 1990s, the studies of Blotevogel will be presented.

Zeitungsregionen

Hans Heinrich Blotevogel was especially interested in the growing significance of regional mass media within a national framework. In 1984, he published an article on the spatial organisation of the daily press and the interdependence between the press and settlement patterns in the Federal Republic of Germany. Blotevogel considers media to be a geographical research topic for at least two main reasons: First, “functional regions of central places are as well communication regions as regional advertisement markets” and second, “the mass medium newspaper stabilised the existing central place orientations and ties in with living spaces through spatially selective information flows” (Blotevogel 1984:79). Additionally, Blotevogel identifies the press as an important factor in the development and maintenance of a ‘spatial sense of togetherness’ (*räumliches Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl*) and regional identity. He distinguishes among three types of daily press: tabloids, national subscription newspapers and purely regional or local subscription newspapers. On the basis of these three categories, Blotevogel gives a profound overview of the history, development and spatial distribution of the German press in the post-war era (at that time, it was the Federal Republic of Germany and West Berlin). Mapping the different types of newspapers by place of publication and distribution area yielded a fine-meshed net of newspaper regions over the entire territory of the Federal Republic of Germany.

At that time, Blotevogel was primarily interested in the spread of media in a given area rather than its content, which aligns him with regional scientists who apply statistical techniques to examining spatial issues. Nevertheless, in his conclusion Blotevogel poses open questions to stimulate further research with a focus on the presumed powerful role of mass media. These questions, along with Blotevogel’s empirical findings, show clearly the relevance of intensified examination of the daily press from the point of view of human and regional geography. With his concluding questions, Blotevogel invites a wider discussion concerning the role of regional media in the (re)production of spatial consciousness and regional identity. At the same

time, he hints at the possibility of regional identity actually regressing due to mass media.

At this point it seems appropriate to refer to Canadian geographer Edward Relph and his book *Place and placelessness* (1976). Relph was one of the first geographers to discuss mass media and its relation to spatial everyday experiences, doing so with a strong focus on the (in his opinion, harmful) impact of mass media on the diversity of places and identities.

Place and Placelessness

In *Place and placelessness* Relph does not analyse any specific medium or its implications for geography, space or place; instead, he attempts to inquire into different kinds of experienced geographies. This goal reflects his discontent with the mechanical and abstract analyses of behaviour that are “simplifying the world into easily represented structures or models that ignore much of the subtlety and significance of everyday experience” (Relph 1976 preface). In contrast, thus, he aims “to explore place as a phenomenon of the geography of the lived-world of our everyday experiences” (Relph 1976:7). He does so explicitly in the spirit of phenomenology, which conceptualises *places* not as abstractions but as directly experienced phenomena of the lived-world full of diversity, meaning and ongoing activities. To Relph, places are important sources of individual and communal identity, and can be “profound centers of human existence to which people have deep emotional and psychological ties” (Relph 1976:141).

Relph considers first-hand experiences decisive for the creation and maintenance of significant and diverse places. In this context, he draws attention to mass media as a tool for transportation or transmission of ideas that has “reduced the need for face-to-face contact, freed communities from their geographical constraints, and hence reduced the significance of place-based communities” (Relph 1976:92). Media, which in fact are driven by a select group of people – a “few experts”, as he writes – “conveniently provide simplified and selective identities for places beyond the realm of immediate experience of the audience, and hence tend to fabricate a pseudo-world of pseudo-places” (Relph 1976:58). In contrast to the lived-world full of first-hand experiences, media offer only second-hand experiences. Thus, media are associated with placelessness. To Relph, ‘placelessness’ is “a weakening of the identity of places to the point where they not only look alike but feel alike and offer the same bland possibilities for experience” (Relph 1976:90). This connection between media and placelessness does not mean that media themselves are necessarily placeless, but rather that they appear to end up in an increasing monotony of places without any authenticity since they convey standardised images, tastes and fashions worldwide. The trend is toward an environment of few significant places, a placeless geography, “a labyrinth of endless similarities”.²

Relph does not conceal his concern about the power and influence of media, and is convinced “that people are vulnerable to the effects of the media constructions for these empty and trivial stereotypes increasingly influence and distort place experiences” (Burgess and Gold 1985:17). According to Relph, mass media have allowed the intrusion of national interest and value into local life and have replaced the qualities of relatedness and community with a uniform, inauthentic mass society.

Relph makes no mention of or comment on media theory, but in a footnote provides insight into his view of media effects, considering media as being “directed at ‘average’ people”, essentially one-way and laden with ready-made attitudes (Relph 1976:92). This view reflects an image of the inactive audience, manipulated and narcotised by the media.

The inactive audience at the mercy of powerful mass media reappears in Hägerstrand’s article *Decentralisation and Radio Broadcasting: on the ‘possibility space’ of a communication technology* published in the *European Journal of Communication* in 1986. In this work, more an essay than a scientific study, Hägerstrand discusses the impact of mass media on social organisation in Sweden.

Over several pages, Hägerstrand traces a changing social organisation from a pre-industrial society to a system society, the latter an outcropping of “the growth of our capability to move people and goods and send messages” (Hägerstrand 1986:11). According to Hägerstrand, contemporary society is characterised mainly by a separation of dwelling and work and the replacement of face-to-face contacts with general anonymity in human relations. Regarding the new technologies, Hägerstrand bemoans how broadcasting has isolated people from each other by eroding location-based contacts. In this context, he (1986:19) calls broadcasting a “hierarchy-promoting instrument” whereby “only one person or a few perform and a vast audience passively listens”. The inactive audience emerges several times in Hägerstrand’s text, for instance when he writes that radio “binds the listener to a timetable designed by others”, and that the television is “clearly a still more powerful prison-warder than radio” (Hägerstrand 1986:20). In this context, he points to a clear qualitative difference between knowledge obtained through a combination of personal observation and through the media, versus knowledge founded exclusively on media products. Nonetheless, Hägerstrand (1986:18) points out later in his article the many advantages that the system society offers, adding “that a return back to a vanished way of life with its limited opportunities and perspectives is not something to wish for”. In order to (re-)establish and enhance some of the lost qualities, Hägerstrand suggests a strengthening of internal communication flows in regions, in part attainable with the help of regional broadcasting, which has “a responsibility to contribute to territorial integration” (Hägerstrand 1986:24). According to this view, the management of audiovisual space has important consequences for the construction of social identity (see Schlesinger 1991).

Hägerstrand's essay resonates with the work of Relph in accentuating face-to-face contact and the varying quality of knowledge as it is acquired either first or second hand. Both scholars value knowledge based exclusively on media products less than knowledge obtained through personal experience, but other studies explore the idea that people in a given agglomeration can never know their entire living area first-hand. Indeed, a population's knowledge about its habitat is dependent on second-hand experiences of the kind that are available only from mass media.

Regional Media and the Question of Spatial Consciousness

Blotevogel and his colleague Hommel examined the creation of regional consciousness in regional news reporting. They examined different regional newspapers in the Ruhr district for evidence supporting their assumption that a medium such as a newspaper influences regional populations' images and values spatially as well as temporally³. This assumption rests on the above-mentioned idea that residents of an agglomeration such as *Ruhrgebiet* cannot know their entire region first-hand; rather, their knowledge about the area is based on the information they receive from the (regional) mass media. In contrast to Relph and Hägerstrand, who consider second-hand experiences detrimental to the creation and maintenance of significant and diverse places, Blotevogel and Hommel see them as decisive for the creation of particular places.

Blotevogel and Hommel's analysis comprised two steps: first, they studied regional news in six newspapers for two months in 1987; then, they examined one of the papers (*Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*) over a period of thirty years (two months during each of the years 1957, 1967 and 1987). This latter longitudinal analysis was split into a quantitative and a qualitative part. The quantitative part tracked the use of the area's name (*Ruhrgebiet*) in the text, recording the frequency with which the name appeared as well as the position of the name within the text. Recognising the insufficiency of pure place name counting, Blotevogel and Hommel designed their quantitative inquiry with more detailed parameters than Walmsley's study. In the qualitative analysis, the two geographers looked at 87 articles (out of 3,410) and their representation of the area. Having discovered the main news issues and portrayals of the area in the papers within the six selected months, the researchers inquired as to which (groups of) people received a voice in the articles and how they were presented. Additionally, the two geographers were interested in whether the editorial staff emphasised certain regional characteristics – positive or negative – that might specifically influence readers' regional identities.

Blotevogel and Hommel found an increase in reporting with a regional focus beginning in 1957. According to the researchers, this increase shows how editors increasingly act as 'image producers' in line with the newspaper's strategy of binding readers to the paper through conscious regional coverage.

Totally independent from these German studies and almost at the same time, Finnish geographer Anssi Paasi also studied newspapers related to the issue of regional consciousness in four Finnish provinces. "Since the provincial newspaper is the most concrete and significant factor which brings the ordinary citizen face-to-face with his region every day", Paasi (1986:24) analysed the content of main provincial newspapers in the areas concerning the article's spatial information (international, national, provincial and local levels). While the overall research aim was the examination of the institutionalisation of four provinces, the analytical focus was on "articles which emphasise the collective characteristics of the region or its people in comparison with other regions and their inhabitants" (ibid). In this context, Paasi calls newspapers "creators of a time and space-specific social reality" (ibid).

Contrary to Relph and Hägerstrand, both Blotevogel and Paasi work on the assumption that media are an important source for the production and maintenance of spatial images and values.

In 1985, the anthology *Geography, the media and popular culture* was published as the first work directed explicitly at the topic. In the introduction the two editors, British geographers Jacquelin Burgess and John Gold, bemoan the "disappointingly small contribution of geographers" to the debate surrounding the mass media's impact on social, economic and cultural life. Equally impoverished were discussions of the content or significance of information flows, in which scholars settle for counting place names or get stuck in "clichés about 'global villages' and 'wired societies'" (Burgess and Gold 1985:6). The authors characterise the research situation up to the mid-1980s as being primarily concerned with messages in space and having strong behavioural overtones.

Burgess, who had studied media and the environment since the late 1970s, contributes with her own paper in *Geography, the media and popular culture*. Her chapter, titled *News from nowhere: the press, the riots and the myth of the inner city*, deals with "the ways in which the British national daily papers interpreted the 'riots' of the spring and summer of 1981" (Burgess 1985:193) in the cities of Brixton, London, Liverpool and Manchester. Summarising approaches to mass media studies by distinguishing sharply between North American and European research, Burgess places her own work in the latter group by pointing to the importance of the production and interpretation of meaning. In this context she writes that mass media play a highly important role in "the appropriation and interpretation of the meanings of social reality. They have the capability to shape conceptions of our physical, economic, political and social environments." (Burgess 1985:194). This is followed by a discussion of the process of news production by newspapers, touching on issues of *hegemony* and *myth* with reference to the work of Stuart Hall, David

Morely and Roland Barthes. Barthes's semiotic theory plays into her analysis of the ideological role of the texts of six selected daily newspapers – both accredited papers and sensationalist tabloids – in creating a common-sense understanding of 'the inner city' as an "alien place". Burgess points out that newspapers provide both linguistic and visual text; therefore, not only written text but also photographs and cartoons play a part in her analysis. With the help of the selected newspapers, Burgess tells the stories of the disturbances from April to November 1981 and demonstrates "the ways in which media practices determine the selection and presentation of events" (Burgess 1985:222).

Two years later, Burgess published *Landscapes in the living room: television and landscape research*, a review of television research. In the course of this publication, Burgess repeats her suggestion that linguistics and semiotics are suitable tools for the analysis of landscape as text. In this context, she briefly presents the ideas of Saussure (semiology) and Peirce (semiotics) that "have played an important role in the interpretation of film images" (Burgess 1987:4). Additionally, Burgess introduces some basic film terms concerning camera movements, camera framing, etc. in order to provide the vocabulary necessary for the analysis of television products.

Mass media theory came into active use when Burgess and Wood were asked by the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) and its advertising agency to evaluate the impact of their advertising campaign on the location decisions of small businesses that had moved into new industrial units in the Isle of Dogs Enterprise Zone. This campaign ran in 1982 and 1983 and included posters, newspaper ads and television spots. In the paper *Decoding Docklands*, Burgess and Wood (1988) base parts of their analysis on sources beyond the questionnaire studies popular in economic geography, since these "tend to take what people say at face value" (Burgess and Wood 1988:116).

The two geographers combine semi-structured interviews with several companies operating in the Enterprise Zone, storyboards and semiotic analysis in order to decode the commercials. This multifaceted approach is necessary when confronted with complex place images; the interplay between personal, economic and cultural factors requires an "interpretive stance – one which recognises that language and meaning are not self-evident" (ibid). The combination of these qualitative methods, according to Burgess and Wood (1988:116), gave "insights into subjective aspects of the process of location decision-making that cannot be explored in other ways".

Burgess follows up on this work with *The production and consumption of environmental meanings in the mass media: a research agenda for the 1990s*. In this article she questions "why the majority of geographers so consistently fail to recognise the significance of the (media) industry" (Burgess 1990:141) in light of the unquestionably large number of people who consume different media products everyday. She suggests that this failure to engage more extensively in media research is in part due to widespread

assumptions that “media communications have little relevance for geographers” and that “the research is being done by other social scientists” (ibid).

Using several case studies, both her own and those of other geographers, Burgess raises doubts about these assumptions. Coverage of issues relating to environmental pollution, natural disasters or ‘green politics’ is, Burgess (1990:141) argues, full of geographical messages and meanings. Thus, the challenge is rather to grasp the full amount of material. Most social scientists have concentrated on media’s effects on public attitudes to sex, violence, crime, politics, welfare issues and popular entertainment; but research on environmental issues or the construction of locality in media texts is rather seldom up to the 1990’s. Another explanation for the lack of interest among geographers in media might be the perception that “media research is tainted by behaviouralism” (Burgess 1990:142). This is according to Burgess “perhaps the most damaging assumption” since it is based on the idea that a “message consists of bits of information, defined as the manifest meaning of words – and which, therefore, can be readily quantified” (Burgess 1990:143). This idea stands for a “naïve reductionism” and should rather be replaced by a view that accepts media messages as “complex ideological discourses composed of verbal and visual signs with meaning encoded into them through the operation of pre-given communicative codes or rules” (ibid). Thus, *reality* can never be something ‘mirrored’ in the media, rather it is “constructed through shared, culturally-specific, symbolic systems of verbal and visual communications, including those of the media” (ibid).

These observations are clearly based on the work of Burgess’s European colleagues in media research, and she uses them to immunise her work from the above-mentioned misgivings among geographers. Furthermore, she argues for a much closer cooperation between geographers and different groups of both media producers and media consumers.

In the course of her attempts to establish a context for media research in geography, Burgess refers (as she had already done in 1985) to the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at Birmingham University and the work of Stuart Hall, as well as to David Morley and his audience studies. She argues for the consideration of four aspects in media geography: the production process behind media texts; the text itself; the consumption of the text by audiences who invariably produce different readings of the same text; and the incorporation of these meanings into people’s daily lives (see Burgess 1990:146).

This article, which has been called a “key piece of research in media geography” (Kneale 1999), does not provide a ‘recipe’ for studying media as a geographer. Rather, Burgess presents vital groundwork from cultural and media studies to a wider geographical audience – especially in view of the fact that this article was published in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*.

All in all, during the course of the 1980s, several human geographers became more aware of and involved in social and cultural theory, and urged more sensitive ethnographic and interpretative approaches. This new inter-

est led to a focus on “the role of language, meaning, and representations in the constitution of ‘reality’ and knowledge of reality” (Barnett 1998:380).

The Media as Creator of Local and Regional Culture

Anssi Paasi, who discusses things including the role of education and mass media as crucial instruments in the (re)production of socio-spatial consciousness and spatial representations, is one exponent of this new line of inquiry. In *The media as creator of local and regional culture*, Paasi states that “the role of the media has been one of the most important themes in the discussion concerning regional cultures and what shapes and maintains their identities” (Paasi 1989:153). In this context, he points out that we receive information from the mass media about other people and cultures that may promote international understanding. On the contrary, research has shown that mass media actively produce and maintain *stereotypes*, which “can serve to drift in the opposite direction” (Paasi 1989:154). With a strong focus on the issue of identity, Paasi assigns regional and local radio, television and newspapers an important role “in the creation of a specific *social reality*” (Paasi 1989:160). He does this despite the (supposed) growth of global mass culture and disappearance of the uniqueness of places and localities. In this context, Paasi refers to Relph and his idea of *placelessness*; however, while echoing Relph’s general concern he also points to the fact that the cultural diversity at people’s local levels is actually growing.

In his own analysis, Paasi (1996) discusses the ideological and cultural construction of territories and boundaries in the Finnish-Russian border area. His work is concerned with representations, signs and metaphors in (historical) texts, autobiographies, people’s stories, geography textbooks, symbols, maps, paintings and photographs. Studying the role of language and discourses in the construction of regions and nations and their identities, Paasi explicitly employs a “narrative geography” (see van Houtum 2000).

Visualised Geographies

British Gillian Rose (1996; 2001) is one of few geographers with a particular interest in methodological questions concerning mass media. As “many kinds of geographical knowledge have been and continue to be produced through a wide range of visual media”, in *Teaching Visualised Geography* Rose (1996:282) argues for a critical interpretation of visual materials. She criticises the few methodological discussions to date, but emphasises the potential utility of the semiotic analysis offered by Burgess and Wood.

Drawing on lecture notes from her own teaching experience, Rose’s article explores the premise that visual representations of place, space and land-

scape can never be taken as “straightforward mirrors of reality” (Rose 1996:283). Rather, images’ meanings are “understood as constructed through a range of complex and thoroughly social processes and sites of signification” (ibid). The methodological challenge is then to track how images produce a particular representation of the world, and not ask how truthfully an image copies the real world. Rose is interested in the complexity of meaning and is therefore not convinced by the work of content analysts interpreting visual images. Her choice is to focus on the intricately woven network of producers, media and audiences taking part in the production of meaning.

In the course of her article, Rose explores a list of research questions concerning the technological, aesthetic and social aspects of these three sites – production, media product and audience. This inquiry forms the basis for her analytical discussion of a photograph by Robert Doisneau, and includes questions concerning the circumstances of the image’s production, the choice of motive and colours in the image itself, and the different spectators and their interpretation of the image.

Regarding the question of audience, Rose refers to cultural studies that have convincingly demonstrated the multiplicity of audiences’ meaning production. In fact, “audiences can and actively do rework the meanings produced at the production and text nodes, and Burgess (1990) has argued strongly that geographers must not consider the audiences of an image as passive” (ibid).

Furthermore, Rose considers it crucial to pay particular attention to the analyst as audience member. “Unlike their more ethnographically inspired colleagues, those geographers responding to ‘the cultural turn’ by examining visual images have rarely engaged in self-reflection about their own specificity as one kind of audience for the text they are interpreting.” (Rose 1996:292) It is important to recognise the bias of the geographer’s account of an image’s meaning.

In the book *Visual methodologies*, Rose (2001) discusses different sites, methods and modalities for interpreting visual materials – largely as she had done in the article presented above, but now in a much more exhaustive way, explicitly enumerating the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches and methods. After briefly summarising the debate on the importance of the visual to contemporary Western society, Rose presents various methods for image interpretation with their contingent analytical assumptions, as well as the empirical focus of her book.

Clearly, Rose’s book on visual methodologies has inspired other geographers in their work on visual material. Among them is this chapter’s author, who studied the role of mass media in region-building projects, particularly the Danish-Swedish Øresund region (Stöber 2001; 2004; 2005). In my work, the empirical focus lies on a cross-border television program that is analysed by means of mixing methods such as content analysis, critical examination of single reports and discussions of several interviews with editors, journal-

ists and other people involved in the production process. Another work methodologically inspired by the work of Rose is that by Felgenhauer et al. (2005), who studied the making of *Mitteldeutschland* by focusing on a German television series. In their project, the researchers take an approach that “covers the entire communication chain from the editorial process to the film material up to everyday language use of the programs target group” (Felgenhauer et al. 2005:45).

Concluding Discussion – Media Geography

A review of the existing literature reveals how little direct work on mass media has been done by human geographers and how little geographers have taken part in the development of media research. With some years' delay some geographers refer to media research, but are not actively involved in the field's development. One explanation for this can be found in the relatively late adoption (especially in Germany and Scandinavia) of the 'cultural turn' (or better, 'cultural turns'), which seems to be decisive for a focus on mass media within human geography (see Simonsen 2003; Stöber 2004). In taking stock of the cultural turns' impact on human geography, Blotevogel strikes an overall positive balance by conceding that these turns have led to enhanced scientific reflexivity within human geography. Additionally, the cultural turns in human geography have led to both permeability of disciplinary boundaries and decisive methodological progress (see Blotevogel 2003).

Methodologically, early work on media was rooted in modelling traditions and characterised by questions regarding the spatial diffusion of media institutions and media products, or the geographical coverage of news reporting. In particular, the few available studies on media at that time often focused on the growth of modern telecommunications and related media flows, with the spatial pattern of economic activity as a dominant theme.

During the 1980s, the research focus changed from a counting and mapping of the media and spatial information to questions concerning content and its meaning and possible impacts. In this context, the issue of spatial consciousness (and, more explicitly, regional identity) received particular attention. Scholarship along this new line of inquiry employed increasingly qualitative methods formerly reserved for ethnology and anthropology.

Corresponding to these developments in media and communications research, geographers widened their focus from the media product itself to processes of production and consumption to networks of producers, media and audiences. Methodological developments enabled interested scholars to interpret things like visual materials and the complexity of their meaning(s).

In the debate on the effects of 'mass media', one can distinguish between two main poles: Pessimists regard mass media as manipulative, while optimists regard mass media as an instrument of enlightenment. While the first

attitude is clearly expressed in the work of Relp (1976) and Hägerstrand (1986), the second can be traced in the work of Blotevogel and Hommel. Both views, however, assume that the audience is inactive – the pessimists more so than the optimists. This stance pervades the work of Relp and Hägerstrand, whereas Burgess and Rose clearly take exception to it. They point to new research focusing “more closely on the personal, social and cultural contexts in which different audiences make sense of the different media texts which cross their daily lives” (Burgess 1990:145). Burgess is echoed by Rose, who writes that “audiences can and actively do rework the meanings produced at the production and text nodes” (Rose 1996:291). Finally, “none of us are passive dupes of the mass media, advertising agencies and propagandists” (Burgess 1990:147).

From a geographical viewpoint, what is striking about the literature on mass media presented here is the strong focus on a national scale – whether in Australia or Sweden. Even scholars who focus on smaller spatial levels still think within the national space: Blotevogel (1984) studies the organisation of regional newspapers in connection to the national settlement system; Burgess (1985) discusses British national daily newspapers’ coverage of unrest in the cities of Brixton, London, Liverpool and Manchester. At any rate, it is no surprise that most of the research has been tainted by a national focus, considering that print media set the stage for the modern nation (see Anderson 1991). Moreover, “broadcasting has been one of the key institutions through which listeners and viewers have come to imagine themselves as members of the national community” (Morley and Robins 1995:11), particularly as a result of *public service* programming by national broadcasters.

When geographers write about the role of mass media in a cross-border context, most contributions deal with globalisation or, in the case of Paasi’s work on the media’s construction of ‘we’ and the ‘Other’ in Finnish-Russian border country, changing geographies across a national border. Relatively little attention has been paid to the role of mass media in cross-border contexts or to the creation of new spaces and communities across national borders. An exception here is the work on the role of mass media in the binational space of the Øresund region (Stöber 2001; 2004; 2005).

All in all, it can be stated that the discipline of media geography in the year 2006 is of a fragmentary nature. This is due partly to its highly interdisciplinary character, embracing thoughts and methods from several sub-disciplines of geography such as economic, cultural, political and regional geography, as well as from Cultural Studies. Whether the discipline’s fragmentary nature is a weakness or a unique chance for a closer cooperation as well as mutual enrichment between scholars within the humanities (e.g., media researchers) and human geographers will be determined by future research.

Notes

1. See, for instance, both Hartke, W. (1952): The newspaper as function of socio-geographical ... in the Rhein-Main-Region. (*Die Zeitung als Funktion sozial-geographischer Verhältnisse im Rhein-Main-Gebiet.*) Frankfurt, and Schöller, P. (1955): Einheit und Raumbeziehungen des Siegerlandes. In: Petri, F (eds) (1955): *Das Siegerland*. Münster. 75-122.
2. Many years later in their book on cyberspace, Dodge and Kitchin (2001:16) refer to Relph and point out that "the concept of placelessness is not new. Indeed, it has always been a feature of modern society; for example, Gertrude Stein has referred to the placelessness of cities with the contention that 'there is no there there'. However, its extent has increased and accelerated under the pressure of globalisation."
3. Blotevogel and Hommel's study is presented and discussed by Wood (1989).

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Chapter 3

Media Studies, Geographical Imaginations and Relational Space

Richard Ek

Recently, media and communication theorists have shown an increased interest in questions about geography, space and spatiality. As argued by Morley and Robins (1995: 30), new information and communication technologies (representing a second media age, according to Holmes (2005)) has made political, economic, social and cultural processes of deterritorialisation, reterritorialisation, delocalisation and relocalisation possible and of a magnitude that at least seems to be unsurpassable. These societal changes do not, as some scholars argue (Ohmae 1995, O'Brien 1992), mean the end of geography. On the contrary, even if the distance factor has decreased or evaporated in a multitude of ways, "space and place cannot be annihilated" (ibid.). Still, 'Geography matters' (Massey et al. 1984), even if the geographical concepts of space, place, scale and spatiality need to be questioned and in some cases redefined in order to work, ontologically speaking, in analyses of the contemporary societal condition. In this context the linkage between geography and communication is crucial (Jansson 2005) since the contemporary societal condition is permeated, perhaps even constituted by a media and communication apparatus. Communications' structuring of space influences how things move through it, thus there can be no geography without communication (Gould 1991).

This linkage is conceptualised by Couldry and McCarthy (2004: 2) as 'MediaSpace', a dialectical term that stresses that media and communication, as discursive practices, produce space at the same time as spatial

Arrangements have consequences for how media forms are materialised. Therefore, "it is necessary to supplement the grammar of interaction that underwrites mainstream media and communication studies with an analysis of the organisational, economic and politically determined production of the material infrastructures of space and time" (Barnett 2004: 66). This space-sensitive approach could be conducted through, for instance, closer attention to how television as a media form is contextual in scale and place-specific ways (McCarthy 2001: 10) or how media processes as inherently spatial processes change the common understanding of how people interact with media and media power (Couldry 2000: 23).

This newly raised interest in a spatial dimension is welcome, whether or not it is articulated as a 'spatial turn' in media and communication studies. Even if, as Hillis (1998: 559) argues, "Geographers, with their access to sophisticated conceptualisations about space, spatiality, place and the construction of material landscapes...have a stake and a claim in positioning themselves more centrally in contemporary debates about how communication technologies and ITs relate to the production of meaning and identity", geography, to paraphrase, "is too important to be left to geographers" (Harvey 1984: 7).

This chapter is meant to further encourage the interest in geography, space and spatiality in communication and media studies. In the section following this introduction, the spatial turn in the social sciences and humanities is briefly addressed together with the introduction of the concepts of spatiality and geographical imaginations. In the third section of the chapter, different post-positivist notions of space and place, labelled as a relational turn in Human Geography, are discussed. This relational turn indicates a paradigmatic departure from the traditional notions of space and place as absolute and relative, and is pivoted on a network and flow ontology. In this section, the meaning of scale, following a relational notion of space and place, is discussed as well.

In the fourth section, media technologies as 'placelessness creating' apparatuses are discussed. Contemporary (space-biased) communication is easily regarded as time-space compressing technologies that enhance the tendency towards a society of hypermodern placelessness. An alternative ontology is presented at the end of the section. Lastly, the fifth and concluding section is normative. Here, I argue that if media and communication studies 'go spatial', perhaps as a 'geographies of communication' field of knowledge production, 'they', that is, the scholars who are engaged, need to consider and discuss in a reflexive way how the geographical imagination that is crystallised in the field *per se* is a part of the production of space in general and the folding of relational space in particular, with political, ideological and ethical consequences.

The Spatial Turn, Spatiality and the Geographical Imagination

The spatial turn in the humanities and social sciences may, according to Ed Soja, (1999) be one of the most important intellectual developments in the last quarter of the past century. The turn can be described as the fact that: "...scholars have begun to interpret space and the spatiality of human life with the same critical insight and interpretative power as have traditionally been given to time and history (the historicity of human life) on the one hand, and to social relations and society (the sociality of human life) on the other" (Soja 1999: 261). This intellectually new direction has naturally been

to geographers' liking. Back in 1984, David Harvey wrote that the insertion of concepts of space, place, locale and milieu into any social theory should have a "numbing effect upon that theory's central propositions" (Harvey 1984: 8). Classical social theorists like Adam Smith, Karl Marx and Max Weber all privileged time over space (Harvey 1990a: 428-429), and space has been most commonly understood by social scientists as either territorial, a series of blocks demarcated by state territorial boundaries, or structural by which geographical entities (nodes, districts, regions) have spatial effects due to their interaction and/or relationship with one another (for instance in centre-periphery and push-and-pull models) (Agnew and Corbridge 1995: 79-80).

Those who argue that there has been an epochal shift in concerns from time to space often invoke the quote from Michel Foucault that "The great obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, history... The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and the far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed." (Foucault 1986: 22). Foucault, together with other influential scholars like Anthony Giddens (1984), Daniel Bell (1978) and Fredric Jameson (1992, see also 2003: 695), created a general interest in the spatial, in combination with the fact that geographers (going through a cultural turn in Human Geography) felt a new confidence about contributing to debates in the social sciences and humanities (Jackson 2003: 39), central concepts like space and place having experienced something of an efflorescence as theoretical terms in recent years (Agnew 2005: 82).

However, it is possible to trace a kind of spatial turn within Human Geography prior to the spatial turn in the social sciences and humanities, or perhaps more correctly a philosophical redirection in Human Geography regarding space. Here, especially the writings of Henri Lefebvre (see primarily Lefebvre 1991) have been foundational. According to Lefebvre (1979: 286), "Space is permeated with social relations; it is not only supported by social relations, but is also producing and produced by social relations". However, this conclusion was something that contemporary philosophers such as Derrida, Foucault and Lacan had missed noticing, argued Lefebvre (1991: 6, see also Gibson-Graham 1996: 74), because they had created a rift between a philosophical, intellectual mental space and the space of the physically embedded everyday life. In order to overcome this dualism, Lefebvre introduced a third category, social space. This social space or the space of social life in its turn contains three elements: conceived, perceived and lived space. In their turn, these elements are connected to three spatial components in the production of space, representations of space, representational spaces or spaces of representation and spatial practice¹ (Lefebvre 1991: 32-33, 38-39, 42).²

Lefebvre was introduced more widely into the Anglo-Saxon world by his former student, Manuel Castells, in 'The Urban Question: A Marxist Approach' (Castells 1977). Inspired by Lefebvre, Castells argued that: "Space is a material product, in relation with other elements – among others, men, who themselves enter into particular social relations, which give to space... a form, a

function, a social signification" (Castells 1977: 115) and some years later (Castells 1983: 311):

Space is not, contrary to what others may say, a reflection of society but one of society's fundamental material dimensions and to consider it independently from social relationships, even with intention of studying their interaction, is to separate nature from culture, and thus to destroy the first principle of any social science: that matter and consciousness are interrelated...

In this socio-spatial dialectic situation (Soja 1980) the production of space is both a medium and the outcome of social action and social relationships, and "The realisation that *social life is materially constituted in its spatiality* is the theoretical keystone for the contemporary interpretation of spatiality" (Soja 1985: 94, original emphasis).³

This ontological standpoint has further implications. One such implication is that each social formation or 'society' constructs conceptions and notions of space (and time) adjusted to its own needs and purposes of material and social reproduction. Material practices are then organised in accordance with these conceptions and notions (Harvey 1990a: 419). Space is a product of social and historical practice (Smith 1984: 77). Absolute conceptualisations of space and time were most usable during the formation of the capitalist system. However, since capitalism is: "...a revolutionary mode of production, always restlessly searching out new organisational forms, new technologies, new lifestyles, new modalities of production and exploitation and...new objective social definitions of time and space" (Harvey 1996: 240) are bound to crystallise.

Another major implication of the spatiality thesis (as in the social constructivist paradigm in general) is that the production of space as a medium and outcome of social practices can only be apprehended and interpreted by human consciousness. This geographical imagination enables each individual to "...recognise the role of space and place in his own biography, to relate to the spaces he sees around him" (Harvey 1973: 24) and has an immense influence upon the way individuals act (Massey with the collective 1999: 17). More explicitly defined, geographical imaginations can be regarded as hypotheses or assumptions regarding how space and relations in space initiate and shape societal processes and changes, and how these processes and changes are spatially expressed. These geographical imaginations or abstractions are based on available but subjectively chosen knowledge, normative ideas and ideological convictions expressed in and canalised through discourses (Sparke 2000: 7). As a consequence, the geographical imagination (Massey with the collective 1999: 17):

...runs from the cosmologies of our positioning in relation to nature and to an inorganic other, through the framing of our selves and our relations to others, through the politicised imaginings of geopolitics, to what we might call 'con-

ceptual geographies'...the isomorphisms of space and society that went to make up the Western "modernist" creation and generalisation of the nation state.

For Derek Gregory (1994), the academic field of Human Geography is therefore a fiction, a construction whose object of study is the effect, rather than ground, of disciplinary knowledge (Deutsche 1995).⁴ According to Soja, this effect or outcome of geographic enquiry, as the geographical imagination of Human Geography has developed, "continues to be confined by an encompassing dualism, or binary logic, that has tended to polarise spatial thinking around such fundamental oppositions as objectivity v. subjectivity, material v. mental, real v. imagined, things in space v. thoughts about space" (Soja 1999: 264). Soja (1996), inspired by Lefebvre, argues that this bifurcation into two modes of spatial thinking has to be opened up through a 'trialectics of spatiality', including 'thirdspace' (stemming originally from Homi Bhabha 1990, 1994); that is, the space produced by the processes that exceed and displace binary knowledge. The real-and-imagined Thirdspace is more than its parts and to Soja, the most creative explorations into thirdspace, and simultaneously the most accomplished expansions in the scope of the geographical imagination, have come from feminist and post-colonial critics such as, besides Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, bell hooks, Judith Butler, Donna Haraway and Trinh T. Minh-ha, (Soja 1996: 92) and the "new human geographers emerging from critical cultural studies [who] are explicitly spatialising radical subjectivity and political practice, imbuing both with a critical spatial consciousness...aimed at constituting a community of resistance which can be as empowering and potentially emancipatory as those formed around the making of history and the constitution of human societies" (Soja 1999: 275), like Doreen Massey (see next section). Nevertheless, binary structured knowledge remains strong in geographical thinking (as in the Western metaphysics of presence Derrida (1976) wanted to overturn through deconstruction), due to the perseverance of the absolute notion of space.

From Absolute to Relational Notions of Space and Place

"Space is a treacherous philosophical word", James M. Blaut (1961: 1) once wrote, as the concept and its different categorisations constitute a matter of constant dispute. Developments in mathematics and physics have had consequences for the philosophical concern with the nature of space. Non-Euclidean geometry and Einstein's relativistic revision of the concept has become a matter of scientific and philosophical controversy (Sklar 1974: 1). The 'new sciences' or 'complexity turn', represented by complexity theory, fractals, quantum theory, autopoiesis, chaos theory and so on (Urry 2003: 17-38 and 2005, Massey 2005: 73) have started a re-negotiation and rapprochement between the natural and social sciences (Massey 1999a).

Traditionally, however, the Western metaphysical tradition has emphasised a notion of absolute space as space; that is, in its generally applicable meaning, as the “space of common sense” (Smith 2003: 12). Going back to Aristotle and Plato, space has been conceptualised as *kenon* (void) and *chora* (formless container) and place as *topos* (bounded place) (Grosz 1995: 93, Casey 2005: 202, Crang 2005: 204). Space is regarded as eternal, empty, indestructible and immobile (Curry 1996a: 5). These early philosophical notions of space lived on in Newton’s cosmology (Burgin 1989: 28, Harvey 1973: 13–14), in which space contains all objects, has an absolute quality (Harvey 1969: 195–196) and is extensible in three dimensions (Elden 2005).⁵

But at the same time, space has a quality among different objects, a quality that varies depending on the objects’ positions in relation to each other. Space also has a relative quality (Harvey 1969: 195–196). For Newton, it was necessary to separate absolute and relative space in order to be able to observe and measure movement (Curry 1996b: 92, Casey 1997: 142). To Neil Smith (1984: 67–77), the division between absolute and relative space made it intellectually possible to define space as separated, for instance in ‘social space’ and ‘natural space’. Absolute space came to be related to an external and primary world, first nature, and relative space to a human secondary world, second nature. Nature was separated from culture in the philosophical tradition.

Relational notions of space and place, and relational thinking in general, is a paradigmatic departure from the intellectual involvement in notions of space as absolute and relative since it dissolves the boundaries and borders between objects and space. Objects are space and space is objects, rather than space existing as an entity over and above objects and their relations and extensions (Jones 2005: 12). Natural and social processes, objects and events, take an ontological precedence over space. Space *is* the product of processes and events rather than processes and events taking place *in* space (Smith 2003: 12).

This relational thinking about space and time originated with Leibniz’s work in non-Euclidean geometry. To Leibniz, space, as time and matter, was dividable into atomic structures in which monads are the only existing entities in the universe that are not dependent on human consciousness. All other physical objects exist only if they are acknowledged by the senses as phenomena. The objects are only phenomenological manifestations of the metaphysical substance, the monads (Tonboe 1993: 78–79). In his famous correspondence with Newton’s proxy, Samuel Clarke (Alexander 1998), Leibniz argued that spatial aspects such as position, distance and motion are nothing else but a system of relations among things, a system without any metaphysical or ontological existence *per se* (Werlen 1993: 1, Harvey 1969: 195–196, 1973: 13–14 and 1996: 250–251). Space expresses an order of coexistences as time expresses an order of successions (Curry 1996b: 94).

This relational thinking has revolutionary consequences regarding the notions of space and place and how they are related to each other as onto-

gical concepts. A common understanding is that space is 'plain' and place 'distinct' (for instance, Pine and Gilmore 1999: 42). Place is space that has been familiar to us, a 'place' to pause in, in contrast to space that allows movement (Tuan 1977: 6, 73), "that lends itself to speed, immateriality, abstractness, floatation and relational disjointure" (Doel 1999: 8; a similar logic underpins Castells (1996) discussion of 'space of flows' and 'space of places'). In other words, the two terms are often seen as representing alternative conceptions of spatiality, and one is usually overextended at the expense of the other (Agnew 2005: 81).⁶

In a relational thinking, this simple form of dualistic thinking is replaced by a dialectical one. As space is a process, as it is produced, places are also worked out through social action in ways that ceaselessly change over time. Place is a diverse social process rather than bounded pieces of Euclidean diagrams or contiguous zones on maps (Graham and Marvin 2001: 203). Place is, as much as space, constituted out of social relations and narratives about them (Hudson 2001: 257). As (social) 'process' and 'production' (of space) are central concepts here, it all really comes down to the metaphysical question of being and becoming, the two opposing and enduring presuppositions between Heraclitus (emphasising the primacy of a fluxing, emergent world) and Parmenides (insisting reality is of a permanent and unchangeable nature): "One emphasised reality as inclusively processual the other privileged a homeostatic and entitative conception of reality. This seemingly intractable opposition between a Heraclitean ontology of becoming and a Parmenidean ontology of being provides us with the key for understanding contemporary debates between modernism and postmodernism" (Chia 2003: 114-115).

Therefore, following the 'logic' of relational thinking, space (and place) is always in a process of becoming since it is the product of relations that are materially embedded practices that must be carried out (Massey 1999b: 283). Here, space is understood through what might be called, in Heidegger's terms, a 'dwelling' perspective founded on the primacy of practices (Thrift 1999: 308). Space could therefore be seen as a verb rather than a noun. Gillian Rose (1999: 293) argues that: "...space is also a doing, that it does not pre-exist its doing, and that its doing is the articulation of relational performances...space is practiced, a matrix of play, dynamic and iterative, its forms and shapes produced through the citational performance of self-other relations". Space is no longer reduced to particularity, passivity and contingency (Doel and Clarke 1998: 48), 'space' and 'time' are less important than the always unique acts of 'timing' and 'spacing' (Bingham and Thrift 2000: 290) and, in his call for poststructuralist geographies, Marcus Doel argues that "place is an event...neither situated nor contained within a particular location, but is instead splayed out and unfolded across a myriad of vectors...vectors of disjointure and dislocation [that] may conjugate and reverberate, but there is no necessity for them to converge on a particular experiential or physical location" (Doel 1999: 7). In sum, there is no space, only spacing; that is "...the differential element within everything that hap-

pens; the repetitious relay or protracted stringiness by which the fold of actuality opens in and of itself onto the unfold of virtuality. Space is what reopens and dissimilates the givens" (Doel 2000: 125).

It should be clear by now that Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari have influenced relational thinking about space and place. As space and place are based on relations, and relations change, space and place are in constant flux. For Deleuze and Guattari, this constant flux is conceptualised into a dialectical relation between striated and smooth space (Deleuze and Guattari 1988). Striated space is constituted by the State, the superior political control over territory, measured and valued, bounded and segmented, mapped and supervised (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 361-362, 385-387), like Lefebvre's representations of space. Smooth space is constituted by the Nomad and the Nomad's deterritorialising lines of flight (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 361-362, see also Cresswell 1997: 364). The relationship between striated and smooth space is not only dialectical, but antagonistic as well. The sum of the Nomads, conceptualised as a 'War machine', challenges ontologically the order and structure of striated space through their mobility. The result is a constant de- and reterritorialisation of territorial space that brings a specific (asymmetrical) character to each territory.

The production of spatiality, as de- and reterritorialisation, produces folded spaces. Space is smoothed and striated, and consequently, movement in space can be facilitated and made more difficult (Gren and Tesfahuney 2004: 55). As in origami, "the world can be (un)folded in countless ways, with innumerable folds over folds, and folds within folds" (Doel 1999: 18, after Deleuze 1993). Folds are everywhere (Deleuze 1995: 156) and space is folded in many ways into manifold (Doel 2000: 127-128). The folding and unfolding of space becomes an event, an actualisation of the virtual (Gren and Tesfahuney 2004: 65, following Deleuze 1994 and Deleuze and Guattari 1994). Place-events are folded into existence (Bingham and Thrift 2000: 290), places are spatio-temporal events (Massey 2005: 130).

The focus on becoming, (un)folding and events in relational thinking has further directed a focus on the works of Michel Serres.⁷ In his attempt to construct a 'philosophical geography' (together with Bruno Latour), topology, as a "science of proximities and ongoing or interrupted transformations" (Serres with Latour 1995: 105) is highlighted (Bingham and Thrift 2000: 290). Topology is not concerned with the distance variable *per se*, but with the properties of spaces that are independent of metric measures and how relations are folded and unfolded (stretched, compressed, stratified, etc.) while maintaining certain properties (Dainton 2001: 365, Latham 2002: 131). "Topology, in short, extends the possibilities of mathematics far beyond its original *Euclidean* restrictions by articulating other spaces" (Mol and Law 1994: 643, original emphasis). Following this line of thought, (relational) time-space can be seen as actor-network topologies, multiple pleats of relations stitched together, "such that nearness and distance measured in absolute space are not in themselves important" (Latham 2002: 131), but how spaces emerge

as ordered and hierarchical socio-material relations (Murdoch 1998: 358-359). Relational farness and nearness are not only the product of distance but also the (dis)articulation of diverse (un)foldings of actor networks (Law 1999: 6-7, Latham 2002: 131).

Following Serres's topological thinking, a number of human geographers have begun to see space, place and time as co-constituted, folded together, situated, mobile and multiple. For Ash Amin (2002: 389), this implies a notion of spatiality as nonlinear and non-scalar as well as a "topological sense of space and place, a sense of geographies constituted through the folds, undulations, and overlaps that natural and social practices normally assume, without any a priori assumption of geographies of relations nested in territorial or geometric sense". Every locality becomes a site of intersection and juxtaposition of old and new spatio-temporalities embedded in complex, layered histories. Place is an open, hybrid meeting place (Massey 1999c: 22). As a consequence, a global sense of place is needed (Massey 1991), where places are imagined "...as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings, but where a large proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself, whether that be a street, or a region or even a continent" (Massey 1994: 154).

Finally, the practice of regarding geographical scales as a rigid spatial framework from the local, or even the body, through the regional, national, continental to the global has been questioned. In recent scholarship, the geographical scale has been theorised and defined in a variety of ways, for instance as a "geographical organiser and expression of collective social action" (Smith 1995: 61).⁸ Arguing in a relational vein that all networks of social relations are constantly in the process of ordering, Nigel Thrift states that "There is no such thing as a scale. Rather, size is an uncertain effect generated by a network and its modes of interaction" (Thrift 1995: 33). Almost ten years later, Thrift (2004: 59) emphasises even more strongly that "Space is no longer seen as a nested hierarchy moving from 'global' to 'local'. This absurd scale-dependent notion is replaced by the notion that what counts is connectivity...". This verdict may sound strong, but it is indicative of the relational turn in Human Geography.

Information Technologies, Placelessness and Relational Space

In academic writings on space and place in late modernity or hyper-modernity, the notion of 'placelessness' is often discussed. As a concept, placelessness was introduced by Edward Relph in "Place and Placelessness" (1976) and indicates a growing existential (in a Heideggerian sense) hollowness when it comes to the connection between human individuals and the

places they are in contact with (physically or mediated). A combination of an established consumer society, increased mobility and a technological development within mass media and information technologies is blamed for a rapidly accelerating homogenisation of 'society's places' (Relph 1976: 90):

An inauthentic attitude towards places is transmitted through a number of processes, or perhaps more accurately "media", which directly or indirectly encourage 'placelessness', that is, a weakening of the identity of places to the point where they not only look alike and feel alike and offer the same bland possibilities for experience. These media include mass communication, mass culture, big business, powerful central authority, and the economic system which embraces all these.

Business streets, terrace house areas, shopping malls, tourist destinations, hotels, airports and theme parks are all examples of placeless places in Relph's discussion. To Marc Augé (1995 and 1999), it is a token of super-modernity that places are replaced by 'non-places', characterised as spaces of circulation, consumption and communication where people coexist rather than live together. The ever-present mobility between and within non-places results in (Thrift 1994: 212-213) "Places (being) stages of intensity...Traces of movement, speed and circulation and in Baudrillardian terms...a world of third-order simulacra, where encroaching pseudo-places have finally advanced to eliminate places altogether."

As hinted at above, media and communication technologies are said to play a crucial role in the production of hyper-real non-places. To Relph (1976: 92), various media for the transmission of ideas (newspaper, radio, television) have reduced the need for face-to-face interaction and freed communities from their geographical constraints. Contemporary media and communication technologies create and transform images of contexts and environments, that is (non-)place (Sack 1992: 97). The television screen has traditionally been given an almost iconic importance. For Robert Sack, the use of place as scene or setting in television programmes tear the place from its web of interconnections and puts it into a transitory context. Further on (Sack 1992: 98-99):

Television uproots and juxtaposes one context after another far more than other media, and this obscures the real historical and geographical depth of place and weakens its relation in space and time to other places and events. Different contexts flash past by the mere changing of channels, each offering a string of programs in different settings.

As a consequence, television alters social roles and makes them more generic. By altering the informational characteristics of place, television and electronic media in general reshape social identities and social situations (Meyrowitz 1985: 117). Media has "...changed the logic of the social order by restructuring the relationship between physical place and social place

[social roles and social positions] and by altering the ways in which we transmit and receive social information” (Meyrowitz 1985: 308). Television blurs the distinction between Goffmanesque front stage and backstage of everyday life into a mediated and homogenised middle stage or region (Meyrowitz 1985: 176). In this ‘global cocktail party’, more enduring social values are neglected and sense of time is destroyed. The fragile balance between the concepts of space and time is unbalanced as modern society creates a bias favourable to an overemphasis on the space concept (Innis 1951/1964: 64, see also Jansson 2005: 3), a tendency that was initiated by the (re)invention of the perspective, the start of the modern (capitalist) world system and further established through modernist philosophy as in the writings of Hegel (Innis 1951/1964: 128-129).

Paul Virilio carries this normative conclusion by Innis further to a dystopic level. For Virilio, the hyper-space-biased communication technologies (see Introduction) indicate the emergence of a culture of generalised interactivity based on ubiquitous and pervasive telematics grids, through which “everything arrives so quickly that departure becomes unnecessary”, and results in a crisis in the notion of physical dimensions (Virilio 1993: 8-9 in Graham 1998: 169-170). With acceleration there is no more there or here, only “the mental confusion of near and far, present and future, real and unreal – a mix of history, stories, and the hallucinatory utopia of communication technologies” (Virilio 1995: 35). Space loses its geopolitical reality as the aesthetics of the appearance of the stable image are replaced by those of the disappearance of the unstable image (Virilio 1991: 16, 25).⁹

However, concepts and expressions like ‘placelessness’, ‘no sense of place’, ‘time-space compression’, ‘the annihilation of space by time’ and ‘global village’ should be, as all (especially spatial) metaphors, handled with care. Technology, information and media technologies in particular, is a mediating force in the production of space whether it ‘shrinks or not’. In some cases, information and media technologies may connect places and homogenise space, and disconnect and fragmentise in other cases, both symbolically as well as materially (Kirsch 1995, Dodgshon 1999). Here, the material aspect deserves special attention because, even if communication has to be understood as material and symbolic (fluidity), as stressed in the introduction, the material dimension is easily neglected. Here, a comment from a Deleuzeoguattarian geophilosophical relational space perspective (discussed above) is fruitful, since it also emphasises the importance of materiality (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 85-113, Gren and Mekonnen 2004).

The notion that space (and time) are ‘compressed’, or that space is even annihilated, by hyper- or late modern technologies (like information and communication technologies), and that media and communication technologies are partly ‘responsible’ for increased placelessness and the loss of a sense of place is fundamentally built on an ontology that claims that space and place are ‘here’, media and information technologies are ‘there’, and that space and place (here) are shaped by the influence of media and information tech-

nologies (there). This is an ontology that does not harmonise with the relational space paradigm. In this alternative ontology, to recall the section above, space and place are verbs, manifesting the materialisation-and-symbolisation of human-and-material interaction through performances. Space and place are events, unfolded and splayed out across distances by embodied and non-embodied vectors of all kinds into heterogeneous assemblages (rhizomes). The virtual is unfolded into the actual, a virtual materiality unfolding into a concrete material present (Deleuze 1993, Shields 2003, Buchanan and Lambert 2005).¹⁰

Relational space (and place) as performed events are perhaps not in theory, but practically mediated through media and communication technologies, as language-based systems of symbols and material practices. And media and communication technologies are also primarily situated practices, verbs. They are (increasingly crucial) parts of the heterogeneous assemblages of human-material-machines that perform spaces (and places). The technological development of media and communication technology enables the folding and the unfolding, the actualisation of the virtual in ways that have not been possible before.¹¹ In this regard, the linkage between geography or space and media and communication technologies dissolves, since there are no (ontological) parts to be linked together in the first place. Space IS media and communication technologies and media and communication technologies ARE space.¹²

Conclusion

The Geographical Imaginations of Geographies of Communication

To quickly summarise, the rapprochement between 'geography' (that is, the interest for spatiality within and outside Human Geography) and media and communication studies brings forth some ontological and epistemological issues regarding the notions of space and place. This rapprochement harmonises well with the contemporary reconsideration and re-theorisation of space and place that takes place under the label of the relational space paradigm (and the deconstruction of the modernist notion of space as absolute and Cartesian in general). In ontological terms, this implies that space is seen as produced through action and interaction, that it is fluid and cannot be seen as fixed, continuous or compartmentalised and that the production of space is inseparable from the materiality of society. The notion of space as relational is naturally not the only way to approach the field of Geographies of Communication (CoG), but is an ontological position that fits nicely into an approach that is well suited for discussing mobility and the 'mobile medium', the convergence of the symbolic/cultural and the material/technological and the issue of interactivity (as stressed by Falkheimer and Jansson in the introduction, see also Jansson 2005).

This compatibility between the ontological position of the notion of space as relational and the spatial ambiguities of the regime of hyper-space-biased communication brings us to some epistemological questions. An epistemological position following the notion of space as relationally produced emphasises that notions of space and place and the use of these notions are entangled with the power/knowledge nexus as elaborated upon by Foucault and others. This implies that the knowledge field of Geographies of Communication (GoC), as that of all disciplines and sub-disciplines, can be seen as a fiction with a specific set of geographical imaginations. These geographical imaginations are a part of the power/knowledge corpus, as they are an inherent part of the Geographies of Communication knowledge production, its spacing, its folding of space. As in every other practice, this knowledge production labels space-time and stabilises meanings of particular envelopes of space-time.

Here, attachment to a certain conception of space and time is a political decision (Harvey 1990b: 432). Harvey (ibid.) asks himself “What kind of space and time do we, as professional geographers, seek to promote? To what processes of social reproduction do those concepts subtly but persistently allude?”. The same question could, and should, be asked by scholars who consider themselves to be in the GoC knowledge field. Because “Just as none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas and forms, about images and imaginings” (Said 1993: 7). Geographical knowledge and geographical imaginations are not innocent bodies of knowledge and are not removed from ideology (Lefebvre 1977: 341):

Space is not a scientific object removed from ideology and politics; it has always been political and strategic. If space has an air of neutrality and indifference with regard to its contents and thus seems to be ‘purely’ formal, the epitome of rational abstraction, it is precisely because it has been occupied and used, and has already been the focus of past processes whose traces are not always evident on the landscape. Space has been shaped and molded from historical and natural elements, but this has been a political process. Space is political and ideological. It is a product literally filled with ideologies.

This reflection on Geographies of Communication’s geographical imaginations can be seen as a part of the intellectual’s responsibility to question the taken-for-granted and the ‘guardians of truth-claiming texts’ (Said 1994). Exactly how this should be done needs to be discussed, but generally speaking, a ‘critical turn’ in a subfield or academic discipline usually starts with a re-evaluation of the traditional or mainstream canon.¹³ This contemporary critical reflection on and ‘showdown’ with the usually dominant disciplinary discourse must be accompanied with the acknowledgement that the critical project *per se* is also in a wide sense a politically and ideologically situated practice.

A possible entrance point for this project as regards discursive reflexivity among communication geographers or Geographies of Communication Intellectuals (GoCI) (following Said) is to admit and openly manifest that not only are they and their texts a part of the production of space, and even that they and their texts ARE space (and texture, that is, a site of ideological reproduction and negotiation (Jansson 2005: 15)), but also that the three epistemological dilemmas of hyper-spaced-bias communication: the ephemerality of texts, contexts and text-context relationships (motivating a spatial turn in the first place, see introductory chapter) are manifested and materialised into the heterogeneous assemblages they are part of and that also ARE space.

The machinations of hyper-spaced-(or spacing)biased communication are consequently the prerequisites for the (power) rationales for Geographies of Communication, with the implication that the ephemerality of texts (in GoC), contexts (here we could perhaps talk in terms of media institutions and the social embeddedness of communication, see Jansson 2004: 38) and text-context interplay become something that must be approached not only ontologically (as called for in the introduction) but also in epistemological terms. Can knowledge about ephemeral hyper-spacing-biased communication practice be anything but ephemeral when the knowledge production *per se* is produced within the parameters set out by the very hyper-spacing-biased communication apparatus itself?

And what about power? The classical transmission view of communication harmonised well with the media of the modernist era of communication, and could be (and was) used by Democratic as well as authoritarian state regimes in their government techniques, warfare (some of colonial and imperialistic character) and internal organisation of national territories (Carey 1989, Thompson 1995, Mattelart 1996). Working in a general emancipatory tradition in the social sciences, GoC nevertheless runs the risk of being applied politically and ideologically by different state regimes. As Deleuze and Guattari (1988) constantly remind us, smooth space easily becomes striated (again). This may be an unnecessarily bleak premonition, but what if theories and 'texts' produced in GoC are used in future bio-political endeavours, perhaps not undemocratic in a formal sense but in an ethical one (for instance, many government actions carried out in the name of the 'war on terrorism')? There are naturally no guarantees, and there is possibly no way of hindering such a development,¹⁴ but this fact does not eradicate the ethical responsibility to relate to and contemplate these issues, as part of the reflexive project addressed above.

For instance, in the post 9/11 2001 era, in national and international politics the need for more surveillance has received support in government circles. Surveillance and control of the nodes and flows of the network society has increased, for instance in airports (Lyon 2003, Adey 2004a and b, Aaltola 2005). Political decisions allowing registrations of phone calls, e-mail conversations and the registration of (what the national security service and the police regard as) dissident groups and organisations have been or are about

to be taken. Perhaps Deleuze anticipated this when he argued that power itself has been nomadic in the era of 'societies of control' (Deleuze 1995)? In this era, contemporary technologies of information, communication and mobility in general constitute a new social topology in which individuals no longer move between sites of surveillance and discipline (as in Foucault's panopticon thesis) but are subjected to free-floating mobile forms of control (Deleuze 1995: 178). This control is based on digital communication technologies, and individuals become 'dividuals' as they are transformed into data through methods such as electronic tagging (Deleuze 1995: 180). Society becomes what the airport already is, a machine of representation that represents individuals as digital numbers or other kinds of signs, as a "word without body" (Diken and Laustsen 2005: 65). Building heavily on Deleuze, Hardt and Negri (2000: xii-xiii, emphasis in original) argue that:

The passage to Empire emerges from the twilight of modern sovereignty. In contrast to imperialism, Empire establishes no territorial center of power and does not rely on fixed boundaries or barriers. It is a *decentered* and *detritorializing* apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers. Empire manages hybrid identities, flexible hierarchies, and plural exchanges through modulating networks of command. The distinct national colors of the imperialist map of the world have merged and blended in the imperial global rainbow.

Empire can thus be characterised as space-biased, and in need of a hyper-space-biased communication and information technology, but also as a regime that is in need of a knowledge corpus regarding information and communication technologies that does not distinguish text from context or the material from the symbolic, and that affirms the mobile character of media technologies, technological and cultural convergence and the interactivity of spatial mediations. Ephemeral hyper-spaced-biased communication is exactly what Empire needs in order to make control mobile and power nomadic. Following this, knowledge about hyper-spaced-biased communication also becomes knowledge/power with a potential use that is yet impossible to predict or foresee. But it is possible (and I should say necessary), through a critical and reflexive discussion, to forecast possible modes of application and areas of use of such a spatially informed knowledge regarding geographies of communication.

Notes

1. *Les représentations de l'espace, les espaces de représentation* and *la pratique spatiale* in the French original (Lefebvre 1972: 42-43).
2. I will not go more into the by now quite well known writings of Lefebvre. However, besides the writings of Lefebvre himself I would also recommend the following in-depth

interpretations of Lefebvre's work: Smith 1984, Soja 1989, Gregory 1994, Shields 1998, Elden 2004, Merrifield 2005.

3. As a consequence, space can be seen as materiality as well as representation, that is (Natter and Jones 1997: 151):

...space is not simply a socially produced materiality but a socially produced – and forceful – object/sign system. This... "system of representation", does not deny materiality but rather argues that any materiality is attached to the representation(s) through which materiality both embeds and conveys social meaning.

This implies that the spatial turn involves a material turn and that space can be regarded as a spatial materialisation of culture (Jansson 2005: 12).

4. With this follows that geographical imaginations should not be likened to mental maps (Lynch 1960, Gould and White 1974), since mental maps are rooted in behavioural science.
5. The absolute notion of space was also reproduced in Kant's transcendental idealism, even if space for Kant was more about epistemology than ontology (Richards 1974: 3. Peet 1998: 18).
6. However, Tuan (1977) uses the concept 'place/space tensions' to stress that any locality can be a space or a place depending on the observer and that space can be transformed into place and vice versa (Taylor 1999, see also Tuan 1974b).
7. Michel Serres, together with Bruno Latour, John Law and Michel Callon, are the 'founding fathers' of Actor-Network Theory (ANT). I will not go specifically into ANT here because it has already been addressed to such a high degree (for a recent example, see Latour 2005). It should be noted, however, that the connection between ANT theorists and geographers representing the 'relational turn' in Human Geography is very close.
8. For a more extensive discussion regarding scale, see Marston 2000, Jessop 2002, Herod 2003 and Sheppard and McMaster 2004.
9. This change in physical representation owes everything to an ever-shorter exposure time, a dromoscopic order of visibility (Virilio 2000a: 39). In this order of visibility, mass media installs a tele-presence, a 'here-and-now' without the 'here', a "social cybernetics, that is, a global regulation of Humanity by media" (Frandsen 1994: 227). To Virilio, this is a threat to Democracy, as the tyranny of real time creates a reflex Democracy without reflection (Virilio 2000b: 109, 2002: 133).
10. A very everyday example: A table contains a multitude of virtual material functions. It can be used to eat on or have sex on, it can be turned upside down to be a pirate ship in children's play or it can be a worktable (finishing an article right before Christmas) and so forth. The kind of material function actualised depends on the relations and performance of human and non-human actors within a certain set of the heterogeneous assemblages the table is part of. This set of heterogeneous assemblages does not need to be based on physical propinquity even if this may usually be the case; see next footnote.
11. Take the table again, with the computer, fax and phone on it. Suddenly, the table's actual-material function is widened. It becomes, for instance, a part of the heterogeneous assemblage we call *call-centre*, a part of Castells's network society. Or take all the mobile technology that makes the virtuality of the human body actualised in new ways, for instance the running-talking-listening assemblage of the jogger with a mobile phone with a headset.
12. As Bruno Latour has stated (1999: 19): "...ANT should really be called 'actant-rhizome ontology'. But who would have cared for such a horrible mouthful of words – not to mention the acronym 'ARO?'".
13. Just two examples of many are 'critical geopolitics' (O'Tuathail 1996), which has deconstructed and situated traditional geopolitics, and 'critical management studies' (Parker 2002), which has done the same with mainstream management theories and texts.
14. Deleuze and Guattari's texts on smooth space, war-machines and nomadology has for instance been influential 'texts' among U.S. defence intellectuals in the Pentagon, in their

architecture of a Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) and the need for U.S. military to adjust to that new architecture and create a military machine that is adaptive, flexible and prepared to meet the new kinds of military threats, like cyberspace attacks, biological threats etc. (for an overview of the conceptualisation of RMA, see Gray 1997 and Ek 2000).

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Chapter 4

Electronic Geographies

Media Landscapes as Technological and Symbolic Environments

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Within the field of media and communication research, the media are often related to cultural and social processes. Takes on the relationship between the three entities are varied, however, as are the motivations for their study. Accounts of the relation often depart from the idea that the media are intervening in social and cultural processes, affecting already existing phenomena either in harmful ways in dystopian fears of cultural and social decline, or in utopian hopes for better futures. The critique has its roots in both radical and conservative research camps: A Marxist-inspired critique from the 1970s has argued that the centre of media studies lies outside the media themselves (Negt 1973 p. ix). This kind of critique was not restricted to the critical perspective on mediated ideological domination embedded in the conflict-ridden society outside the media. It was equally present in liberal and conservative accounts that saw the media as detrimental to the fine arts, and to social life in general, where they were seen as tools for 'amusing ourselves to death' (Postman 1985).

Another common apprehension, and one that usually follow from the first, is that the presence of the media in late modern society is continuously increasing. The media are supposedly becoming of increasing importance to economic corporate life as well as the formation of political opinions and cultural celebrities, etc. In short, the media are seen as interfering in processes once formed un-affected by the media whereas today they are becoming increasingly dependent on them.

I will argue in the following that this is not true today, if it ever was. The idea that there are processes or phenomena being developed in today's society outside the media is not tangible. We might think that there are such spheres or areas of our everyday lives that are free from mediated intrusion, for example when we socialise with our friends in our leisure time. However, also at those points when we are not explicitly exposed to mediated messages, our lives and our actions are so immersed in our experiences from the media that it is simply hard to imagine what they would have been like had the media not existed.

Questions on the relation between the media, culture and society will be in focus over the next couple of pages, and at this early stage of my account it seems appropriate to define what I mean when I say 'the role of the media in culture and society'. I will therefore start with some preliminary remarks on the three foundational concepts of 'media', 'culture' and 'society'. I will then, in the next section, discuss the media in relation to the categories of time and space, as these are of fundamental importance in the understanding of cultures and societies. In the third section I will expand on that discussion to a more focussed analysis of the concept of media landscape, and how this concept can be used in understanding the relation between media, culture and society. I will end the chapter by giving empirical substance to my arguments with an example from a promotional campaign aiming at re-articulating the social and cultural space of Estonia as a European nation.

Media, Culture, Society

On many occasions the concepts of media, culture and society are used without explicit definition. In order to avoid aligning myself with this trend in research, I shall say a few words about each of these concepts before taking on the wider discussion on the relation between them.

In late modern society, and especially in the (post)industrialised parts of the world, *the media* are held to be of fundamental importance for social, economic, political and cultural life. It is in fact very hard to try to imagine what society would be like if media technologies such as the telephone, newspapers, books, television, radio, the Internet and Worldwide Web, etc. did not exist. One could argue that the development of the media goes hand in hand with the development of society from early primitive or archaic societies to large scale, late modern, information and knowledge-dependent societies (see, for example, Crowley & Heyer 1995/1999; Ong 1982/1991; Nordenstreng 1977).

Having said this, one should also acknowledge the common motivation for doing social research about the changing nature of society: that the changes have never been as rapid as at that moment of writing. In the preliminary remarks in what is today considered one of the greatest endeavours in urban anthropology, the studies of Middletown in the early 1920s by sociologists Robert and Helen Lynd, it is said that

[w]e are coming to realize, moreover, that we today are probably living in one of the eras of greatest rapidity of change in the history of human institutions. New tools and techniques are being developed with stupendous celerity, while in the wake of these technical developments increasingly frequent and strong culture waves sweep over us from without, drenching us with material and non-material habits of other centers. (Lynd & Lynd 1929 p. 5).

One such technique referred to in the quote above is naturally the media. For the Lynds, the media referred to was primarily the mass media: books, radio, film and periodicals, but also, although to a minor extent, other media technologies such as the phonograph and telephone. Thus, as the Middletown example reveals, it is not always entirely clear how we should think of the media and what counts as media. And this is true for many subsequent studies. For example, if we try to find simple definitions of the media in a widely cited work such as Marshall McLuhan's (1964/1967) account of the media as an 'extension of man', we need not hunt through many pages before things get quite confusing. Starting with his famous quote that the medium is the message, and that every medium's specific effect on society is not its content but the technology itself, things get increasingly obscure. McLuhan goes through a range of examples, including light, language, paintings, stones, railroads, airplanes, etc. One certainly has the suspicion that McLuhan confuses transportation with mediation. And, of course, it is possible to regard all these phenomena as media in some way. Language is a medium that converts ideas into communicable sentences, and is therefore a tool that serves in the aid of individuals communicating (cf. Ong 1983/1991). And it is naturally possible to use two stones to create messages in Morse code, but this is hardly a fruitful path to follow for someone who sets out to discuss the role of media in culture and society, as it is too inclusive: everything can at one point or another become a medium. A more fruitful way for the media researcher, then, is to not only include the material technologies, but also their organisational form. When Inca Indians in South America used patterns of knotting (Quipu) to disseminate information (Ascher & Ascher 1997/1999), this was performed using a code that had developed institutionally. Today we take television for granted, and do not normally reflect on why we make sense of it. But television is also in need of a code common within a given society if it is to be comprehended as meaningful (cf. Hall 1973). Thus, in order for a stone to become a medium, it has to be used within a coded system of communication in a given society or in a given cultural setting, just as television or any other medium does. This code needs to be produced socially and culturally. This is also why the concepts of culture and society are of importance in the analysis of the media, and these are discussed in the next few paragraphs.

Culture is one of the most complicated concepts, as Raymond Williams once argued (1979, p. 154). This is undoubtedly true, although there are certainly many other concepts that are quite hard to define in any simple way. Although Williams found the concept to be extremely complex, he nonetheless pointed to three general definitions, or ways of using, culture in his seminal work *The Long Revolution* (1961/1965). Firstly, there is the way of using culture to point to an ideal 'in which culture is a state of human perfection, in terms of certain absolute and universal values' (p. 57). Secondly, there are those uses of the concept that point in the direction of a 'documentary' tradition; that is, as articulated by 19th-century cultural critic

Matthew Arnold (1869/1994 p. 5), that which comprises 'the best which has been thought and said in the world', and which emphasises particular 'works' in art and science. The third use of the word culture that Williams accounts for, which is also the definition he aligns himself with, is the 'social' definition 'in which culture is a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour' Williams 1961/1965 p. 57).

It is quite evident that if we are to use any of these definitions of culture, we cannot neglect to include an analysis of the media or communication (cf. Williams 1974/1976). Not only do we need to look to the media because they reflect values, works of art and learning, but also because they reflect our ways of living. However, the media do not only reflect culture in these ways. They are also important institutions that help shape values, art and lifestyles. The media naturally do not in any way determine how certain individuals are going to behave or think. They do, however, play a significant role as an aid in people's constructions of their own lifestyles, values, etc., and the structure of the media to a certain degree also privileges specific values and lifestyles over others. It is therefore possible to say that the media are cultural technologies that have a bearing on how cultures are constructed. Media as technologies, then, have an impact on, or privilege, certain forms of communicating, but they also have an impact through their content.

If we hold the above to be true, we could extend this argument to include the relation between media and society. *Society*, however, is very seldom defined explicitly in the literature. According to a basic definition given by Jürgen Habermas (1981/1992 p. 138), society consists of 'the legitimate orders through which participants regulate their memberships in social groups and thereby secure solidarity'. Denis McQuail (1994 p. 61) has a more expanded definition, stating that society consists of a 'material base (economic and political resources and power), to relationships in various social collectivities (national societies, communities, families, etc.) and to social roles and occupations which are regulated (formally or informally) by the structures of collective social life'.

Although the concepts of society and culture at times seem to overlap, or at least appear to overlap due to insufficient clarification of definition, it is quite evident that society most often refers to organisational forms of collective entities, and culture to the content at the heart of these forms. This is also how the concepts are used in this chapter. Societies and cultures exist in time and space: they have start- and endpoints. Both societies and cultures are often, although not always, considered to be equal with nations, especially since industrial modernity. We distinguish Soviet culture and society from Russian culture and society, to take an illustrative if slightly special example that has its own very specific start- and endpoints. However, although we might think of Soviet culture and society as coherent entities, they have also changed over time. The question is how to understand these changes.

Time, Space and the Media

The problem at hand, to repeat what was expressed above, is how to deal with the role of media in and for societal and cultural change (or stability). At the bottom line, both change and stability are temporal categories, dealing with movements through space, which is how French philosopher Henri Lefebvre (1974/1991) defines time. This means that temporal and spatial dimensions cannot be but analytically separated, as there can be no time without space and vice versa.

With the advent of writing, it became possible to expand societies in space as well as time. On the one hand, written communication made it possible to organise society in more complex ways, through legislation and through trade, which were the first areas where written communication was used. This meant that it became possible to control vaster areas of land and organise society hierarchically, thereby securing power. Through successive divisions of labour societies grew more and more complex, hand in hand with the development of written communication. However, written communication also meant that it was no longer necessary to rely on mnemotechnical devices to preserve knowledge. In a purely oral society, the only way to preserve knowledge and historical accounts was through technologies connected to memory – poetry, verse, etc. With the advent of writing, mental capacities became released and it became possible to preserve historical and cultural texts, contributing to the extension of the public collective memory and to the fact that societies could stretch out in time in ways previously not possible.

Throughout history, the communication technique of writing has developed through the rise of new media technologies, each of which has contributed to the increasing complexity of cultures and societies. We have also seen the birth of a range of metaphorical concepts that attempt to grasp the workings of the media and their role in society and culture. If we turn to a contemporary medium such as television, we can see that the metaphors we use can be related to temporal or spatial features. Raymond Williams's (1974/1979) concept of flow, for example, is clearly a temporal concept, dealing with the continuous adding of images to one another in a seemingly endless and seamless stream of pictures. As such, the two-dimensional images are moving through space, thus fulfilling the definition of time proposed by Henri Lefebvre. However, if we look at other concepts used in connection to contemporary television output, such as program slots, schedules and the like, we can see that these are spatial metaphors having to do with the distribution of program units over an admittedly temporal category such as the day, or over the unit 'prime time', but a category that also points to the distribution of programs in space. This is how we can also see that time can be transformed into a symbolic spatial category that occupies a certain *area* of our everyday lives. How can this be? Let me return to this question in a moment, and first expand a bit on the spatiality of the media and the spatial metaphors used.

It would not be too daring to argue that geographical metaphors have become increasingly common in relation to the media over the past couple of decades. One common concept used in media critique is that of the *media landscape*. A landscape naturally points to a spatial dimension. It has to do with vision, land or geography, and also with a specific view of a certain physical area. However, one should not restrict landscapes to their spatial dimensions. Landscapes also travel through time, and change according to the powers of either nature or individual subjects. It thus also has a temporal dimension.

Etymologically, the concept of landscape comes from the Dutch word *landschap* and seems to have first occurred in the late 16th century. Its semantic meaning can be described as a picture representing a view of natural inland scenery, as well as the art of depicting that scenery. In a more general way, it can also refer to the landforms of a region, or a portion of land that can be viewed at one time from one specific place. It can also indicate an area of activity (cf. Bolin 2003 for a more complete account).

As indicated above, the consequences of printing can be evaluated through the impact it has had on spatial and temporal features of culture and society. In precisely the same way, we can evaluate the growing complexity of the media in their ways of relating to each other, and how the combination of the media in organisational and technological forms as well as the media content (texts, information, representation) affect social and cultural processes – that is, how the media help shape both the form and content of modern culture and society.

Media Landscapes in Space and Time

Media landscapes exist in space and time. When it comes to space, media landscapes can be thought of in at least three ways: terrain, map and simulacrum. The dimension we could label *the terrain* concerns the physical surroundings, the obvious relations between different media technologies. This is the structure of media technologies and contents on a denotative level, to use the language of semiotics. It concerns the immediate apprehensions of television sets, newspapers, books, computers, etc., in their obvious appearance around us. This dimension can also be quite easily apprehended, at least when it comes to the individual's immediate surroundings. For example, if we take a look around our own home or workplace, we can easily observe which media technologies are at hand: we have the radio in the kitchen, the television set in the living room, a computer in the corner, beside the bookshelf with books of fact and fiction, a CD player, a DVD player, several telephones (some of which are mobile phones), computer games, etc. We could describe this environment to our friends, and although we might forget to mention some of the media, it would not be

hard for our imaginative friend to understand the way we have organised our home in relation to the media, since most people have similar ways of doing this. We could also show pictures of our homes, or make drawings to illustrate how we have organised our media technologies.

However, if we leave the micro level of individual arrangements of the media in our private homes, and look at societal or cultural levels, we need to make more general statements on the principles of organisation. Just as with geographical landscapes, it is not possible to fathom the technological structures of electronic landscapes in their entirety, and we need to give more abstract accounts of their organisation. We are naturally confronted with different media technologies in our everyday lives, but we cannot evaluate the structures that they uphold in anything but abstract terms. And when we rise to this level, we do not have direct access to these structures but have to rely on generalised reductive descriptions, metaphors, statistics or general accounts, theory being just one example. In the same way as it is easy to describe in a very exact way the arrangements of flowers in your garden in front of your private home, but more difficult to give an exact account of the environment in your city, there is a discrepancy between how you describe the organisation of the media in your home and the organisation of the media in your home region. The difference between these two dimensions is that of terrain versus map.

Within the dimension of *the map*, we are confronted with such general descriptions, or representations of the media structures on the one hand and of geographical, social, economic, political and cultural accounts represented in and through the media on the other hand. Like the map over geographic territories, the map of media structures is not equal to its referent, but is an abstraction, highlighting certain aspects of reality at the cost of others. The map, then, needs to be understood in relation to its purpose. Maps can focus on demographics, weather conditions, water supplies or other features that can be visualised to illustrate more complex features of reality. Moreover, maps 'are ranked according to their correspondence with topographical truth', according to map historian John Harley (1990 p. 4). They make claims on depicting or representing certain phenomena accurately.

However, although thought of primarily as representations, maps are in fact also constituent of reality. Think of the five-year plans of the Soviet economy. A plan is a map that stretches into the future, giving guidance for future actions. The symbolic thus has a bearing on reality, or, put more to the point: maps *are* also reality. We can speak of this in terms of *the simulacrum*, for want of a better term. This concept is borrowed from Jean Baudrillard (1976/1993), and using it highlights how media articulate physical and symbolic landscapes in space and time, and how these spaces are phenomenologically perceived by those who inhabit them. We could say that this level of analysis is involved in the thinking around the question 'How does the map work on the terrain?'. This means analyzing the links and articulations between the terrain and the map and how the map influences the

world, setting limits for and directing actions analogous to how Michel Foucault's 'archive' becomes 'the law of what can be said' (Foucault 1969/1991 p. 129).

The dimension of the simulacrum is involved in studying ideological discourses about the future, and how certain discourses work as self-fulfilling prophecies. For example, if there were a dominant discourse pointing out a certain region, say the Södertörn region south of Stockholm, Sweden, as the most promising and prosperous place for future investments, such a discourse could very well lead to increased interest from investors, entrepreneurs, politicians, etc. In the long run, an effect of this could be that the area became as prosperous as predicted.

The concept of simulacrum also involves another important dimension, as it points to the fact that some representations cannot be separated from the realities, that they are in fact the same. It has become increasingly important to stress this point, since few phenomena today have non-mediated dimensions, and thus very few things can be said to exist outside of representation.

Some things, however, exist *only* in representational form. These are the things that lack material substance entirely, and it can therefore be illuminating to think of them (the simulacra) in terms of speech acts. According to John Searle (e.g. 1965) and John Austin (1955/1975), these are social acts that are made entirely through language. A promise, for example, is a typical example of a speech act, as the action lies in the utterance of the words 'I promise'. In the same way, a fictionalised account of a phenomenon, a place or an individual is also an utterance that makes a statement. Speech acts can be of many kinds, for example perlocutions/imperatives, constatives or expressives (most relevant here). Perlocutions/imperatives are speech acts oriented towards success (strategic action), and are measured by effectiveness. Constatives represent the state of affairs and thus objectivate truth claims. Expressives aim at self-presentations, aiming at reaching understanding (Habermas 1981/1991 p. 329). Mediated constative utterances with claims on communicating truth, which are of significance here, are thus the basis for our actions in the world as long as we believe them to be true, and following from this, have real effects on social relations. In this respect they *are* the surrounding world. Like verbal utterances, these are performative actions that are not visible or tangible, but are symbolic in their kind.

Many of the speech acts exemplified up to this point are constatives. Many mediated speech acts are, however, expressive; that is, they communicate emotions, experiences, etc., which are communicative modalities often featured in fiction or entertainment (whereas the modality of journalism and other documentary genres is for the most part constative). In terms of communicative validity claims, expressive communication aims at truthfulness (Habermas 1981/1991 p. 329). Perlocutions and imperatives are representative of strategic action aiming at influencing the communicating other, for example through propaganda, advertising, public relations. I will soon return

to examples of how these forms operate, but first I need to further discuss the two basic kinds of structures of media landscapes.

Two Forms of Structures

The media landscapes involve two kinds of structures: those of technological relations and those of representations. Both of these can be related to space and time.

Firstly, when it comes to the structures of the media technologies themselves, these make up technological terrain – electronic geographies in which we orient ourselves in our everyday lives. These are the structures of how the media are organised technologically (networks, organisations, technological infrastructure). These are the material structures of the media – the material base, to make an analogy in Marxist terminology. This material base is distributed in space in the form of technological systems, sometimes visible for us in the form of telephone wires in the sky, which changed the character of the urban landscape dramatically around the end of the 1800s, and was observed and debated in the daily newspapers at the time (Garnert 2005 pp. 87ff). The telephone wires' appearance in the urban landscape was also frequently featured in poems and prose, for example in the works of August Strindberg (Garnert 2005 pp. 112 and 145ff).

However, not all of these systems are visible; at least, some are hard to observe. For example, we might observe the television aerials or satellite dishes on the roofs of our houses, but we have a harder time observing the waves in the air although we know that they are there, allowing our television sets to work (and in the increasing wireless communication via computers, the visible signs of connectivity gradually disappear). And although the satellite dishes are intended for receiving signals for our television sets, they in themselves make up what Charlotte Brunsdon (1991/1997) has termed 'landscapes of taste', which signal cultural and class belonging.

Secondly, there are the media landscapes that are a result of representational practice (Adams 1994). Through the production of accounts, images and maps a semiotic web is constructed, in which we can act as individuals, but which sets up limits, privileges certain kinds of actions before others, and guides us in our everyday lives. Each account of the world, each map, pursues its own argumentation vis-à-vis the surrounding world, and these accounts will have impacts on it. When the author August Strindberg writes a description of telephone lines along the roof-tops in Stockholm, he is engaged in a representational practice, producing a map over a technological structure – an image of a reality that is not accessible for us today as terrain, only as map.

Through the media we learn of places we have never been, some of which we will never visit. This is media as the map of the outside world (including

the map of the material structures). Just as with landscape painting in the 19th century, media landscape in this meaning is strongly connected to the nation-state and nationhood (in the same way as the technological systems are), and contributes to the geopolitics of the nation, giving way to imaginations beyond the local: the 'postmodern geography of the media' (Morley 1992) or the 'electronic landscapes', which ultimately lead us to the wider territorial discussion of the global (cf. Adams & Robins 2000 p. 9). This example (the map) could be divided into media landscapes (the maps themselves, the patterns they depict) and mediated landscapes (the system of semiotic referents in the maps).

The representational structures also vary over time and, similar to how they have been constituent of space, have always defined time: from the habitual – some might say ritual – practices of separating leisure from work time (cf. Bengtsson 2002), to the definitions of the quality of time itself (Christmas time, summertime, etc.). How these representational structures affect our perception of time can be seen in shopping malls, where the commercial seasons profoundly deviate from meteorological as well as cultural seasons – for example, Christmas is culturally spread over approximately six weeks beginning with Advent Sunday and ending with the Epiphany. As a commercial season it lasts approximately as long, but starts earlier – in Sweden around mid-November – and ends earlier, on Christmas Eve (in some countries) or Christmas Day (cf. Ganetz 2001).

The media texts make up landscapes saturated with ideas, values apprehensions. All these kinds of mediated landscapes are laden with ideology, just as landscape paintings can be seen as ideological:

Landscape [...] is an instrument of cultural power, perhaps even an agent of power that is (or frequently represents itself as) independent of human intentions. Landscape as a cultural medium thus has a double role with respect to something like ideology: it naturalizes a cultural and social construction, representing an artificial world as if it were simply given and inevitable, and it also makes that representation operational by interpellating its beholder in some more or less determinate relation to its givenness as sight and site. (Mitchell 1994/2002 p. 1f)

The one problematic issue in this quote is the word 'artificial'. It should be clear from my argument above that symbolic landscapes are no less real than the material, geographical landscapes. There are in fact more similarities than differences between the two.

Although the similarities dominate, there are also some important differences between media and geographical landscapes. One major difference is that although both geographical and media landscapes structure our actions in the world, they do not do so in the same way. One could make a distinction between a 'hard' and 'soft' structuring mechanism, whereby the geographical landscape structures or sets limits on our actions in a hard way, and the technological and representational landscapes of the media structure

action in a soft way (cf. Bolin 2004). In a geographical landscape we need to climb over mountains, walk around buildings, etc. This landscape talks to our tactile senses. The symbolic landscape of the media, as both technology and content, primarily talks to our visual and aural senses. As such, the impact on our actions is not as direct and determining, but it is not always as obvious either. The soft structuring mechanism, then, cannot be described as weaker or less real than the hard. On the contrary, in its capacity of being naturalised, it is much harder to identify and therefore also to resist. We are not always aware of the impact of the symbolic landscape in the same obvious way as we are of the geographical, physical ones.

There is, however, yet another difference between geographical and representational landscapes. This is the fact that the possibility of altering a symbolic landscape is a much more complicated task than is the adjustment of a geographical or material landscape. If I were not content with the way my garden was structured and if I, say, wanted to have apple instead of pear trees, or tarmac instead of grass, I would be able to adjust this myself. There would also be little debate over the meaning of this adjustment to my physical surroundings. On the other hand, if I wanted to adjust the symbolic landscape around me, this would be harder. The semiotic labour that would be needed to conduct a transformation of my persona, for example, or of my ethnical or cultural identity, would not only need to involve efforts by me myself: it would need to be co-produced together with those I wanted to make this changed impression upon. I would then have less control over the production process. The adjustment of the physical landscape is a relation between an individual and a material object. The adjustment of the semiotic landscape is between an individual subject, a sign structure and one or more other individual subjects.

The material, as well as the representational landscapes, has symbolic dimensions. However, representational landscapes do not have material quality, but are instead pure sign structures. They are the result of signifying practices, and can only be adjusted through semiotic work. What we have, in conclusion, are two kinds of symbolic dimensions: those connected to material media landscapes (the symbolic meanings attached to technologies), and those connected to the symbolic dimensions of the sign structures (the symbolic meanings attached to texts).

The symbolic dimensions of the material media landscapes are, in turn, of two kinds. The first is connected to the media technologies themselves. A television set has a symbolic dimension, and the difference between having an HDTV flat screen is significant (sic!) compared to having an old black-and-white set. However, media organisations also have their material institutional basis: media companies occupy headquarters and offices that are material in kind and which have symbolic dimensions. And media institutions do set their mark on the surrounding social environment by, for example, giving names to specific places – Times Square in New York, named after the newspaper New York Times, being a case in point.

But symbolic landscapes also have symbolic or signifying dimensions. Groups of texts are laden with connotations, and in the same way as it matters to the surrounding social world which kind of mobile phone you have (especially if you are a teenager), or which kind of television set you furnish your home with, it does matter which kinds of texts you engage in and which genres you prefer. This means that media consumption patterns also make up signifying landscapes. In the same way that it is easier to adjust your material surroundings in your garden, it is easier for a media company to adjust their material milieu. And if it is much harder to adjust the symbolic dimensions of the material milieu, it is even more difficult to change the connotations of the symbolic dimensions of the semiotic surroundings, since you have to change not only the material dimension but also the apprehensions of it.

Spatial Qualities of Time

Geographical landscapes naturally stretch out in space; so do media landscapes of both the material and semiotic kinds. Although we are never able to overview the totality of the global media landscape, neither are we able to view the world in its entirety. And although media representations increasingly cover more parts of the world, we are a long way from a representational practice that is global in the semantic meaning of the word. However, mediated representations, no matter how representative they are, travel through history and set their mark on future realities, and thus have cultural and societal effects. At this point in the argument, I wish to address the temporal aspect of media landscapes.

When we think of time in relation to media landscapes, it might be useful to think of different kinds of time. It is possible to work with at least three such kinds: linear, circular and punctual. *Linear time* is the time that adds hours to hours, days to days, extending time continuously into the present or back to the past. This is also how we usually think of time in everyday circumstances. *Circular time*, on the contrary, is the time that constantly returns, in the same way as seasons return every year. The third kind is *punctual time*, which is characterised by its quality, by the fact that it is similar in kind to other points in time (Geertz 1973 pp. 391ff).

If we think of the ideology of news, for example, the privileged temporal perspective is that of the linear: things happen in the world and seem to unfold in a row of sequences. This is an effect of how news is constructed. It privileges linear perspectives: the 'now-ness' of news is always contrasted with the 'then-ness' of the immediate past. However, if we return to the example of slots in a television schedule, we can see that a program in the schedule is not only situated after certain programs (the evening news comes after the afternoon soaps), but before other programs (the late-night movie,

for example), which privileges the linear. It is also situated alongside other programs on other channels; that is, it is placed side-by-side and sometimes head-to-head with other programs, often of generic similarity. This makes television schedules multi-temporal, as they point to both the *linear* perspective of the day and evening, which in turn repeats itself every day of the week, and further by week, as well as by season in a *circular* form. But a television program is also representative of *punctual* time – the time that is imprinted by its character, rather than its relation – or *situation* – to other kinds of time. It is not so much that each television program is situated at a special point in the television schedule, but more that the social uses of (some) television programs have a semi-ritual character, and are used by viewers to structure their own everyday life habits, marking off work from leisure, weekdays from holidays, etc. Or, in other words: some programs have the function of events for viewers, and are the result of emotional investment by which they mark off a temporal space to enter into for an evening, if only for a few hours (Bolin & Forsman 2002, pp. 239ff; cf. Bausinger 1984).

The quality of being able to mark off time, thus also giving time a spatial quality, is not restricted to television. Quite naturally, it also applies to radio, perhaps even more so if we consider mobile phones and radios, portable CD players and other mobile technologies that enable the listener to cut him or herself off from the surrounding symbolic environment. However, these media do not only have the ability to cut the listener off. It is just as much a question of altering the environment through a change in its symbolic forms. Through giving the physical surroundings a new soundtrack, an alteration of space has occurred. We are still locked in the physical surroundings, but we have the power to adjust the symbolic dimensions of these surroundings. On an individual level this changes the nature of the landscape, although it might not change the overall structure of society. Taken together with other similar phenomena, however, I would argue that there is an alteration at the aggregated societal and cultural level. This will be the focus of the last section of this chapter.

The Mediated Construction of Culture and Society

We now return to the relation between the media, culture and society, and the ways in which the technological landscapes and the landscapes of representation interrelate with one another in constructing cultures and societies as spatial and temporal categories. I have chosen my examples from post-Soviet Estonia. Estonia is a particularly interesting object of study in this respect, as the country 'has been an unusually unstable time-space, repeatedly constructed and reconstructed in a more or less unbalanced interaction with surrounding spheres of power, in the last decade increasingly orienting itself towards Nordic politics and markets' (Ekecrantz 2004 p. 44). It is

thus suitable as an object of study, as the processes there are more pronounced than in other parts of the world.

The technological landscapes of Estonia have obviously changed quite substantially since the late 1980s – as has occurred in Europe in general with the entrance of digital and mobile computer technology, commercial broadcasting, restructuring of press and literary markets, etc. Naturally, these changes have affected both West European and Estonian societies and cultures in a range of ways. The shift from state-controlled to commercial media, however, can probably be judged to be more overwhelming in Estonia than the changes in other parts of Europe. Although the overarching trends might be the same, the quality of the changes and transformations differs.

It is probably easy to agree on the material side of this historical situation. That is, the general map of the technological landscape will not be disputed. When we come to the question of how we should *evaluate* these changes, however, to determine the meaning of or establish representational facts about technological change, we will run into difficulties, as there will be dividing opinions. Will the spread of Internet technology lead to increased Democracy and engagement by citizens? What are the social consequences of widespread access to mobile phones? Does broadband technology enhance corporate profitability? These are questions that are not easily answered with a 'yes' or 'no'. But it will be possible to agree on the basis of their formulation in technological development: there is a material base from which to depart. This will not be the case once we move into the realm of the simulacrum, or the reality of representation.

In order to analyse the landscapes of representation, we need to consider the *signifying practices* that are fundamentally constituent of culture and society. On the one hand, these are the signifying practices strategically developed in order to actively attain effects, for example marketing, public relations, branding and other campaigning, and commercial and political communication. On the other hand, there are also more subtle and not always conscious practices around media use, which lead to cultural patterns (taste communities, for example). The latter of these are frequently discussed in the research literature on media reception, and I will consequently deal more with the former. As the endpoint of this chapter I will thus discuss some features in the restructuring of Estonia as a nation and a symbolic entity as an example of such landscapes of representation. I will focus on the nodes in the restructuring process at which commercial and political communication intersect.

The more specific example I will discuss is the discursive restructuring related to the branding campaign *Brand Estonia*, launched by the Estonian government in 2001, which aimed to promote Estonia prior to the upcoming Eurovision Song Contest in Tallinn in May 2002. The Estonian government engaged a British public relations consultant – Interbrand – that had specialised in 'country branding', and had previously worked on the Blair administration's campaign 'Cool Britannia'. Interbrand set about its work with the aim of 'promoting the Republic of Estonia abroad', through producing

'targeted, strategic messages', and 'a clear visual identity' for the nation. This strategy, summarised and accounted for in the report *Eesti Stiil/Estonian Style* (accessible from www.eas.ee), consisted of the production of four components: a bank of photographs to be used in promotional campaigns, a special 'colour palette' for Estonia, a special visual pattern, and a specific typography (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Description of the special typeface designed for the campaign Brand Estonia.



(Source: Eesti stiil/Estonian Style, www.eas.ee, 2002.02.24)

As the text reveals, the typeface is intended to help visitors to Estonia 'navigate their way'. A very tangible example has been chosen for this: the direction signs at airports. We can think of the specific qualities of the typeface semiotically, and ask why this typeface was chosen over other typefaces. We can see that Symphony is a quite simple, clean typeface. It is also a typeface that we would not reflect on if we were to see it at an airport: it is in fact quite typical of typefaces chosen at places like airports, train stations, etc. It is easy to read (letters are not easily confused with one another, for example). In short: it has directionary, or perlocutionary, power. This makes it effective as a guiding tool in other contexts as well, which are outside of airports, train stations and the like. But it would still connote a cleanness, purity, freshness, etc., even if placed in relation to signs other than those usually found at transitory spaces for departure and arrival.

At one level of analysis, then, the typeface has perlocutionary power and thus structures action through its representation. At another level of analysis the signifying practice is constative, as it argues for the similarity between Estonia and other late modern societies with late modern airports through which international passengers can arrive and depart. The linguistic combination of English and Estonian clearly confirms the place of Estonia in the context of global tourism and business flows.

Furthermore, the text proposed is a combination of Estonian and English – not Russian. Although there is a large Russian speaking population in Estonia, this has left no trace in the texts in *Estonian style*. The Estonian colour palette also carefully avoids red, and concentrates on bright and somewhat pale colours. In the ‘People of Estonia’ section, young men and women are portrayed, the men with neatly cut hair and business suits, portrayed in business settings, eyes firmly confronting the gaze from the spectator, etc. These are people uncontaminated by their Soviet past but representing the post-Soviet generations, symbolising the nation’s ‘return to the western world’ (Lauristin & Vihalemm 1997).

The combination of signs is thus not done randomly. The basis for their combination has been planned in the communicative strategy laid out by Interbrand within the framework of the Brand Estonia project, just as it has in similar campaigns aiming at promoting regions (cf. Falkheimer 2004). Consider the combination of signs that interrelate in the example from the same campaign in Figure 2, which contains a combination of photographic and geographic messages.

In Figure 2 a map of Estonia is combined with portraits of – supposedly – Estonian young persons. We can note that the map of Estonia is cut loose from context, especially abrupt to the East, towards Russia, indicating the sovereign status of the nation through the sharp line to the East and its relatively openness towards the coastal line and the West (and the Nordic countries – further anchored by the campaign slogan ‘Nordic with a twist’). We can also, after having scrutinised the photographs, see the map of Estonia as a layer over the photographs, or, more precise, accentuating the combination of two pictures. As the accompanying text reveals, however, one must be careful in combining images, since not all ‘will be enhanced by this treatment’. The photographs depict young women and children, bright skies, birches, signs that connote future possibilities, fertility, optimism, etc. Through the combination of the map of Estonia and images that are supposed to connote ‘positive transformations’, the campaign aims at encouraging foreign investors, tourists and others to invest, visit or generally pay attention to Estonia.

Through altering the spatial understanding by marking distance towards the East (and the South Baltic neighbours), and connecting instead with the West and the Nordic countries – for example with the slogan ‘Nordic with a twist’ – the campaign tries to add symbolic values to the nation. These images are then backed up with information about Estonia, for example its Tiger Leap campaign to create e-stonia, which is expected to further attract visi-

Figure 2. Description of the special map and accompanying photographs designed for the campaign Brand Estonia.



(Source: Eesti still/Estonian Style, www.eas.ee, 2002.02.24)

tors and 're-brand' the nation in the eyes of the Western world (cf. Bolin 2003 p. 28). In this, the campaign is a complex speech act of a prescriptive kind: it points to the future and aims at effecting things to come. Through the combination of symbols in semiotic labour, new values are created in the symbolic structuring of East European spaces.

So, to connect back to the relation between media, culture and society that was discussed at the beginning of this chapter, we can now see how these all interrelate in the example above. The Brand Estonia campaign adopts a cultural strategy, mediated through signs, typefaces, colour palettes and symbolically laden maps in electronic and print media, aiming to produce the post-Soviet image of Estonia as a society, a nation, a cultural entity – the

cultural connection achieved not least through images of specially selected handicrafts and (young) people, in specific cultural surroundings, engaging in specific cultural habits, etc. Through this, specific 'legitimate orders' (Habermas) are produced, portraying a certain kind of 'collective social life' (McQuail) for both inhabitants of Estonia and others to take part in. These are the representations of a 'particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour' (Williams). This is society as it exists in representation.

Representational Structures: Final Remarks

This way of life, and this specific cultural and social order, might not be perceived as accurate by some, but will remain uncontested by others. So, to what extent can we speak of society as it exists in representations in terms of truthfulness? If these are maps of Estonia, to what extent can we judge them to be topographically true or false? The answer to this question is that we cannot. We will never be able to judge these representations to be false, as they themselves *are* the reality of Estonia as a society and a specific cultural sphere, at least just as much as any other account built entirely of signs.

As semiotic utterances, these are examples of claims of representing a state of affairs regarding Estonia as a nation. They want to install in their interpreters certain impressions about Estonia, rather than others. These constative claims are made by analogy, masking themselves as being expressive. As long as such representational statements do not make claims on physical facts (it would be hard to claim that Estonia has a larger population than Russia, for example), as long as signs point to qualitative features, it is only possible to judge them against other representations. That is, we can argue about their accuracy but will never be able to prove them false. As long as we act in relation to these images – and no matter *how* we act – the sheer fact that we depart from these maps in our actions marks them as true in the sense that they have real-life effects.

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- Is this a direct quote? Consider using double quotation marks for quotes and single quotation marks for concepts you're introducing. (Also, if this is a quote, should there be a reference after it?) (Also again...I'm finding a lot of these clauses, enclosed in single quotation marks, that seem to be quotes yet have no reference. Might be worth checking into – I won't mark any from now on)
- Check that this is correct after my change.
- Should this be another word – or are 'societies and nations' made equal with nations? And 'made equal' doesn't feel right – 'considered to be equal to.', maybe?
- Have always defined time? Have always been defined by time?
- Aren't you only talking about one thing here (punctual time)? One thing can't be talked about in terms of 'one another'.

Chapter 5

Textural Analysis

Materialising Media Space

André Jansson

The geography of communication is concerned with the dual question of how communication produces space and how space produces communication. As argued in the first chapter of this book, such a concern implicates that communication theorists must find ways to incorporate geographical perspectives (see also Couldry, 2000). In particular, it raises a demand for concepts that are able to transcend the analytical divide between *symbolic* and *material* aspects of space. This chapter focuses upon one such concept – *texture*.

The concept of texture has thus far been used primarily within engineering and design studies, pointing to the characteristics and appearance of particular materials and surfaces. It has also figured occasionally within social and cultural theory, notably within geography and urban studies, pointing to symbolic sediments, infrastructures and/or patterns of interaction in particular settings (e.g. Rowe and Koetter, 1984; Suttles, 1984; Gordon and Malone, 1997; Adams, 2001). Still, in the latter case texture has rarely occupied any fundamental analytical position, nor been adequately defined. The purpose of this chapter is to (a) initiate an exploration of the ontological and epistemological properties of *texture*, focusing upon its analytical potential within cultural studies and the geography of communication, and (b) show how *textural analysis* can contribute to a more composite understanding of the spatial configurations of informational society. These two themes are interwoven throughout the chapter, and provide the basis for a reorientation within communication studies. Textural analysis is advanced as an epistemological framework for holistic explorations of the intersections of symbolic and material geographies of communication, as well as the ideological embeddedness of communicative practices and technologies.¹

Texture – A General View

In her much-debated book on city planning, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs (1961/1993: 66-7) presents a vivid example of

the sidewalk as a *scene*. The example comes from ‘her own’ street in New York, Hudson Street, and illustrates the regularities and ritual character of everyday life in a public setting. In a vivid description of the morning rituals, Jacobs observes how movements and interactions produce a non-random *street ballet*:

Mr. Halpert unlocking the laundry’s handcart from its mooring to a cellar door, Joe Cornacchia’s son-in-law stacking out empty crates from the delicatessen, the barber bringing out his sidewalk folding chair, Mr. Goldstein arranging the coils of wire which proclaim the hardware store is open, the wife of the tenement’s superintendent depositing her chunky three-year-old with a toy mandolin on the stoop, the vantage point from which he is learning the English his mother cannot speak. Now the primary children, heading for St. Luke’s, dribble through to the south; the children for St. Veronica’s cross, heading to the west, and the children for P.S. 41, heading toward the east. Two new entrances are being made from the wings: well-dressed and even elegant women and men with brief cases emerge from doorways and side streets. Most of these are heading for the bus and subways, but some hover on the curbs, stopping taxis which have miraculously appeared at the right moment, for taxis are part of a wider morning ritual: having dropped passengers from midtown in the downtown financial district, they are now bringing downtowners up to midtown. Simultaneously, numbers of women in housedresses have emerged and as they crisscross with one another they pause for quick conversations that sound with either laughter or joint indignation, never, it seems, anything between them. It is time for me to hurry to work too, and I exchange my ritual farewell to Mr. Lofaro, the short, thick-bodied, white-aproned fruit man who stands outside his doorway a little up the street, his arms folded, his feet planted, looking solid as earth itself. We nod; we each glance quickly up and down the street, then look back to each other and smile. We have done this many a morning for more than ten years, and we both know what it means: All is well.

Jacobs’s terminology is related to Erving Goffman’s (1959) notion of social life as performance – actions and interactions taking form according to more or less institutionalised, but still informal, manuscripts. Still, Jacobs’s argument is more precise. It points to the social responsibility attached to all forms of city planning. At the core of her analysis is the assumption that the material-functional spatiality of a city determines not only movements, but also public life, that is, the manuscripts of symbolic exchange and communicative praxis. While some areas and infrastructural arrangements nurture the pluralism and adventurous character of urban life, others choke it. The portrait of Hudson Street is in many ways the ideal view of ordered complexity.

The true nature of urbanism, according to Jacobs, is a positive interplay between public and private life; between anonymity and basic trust – an interplay in which neither of the two sides exceeds the other. This balance,

furthermore, “is largely made up of small, sensitively managed details, practiced and accepted so casually that they are normally *taken for granted*” (Jacobs, 1961/1993: 78, italics added). A good example is found in the third chapter of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Mr. Joe Cornacchia, the keeper of the delicatessen on Hudson Street, is more than a shopkeeper. He is also given the informal function of ‘key-keeper’, which means that the locals turn in their apartment keys to him if they are expecting visitors while away from home. This intermediary function between private and public is based on trust and an unspoken agreement of integrity, that is, ‘no questions asked’. Mr. Joe is what Jacobs calls a “public character” whose particular function also makes him, as well as the particular locale he occupies, a social and communicational *node*; he is the mediator of not only keys but also local news and information.

Naturally, one may problematise Jacobs’s rather deterministic view of urban planning processes. My point here, however, is that inasmuch as Jacobs’s observations reveal how scenes, rituals, performances and informal networks emerge at the intersection of material and symbolic structures, they also provide a portrait of *texture* – the *communicative fabric* of space. Jacobs’s descriptions have much in common with Goffman’s (1959) theories of *regionalisation*. They show, first, that just as much as *communicative practices* (e.g., Mr. Joe talking to his customers) are attached to a material basis, *spatial practices* (e.g., Mr. Goldstein arranging the coils of wire on the sidewalk) hold a communicative potential. Spatial and communicative practices are as difficult to keep apart as Goffman’s (1971) notions of the individual as ‘vehicular unit’ and ‘participation unit’. They also show that *spatial/communicative practices* within any given region are *structured* according to pre-existing *spatial arrangements and resources*, as well as according to *temporal regularities* (most often of a cyclic character). Taxi drivers know when and where people need their services, and people on Hudson Street expect taxi drivers to reproduce this negotiated pattern. Finally, Jacobs’s observations show that *spatial/communicative practices* in a region tend to follow *formal and informal rules* (manuscripts) pertaining to the particular space and time. Mr. Joe does not ask his customers why they must lend their keys, nor does he to introduce them to one another.

The flows and patterns of spatial/communicative practices (performances) that emerge according to the structure of resources and rules (stage/region), and that also (re)produce these structural characteristics, establish a meaningful and mediating texture. The term texture derives from the Latin *textere*, meaning “to weave”, and refers to both the thing woven (textile), and *the feel of the weave* (texture) (Adams, 2001: xiii). Texture thus helps us get past the sense of space as container. It allows us to conceive of space in general, and mediated space in particular, in terms of a communicative ‘fullness’, or *density*, without having to imagine any kind of essence of space, or demarcate clear communicative roles, actions and messages (see also McGuinness, 2000). The roles and practices outlined in Jacobs’s text are not

to be understood simply as switching mechanisms, but as co-existing textural assets, more or less rooted in space, more or less open to individual enactment and interpretation. Through texture, communication becomes space, and space becomes communication.

Jacobs's urban portrait also shows that texture is *observable*. This is not the same thing as 'objectively' definable, however. Rather, textures (of many different kinds) form an essential part of the intersubjective lifeworld, known and manageable through experience (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973). Textural *knowledge* and *imagination* are preconditions for (inter)actions in regions across space. Such experiential frameworks incorporate taken-for-granted notions of material as well as symbolic properties of a region; what they *mean* and *feel like*. This is not to say that regions are always easy to figure out or that intersubjective understanding always prevails. As Goffman demonstrates, there are significant interpretative variations, which implies that regional textures are continuously opened up and contested – such as the boundaries between 'front regions' and 'back regions':

While we are familiar with the stage arrangements in and around a dwelling place, we tend to be less aware of other stage arrangements. In American residential neighbourhoods, boys of eight to fourteen and other profane persons appreciate that entrances to back lanes and alleys lead somewhere and are to be used; they see these *openings* in a vivid way that will be lost when they become older. Similarly, janitors and scrub-women have a clear perception of the small doors that lead to the back regions of business buildings and are intimately familiar with the profane transportation system for secretly transporting dirty cleaning equipment, large stage props, and themselves (Goffman, 1959: 125, italics added).

Although Goffman's statement involves a rather crude division between 'us' and 'them', it provides an important corrective to more abstract formulations of (hyper)modern 'placelessness' (Relph, 1976) and 'non-places' (Augé, 1995). Airports, motorways and global fast-food restaurants might be regarded as universal 'non-places' if we think of them solely as hubs of transportation and transaction. But as soon as we study them in closer detail we find site-specific textural arrangements, involving regional contradictions and social complexity (cf. Tomlinson, 1999; Dürrschmidt, 2000). As shown in Goffman's example, certain groups (by virtue of occupation, lifestyle, etc.) may create alternative textures or problematise the ways in which textures are predominantly perceived and used. If we develop this argument into a more post-structural reading of social life we might also argue that all practices, even through their repetition, negotiate texture.

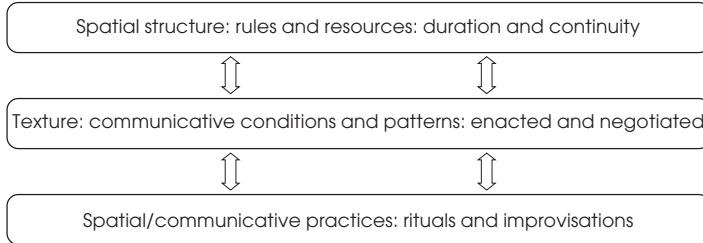
Space is thus both produced and interpreted *through texture*, that is, through a spatial materialisation of culture, whose deeper meanings can be made available foremost through the virtues of ethnographic fieldwork. Doing textural analysis, then, is not only about describing communicative patterns

in certain regions, such as the ‘street ballet’ discussed by Jacobs. Such mappings do hold an important function, for example by means of cross-regional comparisons. But textural analysis is simultaneously, and above all, a matter of unveiling the meaningful spatial structures and manuscripts that enable textures to take shape. As Clifford Geertz (1973) puts it in his essay on *Thick Description*:

Doing ethnography is like trying to read (in the sense of ‘construct a reading of’) a manuscript – foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries, but written not in conventionalized graphs of sound but in transient examples of shaped behaviour (ibid: 10).

Geertz points to the ambivalence of social manuscripts – their intermediary position between regularities (shaped behaviour) and contradictions. In a similar manner texture belongs to a family of intermediary concepts, such as ‘interpretive scheme’, ‘facility’ and ‘norm’, which articulate different aspects of what Anthony Giddens (1984: Ch 1) calls structuration. Texture is thus a mediator not only between material and symbolic aspects of space, but also between *spatial structure* and *communicative agency*; between regularities and improvisations; between then and now.

Figure 1 The Epistemological Position of Texture



Summarising this discussion, we might pinpoint texture’s epistemological position in a more schematic fashion. Figure 1 stresses texture’s nature as both *enacted* and *negotiated*. It is, on the one hand, something ‘out there’, which we may describe and *put to use* in daily life – a weave of ordered complexity, involving symbolic and material resources for interaction. On the other hand, it is something we imagine, interpret and *work upon*, thereby contributing to its continuous (re)production. Figure 1 also stresses texture’s intermediary position between structure and agency. Texture contains aspects of both spatial structure and spatial/communicative practices. Likewise, the rules and resources of space, as well as the ritual and improvisational practices occurring in space, are saturated by texture. Both spaces and practices are *textured*. This also means that the processes through which textures are (re)produced, at the intersection of structure and agency, may be

called *texturation*. However, in order to grasp the dynamic of these processes we must also consider that textures operate according to different rhythms and geographical scales.

Textural Rhythms and Scales

Thus far, our discussion has primarily considered how texture produces regions, that is, how texture holds together a particular space and makes it useful and meaningful in terms of communication. However, as we have also touched upon, texture is just as much part of the alteration, blurring and interlinking of regions. Texture is not reproductive *per se*, although its existence is clearly an outcome of more or less ritualised patterns of communication (Carey, 1989). First, the potential for alteration is related to the *bias of communication* (Innis, 1951/1964). While churches and other places for time-biased communication tend to reproduce texture, places for space-biased communication, such as exhibition halls, are in constant flux, constantly re-textured. Alteration also follows from *spatial openness*. While some social regions have clear demarcations and clearly formalised textures (such as airplane cabins), others are more diffuse or open-ended (such as urban streets and sidewalks).

We must thus think of texture as both *dynamic* and *multi-layered*. Its *dynamism* is a function of the *rhythms* it incorporates. As held by Jacobs's description of the public morning rituals of Hudson Street, most places look different depending upon when they are observed. A train station is a different sight at rush hour than on a Saturday night. The number and types of passengers vary, as do the frequency and types of trains, generating shifting modalities of material and symbolic flows. This does not mean, however, that a train station is an entirely new place on Saturday night, or that its textures are entirely new. It means foremost that regional textures, depending upon their level of openness and bias of communication, incorporate and articulate the rhythms of broader patterns of social life. Textural dynamism is part of defining a region, creating a particular atmosphere and pulse. In a study of how second-hand commodities circulate in urban areas, for example, Straw (forthcoming) points to the emergence of different commercial genres – such as the charity shop, garage sale, pawnshop and retail outlet. These commercial spaces are not only organised differently. Their textures also represent different ways of relating to the rhythms of urban commerce and social life. As Straw argues, these textural rhythms also contribute to the identity work of urban-dwellers: “As regions within the city come to be associated with moments in the life cycles of objects, and as these moments themselves come to ground distinctive forms of urban commerce, the urban-dweller's sense of belonging is given added substance, made ‘thick’” (see also Löfgren, 1997).

The *multi-layeredness* of texture is to be understood in terms of *scale relationships*. As Doreen Massey (1993: 155) convincingly argues, “we need to conceptualise space as constructed out of interrelations, as the simultaneous coexistence of social interrelations and interactions at all spatial scales, from the most local level to the most global”. Most regions are not isolated, but relatively open. They comprise a conglomerate of textural relationships, which in turn generate symbolic flows across and between regions. This *connectivity* has increased during the entire modern era, and notably due to the informationalisation of late modernity (e.g. Tomlinson, 1999; Castells, 1996/2000). While modern communications, such as the railway system, the press, the cinema, and stationary radio technology, foremost contributed to the pluralisation and interlinking of social regions within certain *institutional* patterns (cf. Berger et al., 1973), the age of informationalism is typically marked by *globality*, that is, an abolishment of local/regional boundaries and ties. In a similar manner, without claiming absolute categories, we may study textures according to three different *scales*: the *regional*, *institutional* and *global*. These scales cannot be separated, but texture looks different depending upon which geographical level we are interested in.

Textural analyses of a *regional scale* conform to the ethnographic tradition appointed above. They deal with the texturation of *geographically bounded spaces*, and the (sub)regions that make up these environments. Such a perspective can be found in Anna McCarthy’s (2001) book *Ambient Television: Visual Culture and Public Spaces*, which investigates how television contributes to the regionalisation of public settings. She discusses the mediatisation of places as diverse as department stores, restaurants and laundry facilities, in which TV screens give shape to social atmosphere, behaviours and (inter)actions (see also Andersson; Bengtsson; Fornäs; O’Dell in this volume).

Textural analyses of an *institutional scale* deal with regional conglomerations that are bounded, not in terms of a stable geography but of *organisational mechanisms*. The analytical starting point is not spatial arrangements, but particular organisations of social life. The focus might be on the textures produced within the framework of, for example, tourism, news production or event marketing. All such institutions produce and are produced in space, by means of textural processes, which to some extent can be generalised, but also involve moments of negotiation and change. A good example is Haldrup and Larsen’s (2003) study of the ‘family gaze’, that is, photographic practices among families on vacation. Their analysis applies tourism photography as its starting point and then tries to chart out and interpret how images work as a means of consuming, representing and re-representing space. Tourism photography generates textures that link many different regions and arrange them in new ways by means of mobility and representation (see also Larsen in this volume). A broader textural analysis might also consider how family vacationing produces and is produced through complex patterns of communicative/spatial practices, which in turn contribute to the experience of tourism as such.

Textural analyses on a *global scale*, finally, focus on how textures create and articulate spaces that are uncoupled from local geographies. The focus is upon how regions and institutions might be ‘stretched out’ or locally uncoupled – typically through the production of virtual, electronic spaces on the Internet. The analytical starting point, then, is spatial configurations that do not necessarily have any direct relationship to material spaces – *virtual geographies* (Crang et al., 1999) – but which are indeed representing and influencing them (see also Sundén in this volume). In an account of the interplay between urban development and telecommunications, Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin (1996: Ch 8) point out a number of synergetic relationships that together explain why the cities of modern society are also turned into informational nodes, that is, nodes in a texture of global scale. Among other things they stress ‘physical synergies’, pointing to the fact that networks for movement and telecommunications tend to grow together in “mutually reinforcing loops which further concentrate transport and telecommunication investments on to ‘hubs’ within the larger cities” (ibid: 329), and that old infrastructure is often used as the material basis for the extension of new digital networks:

Between the main cities of the UK, companies eager to enter the liberalised telecommunication markets are stringing out competing optic fibre networks along the railway lines (Mercury), along the tops of electricity pylons (Energis) and even along the banks of the old canals that were the main transport networks during the industrial revolution (ibid: 329).

In other words, the textures of globality are not the outcome of informationalisation alone. Its material underpinning and ideological structure have much in common with the industrial era (see also Massey, 1991; Morley and Robins, 1995; Appadurai, 1996; Mattelart, 1996/2000). Graham and Marvin underline two of the most important objectives of textural analysis. First, they unveil the complex ways in which symbolic flows contribute to and rely upon the presence of certain material arrangements in space. As in the example above, these arrangements are typically sedimented, articulating not only future visions, but also visions and ideologies of the past. Secondly, the authors expose how textures are configured and interwoven according to different scales, establishing a local-global nexus. From a textural perspective, the emergence of global electronic spaces cannot be separated from the parallel development of particular kinds of regional and institutional textures – ‘scale effects’ (Couldry and McCarthy, 2004) – in terms of urban infrastructure; places for technical distribution and consumption; new forms of shaped behaviour, etc. In the next section we will look at these issues from a more temporal perspective.

Texturation, Durability and Change

Jane Jacobs's description of Hudson Street bears witness to a texture with strong historical continuity – a texture closely tied to spatial structure. But what has happened to such a texture since the 1960s? To what extent have new means of communication – *integrated in space* (e.g., electronic surveillance technology); *located in space* (e.g., TV screens), or *carried by people in space* (e.g., mobile telephones) – altered the texture of this neighbourhood? Approaching communication as spatial production implies that we can interpret the consequences of informationalisation in terms of *texturation* – the operation of economic and technological forces within a more durable material and cultural structure. As asserted in Figure 1, texture embodies the tension field between durability and change, structure and agency.

Which side to foregrounded, is partly an epistemological and ideological question. In a sociological account of urban culture, for example, Gerald Suttles (1984) argues that the understanding of culture in general would benefit from a material turn, which would also imply that more direct attention was to be paid to durability and the “cumulative texture” of local culture:

We [the US] are becoming an older society; our cities are aging and the patina of local culture is more visible. Such time depth invites attention to local culture because local culture is not something that starts full blown but something that accumulates. [...] By culture I do not mean that textbook sociological definition that makes everything normative cultural. Rather, I aim to indicate something closer to what an art historian or collector would call culture. Not just high culture, of course, but popular culture as well; not just what people put in their museums, but also what they put on their car bumpers and T-shirts. [...] Indeed, one of my contentions is that these objective artefacts give local culture much of its stability and continuing appeal (ibid: 284).

Suttles makes a good point in partly redirecting the interest of cultural inquiry from practices to material objects and manifestations. In doing so, he raises the important argument that heritage and tradition must be studied in space, that is, through their cultural sediments. Suttles's interest concerns the articulation of predominant socio-economic forces in metropolitan areas, through which the image of place is stabilised. Such articulations are cornerstones of urban texture, a kind of common denominator, bearing witness to its *durability* in much the same way as Harold Innis (1951/1964) has described the characteristics of time-biased media. Similarly, texture itself is reproduced largely by means of symbolic and material representations of historical value patterns, events, personalities, and so on, pertaining to a regional, institutional and/or global scale.

Beyond this point, however, Suttles's method turns out to be problematic, since it suggests that durability is articulated only through the phenom-

ena most commonly quoted or reproduced in public life. Durability is conflated with a quantitative measurement of public visibility.

A more elaborated notion can be generated if we turn to Lefebvre. Although Lefebvre shares with Suttles an emphasis on durability and cultural accumulation, as opposed to alteration and circulation, his conceptualisation of texture (1974/1991: 118) enables complex interpretations of the historically contested nature of space:

Paths are more important than the traffic they bear, because they are what endures in the form of the reticular patterns left by animals, both wild and domestic, and by people (in and around the houses of village or small town, as in the town's immediate environs). Always distinct and clearly indicated, such traces embody the 'values' assigned to particular routes: danger, safety, waiting, promise. This graphic aspect, which was obviously not apparent to the original 'actors' but which becomes quite clear with the aid of modern-day cartography, has more in common with a spider's web than with a drawing or plan. Could it be called a text, or a message? Possibly, but the analogy would serve no particularly useful purpose, and it would make more sense to speak of texture rather than of texts in this connection. [...] Time and space are not separable within a texture so conceived: space implies time, and vice versa.

Lefebvre's example stresses that textures are produced not only in space, but also *in time*. Studying texture is not to study random occasions of spatial and communicative practice, but the dominant paths and patterns that emerge through the repetition of practices within a more durable spatial structure – what Geertz (1973) refers to as manuscripts written in “transient examples of shaped behaviour” (see above). The unveiling of such patterns articulates textural history and provides a hermeneutic platform for studies of how particular communicative conditions are negotiated in relation to the past. In particular, Lefebvre's perspective encourages a closer examination of the *ideological* and *material* embeddedness of such conditions.

Ideology

The foundation of Lefebvre's theory of spatial production is a triadic interplay between (1) *spatial practices*, (2) *representations of space*, and (3) *spaces of representation* (or *representational space*). Spatial practices refer to the activities and material conditions that prevail in a particular space and define its social nature. Representations of space are symbolic mediations, such as maps, drawings, etc., showing space as it *was*, as it *is*, or, perhaps most important, as it *could be*. Representational space, finally, refers to the realm of imagination and experience, that is, the myths, ideologies and pre-understandings through which social subjects come to understand space and its representations. Following this perspective, Lefebvre (1974/1991: 42)

argues that texture is “informed by effective knowledge and ideology”. In other words, texture is *a site of ideological reproduction and negotiation*, embodying and expressing competing notions of how space and communication are to be organised in society. All such ideological patterns are inherited through historical knowledge and myth, that is, through representational space.

In this connection, Lefebvre’s (ibid: Ch 4-6) discussion of how the *dialectic of spatial production* has taken on different shapes under different historical regimes provides a fascinating parallel to Harold Innis’s notion of the ideological *bias of communication*. While texture, by virtue of its internal durability, provides ideological support for certain spatial/communicative practices – in capitalistic informational societies light, *space-biased* communication – it restrains and sanctions others – that is, more solid, *time-biased* forms. This does not mean that subjects are imprisoned by texture. But they can only slowly and to a limited extent (sometimes through subversive and revolutionary practices) alter the textural properties of any given region, institution or global space:

The subject experiences space as an obstacle, as a restraint ‘objectality’ at times as implicably hard as a concrete wall, being not only extremely difficult to modify in any way but also hedged by the Draconian rules prohibiting any attempt at such modification. Thus the *texture* of space affords opportunities not only to social acts with no particular place in it and no particular link with it, but also to a spatial practice that it does indeed determine, namely its collective and individual use: a sequence of acts which embody a signifying practice even if they cannot be reduced to such a practice (ibid: 57, italics in original).

Given the durability of textures, it is worthwhile to note that informationalisation has led to a historical shift, a *textural revolution*, similar to the one imposed by industrialism. This revolution has saturated both private and public spaces, both material structures and symbolic interaction. For example, Paul Virilio’s (1990/2000: 22) prediction that “*audiovisual speed* [of new media] will at last be for our interior domestic architecture what *automotive speed* was already for the architecture of the city” seems more and more valid. Suburban highways are paralleled by ‘digital superhighways’, transforming the domestic home into an informational hub (see also Silverstone and Hirsch, 1992; Morley, 2000; Allon, 2004) – a development that not only enables new forms of communicative practices, but also imposes the adjustment of spatial practices according to the anticipated presence and influence of new means of communication (cf. Meyrowitz, 1985). In late modern society, then, people expect others to carry mobile telephones (turned on or off, depending on region) (Höflich, 2005); public behaviour is managed according to the presence of surveillance technology (Graham, 1999), and so on. Ideology operates by means of the textural taken-for-grantedness mentioned earlier.

This does much to confirm Marshall McLuhan's (1964: Ch 1; see also McLuhan, 1961) classical statement that "the medium is the message" – that "the 'message' of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs" (ibid: 8). However, we must not overlook the opposite perspective, asserting that new technologies and their implementations are fostered by pre-existing textures and ideologies of communication, which in turn are bound up with broader ideological structures of society. This is essentially to say that spatial textures work as mediators for the cultural and ideological shaping of communication technologies, that is, the production of media as *cultural form* (Williams, 1974). For example, according to several commentators the expansion of CCTV surveillance in public spaces has occurred in symbiosis with the proliferation of private security initiatives, as well as "on the back on what appears to be incessant populist crime control politics" (Newburn, 2001: 843). In effect, the expansion of CCTV has also reproduced a late modern form of technological utopianism, overstating or misjudging the potential social effects of technological change (see also Graham and Marvin, 1996: 213pp; Norris et al., 1998; Bauman, 2001). While such ideological constellations work towards the uniformation of textures, however, their social and technological imperatives can never abolish older patterns altogether, but are negotiated across space in relation to durable textural formations of particular locations. Local history and tradition may even serve as the groundwork for the formulation of *alternative textures*. An interesting example is the *Slow Food/Slow Cities* movements, which have institutionalised textural criteria for ecological and cultural sustainability within urban development. At the core of these criteria is an intention to revive people's sense of local place, rhythm and social community – to support "local rootedness and decentralization" (*Slow Food Webpage*, 2005), and to "respect small realities in a more and more global connected world" (*Cittaslow Webpage*, 2005).

Another important point here is that pre-established textures might be used as carriers, or media, for countercultural interventions in everyday life. In her analyses of the integration of television in public spaces, Anna McCarthy (2001: Ch 7) provides an example from San Francisco commuter stations, where TV screens present advertisements mixed with information about train arrivals and departures. In 1998 this locally taken-for-granted texture was used as a means for questioning capitalism. Inspired by the situationist movement, an activist network bought advertising time on the Commuter Channel and aired the message "Capitalism stops at nothing", using the graphic design normally used for train information. People's expectations to encounter traffic information and televised commercial messages in the train stations were thus used as a means to generate attention to the ideology behind this taken-for-granted texture, as well as to the broader issue of capitalism. McCarthy's example also stresses that performance and public art might be powerful tools in making textures visible to both the analytical gaze and the everyday eye.

Materiality

Lefebvre's theory is also essential in understanding the inseparability of spatial and communicative practices (see Figure 1). A conversation between two persons on a bus, for example, not only produces texture by means of representing space through speech acts. The conversation is also fundamental to texture inasmuch as it is *taking place* at a particular location and in a particular way, which in turn obeys (or disobeys) the communicative rules and resources of the particular region. Communication thus produces space, by way of texture, in a very material sense. As Lefebvre (ibid: 118) argues, texture cannot be understood as a mere representation of space: "It has more in common with a spider's web than with a drawing or plan". While this condition could be seen on a very fundamental level in Jacobs's picture of urban life, its relevance has been accentuated through the regime of hyper-space biased media, and the social significance of mobility, technological convergence and interactivity (see Jansson and Falkheimer in this volume). New digital media are continuously 'on the move', interconnected, remediated and reconfigured by their users. The aim of textural analysis, then, is to decipher how such symbolic-material transformations become integrated in, or revolutionise, more profound and durable spatial structures.

From a media studies perspective, then, textural analysis supports not only a spatial turn, but also a *material turn*. This means, first, that textural analysis is a perspective in which symbolic flows and expressions are treated as essential to the makeup of socio-material environments. Similar approaches have been introduced in a pioneering way by media ethnographers like James Lull (1991), who shifted the concern of audience studies from texts to contexts. Treating media texts, pictures and sounds as part of *material culture* implies that the characteristics of private and public settings must be understood as *textured*. As Jo Tacchi (1998: 26) puts it in one of very few discussions of texture within media studies, "thinking of radio sound as textured allows the possibility of considering how it operates, and how people operate within it". The emphasis on being *within* mediation is crucial here, since it points to the spatial liminality of mediation and how people experience it within the socio-material frames and rhythms of everyday life (see also Bull, 2001; Höflich, 2005).

Secondly, the mediatisation of communication in itself raises a need for studying the material geographies that media generate, and which, in turn, make mediation and 'global spaces' possible. These are foremost the structures established for distribution and management of media texts and technologies, as demonstrated by Graham and Marvin (1996) above. In the collection *MediaSpace*, Nick Couldry and Anna McCarthy (2004) raise a similar argument, asserting that the 'annihilation of space/time logic' must be contested. This logic has, as Lisa Parks (2004: 38) puts it in one of the essays entitled *Kinetic Screens*, "served a fantasy of digital nomadism that imagines the web navigator is able to move freely, change identities at will, and travel

the world without restriction". Parks argues that cultural inquiry must pay closer attention to the socio-material geographies that interactive mobility and nomadism take for granted – that is, the 'real' places of the interface. One such geography, or texture, could be written by means of mapping the actual flows of information that web-navigation generates. Another, and socially much more explosive texture, is found in the socio-material environments created at the 'endpoints' of the digital information circuits. One of these endpoints consists of the numerable Third World townscapes where people make a living from breaking down and burning imported computers. Here, Parks argues, "wires from the West's obsolete computers become the earth's ground floor, and again, as machines are disassembled, it is impossible to separate the village topography from the computer's insides" (ibid: 50).

Park's critique underscores the fact that an emerging geography of communication must provide a corrective to the commonplace spatial fascination attached to sociological theories of liquidity and decentered networks of global control (cf. Bauman, 2000; Hardt and Negri, 2000). As I have shown in this chapter, textural analysis provides such a corrective. In order to bring this argument to a more pragmatic conclusion, I will now outline an epistemological framework.

Texture as an Epistemological Field

Textural analysis does not belong to any exclusive domain of communication studies. Rather, it has its foundation in social and cultural theory, as formulated by thinkers like Goffman, Giddens and Lefebvre, mentioned earlier. In what sense, then, does texture contribute to the geography of communication? As told by the composition of this anthology, there is indeed much more to the geography of communication than merely textural analysis. However, texture provides a perspective that cuts across the realms of mediation, mediatisation and imagination, making the epistemology of texture useful throughout the field of communication geography.

Recapturing the dimensions discussed above, Figure 2 presents an outline of texture as an epistemological field. The first dimension, *scale*, asserts that textural analysis is set to explore how texture produces and is produced through the interplay between *regional*, *institutional* and *global* processes. As pointed out above, the texture of a particular space is rarely isolated geographically, but incorporate flows and resources that create spatial extensions and connections.

The second dimension, *space*, corresponds to the outline of this book. It represents a reformulation of Lefebvre's theory of spatial production – the interplay between spatial practice (socio-material space), representations of space, and spaces of representation. The focus here is upon texture's intermediary position between the material and symbolic realms of space, and between manifest patterns and textural experience/imagination. Since spa-

tial production is always a contested process, involving competing representations, ideologies and interpretations, an important task for textural analysis must be to show how individuals and groups produce not only representations, but also mental maps/manuscripts of particular spaces/places. As pointed out in the first part of this chapter, imagined textures (more or less mediated) form an essential part of the everyday lifeworld, which is in turn essential to how people interpret and carry out certain spatial/communicative practices. An elaborated view of these processes can be found in Amanda Lagerkvist's (2004) analyses of Swedish travelogues about the US (see also Lagerkvist in this volume).

Figure 2 The Epistemology of Texture

Scale	Space		
	Socio-material space (Mediation of Space)	Representations of space (Mediation of Space)	Spaces of representation (A Mediatized Sense of Space)
Regional	The texture of regions	The mediated texture of regions	The imagined texture of regions
Institutional	The texture of institutions	The mediated texture of institutions	The imagined texture of institutions
Global	The texture of global spaces	The mediated texture of global spaces	The imagined texture of global spaces

A third dimension, *time*, might as well be included in the picture, pointing to the process of *texturation* – the tension field between durability and change.

The objective of a typology like this is not to create boxes for different 'types' of texture. Nor is it to create isolated areas of inquiry. The objective is instead to map out the complex research terrain, in which textural analysis, as well as the geography of communication, has to operate. None of the nine areas can be studied without taking into account the others. This is especially true when it comes to global spaces, whose development both transcends the symbolic-material divide and generates complicated patterns of connectivity across and between scales. The typology, as well as this chapter, is thus to be understood as a plea for holism and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Note

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II

Mediated Spaces

Chapter 6

“Fortress Europe”

Ideological metaphors of media geographies

Inka Salovaara-Moring

Space and time are basic categories not only of human life but also in the control of power and knowledge in society. Within communication research, the study of space and time has been going on for half a century¹. During recent decades, geographers have also pointed out the reciprocity between the social and the spatial. The claim that the spatial is always socially constructed has been widely accepted, and from this acceptance has followed a demand for recognition of the claim that in social theory the social should also be spatially constructed.

The links between human geography and media studies are still surprisingly underdeveloped theoretically. Since the works of *Marshall McLuhan* and *Joshua Meyrowitz*, the concept of space has at best been used as a metaphor within mass communication research. Too often these loosely cultivated spatial metaphors and analogies carry connotations, assumptions and implications that have a strong impact on a variety of research issues and interpretations. In terms of connotation, those ‘spatial metaphors’ used in media studies seem to be laden with unintentional administrative, politico-juridical and military baggage.

This article argues that the spatial dimension in media studies is not only a metaphorical flirtation with human geography or a study of media representations in different spatial settings, but also the study of how media-caused entanglements of scale are variously experienced and understood in different places. More importantly, it is the study of changes in practices regarding how time and space are given meaning through different mediated discourses. The first step in changing spatial metaphors into usable and analytic devices is defining whether we talk about material practices in time-space, different representations of time-space, or temporal geographies where imagination and social memory are parts of the setting.

In this article I will proceed through five stages, each expanding upon the preceding stage, transforming and developing it. First, I will focus on how spatial dimensions have been understood in media studies in general. The second and third stages serve to clarify how new paradigms evolve and

what kind of baggage spatial metaphors often carry. The fourth part selects the metaphor “*Fortress Europe*” as an intellectual exercise showing how metaphors live their own lives, evolving into ideological and political implementations. In the last part of the article I will try to re-think the “*Fortress Europe*” metaphor as part of the discourse on contemporary Europe. The concept of ‘*meaning market*’ is offered as a framework to open up how spatial dimensions are intertwined as a part of public discussion when politico-social regions are produced and defined.

Spatial Dimensions in Media Studies

There are many theoretical ways of approaching relations between communication, space and time in their societal settings. Media have been studied from a multitude of viewpoints: historical, economic, political, cultural structural, textual or technological, just to mention a few of the core areas in the field. Although agreement on the significance of a geographical understanding of the world is well established, the study of the spatial dimensions of media representations and mediation has been considered problematic, not only theoretically but also empirically².

Within social science, there have been continuous efforts to address this complex field during the latter part of the past century. Slogans like “*geography matters*” or “*space makes a difference*” are often repeated, but in media studies there has been too little effort to unlock the question and begin a systematic exploration of what kind of geography could matter. Though there has been research outlining the spatial aspects of media, I would argue that human geography has not been consciously given the position within the field of media studies it deserves. It is not mentioned in the standard presentations on media and communication studies, and, until recently, only single works stood out.

This earlier aversion to spatiality in the social sciences may be due to historical, functional or structural approaches, all of which are privileged by the factor of time or social structure over space. There was also a tendency amongst social theorists to handle time and space as empty containers in order to comprehend certain universal laws. Simultaneously, it may explain why human geography has had only a marginal impact on media studies thus far. If the main effort had been directed towards exploring universal categories and structures, a more particularistic human geographical approach to time and space would have, by default, fallen outside these theoretical frames.

Domination and control over space has always been closely linked with modes of communication and control of media in different societies. Whilst oral cultures struggled against spatial friction and tried to conserve the wisdom and traditions of earlier generations through stories, verses and tales,

literal cultures were able to overcome space and enlarge the limits of ruled territories over vast spaces. This power to overcome space, for example, fundamentally changed the conditions for the execution of power. Emperors could execute and deliver commands, laws, doctrines and their interpretations in written form, directing their will in even the most remote part of the territory.

In terms of time, writing culture shortened human memory: information could now be stored in a durable form. Newspapers became the diaries of communities and these communities began to live in the form of an organised society that was ruled by "deceptive time," masking sudden and unexpected crises by stressing continuity between the past and present (Harvey 1989: 224). Print media represented a dramatic development of the extension of human sense in time and space (Carey 1989; 1969; Ong 1977; McLuhan 1962; Innis 1950; 1951).

In particular, print media enabled forms of cultural codes, education and information to be circulated across nations, reaching even the most remote areas. Print technology accelerated the development of capitalism, enabling both the spread of individualism (by separating the individual producer from the tradition) and collectivism (by creating communities that shared the same cultural grammar and normative codifications). According to McHale (1987: 179-81) "the invention of printing embedded the word in space." Printing as a system of representation automatically froze the flow of experience and in so doing modified and even partly distorted what it strived to present (Harvey 1990: 206).

Alongside modernity came the rise of an autobiographical and storied self, as well as many grand narratives of nation, class and even capital itself – such as Liberalism, Communism and globalisation (Crang 2002: 207). Through newspapers, "imagined communities" emerged, which were the basis of modern nationalism (Anderson 1991: 33). The process of time-space distanciation was the medium of modern power relations. According to Giddens (1990), this referred to the ways in which social life and social systems were stretched by different mediums (money, commodities and writing), which re-articulated relations of spatial and temporal presence and absence. Space and time were not understood as neutral and transparent mediums for social and system integration, but as plastic configurations whose forms were inherently related to the constitution and transformation of power, exploitation and domination. In this sense, spatial and temporal dimensions of social processes were, and still are, more intimately related than diametrically opposed. Space in relation to media can be related in Doreen Massey's terms (2005: 24) to "the dimension of multiple trajectories, a simultaneity of stories-so-far."

A distinctive feature of current society is that dominant processes, for example concentrating power, wealth, images and information, are organised as flows in space. The disjunction between two spatial logics – that of everyday living and that of dominating space – is a fundamental mechanism

in controlling society (Castells 1997: 60). Those who are in charge can be spatially distant but still capable of observing and controlling a spatial and temporal organisation. Our sense of time has become even shorter; we now live mostly in real-time or even in “time in advance” (time that is rushing forward). Thus, real-time media are marked by discontinuity and the future becomes the present.

Nevertheless, few would object to the claim that media reception and consumption still constitute a *situated, located and temporal activity*. Individuals who use and consume media are situated and located in specific social, geographical and historical contexts. These contexts frame not only the media representations but also the interpretation process. Making sense of the world is a trajectory between past and future, a comparative endeavour through which the conceptual landscape is organised in order to control the sense of chaos and discontinuity of everyday life. Also, the interpretation of media representations is a hermeneutical process in which individuals use the resources available to them in order to make sense of the everyday world around them (Thompson 1995: 39).

Spatial context is thus both a physical surrounding and a social construction that shapes the images, hierarchies and representations of everyday life. Representations of space, such as places, regions, landscapes and nations, are parts of global and local imageries that the media audiences consume daily. In this sense, the spatial/regional approach to media rejects a universalistic perspective of looking at society as a whole, as one system. Instead, society is formed in specific time-spaces in specific discursively maintained (market) places and interpretative communities.

What Kind of Geography Matters?

In recent discussions, the relationship between media studies and human geography has been captured mostly in metaphorical terms. *Media ‘spatiology’* seems, in a sense, to have entered the discourse of media studies as a new paradigm. Whether still ascendant or already fully established, conceptual paradigms tend to portray the succession of their particular doctrinal frameworks as one of the objective progress, accumulation of knowledge and improvement relative to previous paradigms. At the same time, these recently arrived paradigms immediately start wrapping their explanatory and descriptive concepts and suppressing a sense of historical recency.

Emerging paradigms are never innocent. They not only modify basic belief systems or worldviews that guide our investigation, but also fundamentally modify our ways of seeing and writing ontologically, epistemologically and methodologically. This is because paradigms reside concretely within the area of language used in scientific writing and style. They usually include sets of models, manners, metaphors and analogies that are part of the tacit know-

ledge of the proper craftwork of the field. In scholarly work, new paradigms can often be first detected as weak signals before fully entering onto the scene. Characteristically, these weak signals are metaphors and analogies stripped from other scientific fields that help the paradigmatic 'turn' to be actualised.

Spatial metaphors have become increasingly popular in media studies during the past decade, and many social theorists have incorporated them into their thinking. Such metaphors are also used more widely and do not limit themselves to inherently scientific discourse. Spatial concepts and notions –(position, displacement, site and field) or geographical metaphors (territory, domain, soil, horizon, geopolitics, archipelago, region, landscape and cartography) have been used in many recent works (Couldry & McCarthy 2004; Barnett 2003; Berezin & Schain 2003; Smith 2001; Morley 2000; Urry 2000; Chouliraki & Fairclough 1999).

There is nothing wrong with metaphors and analogies as such. It can be even claimed that, as a literary device, a metaphor is the linguistic backbone of social science and the humanities. In general, metaphors work in communicating the unknown by transposing it in the terms of the known. This sense-making is accomplished through comparison. Social scientific writing uses metaphors at every level and often unconsciously. The essence of metaphors lies in the experiencing and understanding of one thing in terms of another.

A cognitive theory of metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson 1980) indicates that metaphors deeply guide our thinking and are also a part of the way we interpret everyday experiences. Basic abstractions of society are usually embedded metaphorically into the language (Lévi-Strauss 1966) and refer to categories and concepts, such as money, class structure, historical time and space, and knowledge. As Laurel Richardson writes (1994), "Indeed, facts are interpretable ('make sense') only in terms of their place in metaphoric structure." Human minds tend to work by categorising, dividing and unifying phenomena in a linguistic structure by which meaning is constructed through difference and sameness. In general, the social sciences and the humanities depend on a deep epistemic and metaphoric code regarding the way knowledge and understanding in general are conceptualised.

If we look more closely at the most popular metaphors used today in textbooks published within a 'spatial' paradigm, we can notice that they often carry connotations of which the writers seem to be mostly unaware. In Foucault, for example, *territory* is no doubt a geographical notion but is used in this case foremost as a juridico-political one. Territory has a strong political meaning, referring to the space defined by a nation-state's borders (in German *das Staatsgebiet*, *das Hoheitsgebiet*). This kind of territory is a controlled and politically administrated area. Figuratively, *territory* refers also to areas of knowledge or action.

Field as used in cultural studies is also an economico-juridical notion, but especially a military one. *Field* as a concept derives from *Field of Battle*, which then became 'battlefield'. *Domain* is a juridico-political notion referring to controlled area of action or jurisdiction. *Soil* is a historico-geological notion,

but also has a strong geopolitical connotation in ‘*native soil*’. *Region* is a fiscal, administrative and military notion. *Horizon* is a pictorial, but also *strategic*, notion. A *province* is a conquered territory (from the Latin *vincere*). *Landscape* (*media landscape*, *mediascape*) is a pictorial notion but is also an essential object in traditional geography. The obvious military connotations of *Fortress* in “*Fortress Europe*” do not need further elaboration but, in this context, “*Fortress Europe*” is not only a protectionist metaphor but also has an intrinsic quality of domination over a socio-economic hinterland.

Even the term *public sphere* is a spatial metaphor for a largely non-spatial phenomenon, according to Calhoun (2003: 244). To be sure, public spaces from the Greek *agora* to early modern marketplaces, theatres and parliaments all give support and setting to public life. In history the public sphere is a ‘space’ of communication, and according to Calhoun, as such “it transcends any particular place and weaves together conversations from many.” More than ‘space’ it is spatial dynamics or *a system of networks* in which different actors are allowed access to a symbolic and mediated marketplace. Although publics become less place-bound as media proliferate and the process of globalisation expands, the spatial image of the metaphor seems to remain apt.

Most of the politico-strategic metaphors, it seems, are indications of how the strategic, geopolitical and administrative discourses actually come to inscribe themselves within the new discourse of the spatial paradigm of communication studies.

Europe as Mediated Region

If we think about ‘Europe’ as a mediated region, it is a typical example of a politico-strategic site that lives its life as a region in people’s minds without clear borders but much economic and political weight. To understand that symbolic boundaries of language, culture, and meaning-making processes produce communities is an essential part of understanding that regions are not only geographical sites. Territories and regions are always part of understanding the cultural and political power of those who inhabit the area and, therefore, are not only geographical sites. Perhaps more than this, they are also part of the understanding of those who dominate and rule the region or area.

The concept of *region* comes from the Latin verb *regere*, to command. According to Emile Bienveniste, the etymology of the word *region* (Lat. *regio*) leads to the concept of division³. These notions circulate again between geographical and strategic discourses used for administrative and political purposes (Bourdieu 1992; Foucault 1980). According to Bourdieu (1992: 222), it is hard to claim today that natural regions with natural frontiers exist. “*Frontier or border in a sense is always produced by a symbolic classification where political power plays a central role.*”

This does not mean that regions could not be divided by different elements found in regions (e.g., habitat, language and cultural forms). The main argument, however, remains: these social and political classifications are not always based primarily on "reality" but are part of the symbolic struggle in which space is produced and ultimately dominated by authority, whether by political or economic power. Additionally, borders produce cultural difference at the same time that they are produced by it.

Therefore it is quite natural to analyse Europe as a 'region', i.e. the Europe that constructs itself under the administrative, political and economic interest of the European Union (EU). It is conceived in bureaucratic discourses and has politico-economic intentions as a region. It has clear borders that are symbolically negotiated and are not always based on "reality". These borders are negotiable and prone to metaphorical manipulation (Characteristically, when the EU prepared its constitutional framework, it created a "Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe" not for the EU⁴). This means that 'region', like Europe, is not simply a bounded space on a map, nor does it possess the same shape or geography over time.

Regions as such are characteristically made and remade by social processes that impact unevenly. In this process, new lines are laid down for both social and geographical difference and division (Massey 1999; Allen et al.1998; Häkli 1994; Paasi 1986). These processes are partly carried out as discursive social practices, in political rhetoric, administrative discourses, newspapers and educational institutions. In this sense, there are always ideological territorial systems of meaning that are connected to spatial and social contexts. Regions can be made from nothing, but they do not remain or preserve themselves for posterity without symbolic classifications. These systems of meaning have their own dynamics and structural inertia that oppose sudden cultural change and create cultural continuity in the form of traditions, symbolic patterns and the historical lore of the land.

The History of "Fortress Europe"

Like every ideological configuration, whether spatio-temporal or juridico-economical, 'Europe' is also constructed in both negative and positive discourses that are circulated in media. The discourse on "*Fortress Europe*" is used in today's media discourse as a catchword referring pejoratively to Europe as a wealthy but closed system. The "*Fortress Europe*" metaphor has been used mostly to describe the tightening immigration policy of the EU. Europe has been seen as a wealthy fortress that is closing its gates against the poor, immigrants, ethnic minorities and the Third World in general.

In this context, Europe as a region is intellectually interesting because one of the most conspicuous discourses that present-day Europe carries is a visibly military metaphor, used in order to emphasise the aspect of inclusion

and exclusion. The discourse emanates from the construction of borders against ‘non-Europeans’ and is therefore a generic example of *border-constructing activity*. Defining and using the metaphor ‘*Fortress Europe*’ is an act of *regere fines*, whereby the limits between the external and internal are defined.

According to an Internet search on this term, resulting in nearly one million hits that were partly scanned, roughly 90% of uses could be categorised as Eurocentric critique addressed to the public whereas the rest was comprised of the concept’s historical origin, historical computer games and miscellaneous announcements of grass-root movements and neo-Nazis. Typical uses of the metaphor are contained in the following selection from the Internet search:

European Comment: Shake up for Fortress Europe “The global capital markets are shaking fortress Europe. For all their efforts to fend off the enemy, the ramparts of the eurozone’s two largest economies are showing more cracks.” (Financial Times, 21.7.2005)

Fortress Europe raises the barricade – Europe already has a security-based approach to immigration. Now it is seeking to offload its responsibilities onto third-party countries – with poor track records in human rights. (Le Monde Diplomatique 28.7.2005)

Fortress Europe – Open borders within the European Community means closing doors on those desperate for sanctuary. **NI** reports from around Europe. (New Internationalist, September 1991)

The discourse on Fortress Europe offers an interesting example of defining Europe as a region because social amnesia has cut out the origin of the metaphor, replacing it with a critique of Eurocentrism. “Fortress Europe” has an interesting history that differs dramatically from its modern use. The historical origin of the metaphor goes back to the 1940’s: During World War II, the Germans constructed very strong fortifications across the northern and western seacoasts of Europe, as well as throughout the Italian and Balkan peninsulas, to repel an attack from the Allied Forces. By 1944, Hitler’s Europe had become a seemingly impenetrable fortress, protected in the west by what came to be known as the Atlantic Wall, but overall forming “*Festung Europa* – Fortress Europe”. The Atlantic Wall was perhaps the most massive fortified position in history, and was a formidable obstacle for the Allied planners. It was created by order of Hitler’s “Führer Directive No. 405” and comprised a massive World War I-type trench system, reinforced with substantial concrete *Widerstandsnester* – strongholds bristling with machine-gun nests and pillboxes. Some of the more heavily fortified concrete bunkers were home to gun emplacements, and man-made obstacles and extensive mine-fields were laid on potential landing beaches to canalise the attacker and fix

him into carefully selected "killing areas". All this was designed to defeat an invasion on the foreshore and prevent the Allies from gaining a foothold.

However, this original use of 'Fortress Europe' is still retained by ultra right-wing groups, neo-Nazis and the like. Public communication, in a broader sense, is in a position to produce a certain time-space and transform it into the form of discourse(s) in the symbolic market, using connotative and metaphorical expressions. In this sense, things like journalism, grass-root movements and administrative jargon are social practices.

Social practices as such are never given or natural. They do not reflect or mirror easily objectified reality. They are economic, social, psychological and even technical accomplishments. They are produced as discursive spaces within which certain actions are sensible, accepted or even necessary. As such, they are ideological in nature, but their ideological underpinnings are not solely or dominantly only structural or political in nature but are more often spatial – geopolitical, national and regional. In these times of globalisation, Europe is modified as a sub-region within a larger power geometry. Moreover, new social 'dis-remembering' of the metaphor makes it more functional and usable in today's context. Perhaps even the dynamics of collective remembering erase intentionally traumatic divisions of Europe, replacing them with a unifying metaphor.

Reconstructing Metaphor and Searching for a Solution

In order to deconstruct '*Fortress Europe*' as a metaphor, there is a need for a concept that helps to approach this particular process of representational praxis, whereby the life-world of the people with its different actors and social practices and the structures of the economy are involved. Such a solution exists through the introduction of a model of a system of representation based on a large empirical study on how 'region' can be framed and understood in the media (Salovaara-Moring 2004).

At the transnational level, European public communication is considered to operate in a "*meaning-market*" where "symbolic goods" relating to economic, social and cultural life are produced and exchanged. In this regard, national public spheres can be metaphorically understood as symbolic "marketplaces" where different social and political actors meet citizen-readers, and this interplay is actualised through public communication and in media texts.⁵

Structures of preferred meanings, constructed by media, politicians, bureaucrats and other European actors (e.g., other media, schools, associations, grass-root movements and non-profit organisations, administrative organisations and business actors) typically involve the process of cultural system building. Messages and codes once lived, or to be lived in the future, are spread through media and similar systems.

In everyday social practice, these relations are remade and negotiated publicly in a dialogue between the community, different modes of “region” (political, administrative, cultural and spatial), the contexts (a certain historical time-space) and the respective media. In this matrix of relations, a (regional) cultural grammar is defined and maintained publicly. In this sense, the discursive (textual and symbolic) landscape of the media and public communication is relational to its nature. Representations of regions are made in a cultural and symbolic exchange process, in a *system of representations*.

Agents participate – willingly or unwillingly – in a process of modification of different values, democratic ideals and political aspirations, to accommodate their surroundings in accordance with the economic interests of the media, administrative or political entity, etc. In this regard, the concept of “market” is used in a dualistic sense. In economic terms, market does not have a moral connotation (if the product is good, the buyers, i.e. readers, are willing to purchase it), but the dynamics of a meaning market are subject to ethical and moral principles that are adapted to the regional “good”.

Moreover, as a system of networks, public communication has to adjust its own interactions as well as the regional community’s to different national (sub-regional) and global requirements. This is why the dynamics of a regional meaning-making cannot simply be contextualised in terms of its surroundings. Its orientation is simultaneously towards itself (as a spatial entity) and towards the local, national and global spheres.

This type of exchange is not only material (i.e., means of communication and exchange) but also symbolic (values, norms and cultural orders embedded in media texts) (Salovaara-Moring 2004). A regional system of representation is formed through a complex set of dynamic relations: discourses about the surrounding societies, their values, produced by different institutions, the economic circumstances of society at regional/national and global levels, the relations of production, the codes of discursive producers, i.e. journalists, politicians and the everyday world of the people.

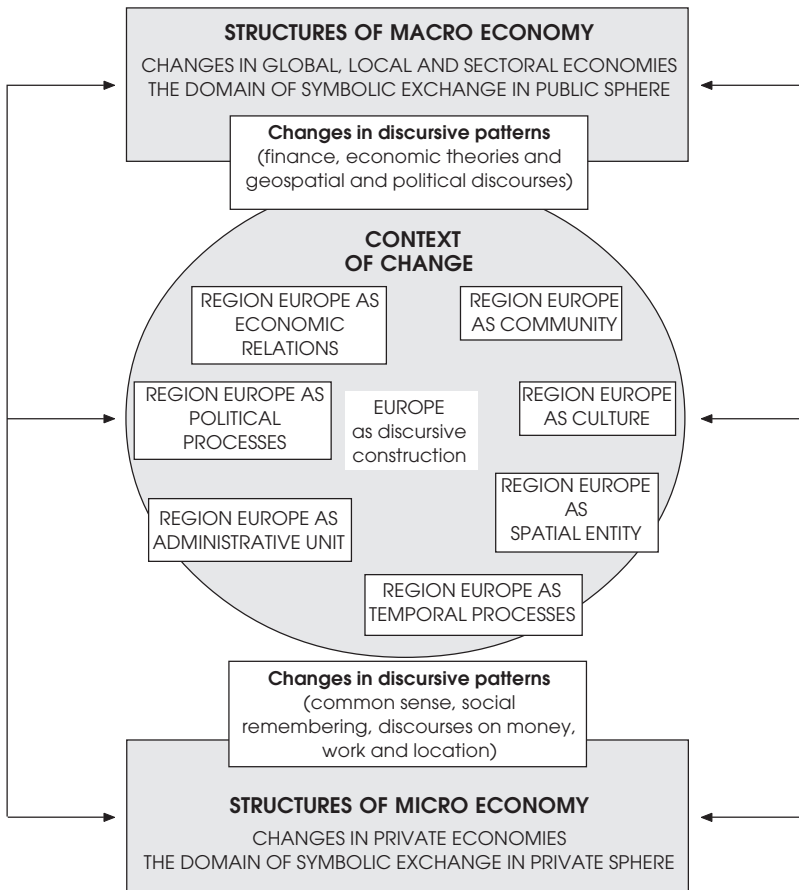
A meaning market obviously functions in the domain of collective consciousness as a system of beliefs, values and norms as well. In this role, the basic principle of a market’s internal transactions is supposed to yield a surplus for the symbolic exchange process within the region/spatial entity. On a larger scale a meaning market operates through the de-materialised systems: for example, through finance, politics, the administration, the informal economy and aesthetic values.

A meaning market would probably only appear in a spatial system in which people share values to a sufficient extent, such as language, norms and a sense of power relations. In this context, a meaning market integrates and articulates the grid of values, norms, flashes of political history and ideals of social equality and democracy that become visible in public discussion. That is to say that *the system of regional representation is a process in which crystallised meanings of things such as the political, cultural and economic spheres of the region are distilled to be part of the shared discourses and everyday*

life. In broader terms, the actors of in a meaning market are all the individuals or institutions who possess the power to define and categorise things in public.

The symbolic commodities of a meaning market (values and discursive formations) are produced and developed through dialectical relationships consisting of collective memory, internal economy of the region and market imperatives. However, as with every market, a meaning market also yields a profit when the surplus values of the commodities that are circulated in the public sphere accumulate. The public recognises and uses these symbolic commodities as a part of their common understanding and social capital, keeping the process of symbolic exchange in motion. An example of a typical symbolic "commodity" could be the idea of the cradle of old civilisation based on European history of nation-states or a common European identity. These characteristics are portrayed as a common belief; people of the region are portrayed

Figure 1. The meaning market and "Fortress Europe": Elements of spatial dynamics and textual representation of Europe



as approving of this description as part of their identity in the interaction with their immediate surroundings. In this case, people are then seen to be more resistant and unwilling to give up democratic, educational or liberal ideals and practices and ready to take action if they are threatened somewhere.

In this circulation, the primary notion of people's mentality (their willingness to see themselves as "true Europeans" and supporters of constitutional rights, freedom of speech, equality, etc.) is transformed into profitable economic ideas (private ownership, profit-yielding activities of free trade, etc.). These types of symbolic commodities produce surplus value to form a self-maintaining circle. The European community benefits from functioning meaning structures that increase the community's internal cohesion and ontological security. Whilst "Fortress Europe" is more often than not used in a negative context, it has an underlying pan-European assumption. It strives to bring substance to a concept of a "Europeaness"; defining what Europeans are not and thus emphasising the democratic ideals of community, historical continuity, economic liberalism, cultural diversity, political freedoms, etc.

The process of the meaning market also includes symbolic meaning structures that have been produced in *negative trading relationships* that can be understood being conceived in discourses like "*Fortress Europe*" or "*democratic deficit*" discourse. These meaning structures are usually used as part of political and symbolic struggle. In such a case, this primarily cultural notion is portrayed as transforming itself into part of the community's collective resistance. This portrayal serves as a basis to question the fairness (legitimacy, equality and rationality) of the political system. The resistance of the community is understood to strengthen its internal social cohesion. This process transforms an economic issue into a political one.

The Evolution of Europe as Region

Anthony D. Smith has condensed the problem of European identity into two different cultural spheres. On the one hand, there is a collective storage of historical myths and memories that do not embrace the entire continent and cannot be shared. On the other hand, there is a non-historical and scientifically rational culture that is held together by political will and economic interests that are vulnerable to cultural changes and transitions. According to Smith, if and when there is a will to create a European identity with which the people of the continent would be willing and able to identify, it would not be able to be established solely on the dissemination of Western values to the Northern, Eastern and Southern peripheries of Europe (Smith 1991).

Myths of folklore, symbols and historical memories and traditions have a major impact in constructing European belongingness. Thus far, Europe as a region lacks some of the basic elements that would make it a functioning region: history and social memory. Europe as a region does not have a sense

of community or cohesive regional culture with commonly understood historical origins. Sub-regions of nation-states are often also linguistically and culturally homogeneous. Additionally, the 'borders' of Europe have been, and still are, under constant negotiation. Therefore, any social capital that usually accumulates in the regional meaning market is omitted (Salovaara-Moring 2004). Here, the key question of metaphoric Europe comes alive: in the creation of an entity that carries all features of 'essential' existence.

A discursively functioning public sphere (or systems of representation) is characterised by at least three dimensions that are lacking in 'European integration': firstly, it enables participation in collective choice, whether about specific policy issues or basic institutions; secondly, public communication allows for the production or transformation of social imaginary that gives cultural form to integration (in this case, making 'Europe' relationally connected and giving it shape by imagining it specific ways); and, thirdly, the public sphere is itself a medium of social integration and a form of social integration and a form of social solidarity (Calhoun 2004).

This meaning-creating process is in a constant state of flux. The previous meaning structures are slowly vanishing and being replaced by new, more functional values and norms. Through these meaning structures, the *narratives of Europe* are presented in public discussion through dichotomies (open-closed, free-controlled, democratic-authoritarian, liberal-conservative, humane-inhumane).

Turning our attention back to spatial metaphors, according to Foucault (1980: 69-70), deciphering discourse through the use of spatial, strategic metaphors enables one to grasp precisely the points at which discourses are transformed in, through and on the basis of relations of power and power geometry. Spatial metaphors themselves carry loaded connotations of power and governance that should be carefully considered by those using them. Critical analysis of mediated practices, in particular, should be mindful of the particular features of language use in science.

A first step in changing spatial metaphors into usable and analytic devices is defining whether we talk about material practices in time-space, different representations of time-space, or geographies and temporalities of representations by which imagination and social memory are in focus. Here, the "*Fortress Europe*" metaphor was used as an intellectual exercise in which the concept of 'region' was deconstructed in order to see what types of processes it might include.

If Europe is not merely a place but a space or region in which distinctively European relations are forged and European visions of the future are enacted, then its existence depends on communication in public, as much as on a distinctively European culture, or political institutions, or economy or social networks. All these features affect how Europe will evolve as a region. "*What is a region?*" is thus always a question of definition.

Times-spaces always contain stories and serve as palimpsests for specific contextual narratives of people. Discourses on region have historically spe-

cific rules of formation, sets of mutually shared tacit knowledge of the past and future, differentiating pure, grammatically well-formed statements, and arguments from those actually expressed in certain times and places (Foucault 1991, 63; Howarth 2000, 7). The history of social change can therefore be captured by the ideological uses of conceptions relating to different modes of change within spatial entity. Within the range of these uses, economic, cultural and social dimensions take on new meanings. It is not only scientific discourse with its new metaphors that often unconsciously takes new meanings from scholars within their activities to govern the field. Categories of time and space struggle to define every historical era according to their own particular power poles and maintainers.

If we accept that the function of cartography was to give sense to a physical world, and that of metaphors was to give sense to a discursive world, then it would be logical that in times of dynamic social and political change the use of powerful physical metaphors provides strong ideological and intellectual foundations for the reader, locating them 'somewhere' on both an intellectual and a physical map. The use of military symbolism in times of threat may strengthen us in a way that helps us more easily create a perception of 'us' and 'them' (the other), the 'inner' and 'outer' (Europe) and 'security' and 'threat'. Scientific discourse, despite its distinguished role within the discursive hierarchy, is still one discourse. It takes its ideological heritage from the political, cultural and social spheres of human life. In times of change, the concrete language of the physical world makes scientific activity more tangible, more 'real' and located in time and space. Spatial metaphors are fortresses themselves: they are a home, a base and a safe haven in a time when science, as one discourse, is fighting for its place within society.

In Europe today, economy may be regarded as the prime mover, in a similar way as religious discourse once held the power position. The long historical time geography of nation-states with political unity discourse may be withering away but it has not, by any means, used up its discursive reservoir yet. Past memory always plays the central role in reproducing the present moment. In the construction of Europe, it does not truly matter whether the metaphors are used in order to support or oppose. The consequence of becoming a discursive entity, dominating people's minds, is in itself a first step in becoming an ideological entity that locates itself within global power geometry.

"Keep banging on the wall of Fortress Europe
 We got a right, know the situation
 We're the children of globalisation
 No borders only true connection
 Light the fuse of the insurrection
 This generation has no nation
 Grass roots pressure the only solution"
 (ASIAN DUB FOUNDATION; Fortress Europe)

Notes

1. This tradition is based mainly on classical texts of cultural theorists like Innis (1950, 1951, 1952), Ong (1977) and McLuhan (1951, 1962, 1994), McLuhan and Fiore (1967), and a more recent strand of discussion in works by, for example, Carey (1989), Goody (1977), Harvey (1989), Giddens (1990), Stevenson (1995) Thompson (1995), Castells (1997), Barnett (2003) and Couldry & McCarthy (2004)
2. See methodological discussion, for example, Massey 2005; 1999; Allen et al. 1998; Bird et al. 1993; Paasi 1997; 1991; 1986; Thompson 1995; Ekecrantz & Olsson 1994; Soja 1996; 1989; Anderson 1991; Harvey 1989; Alexander et al. 1986; Meyrowitz 1986; Lintz & Miguel 1966.
3. In the strongest sense of the word, "region" may be defined as a relatively confined network of production, interaction and culture. This definition, in which regions are taken as quite coherent wholes and self-sustained entities, excludes many geographical areas. Traditionally, the regions of the geographers have been either military or fiscal and administrative areas. An exception to this is the *Vidalian* tradition, in which regions have been seen as cultural-geographical entities connected to the regional way of life, '*genre de vie*'.
4. <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/JOhtml.do?uri=OJ:C:2004:310:SOM:EN:HTML> (consulted 1.8.2005)
5. Sharon Zukin's (1991, 3-6) analysis of the relation between concepts of place and market bears relevance to the discussion on public sphere. The expression *Marketplace*, as such, literally denotes a historical place. It also connotes a socially constructed space that involves the transaction of capital and products as well as a system of long-distance trade. Both these meanings are intertwined and bound up with local communities. While the idea of place is withering away, the idea of markets as global space is growing stronger (Zukin 1991, 12).

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When Place Images Collide

Place Branding and News Journalism

Jesper Falkheimer

Place branding aimed at creating attention and attraction in different destinations such as nations, regions and cities is a common phenomenon in late modernity.¹ The production of place images is usually based upon business marketing theory (Ooi 2004), not taking into account political and public consequences or opinion formations. The branding strategy is sometimes rooted in civic society and has the support of public opinion, but it is not uncommon for large branding projects to lack internal public support. People with an everyday place experience and distant target groups with no experience interpret slogans and logotypes quite differently. In rhetorical terms, the *pathos* of place branding, based upon one-sided argumentation, is always at risk of coming into conflict with the *ethos* of the local, regional or national public, fuelled by the *logos* of the mass media.

The place branding discourse may, as is the case with place marketing as a whole, be interpreted as a consequence and force behind *the entrepreneurial turn* in public management (Harvey 1989:14), aiming to develop prosperity through risky infrastructural or cultural projects. This turn may be well integrated into the allied minds of business actors, top public officials and politicians. But the broad public and local journalists do not always enhance this turn, and prefer traditional public management that prescribes that the aim of public institutions is not to take risks to gain profit, but to deliver welfare service. The democratic struggle between these two definitions is – and this is an assertion in this chapter – evident in news journalism but absent in place branding.

Place branding discourse is developed through new partnerships or hybrids between public and private actors and institutions (Harvey 1989:7). The actors join together in entrepreneurial projects with high risks, with a main aim of gaining prosperity in local, regional or national contexts. Media and communication are indeed necessary tools for achieving this. The development has resulted in heavy advertising campaigns as well as increased efforts to influence news media. A typical Swedish example is the arrangement of the sailing competition *Malmö-Skåne Louis Vuitton 6&7 of the 32nd*

America's Cup in 2005. This international sailing race is fundamentally a commercial and private mega event, but is arranged with the support of the local and regional governments. One of the hopes of public officials and politicians was that the media coverage of the competition would improve the destination's image in the eyes of important groups such as potential tourists or investment actors. But the arrangement was heavily debated and criticised in the regional news media. The financial risks, the influence of consultants and the lack of democratic support during the decision phase were the main arguments in the critical regional press (Dannestam 2005, Falkheimer 2006). On the other hand, the politicians, officials and private actors standing behind the decision tried to explain that the arrangement would increase the attention and branding of the region (referred to in different ways as the local city of Malmö, the Skåne region or the transnational Öresund Region). "The first argument is that the America's Cup together with several other efforts will improve Malmö's image as a prosperous city", stated two business executives and a local top politician in an opinion piece (*Sydsvenskan* 17th of August 2005).

In this chapter, the aim is to discuss the communicative aspects of these questions.² This means *analysing the discourse and strategies of place branding practice and the role of media and communication in image formation processes*. The analysis will partly be based upon an empirical study (Falkheimer 2004) on the role of the mass media in the image formation process of the Öresund Region, which will be introduced soon.³ I will also use several examples from research on place as a tourism destination concept, which is naturally only one of many ways to view the concept of place. I intend to *question the mainstream place branding research from a society-centric view of communication, because of its narrow perspective that neglects public opinion, news media and stakeholders of indirect importance*. This leads to a reading of how branded media representations and journalistic representations may collide and sometimes co-operate with each other. According to my interpretation, the narratives of journalism and branding illustrate very well the social development as a political struggle between the global and local, and between ideas of entrepreneurial and managerial public management.

The Öresund Region

The Öresund Bridge between Denmark and Sweden was inaugurated in the year 2000, connecting the Swedish city of Malmö and the Danish capital Copenhagen. The bridge was an important move towards the realisation of a transnational Öresund Region. Building on the rhetoric of regional development in Europe that gained political and business support during the 1990s, the Öresund Region was viewed by the political-economic elite as the only way to compete on the global market. The organisation of the modern na-

tion-state was viewed as an obstacle to growth and prosperity, whereas the organisation of regions was seen as more “natural” in relation to the late modern tension between the global and the local.

The local arguments for building a bridge were important. The cities of Malmö and Copenhagen had experienced a severe recession during the 1970s and 1980s and region building was viewed as a possible way out of the depression. However, such region building was, and in many ways still is, a question of communication strategies, symbols and signs – a vision, brand or media image. There are political and corporate co-operation projects between Denmark and Sweden, but the region is still (in 2006) best viewed as a strategically communicated discourse or vision.

Apart from a romantic movement during the 1840s called Scandinavism, the transnational vision of the Öresund Region is a modern (or late modern) phenomenon. The first phase took place during the 1960s, when serious attempts were made to start building some sort of transport link between Denmark and Sweden. The vision of the 1960s was called Örestad instead of Öresundsregionen (Öresund Region), and was influenced to a large degree by the modernist technological optimism of the decade. Mass media also played an important role during this phase (Wieslander 1997). The economic recession of the 1970s, beginning with the oil crisis, put an end to the Örestad vision. The next phase began in the 1980s when a European corporate alliance began lobbying for increased investment in transportation infrastructure, linking the Scandinavian markets to the continent. Immediately after this campaign had begun, local political and corporate actors formed the idea of an Öresund region.

In 1990 the Danish and Swedish parliaments decided that an Öresund Bridge would be built and a state-owned bridge company, Öresundsbro Konsortiet, was created. A long governmental investigation in Sweden began – the environmental consequences had to be analysed. This meant that a final decision regarding the bridge was not taken until 1994 in Sweden. In 1995 the construction work began. Öresundsbro Konsortiet and other actors had to convince the regional and national public of the possible positive outcome. According to opinion polls, the Swedish and Danish majorities were negative towards building a bridge. The actors in the Öresund Region launched a heavy PR campaign to increase support. It took until 1998 for 50% of the polled public to assume a positive view of the bridge. Some years later, when the bridge was inaugurated, branding consultants from England launched an Öresund place brand called “The Birth of a Region”, featuring images having no real connection to the local or regional heterogenic context. Instead, the images represented the borderless new economy (in biotechnology, IT and other areas) in a somewhat placeless aura (Ek 2003). Today, in 2006, the Öresund Region is branded as “the Human Capital of Scandinavia” or as “Two Countries: One Region” with four core messages: (1) Technology with a Human Touch, (2) Where Human Capital Grows”, (3) The Nordic Main Gate, (4) A State of Mind (Öresund Network 2005).

Paradoxes of Place Branding

Different promotional strategies and techniques are used to seduce target groups into working, living and spending free time in a certain place. As in business branding, eloquent core values are formulated and communicated in different contexts. These values are supposed to be based upon material and immaterial characteristics of a certain geographical place, but in practice are often similar and cannot be distinguished from each other (Hospers 2004:274). For example, California's Silicon Valley has inspired several European regions such as Silicon Glen (Scotland) and Silicon Saxony (Germany). In 2005, Stockholm began to brand itself as the Capital of Scandinavia, not entirely different from the tag of the Öresund Region – the Human Capital of Scandinavia. There are several other examples that show how the place branding process is characterised by global discourses, trends and standardisation.

Concepts such as network (Castells 2000), creativity (Florida 2002) and experience (Pine & Gilmore 1999) are frequent in the contemporary place discourse. The academic uses of these concepts are usually quite different from their popular uses in marketing and communication management. When it comes to tourism and place marketing as research fields, they have been of interest mainly to instrumental research, according to Morgan & Pritchard (1998).

The earliest practice of place branding took place during colonialism, when governments had to market their territories (e.g., America) to encourage citizens to move there. But as a modern concept place branding is a rather new phenomenon, originating in the US and becoming popular among academics and practitioners during the 1980s and 1990s (Avraham 2004:272).

There are several reasons for the growth of this interest. It is no exaggeration to say that politicians and businesspeople have experienced an increase of regional, national and global competition. The global competition is a part of the network society, according to Castells (2000). This late modern disorganised capitalism is featured through its fast, flexible and mobile character. Material and immaterial capital is easily moved from one place to another in a "space of flows", global networks of contemporary economy, power and information. The opportunities for Sweden and other countries to compete on this market are limited. According to the contemporary discourse, the alternative is to develop a new experience and knowledge-based economy by which certain places are crucial. Having a bad or weak place image is seen as a severe obstacle to this development. These circumstances are the main reasons behind the expansion of place branding aimed to create attention, interest and valuable relationships between geographical locations and attractive corporate, work and tourism capital. This is also true for the Öresund Region.

The Öresund Bridge is a main symbol of the strategic regionalisation process, but the regionalisation consists of several other material and symbolic events. The sailing race mentioned earlier, the America's Cup in Malmö

2005, is one example. The arrangement of the spectacular Housing Fair Bo01, or *the City of Tomorrow*, in Malmö in 2001 is another example. The fair consisted of a newly built post-industrial district in the former shipyard of the city that had received heavy publicity. Jansson (2005:1679) concludes that the “catch-words of the place-marketing discourse were re-encoded [...], transformed into a negative back-drop to the more dramatic socio-political events that took place in the local context”. The visionary branding project collided with the regional news media narrative, which questioned the fair from several angles: it was accused of being only a district for the very rich, public tax money was embezzled and there were few visitors. It was also a fact that the public-private Bo01 company was declared bankrupt on closing day. The branded *City of Tomorrow* turned out to be *the City of Scandals* in the news media.

But the mainstream place marketing literature takes no notion of political and social contexts. Social macro-variables are mentioned, but only as arguments for instrumental use of marketing. In one of the most cited textbooks on the art of place marketing (Kotler et al. 1993), it is concluded that external forces such as rapid technological change and global competition have gotten places in trouble. Besides strategic marketing activities such as product and distribution development, place branding is recommended as a cure. Place branding is viewed as a rational communication process by which places are distributed from a sender to a recipient. Fundamentally, traditional place marketing relies on a transmission communication model (Carey 1992) whereby media technology, message transaction and consumption comprise a manageable process. In the contemporary field of place branding there seems to be a more developed cultural understanding of media and communication processes, concerned with polysemy, interaction and making of meaning. But the political and social aspects are still neglected.

One of the major players in the field of practical place branding is the consultant Wally Olins. Besides being a practitioner, he has written extensively about branding and has influenced other practitioners. In *On Brand* (2005), he speaks of three different strands that drive business in different ways: technical skills, financial know-how and branding. In contrast to rational marketing theory he means that: “(...) we should remain quite clear that what marketing, branding and all of the rest of it are about is persuading, seducing and attempting to manipulate people into buying products and services” (Olins 2006:7). This statement is a bit paradoxical, since in another sentence Olins defends branding to critics such as Naomi Klein, saying that the anti-branding (and anti-globalisation) movement is irrational.

When it comes to branding nations, Olins concludes that this is nothing new. He is probably correct, especially if one interprets all communities – as nations or regions – as dependent on media technologies and communication processes (Anderson 1983). The strategic use of communication is as old as humankind, and in modern times the mass media play a crucial part in all constructions of communities as producers of space, ideologies and

dominant meanings. The increasing efforts to brand places at other levels such as cities or regions may be seen in this light.

Olins (2005:167) gives his recommendations (transformed into my terms) for successful place branding: (1) Set up an elite group with representatives of government, industry and popular culture. Fund it with a power base and invite consultants to be guides; (2) Find and define critical audiences. Research the existing place images among inhabitants and external target groups; (3) Consult opinion leaders and use the image data to determine strengths and weaknesses; (4) Create a core idea of the place brand. Visualise this idea through a symbol created by a well-known artist; (5) Develop a brand book with illustrations of the place mood, personality and style; (6) Co-ordinate and integrate messages from complementary sectors; (7) For a period of time, all formal communication along all channels should be co-ordinated with the chosen brand; (8) Final stage: "(...) influence the influencers" (Olins 2005:168), in other words use networking and opinion-formation tactics to move forward.

From an opinion perspective, it is interesting to see that Olins uses the old model of opinion leaders developed by Katz and Lazarsfeld in the 1940s. His recommendations follow a rather conventional communication planning process. From an instrumental point of view, one of the major advantages of the stages is that they take a rather holistic grip on the persuasion. Olins emphasises that business, sports, media and other popular culture must be used. But it is also a planning process formulated, controlled and managed by an elite. This may work in commercial enterprises, but when the context is a society at some level it may turn out to be not so simple.

Besides the fact that Olins writes in a way that makes one feel as if it is quite easy to persuade millions of people to communicate in a homogenous way, he makes hardly any analysis of the reception process or political and social conflicts. Place branding may, in a critical sense, be viewed as a kind of standardisation of cultural life. It may also be seen as a non-democratic resource, since it (as above) is usually constructed as a top-down-communication project. Commercial actors may also gain more than public actors (Jones 2001). But, of course, place branding may also lead to positive effects such as increased prosperity, infrastructural development and a stronger place image among important target groups.

According to Ooi (2004), most branding studies to date are based on general marketing theory, leaving social, political and cultural issues aside. In practice this leads to an excessive interest in the formulation, production and distribution of commercial destination messages, while other areas and channels of public communication are neglected. Ooi (2004:123) has performed a case study of the branding programme of Denmark launched in the year 2000 (*Denmark, Enjoy!*). One of Ooi's main arguments is that destination branding is quite different from branding commercial firms. There are several reasons for this. First, the branding project is dependent on public and private organisations, whose trust cannot not be controlled or man-

aged the same way as a corporation's can. The ties between the branding centre and front actors are usually voluntary. Second, commercial firms have only an indirect social and public responsibility, as opposed to local, regional or national tourism or investment agencies. The branding of a destination requires public support and democratic principles (especially concerning transparency and control of responsibility).

The branding of the Öresund Region has relied mainly on a cosmopolitan narrative – describing the region through global and technological metaphors. Local cultural aspects have disappeared. But in the local and regional journalism, the local consequences are the main interest. The global (late modern) discourse may have an impact on target groups outside the region, but is not an effective communication tool when it comes to the regional public. I conducted an analysis of the media content about the Öresund Region 1991-2001, with the hypothesis that this image would be influenced by late modern cosmopolitan ideas. But the analysis did not confirm the hypothesis. Instead, a new suspicion was raised – that the global discourse branding of the region is the main interest of primarily regional actors already involved in the process, as auto-communication.

The reasons for the difference between the branding and journalism discourse are linked to different production and consumption logics. As a result of structural and cultural features of media organisations, Media logic (Altheide & Snow 1979; 1991) focuses on dramaturgical norms such as localisation, polarisation, drama, personification and instant correlation. It is a fact that *every business is local* from a media organisation point of view – and if an event is not local in itself, it may be framed as such. Branding logic also uses rhetorical features to get attention, but instead of relating to local social dimensions it tries to associate the object it sells “with the profound subjectivities of everyday life” (Lull 2000:170). This means that the audience is communicated with as emotional individuals through messages that emphasise individual immaterial needs.

There is not room here to show the contrasts in depth, but let me give a few examples of how advertising logic versus media logic formatted the Öresund Region in the different ways mentioned above. First a quote from a branding text, then three fragments from the journalistic narrative:

With a new infrastructure as its springboard, the region is expected to develop into a discrete commercial and demographic entity with a clear and unique international profile. Visitors to the Öresund Region will notice the differences and the similarities between two closely related peoples working together to generate new energy, new concepts and unique potentials for the future (*Öresund Network* 2000).

No preparedness for traffic jams at the Bridge. No responsible authority is handling the issue and there are not enough ferries to solve the potential problem. (*Sydsvenskan* 28th of June 2000).

Traffic research anticipates very heavy traffic over the Öresund Bridge. It is unrealistic to believe that car traffic may be kept to a low level, according to researcher Uffe Jacobson (*Berlingske Tidende* 23 of March 1991).

Not everyone hails the new transport link. To Danish commuters living in Landskrona [Sweden] it will be more expensive and will take a longer time to get to work. (*Öresundsnytt* 20th of June 2000).

Brand Representations of Place

The geographer Cresswell (2004: 51) concludes that place may be approached from three levels. Firstly, through the descriptive and objective approach that is common in traditional place marketing theory. Secondly, using a social constructionist approach. This means that place is viewed as something that humans construct through communicating in a cultural context. In a pragmatic understanding of constructionism, place is a relative and rhetorical representation of the real world, reflecting and constituting reality in a dialectic way. Thirdly, Cresswell defines a phenomenological approach. Instead of focusing on descriptive attributes of places or the social actors and communication involved in the shaping of a place, this approach gives attention to how humans exist in place. In my point of view, the constructionist and phenomenological approaches are meaningful in analysing place branding. On the other hand, persuasive communication cannot only be analysed as something that occurs on behalf of a hermeneutic reading of texts. The intention of a persuasive communication act does have implications and effects. In other words, socio-cultural perspectives are valid only when combined with power analysis.

Promotional images are usually constructed according to basic marketing theory: find customers' needs, develop services and products and promote them. This means that established stereotypes and different grades of ethnocentrism are common in, e.g., tourism advertising. The "tourist gaze", as defined by Urry, through which tourists objectify places and people he visits or passes, may be viewed as a consequence. In the same way, Morgan & Pritchard (1998:3) assert that marketers and tourism communicators (re-) produce "images which both reflect and reinforce particular relationships in society. These relations are grounded in relations of power, dominance and subordination which characterise the global system". This is also shown in many empirical studies; two examples are given below.

Cohen (1995) has researched the gap between the promoted image and how inhabitants view the British Virgin Islands. The Islands have been promoted as a tourism destination for wealthy tourists since 1962, and tourism is a substantial part of the economy. Cohen found that the promoted image is exotic and constructs the islands' inhabitants as objects of sexual desire.

The Virgin Islands are promoted as mystic, magic and sexual in the advertising campaign, produced by an agency in New York. In many ways, the Islands are constructed as a sexual place, as female virginity offered to rich, male, Western tourists. The natural, sexual or “primitive” promotion of the Virgin Islands is common to many similar places. The tourist is a man, the Islands a woman. Cohen (1995) concludes that sexual desire is a basic element in tourism as ideology. In contrast, Cohen describes actual island life as very complex and complicated.

In a similar way, the Swedish historian Grinell (2004) has analysed how the Swedish tourism industry marketed different destinations between 1930-1990. Drawing on the post-colonial ideas of Edward Said, he tries to uncover how the Swedish self-image of modernity and progress is projected in the marketed images. “The populations of other countries, on the other hand, live in less modern environments and represent steps on the developmental ladder that Swedes have long since passed” (Grinell 2004:241). But it is also a fact that common people living in tourist destinations are rarely present in the marketing material. Locals are used only when they fit into the established stereotypes – as exotic Orientals, peasants in folk costumes, or dancing Africans.

But place branding may not always be linked to the post-colonial discourse. When it comes to branding of places aiming to attract investments, business and knowledge, the focus is upon future rather than history. For example, the branding strategy of the Öresund Region is manifested through visual symbols that are not based on historical stereotypes of Danish and Swedish cultures. Instead, empty utopian spaces and elite cosmopolitans represent the region. The late modern discourse of globalism and high technology shows a weak interest in old stereotypes and prefers to construct a new world with futuristic narratives.

The overall media image of the Öresund Region in the two regional newspapers⁴ was nationally framed and had national or local growth and profit at its centre. This is valid for both the opinion and editorial content. The mass media are seen as vital actors in the regionalisation process by political and corporate actors. Therefore, they support Öresund media projects and have a belief in the effects of such efforts – which they view as a part of the place branding process. But the selected media material is nationalising, even if the aim is to transnationalise. The self-image of national character and that of the “other” national character are rather similar. Öresund narratives are constructed and shaped through homogenous national stereotypes, which are very rarely questioned.

The conclusion is that the dichotomies between Swedes (stiff and obedient of governmental rules) and Danes (happy and anarchistic) may even be enforced through the regionalisation process that has taken place thus far.

Destination Image Formation

The study of the Öresund Region used as an example here is based upon media images and intentions, but the hermeneutic process of regional everyday “readers” is not researched empirically. However, there are theories about destination image formation that are worth mentioning. The aim of place marketers is to influence the image formation process of different target groups. Sometimes this means establishing an image of a place no one has thought of before, and sometimes it means changing a negative place image. Branding destinations is more complicated than branding an isolated product or service. Destinations are composite and consist of “a bundle of different components, including accommodation and catering establishments, tourist attractions, arts, entertainment and cultural venues, and even natural environment” (Morgan & Pritchard 1998:147).

In a broad sense, destination image may be defined as the expression of all knowledge, impressions, prejudice, emotions and imaginations an individual or group might have of a particular place (Lawson & Baud-Bovy 1977). Image is constructed through a sense-making process in relation to social interaction. From the instrumental view of marketing practitioners, the ideal destination image is a standardised and homogenous one, but in reality image formation is a highly diversified phenomenon. The destination image formation is a dynamic process dependent on the beliefs, conceptions, prejudices and experiences a person has. The strength of the destination image theory is that it aggregates individuals into segments; the weakness is that it hardly takes into account cultural aspects.

According to Kotler (1993), the most important decision variables are the information sources used by an individual. The primary sources are personal ones such as family, friends or neighbours. The secondary sources are commercial sources such as advertising, salespersons and travel planners. The third source consists of public sources like mass media and public experts. The last source is experiential – the experience of having visited the place oneself. Kotler explains the decision-making process as an evaluation of alternatives that leads to the formation of valid judgements. The final evaluation undergoes a process of five stages starting with the consumer defining the place as a “bundle of particular attributes” (Kotler 1993:49). The process then includes evaluating what attributes the consumer finds important and attractive and leads to a developed set of beliefs about the place, a destination image. The weakness of this categorisation is that it focuses solely on the information sources. Cultural contexts, ideological structures and social discourses are neglected and decisions are not always rational. What cements the decision does not necessarily have to do with the presented sources or facts, but depends on the social construction and cultural interpretations. The real place is a text, more or less open to different readings.

In tourism research the construction of a place image is meant to be dependent on several variables amongst the readers such as motivation, expe-

riences, social and economic background and media images. Naturally, the importance of journalism, marketing and public relations increases when the reader has no experience or deeper knowledge of the destination, according to Jenkins (1999) and other destination scholars. But this division is probably undeveloped. Destination images are saturated by media images, which also influence experience of places. Most tourists want to confirm and enhance expectations they have constructed through readings of travel catalogues, news articles, adverts or popular culture.

A destination image is created and changed in a process. The potential tourist passes through a "hierarchy of place images" (Selby & Morgan 1996:288), from initial perception to a negotiated image that develops at the destination. In tourism research, the formation process is usually described in three phases (Selby & Morgan 1996; MacKay & Fesenmaier 1997). At first the tourist constructs *organic images* through non-tourism sources such as journalism, popular culture, conversation or education. Then, or parallel to the first phase, the tourist develops *naïve images* through the interpretation of information distributed by tourism actors. This includes commercial adverts, guidebooks and the like. As I will discuss later, this distinction is very hard to make since it does not take into account the fact that professional tourism sources also influence journalism and popular culture. Thirdly, the tourist constructs *negotiated images* in relation to personal experience of the destination. The formation process is described in stages and gives a rational and logical understanding. This is a problem encountering a real formation process, which a hermeneutic circle would probably illustrate better.

The Swedish tourism researcher Sillanpää (2002) has developed a model, called *geographical imagology*, to show how places are constructed in the human mind. Basically, she identifies four image-creating dimensions: symbolic image (identity and lifestyle-based), emotional image, media image and empirical reality image. I find the division hard to make since the dimensions are drawn from different levels and distinguishing between them is not possible. In a quantitative study (Sillanpää 2004), she tried to determine how strong the influence of contemporary and popular literature was in Sweden. The hypothesis that the novels about the medieval knight Arn (by Guillou) and about life in the northern city Pajala (by Niemi) would be central to people's associations about the geographical places where the novels took place, was not supported. But the research method may be questioned; asking people in a standardised way and *ad hoc* what they associate Pajala or Västergötland with may not give reliable answers.

Drawing on the communication model of coding/decoding developed by Stuart Hall (1980), it may be more valid to analyse image formation as a continuous negotiation process (see, for example, Jansson 2003). This model shows in a better way how image formation is a struggle of meaning dependent on cultural contexts. Hall concludes that all texts have ideological meaning structures in relation to production circumstances (able to investigate through semiotic analysis). But meaning is not distributed one-way.

Different readings are possible: (1) A dominant reading (by which the reader decodes the text according to the implied ideological framing); (2) A negotiated reading (by which the reader finds parts of text non-problematic, and other parts problematic); and (3) An oppositional reading (by which the reader totally rejects the intended meaning).

There are reasons for arguing against the traditional destination formation theory, as described in marketing or tourism research, with a cultural and social constructionist frame. A main point is that the formation process is viewed as a never-ending hermeneutic circle, which would better illustrate the process than a stage-model would. Stage models, common in marketing and management theory, are aggregations based on a highly rational and finalistic assumption. Another main point, mentioned earlier, is that I position place image as a negotiation between organic, naïve and real images. I find that the image developed in real encounters with a place is not the end-point of the formation process. Old and new media images may influence both the encounters and the formation that take place when the tourist has left the real place. The difference between the different image sources may be questioned. The organic image sources may not be so easily differentiated from naïve image sources, since tourism actors may influence them through public relations techniques. The experienced images may be influenced through branding techniques that design destinations as “experience stages”. Overall, the old stage model does not take into account the fact that the destination image formation is a holistic process, influenced in several ways by media images, branding and strategic communication.

When Place Images Collide

Destination image theory and place branding seldom reflect upon the role of news media, as I have discussed earlier. The political aspects of branding are neglected. News media are seen as uncomplicated distribution channels. Practitioners spend their main efforts and budgets on the production of marketing campaigns and show less interest in social and political perspectives. Selby & Morgan (1996:288) discuss the fact that tourism authorities have neglected non-traditional aspects of possible marketing for many years. For example, very few place marketing researchers show any interest in conflicts or relations between journalism and advertising in creating destination images. One point here is that the promotion of places challenges traditional borders between marketing, public relations and journalism. Another point is that news journalism has a much stronger impact on destination image processes than advertising campaigns do.

The example used in this chapter shows the complexity of how places, as destinations, are communicated. The Öresund Region as a vision fits very well into a narrative of late modernity characterised by increasing local and

regional identification, blurred limits between public relations images and journalism, and media dependence on a future prognosis (which leads to a dependence on experts). The study showed two major similarities between place branding and news journalism: the reliance upon stereotypes and the use of a contemporary social discourse concerning growth and geo-politics. But besides these symbiotic lines, there is a radical difference or conflict between the branding discourse and the journalism discourse – the journalism perspective is local and the branding discourse is cosmopolitan. One might say that journalism considers place as something that has local cultural and geographical meaning, differing from other places. The branding discourse is strongly related to a cosmopolitan arena in which place is a question of global lifestyle and growth. The regional and local news media view society from a public management perspective, which collides with the *entrepreneurial turn* in public management (Harvey 1989:14) that is a premise for contemporary place branding discourse.

Notes

1. Branding is a marketing theory and practice that focuses on differentiation of a brand, *a sign with attributes*, through communication. Brands are complex and not just related to market mass communications. Christian Grönroos (2002) concludes that brands are constructed in customers' minds through a relational process by which all contacts between a service, product or organisation and a customer are valid. In this chapter I mainly use the term *place branding*, but sometimes *place marketing*. The latter concept is a wider platform, including several other practices such as destination development or design.
2. I am grateful to André Jansson for comments on earlier versions of this chapter.
3. The methodological approach in this project was multi-faceted, using quantitative secondary material, content analysis, rhetorical discourse analysis and qualitative interviews. The study is based on 16 formal interviews, 1,183 regional newspaper texts, opinion polls and analysis of several PR and marketing texts and images.
4. The Swedish paper *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* and the Danish paper *Berlingske Tidende*.

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Chapter 8

Blank Spaces

The Mediation of Nature in Travel Advertisements

Åsa Thelander

‘Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps. I would look for hours at South America, or Africa, or Australia, and lose myself in all the glories of exploration. At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on the map (but they all look that) I would put my finger on it and say, When I grow up I will go there.

Joseph Conrad, 1926, *Heart of Darkness*

In Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1926/2000:21-22), Marlow talks about how his imagination of places has been triggered by reading maps in his boyhood. It is a description of an imaginative process by which media is used as a source of imagination. Maps were a great source of inspiration for Marlow's imagination of places. We live in a society that contrasts Marlow's in many ways (cf. introduction); One is that we live in a culture that is increasingly permeated by visual images of other kinds. One category of images we encounter every day in different media, and that constitutes a large and growing part of media content, is advertisements. Advertisements serve a certain purpose, i.e. to persuade the viewer. Everyone is familiar with the seductive presentations of advertisements. When it comes to representations of places, one can close one's eyes and recall an image of a beach, sand and water. Visual representations can evoke inner pictures and memories of moments, people and places. In order to persuade the viewer, idealised representations of phenomena are presented. It is also commonly believed that advertisements have certain effects. They are not restricted to immediate effects, such as buying a certain product or changing an attitude, but are also believed to have long-term effects since images represent, make a meaning of and convey sentiments about phenomena. Realising the importance of images, it is surprising that they have not been studied to any considerable extent in media and communication studies. However, visual studies in communication research have increased since 1999 (Barnhurst, Vari & Rodriguez, 2004). Visual studies do not constitute a separate department of research and, as a consequence, receive little attention. More worrisome,

however, is that the status of visual work is low (Prosser 1998; Barnhurst, Vari & Rodriguez 2004). In some fields of research, for instance tourism studies, visual studies are more widespread. When it comes to representations of tourist destinations, as in the example above, advertising is the dominating source since there are numerous agents who promote a destination. Almost all advertising is produced to create a positive attitude towards the advertised product, for instance in travel advertisements, in which places are represented in order to sell a trip to a certain destination. Places are actually the lure and the way a tour operator communicates its image as well as the purpose of their service (Bitner, 1992).

In this chapter I will discuss how place and nature, i.e. a particular part of the destination, are represented in travel advertisements. The study of the representation of nature in travel advertisements shows how a “real world” phenomenon is mediated and how it becomes a part of culture and socially constructed world, i.e. how it becomes culture. Two things stand out from the definition, namely meaning and materiality. *Meaning* refers to how advertisements ascribe meaning to nature and *materiality* refers to the very fabric of the place, i.e. how it is produced, in this case in a tourist context. Representations are hardly an “objective” or even neutral description of the referent, but rather a representation influenced by its context and results of genre conventions. Advertisers do not only sell places, their representations are also a way to make places. Advertisements create expectations, mental images that may guide the actual experience of the place. For those who do not visit the advertised place, the advertisements constitute a means to familiarise places and make them the objects of one’s dreams. Since advertisements may create a mediated experience, I will also discuss how viewers make meaning of the nature represented.

Empirical Material

The empirical material was collected for a dissertation *A trip to nature on terms set by advertisements* (Thelander 2002). The phenomenon of interest in the dissertation is nature – how it is represented in travel advertisements and how tourists perceive the representations and how they, in turn, represent nature in their photographs. Two methods and several empirical materials have been used. An analysis of 52 advertisements containing 173 images has been conducted. Twenty-four photo-elicitation interviews have been conducted with tourists. Images from travel advertisements and the interviewee’s own photographs have been used as elicitation material. Advertisements published in a weekly travel supplement in *Dagens Nyheter*, the largest daily paper with national coverage in Sweden, were analysed. There are at least two reasons I chose advertisements from this supplement. First, it is the main source of travel advertisements intended for a broad public,

and second, advertisements published in other dailies are identical to those published in *Dagens Nyheter*.

Two time periods were chosen for the analysis, one in January and one in September, since different destinations are advertised depending on the season. During these particular time periods, advertisements for trips are intensified due to the release of catalogues and package tours for the season. The selection resulted in 52 advertisements containing 173 pictures. As a consequence of the selection, it is the large tour operators' advertisements that are analysed, in this case seven companies holding 80% of the market of package tours. These operators dominate the market and provide millions of Swedes with access to faraway places, especially if catalogues are also considered. Hence, they produce a great deal of images of nature in a travel context. During the selected time periods, there are several full and half-page advertisements. The advertisements expose destinations mainly in images, but in order to anchor the meaning the destination is mentioned in the headings and/or texts. Nature is exclusively presented in the pictures and scarcely mentioned in the texts, and therefore all the pictures were analysed. There are several possible ways to analyse advertisements, all having their own strengths and weaknesses. In this case, a semiotically inspired analysis was conducted. Semiotic analysis of advertising has been used in a number of studies (e.g. Barthes 1969, Bignell 1997, Schroeder 1998) in order to review the mythic structures of meaning that ads try to communicate.

The interviews were carried out with people who had bought a charter trip during the advertised season. The aim was not to trace effects of the selected advertisements, but rather to interview people for whom the same advertisements may be relevant. In order to cover as many angles as possible, interviewees with different social backgrounds and ages (ranging from 16 to 71 years) were chosen, and were selected from different travel companies (for a more detailed description of the interviewees and travel advertisements see Thelander 2002). The word term *mass tourist* is often used to describe someone going on a package tour. The epithet *mass* indicates a low status and lack of taste, as well as an indication of the tourist's social class. However, there is a danger in the use of the word *mass* as it is a prejudiced and condescending approach and implies that a tourist belongs to a specific category of people. In 2001, when the interviews were carried out, 2.2 million Swedes went on a charter trip, which makes up a large portion of the total population of Sweden.

Four Types of Nature

The analysis of all pictures revealed four categories of images of nature. The main differences between the four categories are the degree of authenticity and creative strategy. Four levels of authenticity became evident and are represented in different ways. MacCannell's theory about staged authentic-

ity (1976) is one of the most famous. Inspired by Goffman's (1959) distinction between front stage and backstage, MacCannell formed a theory about social encounters, proposing a six-point model of stages in tourist settings. In more detail, Stage 1 is equivalent to Goffman's front stage, a front region. Stage 2 is 'a tourist front region which has been decorated to appear like a back region' (1973:598). Stage 3 is 'a front region which is organised to look like a back region' (1973:598), and Stage 4 is 'a back region which is open to outsiders' (1973:598). Stage 5 is 'a back region that may be cleaned up or altered a bit because tourists are permitted an occasional glimpse in' (1973:598 in Corrigan, 1997), while Stage 6 is Goffman's back region. Additionally, MacCannell asserts that tourists' ambition or ultimate goal is to reach the back regions in order to gain authentic experiences. He has been criticised for not acknowledging the possibility that some tourists enjoy front regions and have no interest in reaching back regions (i.e. Urry, 1990). A number of researchers have also criticised MacCannell for having universal and elitist motives (i.e. Relph, 1976; Urry, 1990). Discussions about authenticity have also pointed out MacCannell's problematic use of the concept (see also Jansson 2002b). Who decides what an authentic experience is? Is it the tourist himself or someone else? Is there an authentic experience *par excellence*?

Despite the relevant critique, the theory of staged authenticity is useful in analysing the advertisements. MacCannell's most important contribution is the distinction between different types of tourist settings and social environments. This theory can also be used to describe how different types of nature are represented in the travel advertisements. Nature may be conceptualised as a social construction. First, it points to the transformation of a natural landscape into a cultural landscape, concerning how landscapes are modified and changed by humans. When it comes to travel destinations, this concerns the transformation of the landscape into a service scape (Bitner 1992), made by man for tourists. Second, it is about the mediation of the place, how nature is represented in the travel advertisements (cf. Jansson, 2002b). The different levels involved will be discussed here, as well as what types of representations travel advertisements provide people with and how the representations are consumed.

The other distinguishing factor is how different types of tourist destinations are represented in advertisements in terms of stylistic and formal features. The four levels of authenticity are represented in different ways. How the viewer is positioned is important. The distance between the photographer and the object has certain consequences for the content as different aspects are in the limelight. Distance has effects on the viewer. Some distances are close to people's real-world experiences, bearing iconic relationship to real-world visual experiences. For example, it is believed that close-ups increase attention and elicit stronger engagement among viewers, as the close-up reveals a great deal about emotion and character psychology. The possibility to create a feeling of intimacy with the object or identification is often stated as an advantage. According to Bousé (2003) a false intimacy, a

“para-social” relationship, may be the result. Thus, stylistic elements are capable of conveying meaning over the more overt content in a picture (Messaris, 1997). The different types of distances imply different possibilities for representing nature. A long shot makes it possible to show large areas, to get an overview; consequently, these possibilities are limited when using a close-up. Long shots use an impersonal distance, which makes it almost impossible to see details such as the subjects’ faces and thus become emotionally involved with them (Bousé, 2003). Therefore, distance is an important factor in analysing nature in advertising.

The four categories of nature are called *artificial nature*, *tamed nature*, *untamed nature* and *accessible wild nature*. I will describe these categories concerning usage and role in more detail below, and will then return to the more overarching research questions concerning the image of nature and its consequences.

Artificial nature is the least “authentic” type of nature and can be described as the true service scape (Bitner 1992). According to Bitner, it is a complicated service scape with many elements and many forms. It is also a visual metaphor for the total offering of the travel company, an environment that is arranged entirely for tourists. The tourists constitute the natural focus of attention in these settings.

The easiest way to describe the artificial nature is to compare it with a park, created by humans and for different human activities. In advertisements for tourists the most central aspect of the park is the swimming pool, around which the environment is organised. Sun chairs and parasols are placed on the paving surrounding it, and beyond one sees a narrow strip of green grass and other cultivated vegetation surrounded by hotel buildings. It is sometimes possible to discern the sea or hills beyond that. Above all, the sun shines from an unclouded sky and creates sparkling reflections in the turquoise pool water. The short description reveals that the natural features are few and are restricted to trees, plants, flowers and grass. Everything is controlled and arranged for humans. There are plenty of people in artificial nature – babies, children and adults, never elderly people or teenagers. They devote themselves to different water games in the swimming pool or sunbathe in the chairs surrounding the pool. People in artificial nature are never alone. Being together is a suitable description of people in artificial nature. The setting is designed to encourage social interaction among tourists. Family relations are emphasised in the advertisements and are portrayed as unproblematic and purely joyful. Feelings originate from being together and from common activities. In this sense, the role of nature is very limited. The sun creates the necessary condition for the activities; thus, the only thing that could darken their experience would be clouds covering the sun.

One might wonder if this is a type of nature at all, as the natural features are very few. However, in this study it will be considered as such since certain features of nature have been selected and are present in almost all the pictures. The features that are indeed represented contribute to certain experiences.

Not only does artificial nature have certain characteristics, it is also represented in a certain stylistic way. Different ranges were used, from close-ups to long shots, which results in rich visual descriptions. In terms of numbers, artificial nature is the dominating representation.

Tamed nature is the second type of nature in travel advertisements. It presents nature as highly affected by humans, to the extent that the environment is totally dominated by human artefacts. Water is a central element in this type of nature as well as in artificial nature, but here water has a more natural touch, portraying the beach rather than the swimming pool. It is not just any beach, however; images of tamed nature have certain common characteristics.

A wide beach with white sand is a central element in advertisements of tamed nature. The sand is fine-grained, soft and clean. The sea is green or blue with small sparkling waves lapping the shore. The water is clean and clear. It is also obvious that it is shallow close to the beach and becomes deeper further from the shore. However, humans and human artefacts such as parasols, toys scattered around groups of sun chairs, restaurants and hotel buildings dominate the beach. There are also plenty of things in the water, such as pedal boats, buoys and jet skies. Above all, there is a cloudless blue sky with a constantly shining sun. Tourists with blond hair and suntanned bodies, dressed in beachwear, are the principal figures in tamed nature. They always belong to a group: part of a couple, family or group of friends. Being together is also important in tamed nature, thus activities and experiences are main themes. All the artefacts in tamed nature give a hint of what people devote themselves to. Tamed nature is a kind of playground for grownups.

There are many similarities between artificial and tamed nature, but the latter is on a larger scale and is less controlled. People devote themselves to the same type of activities, and it is the activities that give them joy and satisfaction. Since the natural features are standardised, nature is nothing but a prerequisite for the activities. The same elements are exposed in almost every single picture. Thus, it is almost impossible to determine which specific place the picture represents. Whether a picture represents the French Riviera, Turkey or Greece is only determined by subtexts. Tamed nature is a common theme in advertisements in terms of numbers. It is represented in close-ups as well as long shots, and is frequently represented in travel ads.

The third type of nature is *untamed nature*. Here, the human presence is not so obvious, and artefacts do not dominate the pictures. Nature is more authentic and even appears to be untouched.

Like in the other types of nature, the beach is central in untamed nature. However, there is a significant difference. Even on a sandy beach, rocks or block of stones serve as interesting eye catchers. There are no parasols or sun chairs on the beach. The pictures represent an almost empty beach. Beyond the beach, hills or mountains rise against the horizon. They seem to be reminders of uncivilised nature. Upon closer inspection, traces of humans become evident. For example, one can find a small boat, a fence or a towel

on the beach. Beyond the beach are no human artefacts. There are similarities between untamed nature and the ideal of picturesque landscapes that was popular during the 19th century. Remnants were common and served as reminders of human presence and the not-far-away civilisation (Johannisson, 1984).

There are few people in untamed nature, but those present are never alone. They appear in small groups of two or three people. They do not dominate the picture, but their presence is in focus. People do not devote themselves to many activities – the pictures are focused more on the surroundings than on people. People in untamed nature experience silence, calm, relaxation and joy.

The beach and sea are still highlighted, but there are two important differences from artificial and tamed nature. First, more elements of nature are significant. It is not only the narrow beach that is represented; there are rocks, cliffs, mountains and forests. Nature is extended; it is more than the sun and water to play in. Second, there are variations on the theme. It is possible to determine which place a certain picture represents. Nature is not standardised; each place is unique.

This type of nature is represented in long shots. However, the lack of close-ups results in poor descriptions of personal experiences, i.e. representations of personal experiences are absent. This may curtail people's attention and ability to imagine being in untamed nature. Taken together, this means that nature has a defined role in these images. It is mainly a passive role, as nature exists only to be gazed at.

The fourth type of nature is *accessible wild nature*. This is the most authentic nature represented in travel ads, with few or no suggestions of human impact. Although there are people present, they are not in the limelight. Sometimes one can barely discern them. The focus is still on the beach and the sea, but here it is a tropical beach. The sand is very white, due to coral and shells having eroded into sand (Lencek & Bosker 1999). The water is turquoise blue and the trees along the beach are always palms. Long and unbroken horizons are shown – a popular wallpaper scene in the 1980s. Accessible wild nature is equivalent to tropical nature, exotic and far from Sweden. Associations with infinity and being far from civilisation are overriding.

There are very few people in accessible wild nature, and if they occur at all are typically solitary adults. They stroll along the shore, read books, meditate and enjoy the silence, calmness and surroundings in the shade of a palm tree. This is the only type of nature where people are in nature, involved with and enjoying nature and not only a certain set of features. However, impressions of nature are restricted to sight. People are present in nature; they merely observe it and enjoy the features they can see. They are never represented as having close encounters with nature, dirty, muddy or wet from more intimate experience. Most importantly, nature provides a feast for the eyes.

According to the discussion above, nature is to be enjoyed by one of our five senses, however there are several features worth looking at. Accessible wild nature contains a myriad details: it is a realm unto itself. Despite the fact that people are presented as being on their own in accessible wild nature, it does not necessarily tell us about loneliness. Other associations can be made. Few or no humans present give the place a touch of exclusiveness. In addition, it assigns a value to nature: to experience virtually untouched nature is a privilege. Accessible wild nature is situated in the tropics, far from the Swedish everyday life. Such attributes give it an exclusive touch. It costs a fortune to go there and it takes time to reach the destination, factors that might increase its desirability. There are many similarities between the representation of accessible wild nature and paradisaical nature. Costa (1998) has found that exotic climes – isolated, green, unspoilt, fringed with palm trees, etc. – are experienced as signs of paradise. This has also long been the ideal of perfect holiday (Löfgren, 1999). The significant difference between paradise and accessible wild nature is that the latter can be reached by travelling.

Exclusively long shots are used in describing accessible wild nature, allowing a good overview. The viewer has hardly any human beings to identify with or receive clues regarding feelings or moods evoked by the nature. As long shots are used, nature itself is in focus, i.e. a more extended environment than merely a beach.

Placeless, Featureless and Timeless Representations

Thus far, the differences between the four types of nature have been discussed. Despite the differences, there are several common features and ideas which, taken together, form a myth of nature in travel advertisements. As a logical consequence of the selection of travel advertisements, all pictures describe the seashore and life on as well as around the beach. Nature is presented as a variation on a common theme. In some cases the representation is more of a socioscape, which means a social regionalisation of nature. It becomes a place for interaction and social activities (c.f. Jansson, 2002a). Nature is beneficent; there are never any unexpected or unwanted features such as rain, storms, animals, insects or anything that can threaten a pleasant experience. Any hint or element that can give the slightest association with something unpleasant is left out. None of the pictures analysed shows a cloud in the sky or a trace of litter on the beach. People are happy and in love, and there is nothing to mar the sense of well-being; it is a carefree existence.

The features of nature represented in the pictures are strictly chosen. It is a certain kind of beach, with white sand, trees and flowers in the pictures. Consequently, many characteristics are excluded. There is not a single picture of wild nature. When present, it is in the background of the other types of nature. Interestingly enough, there are no signs or indications of how to

get there. In addition, there are no descriptions about making use of nature or how to enjoy it. In analysing travel ads it becomes evident that wild nature does not exist in this context. Either it is not worth visiting or it does not have any value in the travel context.

Different formal and artistic means are used in representing the four types of nature. These means also convey a defined meaning of the status of nature. Several distances are used in describing the least authentic nature types, giving “thick descriptions” of characteristics, use and experiences. Thus, they come across as important types of nature. Only long shots are used for more authentic types of nature, which gives an overview. However, possibilities for identifying oneself as a visitor and for catching attention are fewer. The importance of this type of nature is insignificant.

It is obvious that different types of nature are represented in travel advertisements. The features and use of nature vary according to the type of nature represented. Despite certain variations, nature is of minor importance. It is treated as a recreational arena. It is also interesting that wild nature does not exist in the travel ads. What implications do such ideal images imply?

The nature represented in the travel ads does not have a specific location. Tamed nature is located somewhere around the Mediterranean, but whether it is Italy, Greece, Turkey, France or Spain is impossible to discern. The same applies to accessible wild nature, which is located somewhere in the tropics with no further specification. The pictures present a non-place which is “spaces where people coexist or cohabit without living together”; further, they are “unrooted places marked by mobility and travel” (Augé 1995). Examples of non-places are spaces of circulation, for instance airports and spaces of consumption and communication. They have certain characteristics but cannot be located anywhere. Accordingly, the beach resort is also an example of a non-place as there is a “universal scheme of beach resorts” (Jansson, 2002a: 433). The pictures of the travel advertisements represent non-places or blank places filled with the “right” signs.

It is striking that people represented in the pictures are difficult to locate in a social setting. The main characters are simply tourists, represented in a stereotyped manner. In a study of people featuring tourist brochures, Dann (1996) demonstrated that tourists dominate the scene in brochures. They are ever-present main characters, and hardly interact with locals (Grinell 2004). Any further characteristics that may indicate social class or nationality do not exist. The persons are not old, not very young, not too beautiful as in other advertisements, but not ugly either, they are not dressed fashionably but cannot be accused of being unfashionable. They have neither prominent personal attributes nor express any personality. In advertising, different lifestyle attributes are used in order to associate a person with a group of people or a desirable group. The shape of the body, body postures, hairstyle and makeup are examples of attributes chosen specifically for this purpose. In travel ads, there are no discernable signs of any specific lifestyle. People in the advertisements are featureless, but they do have one characteristic:

their emotional state is generally happiness, stemming from various social relations. Nature and places in travel advertisements are associated with feelings rather than attributes.

The placeless and featureless representation gives a sense of timelessness, as there are no signs to indicate time. Photographs cannot represent the future, but photos in travel advertisements do not represent the past either, but more or less a diffuse contemporary state.

There are striking similarities here to stock photographs, which are ready-made photographs designed for multiple reuse (Frosh, 2002). Freelance photographers with no final purpose or address produce these photographs and sell them to special agencies, which in their turn offer them to various customers. The photographs are sorted into an "image bank" from which they may be purchased for exclusive use during a period of time and/or in a specific context. To maximise sales, the image must be suitable for a variety of purposes, products and contexts. In order to be resold, it must be polysemic in the sense that it is open to interpretation. Frosh (2002: 178) asserts that a stock photograph is "a code without a message". It constitutes inconspicuous representations, which means that it relies on accepted cultural stereotypes and does not diverge from accepted norms. People are neutral – without personality – destinations are placeless, and more or less timeless representation is also common. Photographs in travel advertisements are used in the same way. The very same photography appears in advertisements, catalogues and booklets and on posters; hence it is not produced for a certain context.

Every travel company has its own image bank or has secured the exclusive use of the selected photographs they use in promotional material. However, the generic character of the photographs results in a standardised way of representing nature, place, people and time. In advertising there is often a habitual, unconscious, unreflected and repeated representation of the same phenomena. However, in this case the unconscious representations have consequences for their market strategy. There is no difference in the use of photographs between competing travel companies. There is a prevalent no positioning strategy on the market, which results in monotony. Keeping in mind that these companies hold 80% of the market and provide most of the pictures, the monotony is widespread. The strive for specific market segments so often mentioned and the changing market of package tours do not seem to count in this case.

Blurred Genres

Multiple images make up discourses about nature. According to Barth (1969), a dominant image forms a myth, which appears as common sense and may be taken for granted. Advertising is a great source of information about travel destinations and may very well function as an ideal image of how people

sense nature, what they do in nature and what opinion they form, which might influence their concern for nature.

The representation of nature, places and tourists is repeated in travel companies' promotional material. Regarding images of nature, there are other sources of information for the tourist with other representations. In a study of the Caribbean tourism experience in two national UK newspapers, Daye (2005) found that the same stereotypes were used in travel writing as in advertisements. However, this might not necessarily be the case for *Dagens Nyheter*, which is the context in which the travel ads analysed here were published. Guidebooks also have traces of commercial interests. Grinell (1999), who studied Swedish guidebooks from 1945 until 1985, found that texts are becoming more focused on selling propositions made by the tourist industry and less focused on education. These two examples may not be surprising, as the influence of advertising on popular culture and vice versa has long been acknowledged (Fowles, 1996). Representations are not limited to one genre; most texts include aspects and traces from other genres. The amount of traces may differ between genres, but among tourist images it is striking and common. Photographs make up an even more striking example, as it is impossible to distinguish between a photograph published in an article from one published in an advertisement. Taken out of context, the photograph is not genre-specific. This is an example of blurred genres in which "closer and closer webs of intertextuality are spun" (Jansson, 2002:19), as well as of a commercial gaze since non-commercial agents are influenced by the promotional representations.

The monotony among representations seems to be problematic from several points of view. Taken together, a commercially biased representation dominates. One can notice the problem when the same types of representations are repeated with little variation. A consequence may be that this gives rise to well-defined expectations, which encourage tourists to experience the trip in line with the representation. Lagerkvist (2005) addresses this phenomenon in her study of the construction of an imaginary America in Sweden during the years 1945 to 1963, studying how travel writers represented America. Their gaze was directed towards famous spots, and was "filmic" and highly inspired by other mediated images, which they also addressed in their texts. The mediated gaze (Lagerkvist, 2005) parallels how a tourist experiences a place or site in relation to a former media experience. In the case of travel, this gaze is highly influenced by commercial interests, which one could call an advertised gaze.

Researchers portray a dark picture of the consequences of commercial intertextuality (cf. Wernick 1991). Companies are often blamed, however a one-sided representation may be problematic from their point of view as well. The visual metaphor for the offering is the same for each company. In this sense images are not persuasive, as they seem to be designed not to attract attention. Otherwise, it is the advertiser's first task to obtain attention, according to Messaris (1997). The photographs are not compelling, which may result in an experience unlikely to be noted.

The Imaginative Tourist

These kinds of problems concern message and content *per se*. The communication process is limited to aspects but not the viewer. There is no recognition of the viewer and how the images of nature are interpreted and experienced or how meaning is attached to them. Very often, it is an implicit view that there is a preferred meaning (Hall, 1993) and the viewer decodes the advertisements in accordance to this. Other ways of decoding are neglected in this media-deterministic view of the effects of advertising. Returning to Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*, the effects of advertising are negligible; the imaginary process is private in the sense that he fills the blank spaces with meaning. In the earlier mentioned study (Thelander 2002), in which tourists were interviewed and travel advertisements discussed, it was apparent that the interviewees adopted three different positions towards the advertisements, some in a way that shares with great similarities with Marlow.

One group of interviewees viewed the images as consumer information and accepted the message without further reflection. This position resembles dominant-hegemonic reading (Hall 1993, Schröder 2000). This is also a position that the interviewees had regarding travel advertisements, whereas when advertisements in general were discussed they distanced themselves from the advertising content. They were clearly aware of conventions, features and characteristics of advertising and spoke as competent consumers (O'Donohoe 2001). But when they engaged in decoding travel ads, which represented and reminded them of a highly appreciated activity, the distance was erased and they accepted the representation of the ad. This position has been considered evidence of the all-powerful media. Based on the result of these interviews it is an overstatement, as these people deliberately used the advertisements as a means of daydreaming. Hence, the photographs were meaningful not as objective facts but as photographs useful for remembering and creative daydreaming. The interviewees were not completely seduced or – as some researchers may put it – duped, rather they wanted to be seduced. They liked the allure and enjoyed the thought that the representation might become reality. Thus they were so motivated to engage in the decoding of advertisements that they seemed to forget their intentions. Some researchers would rather see it as a method of emancipation from work and everyday life. However, this is an overstatement. Nothing in the way of talking about the advertisements gave the slightest hint of escape attempts.

Another position on the advertisements is seen in the group of viewers who are critical to advertisements, which parallels oppositional reading (Hall 1993, Schröder 2000). These viewers made clear distinctions between the representation and their own impressions. They talked about their own position against the advertisements and different qualities of the advertised trip or destination as a kind of causal cognoscenti (see O'Donohoe 2001).

Those who decode advertisements and actualise their own experiences represent an intermediate position (negotiated reading, see Hall 1993). The

photographs in the travel ads were more or less reminders of other experiences or memory triggers. These viewers actualised their own experience to distance themselves from advertising, but occasionally appear to simply blend their own impressions and advertisements in a way that makes the latter a part of their own ideas. The placeless and timeless image seems to attract these particular viewers (Thelander, 2002). Featureless people and non-places enable the viewer to negotiate the meaning. Signs were like triggers that evoked personal memories and experiences. These viewers also gave the places localities and made them familiar and reachable. For instance, when the interviewees talked about a certain advertisement, a long shot representing the universe theme of a beach resort, they were completely convinced that it represented the destination they had visited, namely Turkey, Spain, Crete, Rhodes or France. The representation of paradisaical places is obviously connected to personal real-world experiences and not free-floating fantasies. The ability to locate the representation was a way to get hold of a myth – it was possible to buy a trip to the desirable place. Jansson (2002a: 430), who has studied spatial appropriation, concludes that “mediated spatial phantasmagoria reinforces the desire for ‘first hand tourism’”. In this sense it is obvious that images in travel advertisements sell us non-places or blank mediated spaces that are used as ways to make places in the same manner as the maps did for Marlow in *Heart of Darkness*.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the mediation of place and nature in travel advertisements. It is represented in a stereotyped manner, as a recreational resource. The representation is widespread and appears in contexts other than strictly commercial ones. I have also discussed viewers' imaginative process. Thus, the discussion has been focused on mediation and the meaning ascribed to images. What about the actual consumption of place and nature? According to researchers who have studied consumption of place, there seem to be several similarities between media consumption and consumption of place (Jansson 2002a, Jackson 2005, Thelander 2002). First, being a tourist and watching a film are converging cultural activities. They share the same logic. According to Jackson (2005), watching a film (the film gaze) and enjoying a landscape (the tourist gaze) signify a psychological relationship that is the same. Jansson (2002a) presents three modes of spatial appropriation that parallel viewer positions. Secondly, the activities are not only similar; they are also intertwined in the sense that they do not have to follow the exposure-travelling sequence, but rather a circuit. Travel ads are used as means for remembering as well as daydreaming, which means that experience and future aspirations are related to the very same image. Therefore, the representation of place and nature may be not only decoded but also recoded; and mediated blank spaces suit this activity.

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Chapter 9

Armchair Travelling with Pilot Guides

Cartographic and Sensuous Strategies

Anne Marit Waade

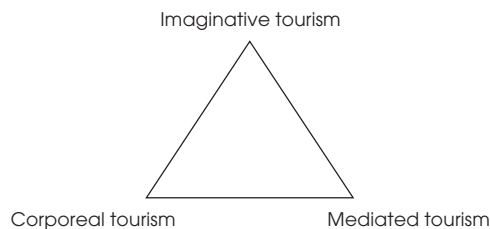
There are many examples of mediatisation of travel and tourist experiences both historically and recently in, e.g., travelogues, handbooks, magazines, ads, television travel series, computer games, websites, fiction and art works, as well as private images and stories in holiday snapshots, videotapes, online travel communities, etc. My focus in this chapter is on television travel series, and I use the popular backpacker show *Pilot Guides* as an analytical example to point out different aesthetic strategies and cultural perspectives in the field of mediated tourist experiences. I am looking for different tourist aesthetic expressions and sensuous modes of appropriate landscapes, places and cultures, and how different media (camcorder, photography, etc.) represent different images and aesthetic relations. Instead of thinking of travel programmes as maps and representations of actual places and cultural differences, it is my claim that these programmes reflect and offer the viewer certain modes of sensuous experiences and cartographic navigation of global conditions. The mapping strategy in *Pilot Guides* is illustrated in the way the spectator is able to see the sites from almost every angle: the perspective shift from a frog's perspective, to a human being's, to a bird's (or more precisely, a flight's). You follow the host's eye, and in the next minute you see the site on a map or from a high camera angle from a flight, or even through a paragliding camera. This unique and sovereign position of seeing is *tourist specific* and *site specific* as well as *media specific*.

Mediated Tourism and Visual Representations

John Urry advances the idea that tourism includes a specific gaze: a certain way of looking at sites, landscapes and cities (*The Tourist Gaze*, 1990/2002). This particular gaze affects the way the tourist looks *for* sites and *at* sites when he/she visits places. The tourist gaze is reflected in – and caused by – the images presented in tourist brochures, postcards, advertisements and

tourist posters, but also in the tourist's own holiday snapshots. John Urry also takes part in the discussion of the state of *post-tourism*. Inspired by the ideas of simulacra and postmodernism, he argues that tourism is becoming increasingly virtual through mediation of the tourist gaze and the tourist experience, and that visitors “know that there is *no* authentic tourist experience, that there are merely a series of games or texts that can be played” (Urry, 1990:11). This fictionalisation of the experience was to be understood as a ‘tourist simulacrum’. *André Jansson* follows up on this discussion in his article on “*Spatial phantasmagoria*” (2002), suggesting hyper tourism as a way of looking into the phenomenon to describe how mediated, imaginative and physical tourism plays together in a complex and reciprocal process. Mediation of tourism means simulations of already simulated environments, and “paradoxically, it seems, the more organised tourism gets, the more mediatized it becomes – and the more it is turned into simulation” (Jansson, 2002:438). Jansson sees mediated and physical tourist experiences as different forms of cultural consumption and spatial appropriation, and rather than substituting physical travelling, mediated spatial phantasmagoria reinforces the desire for first-hand tourism, he argues. A second edition of *The Tourist Gaze* was published in 2002, and at the end of the book Urry comments on the discussion that the first edition and the idea of post-tourism has caused. He argues that “there is no evidence that virtual and imaginative travel is replacing corporeal travel, but there are complex intersections between these different modes of travel that are increasingly de-differentiated from one another” (Urry, 2002:141). I take these ideas as a starting point, not to bring the discussion of representation and reality to an end, but rather to suggest a way to look at the complex intersections of the different modes of travel.

To illustrate the different aspects and modes of travel, it is relevant to differ between imaginative, corporeal and mediated tourism:



Tourism seen as a visual and performative cultural praxis includes in other words mediated, physical and imaginative aspects. In this respect, it is obvious to examine different *aesthetic expressions and relations*, and how different images and representations are staged and work in certain contexts. Even though the visual and the performative play an important role in tourist culture, the aesthetics of tourism are not limited to these forms, but include all kind of aesthetic expressions and sensuous experiences (sound, smell, taste, geographies of touch and storytelling; see also Urry 2002:146).

Several analytical works have been undertaken on the relationship between tourism, media and visual culture (e.g. Crouch & Lübbren: *Visual Culture and Tourism*, 2003, or Crouch, Jackson, & Thompson: *The Media & The Tourist Imagination*, 2005).

The visual aspect of tourism concerns not only tourist-specific and *site-specific* images, but also media-specific aesthetics, in which the different media's technological possibilities and cultural impacts play an important role. *Peter Osborne* (2000) deals with the specific relationship between tourism and still photography, and how tourism includes certain visual signs and semiotic codex. *Jonas Larsen* follows up on Urry's and Osborne's ideas, looking at specific media and their aesthetic implications. Larsen differs between a *travel glance* and a *tourist gaze* (Larsen, 2001 & 2004). The *tourist gaze* is based upon a photographic eye gazing at sites, monuments and landscapes, and is known from tourist advertisements as well as tourists' own snapshots, and its image is characterised as still. The *travel glance* is related to the car and train as transport technologies and means of motorised mobility in modern tourism; it also involves visual machines that represent certain images.

There are several types of tourist glance: the tourist can glance at panoramas of sights in passing from a railway carriage, through the car windscreen the steamship porthole, the jet-plane's bird's eye aperture, and not least, the voyeuristic sightseeing bus. Such a moving look is paradigmatically represented by the camcorder, whereas the "tourist gaze" is captured and constituted through the still photographic camera. (Larsen 2001:95)

The travel glance is a glance through landscapes, a moving eye. It represents an emotional state and the traveller's mood rather than the contemplative, penetrating tourist gaze. The travel glance is based upon a paradox: visual mobility through landscapes and at the same time corporal motionless. Larsen relates the travel glance to the cinematic glance: "the train and car spectator is roaming spaces like an armchair traveller – similar to the cinema spectator" (Larsen 2001:89). The camcorder represents a new way of producing images in tourism that differ from the photographic image: the still camera is used to photographically re-present and document tourist sites, while the video camera influences the way we see and act as tourists.

While tourist photographers may "snap" a few photographs, particularly when the bus is temporarily stationary, of emblematic signs, video tourists tend to spend much more time "doing" filming throughout the tour, and they are not only interested in the major attractions. Rather, they are engaged in experiencing and filming the paradigmatic modern experience of tourist mobility and glancing itself (Larsen 2001:93).

The video camera is a way of seeing, an extra pair of spectacles, which is not meant to document but rather to stage sites and produce images. I will

suggest that it is not only a question of moving or still images, but also of the quality and texture of the image. A snapshot image represents a private, authentic experience, while a postcard image typically has a high gloss texture and represents staged realism. The different images might be connected to Jansson's *symbiotic* and *antagonistic* modes of appropriating scapes of tourism (Jansson 2000:435). The postcard images and the landscape panorama view implicate an *antagonistic* mode, while the snapshot and the camcorder images represent a *symbiotic* relation between viewer and motif. According to Morten Kyndrup (1998), the images have different *representational effects*: the former have a referential representational effect (a realistic effect), referring to the landscape and the site itself, while the latter (camcorder and snapshot) have a metonymic effect and represent the person who is looking and experiencing the site, monument and landscape as well as the way he/she is moving and travelling through the landscape. The different images and media represent different aesthetic relations and meanings¹. To give some examples of how the different images work, as well as their meanings and effect, I will look at a specific episode of *Pilot Guides*. The different images represent different sensuous experiences and embodied appropriations of the destination, and the country is staged as a character you can smell, feel and taste.

Venezuela as a Sensual Woman

Pilot Guides is a programme produced for the Discovery International Travel Channel, based on the *Lonely Planet* guidebooks: "a show which celebrates the best, newest and most exciting travel hotspots in the world" (www.pilotguides.com). The series has been shown on the Danish television channel DR2, and every night at about 7 pm the television audience can follow the guides to almost every place on Earth. *Pilot Guides* illustrates the concept of backpacking: you travel on your own, meet other backpackers, are young and free, travel far away to exotic places, and travel mainly just to travel.²

As a genre, the travel programme is in itself a hybrid, a kind of factual entertainment including both documentary and ethnographic film, as well as a television show in which the studio is replaced by tourist destinations and where the host plays an important role³. At the same time, holiday programmes also serve to market destinations, sometimes even paid and planned as advertorials or through financial support. Travel programmes function as effective marketing, emphasising the positive and unique qualities of the different places and cultures, besides presenting travelling itself as positive. Travel programmes do not give a critical journalistic view, but the main premise (as in all entertainment programmes) is instead to create a good mood and good feelings to achieve sociability with the audience, as well as to present great pictures of the destination.

Pilot Guides communicates with young audiences and globetrotters both by staging backpacking trips and in the way it is told. It has a high tempo due to short cuts, the programme host's constant and swift introduction of new topics, places, people and music, the rapid changes in addressee (from spectator to cameraman, locals, companions, etc.), and the continuous changes in camera position. The host plays a very central role in the programme: serving as much more than a guiding voice through the programme, he/she is the one who creates a connection between the locals and the audience and is thus both interpreter and mediator. David Dunn even argues that on television holiday programmes "the increasing foregrounding of the performance and celebrity of the presenter (...) throws the tourist destination into a background of soft focus." (Dunn, 2005:155). As I see it, the location and destination still play an important role in these programmes, and especially in the presenters' *site-specific* performance and experience. Audiences of travel programmes look through the eyes of the host, and the host's body and the spectator's body overlap. The host is also the one who guides the audience through the programme and creates the energy in the programme and the direct and friendly contact with the spectator.

In the example I have chosen for this analysis, we meet *Ian Wright*, an energetic young British man on his way to Venezuela⁴; "a country which has everything you can imagine: mountains, rain forests, great plains, untouched sandy beaches and a waterfall 16 times bigger as Niagara Falls!" (www.dr.dk/dr2). This amazing country is presented as a person: a sensual woman that the explorer finds, desires and conquers. Several times during the episode, the guide Ian Wright touches on this idea: e.g., in the opening scene in the Andes Mountains, some backpackers refer to the place as a virgin and to nature as something you can conquer and penetrate; and later at the marketplace in Mérida, Ian makes an issue of an ice cream called "Miss Venezuela" (and after tasting his first mouthful, comments, "Now I remember how she tasted"). Later, the audience meets the real Miss Venezuela, a tall and dazzling woman, much taller than the programme host, and the guide shows in a short and humoristic dream sequence how he tries to reach the woman by climbing up on a box. Even the religious aspect of the country acquires an erotic undertone when the audience follows the host to a shop where figures of the Virgin Mary are sold, and the guide chooses the half-naked figure with an impressive bosom, all the while winking and smiling at the spectator.

The idea of the country as a woman who can be seduced and conquered also plays a role in the sequences in which the host goes to a school where young people are trained in good manners and where the teachers try to teach the host to be a gentleman. This topic also plays a role in the sequences in which the host and some other men try to cope in the wilderness of the country: first, he tries to capture an enormous anaconda, and in the next sequences he and some local cowboys try to catch cattle. In the tourism business, this idea of sexual possession and the allure of virginity are well

known as effective storytelling and marketing for tourist destinations and, e.g., Cohen (1995) has shown how the British Virgin Islands have been “naturalized within relations of sexual difference as female and eroticized through references to the allure of virginity (...) rendered a site where to “discover nature’s little secrets” is to achieve the transcendence of the knowing (male) subject” (Cohen, 1995:410).

The idea of Venezuela as a wild and amazing woman, who the host/backpacker is trying to seduce and conquer, creates a dramaturgical framework for the episode. It is told in a humorous and ironic tone, and instead of a romantic hero we meet a host that fails again and again: he doesn’t have the power to catch the anaconda himself and is clumsy and comical when trying to be a gentleman as well as when he interviews Miss Venezuela. The audience follows the host to a hotel room in Los Llanos where he is going to meet the cowboys. When he enters the room, which contains two beds, he addresses the spectator: “A simple room, for a simple guy”. He is staged as a simple, single guy and a lonely cowboy unable to capture cattle and wild animals and women, but on the other hand he is a fabulous and funny traveller. He is a real cosmopolitan, travelling is his home and his life, and all places are whereabouts and destinations. In this case, his backpacking is not a *rite of passage* between two social and identity states such as study/get a job, stay single/get married etc., instead, travelling is the state of his life (Sørensen 1999).

According to the ideas of Amanda Lagerkvist (2004), and to how post-war travelogues presented *the truth* about America, a travel series like *Pilot Guides* stages quite another attitude. According to Lagerkvist, we might still talk about a specific *medial attitude*, and the different viewing position is well represented in the series; the tourists seeking for stimulating sights, the natural scientists collecting information and facts, and the (male) colonists longing for new and virgin land to conquer (Lagerkvist, 2004:327). But the playfulness of the series, the entertainment premise and the guides’ ironic performance, all points at the series as something staged and constructed, playing with cultural clichés and prejudices. In other words, it is not *the truth* about Venezuela, but rather a joyful way of looking at (and visiting) the country, in which the spectator is aware of the site-specific, tourist-specific and media-specific constructions.

Site-specific and Tourist-specific Aesthetics

To sort out the different aesthetic strategies, I will focus on their three main aspects: first, *site-specific* aesthetics, concerning the specific places the programme host visits and presents; second, *tourist-specific* aesthetics that include different tourist experiences, styles and forms of travelling, and finally *media-specific* aesthetics that deal with the mediation of the tourist experi-

ence itself and different meta-communicative strategies⁵. It is impossible to keep the three strategies apart inasmuch as tourist-specific aesthetics are often site specific and even media specific, and the mediatization of site-specific aesthetics is, for obvious reasons, also media specific to some extent. The mediatization is in itself an aesthetification of both tourist experience and place. The three strategies are to be seen as analytical constructions and as means to sort out different patterns of reception and aesthetics in travel programmes.

The *site-specific* aesthetic covers different ways of presenting and reproducing the specific destination. The places are not at all random locations for the content of these programmes, but are rather the content. The regeneration, commodification and aesthetification of places are not exclusive to tourism, but present an overall tendency in the global market economy and the process of 'glocalisation' (e.g. Robertson 1995, Urry 1995). In place branding as well as local planning, tourism and site-specific art, the unique quality of the specific place is of importance. In the travel programme, the places are both locations and destinations, and are the main principle in the dramaturgy of the programme. The worldwide journey constitutes the main concept of the series' format (e.g., every night you go to different countries like Vietnam, Ethiopia, Cuba, Greenland and Venezuela or to cities like New York, Paris and Hong Kong) and every episode is based on a round-trip journey to the different destinations. When Ian Wright goes to Venezuela, he makes an effort to explain where he is going; in the very first and last moments of the programme, he explains where he is going and where he has been, shows the places on a map, presents images from the different places, and explains what is unique about them, both as universal clichés and through his own experiences.

In this episode, Venezuela is represented by the Andes Mountains and its wild and amazing nature, the cowboy country of Los Llanos, the capital, Caracas, and its metropolitan culture, the paradise island of Los Rogues in the Caribbean Sea, and finally the Amazon Rain Forest, where the spectator is shown the world's highest waterfall, Angel Falls. The places chosen for the episode reveal great differences in the culture, geography and nature of the country. The impressive image the spectator gets of the country is based on these places, not only through the amazing impressions they get of each place, but also through the great differences between the places. The spectator follows the guide high up in the mountains, sees a marvellous waterfall and goes to an exotic island in the Caribbean Sea, visits the desolate, old-fashioned countryside and the modern, urban city. The site-specific aesthetic in this episode is characterised by how the places work together as a whole and how the different sites are presented. The landscape and townscape of the different places are shown through the host's eyes and through the panorama gaze of the camera; in addition, every place and site becomes a location for a short story or performance: for instance, in the Andes Mountains the host goes paragliding for the first time, at the marketplace in

Caracas he tastes an exotic drink containing fruit, fish eggs and the fresh eyes of an ox. The greatness of the sites' nature and culture reaches a climax in the very last scene of the episode. In the beginning, the spectator sees the host up close while summing up his journey and the different destinations. After a few seconds, the camera leaves the man and he becomes smaller and smaller; he remains standing on a rock while the surrounding forest, waterfalls, mountains and sky dominate the image and make the man look tiny. The spectator discovers the enormous landscape while the host slowly disappears. The site-specific view dominates the host and the actions. Miraculously, the spectator can still hear the voice of the man as though he were still up close. This media-specific aesthetic effect puts the spectator in a sovereign and non-human position from which he/she has a God's eye view of the landscape and at the same time can hear the sounds as though he/she were standing near their source. The aesthetic is also sense specific in that it plays with the qualities of the different senses: to hear (just as to smell, taste and touch), one has to stay close, while the sense of sight and the view are not limited by the distance.

The tourist-specific dimension of the episode is naturally the concept of using backpacking as entertainment, and how the programme addresses a young, well-educated and cosmopolitan audience that may already have visited – or plans to visit – the destination. The programme constitutes the backpacker's ritual praxis, dwelling at the threshold state that characterises travelling as cultural praxis, and illustrating the person's transformation. The mediation of tourist pilgrimage and ritual praxis in itself dwells at this threshold: the spectator can stay together with the host in this state between staying and leaving.

In this episode of *Pilot Guides*, the tourist's travel glance is used as an aesthetic effect. It shows the visual, sensuous experience that motorised travelling represents so that the armchair traveller can achieve a specific tourist mood. There are many sequences in which we see the host travelling. The camera shifts perspective: one second we see, for instance, the host on a car deck and the next we follow his glance through landscapes and townscapes. This shifting perspective is also used when the host is paragliding, walking in the mountains, riding in a gondola or on a horse, or flying in a plane. The different ways of travelling, motorised or not, are illustrated by the movements of the camera, which has a metonymic effect in respect to the spectator, because the movement of the camera when we follow the host's glance represents a bodily experience. The differences between horseback riding, paragliding and driving a car illustrate different bodily experiences, but also different visual images of the landscape and spatial appropriations.

The car and train, as well as horseback riding and walking, represent travelling through the landscape. It is mainly the speed that constitutes the different images. When it comes to paragliding, flying in a plane or riding in a gondola, the image and landscape experience change. It is no longer only the changing speed on a horizontal axis that matters to the image, but also

the changing position on a vertical axis. Paragliding and riding in the gondola occur close to the surface of the Earth – you can still see individual trees, houses and cars down there. But when it is a matter of flying, the spatial appropriation shifts and the landscape becomes more like an abstract pattern, a map, a landscape that can only be experienced visually, not corporally. This movement of the traveller, as both spectator and physical tourist, represents a sovereign position and a new kind of imaginary colonisation that gives the tourist an overview and the possibility to appropriate landscapes with almost no restrictions or bodily limits. (An even more radicalised version of this sight is seen in digital images – e.g., computer games and computer-animated images – in which the spectator is no longer limited by his/her own body or transport technologies. This is not the case here.) In the mediated version of this backpacking journey, this shifting position is even more uncomplicated and easy than in real life, and it turns into an interplay of excessive images and bodily representations.

The tourist-specific aesthetic is also related to the tourist images of the country as a destination, as well as to stories and myths related to the country (e.g., one of the very first images shown in the episode is of two cowboys portrayed as lonely riders against the sunset). The staging of locals as others, as different from oneself, is also a central part of the tourist experience, as is the search for staged authentic culture and picturesque images of sites and places. We might even supply real sound and music that is used in this episode, to give a realistic and complete presentation of the destination.

Media-specific Aesthetic

The media aesthetic aspect is less about the country or the culture presented than about the mediation itself. This meta-communicative level might be found in all mediated communication, but concerning tourism as a cultural phenomenon and the concept of hyper tourism, mediation plays a central role in tourist images as well as tourist experience. In emphasising the media-specific aesthetic in this episode of *Pilot Guides*, the production team stages both the media-competent spectator as well as the travel-competent spectator.

The episode does not have a documentary premise like ‘this is the truth about Venezuela’, but rather an experiencing attitude that is open to adventure. The ‘we’ is naturally the backpacking tourist as well as *Pilot Guides* – the programme concept, production team and the host alike. But ‘we’ are even the television audience, and the programme constitutes a fellowship between audience and host as close travel companions. The sovereign spectator conquers and penetrates the destination as a comfortable armchair traveller, along with the host and production team. This mediated social ‘we’ is media and genre specific, as are the different visual and dramaturgical strategies used in the programme. In the following, I will focus on three travel-

lers in the episode that each represent media-specific aesthetics: the host, the television spectator and the camera.

The programme stages the host as a backpacker. Besides the site-specific and tourist-specific parts of this aspect of the programme, there is also a media-specific dimension. As I have argued, this is a mixture of the documentary and the entertainment genres. The documentary elements of the programme include facts we are given about the country, its inhabitants, its culture and history, the graphic presentation of a map of the country, as well as the camera's presentation and documentation of reality. There are also several elements that make the programme primarily entertainment. The host, as in other entertainment programmes like talk shows and quizzes, plays an important role as the one who constitutes the sociability between the guests in the studio and the audience (e.g. Bruun, 1999). Ian Wright is the one who introduces us to the different people and places we meet; he is the one explaining and commenting on what is going on, making us comfortable, creating a good mood and joyful experience by playing the clown, putting himself in comical and embarrassing situations, and joking and winking at us as though we were intimate and close friends. He is less the observer (familiar from documentary and other journalistic forms) and more the protagonist who stages and constitutes joyful sociability.

This is also seen in the way he addresses the audience: he always keeps an eye on the spectator, even when hanging in a paraglider, scared to death of an anaconda or left behind on a rock while the camera/spectator is ascending into the sky. For instance, in the short cut in which he is talking to a fish, he is obviously not talking to the fish, but playing it up for the spectator. The narrative is a convention in documentary and factual entertainment forms, and is used here to address the audience, not only in order to explain what is going on but also to keep the host's alliance and contact with the spectator. The narrative normally constitutes a temporal distance from what is shown onscreen; the voice-over is edited in the studio after the camera has filmed on location. This is also true in this example, but in the voice-over another media-specific and meta-communicating game is played: e.g., when we see the cowboys on their horses while listening to the narrative, and the next second another cowboy appears in the lens of the camera – this is the host talking from the back of his horse! The spectator realises that what he/she thought was an edited voice-over is the actual sound from the clip. Precisely the same effect is achieved in the last image from Angel Falls (in the opposite order), where the spectator can still hear the host as if he were up close even though the camera is so far away the host cannot be seen.

The quality of the image varies: between a clear texture with bright colours and contrasts and short cuts and a blurred, grainy texture, nostalgically recalling Super8 cameras without real sound, only edited with music or narrative. These cuts are more like short glimpses, fleeting and unclear dreams, memories and images. They have a poetic and psychological effect through which the audience can follow the host's own inner images, memories

and feelings. They also have a visual effect in the way they break the stream of moving, realistic pictures. In both cases they create an alliance between host and spectator; in the former, the spectator gets close to the host's inner imagination (not only what he is seeing and doing) and in the latter, the effect is more meta-communicative, with the spectator becoming aware of how the country and backpacking adventure are staged and presented.

Naturally the way the episode stages the spectators as travellers is closely related to the role of the host and the mediated sociability. But there are also other media-specific aesthetic strategies that make the spectator (nearly) a first-hand traveller: I am thinking about how the camera gets very close to the objects, how the programme emphasises the sensuous experience of travelling and being a tourist, and how the spectator sees, 'tastes' or hears things with his/her own senses. This is a realistic effect that momentarily makes the media, host and mediation invisible. An example of this is when the host and a local companion visit the city market and are waiting for a drink that is a regional specialty. The host explains what is in the drink: eggs from chicken, quail and fish and a bull's eye. The spectator sees the ingredients up close: the fresh fruit is grabbed by a hand, the eggs are cracked into a bowl, the bull's eyes are cut with a knife and the juice flows, the machine mixes the drinks, and finally the consistency and colour of the drink are shown in the glass. The camera dwells on the objects, and the spectator has the opportunity to imagine the feeling of grabbing the fruit, cracking the eggs, cutting the eyes and tasting the drink. According Kyndrup (1998), the image has a certain realistic effect (referential representational effect) that we know from, e.g. adverts, fashion photography and food programmes in which the close image with its colourful and clear texture achieves a tactile, sensuous and tasty effect, so that the spectator can imagine what it is like to touch, smell or taste the object. These kind of realistic images exist only in mediated form, in which the camera makes it possible to dwell, get close to, repeat, show slow motion images, etc., in order to stress the sensuous aspect of the experience as well as the viewer's imagination.

The last approach I mentioned as being related to the media-specific aesthetic is the way the camera is staged as a traveller. This issue deals with the use of visual effects that have no representational function concerning tourism, travel programmes or the specific country presented, but rather represent the media itself – e.g., a short sequence right after the host has said goodbye to Miss Venezuela at the café, where the film is fast-forwarded. We see the long-legged woman walking quickly down the stairs away from the host, who is left behind at the café table. This sequence constitutes both a humoristic position and a dreamlike, unreal attitude, as if the woman was not real and the meeting had not happened. But it also underlines the technological and mediated construction of the situation. The host also makes a point of the presence of the camera, talking and making signs to the cameraman. Within seconds, he gets so close to the camera that his face is distorted. The spectator's sense of the body is no longer natural, but depends

on the mediation and the construction of the camera lens. The object comes so close that it represents a grotesque image of a human body, and the spectator becomes aware of the wide-angle function of the camera.

Cartographically and Bodily Navigating the Globe

The visual images that *Pilot Guides* offers is connected to tourist images we recognise from private snapshots and camcorder images as well as part of a certain television aesthetic. *Pilot Guides* includes both Super8 and camcorder images that we recognise from documentaries and factual television, and in both cases the images indicate personal and embodied experiences (the former as nostalgic memories, and the latter as everyday here-and-now experiences). The low-grade video images represent a tourist-specific and site-specific experience, as well as a media-specific image. According to Jon Dovey (2004), the camcorder image has become the “privileged form of TV truth telling signifying authenticity and indexical reproduction of the real world” (p. 557). Dovey explains that the camcorder aesthetic presumes a direct and transparent correspondence between what is in front of the camera lens and its taped representations, insisting upon a localised, subjective and embodied experience, and reproducing and penetrating the boundaries between the individual subject and the public, material world (Dovey, 2004:557).

To summarise the aesthetic aspects of *Pilot Guides*, it produces and reproduces visual images for the iconoclasm of tourism. The images involve the viewer on two levels: as representations of actual places and travels, and simultaneously as pleasurable images that stimulate imaginative travel activity and establish sociability. Related to the concept of hyper tourism in which media reinforce these first-hand-experiences, the images represent an aesthetification of tourist experience in which the bodily and sensuous experience plays a predominant role for the tourist. Tourist aesthetic includes not only how tourism is expressed, staged, performed and illustrated in different mediated forms (as a style), but also the aesthetic (sensuous-reflexive) qualities of travelling and being a tourist, in both physical forms and the reception of mediated forms. *Orvar Löfgren* (2000) has underlined these sensuous qualities of modern tourism and travelling. One way to sort out modes of tourist aesthetics is to look at different aesthetic strategies: the use of visual, theatrical, narrative and auditory elements and effects.

The cartographic process is characterised as an ongoing and interpretative process (Bjerre Jepsen, 2004). In contrast to maps, which are static representations of specific landscapes and sites, the cartographic process is a dynamic, subjective process in which meaning and connections are created. The cartographic navigation in *Pilot Guides* includes cognitive, emotional and sensuous strategies. The series offers the viewer a sovereign position to experience, navigate and understand the country and the destination. This

position is even more sovereign than the guide's; in an hour you can overcome a country by driving, tasting, climbing and paragliding the landscape and getting a feel for the people. And the next evening you can go somewhere else. On the whole, the series puts the viewer in a unique position, in which the globe becomes the destination (Molz, 2004). And this is not an abstract, conceptual globe but rather a sensuous, tasteful, untroubled globe full of pleasure, sound and sociability.

My idea of a cartographic sense of places and landscapes is related to the process of cultural globalisation, reflexivity and commodification. John Urry discusses a shift from a single tourist gaze in the nineteenth century to a globalisation of the tourist gaze today: "a proliferation of countless discourses, forms and embodiments of tourist gazes" (Urry, 2002:161). The cartographic process deals with global conditions in both cognitive and sensuous ways, and as I have illustrated, the mediated (as well as corporeal and imaginative) ways to travel include different modes of mapping discourses and embodiments.

Notes

1. To follow up this grammar of tourist images and their aesthetic implications, digital technology opens up to new expressions and means; e.g. how the Internet, moblogs, camera phones, digital video and photograph cameras, GPS, etc., open up to new communicative praxis. Digital media make it possible to edit and communicate in real time and interactively, and the boundaries between receiver and producer have become blurred.
2. The series includes three different guides, two women and one man, and every show is run by one of these guides. *Pilot Productions MMI* produces specialised TV shows addressing travel, food and history topics: *Pilot Guides*, known as *Globe Trekker* in the US and previously broadcast under the name *Lonely Planet*, *Planet Food*, the adventure and trekking show *Treks in a Wild World*, and the shopping and travel series *Bazaar*. The pilot team has visited over 100 locations on every continent and the show has employed some of the leading names in the TV industry. Pilot Productions produces its own highly successful brand of world music CDs, videos and DVDs, and produces the *Pilot Guides* website, www.pilotguides.com.
3. Kristin Skare Orgeret (2002) describes television travel series as infotainment, and Elfriede Fürsich (2002a, 2002b) looks at it as a kind of global journalism.
4. This episode of *Pilot Guides* was broadcast 11 November 2004 on Danish broadcast television DR2.
5. *Pilot Guides* opens up for many analytical perspectives, such as how a country and locals are staged, predominant national and global discourses, the programme as factual entertainment, how the backpacker's attitude is staged and reflected, e.g., in relation to other kinds of tourism, global journalism (Elfriede Fürsich, 2000), etc.

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III

Mediatized Spaces

Chapter 10

The Flexible Home

Magnus Andersson

The home is a mythologised place. In proverbs, literature and media, it is often portrayed as the stable and secure place one always returns to. The home is depicted as the hearth where families gather, having fun together, protected from a threatening surrounding world. The home represents a personal sphere in contrast to an anonymous public world. This image is reproduced in the media in a double sense: on the one hand in advertisements and 'lifestyle media', i.e. magazines and programmes on interior design, gardening and cooking and other domestic activities (Morley 2003: 437), and on the other hand in soap operas and situation comedies in which intrigues are very often based on domestic family life (Spigel 2001a: 5f). As a contrast to this warm, idyllic, private and enclosed sphere, there is the mediatised home where new information and communication technology (ICT) perforates walls and keeps the home continuously connected to the surrounding world, transforming it into a node in a global network (cf. Morley 2003). Whether a constant connection to the world is desirable is a point of discussion, but as Spigel (2001a: 3ff) notes, it is remarkably many of contemporary (American) media critics who have the idyllic and enclosed home as a point of departure. The critique, in other words, has its origin in nostalgia, how it used to be – or rather, *the image of* how it used to be.

Through these two images, the meaning of home could be seen as a question of family hearth *or* global connectivity – the enclosed home versus the expanded one. The media, with the ability to connect different contexts and undermine the significance of distance (Harvey 1990; Giddens 1990; Thompson 1995), play a vital part in this question of the home's boundaries. As many commentators have recognised, especially concerning television, the domestic electronic media enable people transcending the boundaries of the private realm to make imagined or virtual travels (Williams 1974; Moores 1993; Scannell 1996; Peters 1997; Morley 2000; Urry 2000; Spigel 2001a). The question is, however, more complex than the presence or absence of media. The role of media is full of contradictions. For example, a former homeless man interviewed in a Swedish newspaper (*Dagens Nyheter*,

20 November 2002) talks about the pleasure of being able to watch the television news in his own apartment. Soon, he says, he will get a sofa. For him, watching television is emblematic for the home, more so than furniture is. Media technologies and media consumption have long contributed to the manifestation of the home and the family hearth, as Spigel (1992, 2001a, 2001b) recognises in her historical research on the introduction of media technologies in the home. Thus, media are complex phenomena that may both enclose and expand the home. This is related to the twofold meaning of media technologies as pieces of furniture and as mediating apparatuses (Silverstone 1994: 83; Morley 1995; Østerud 2000).

Hence, the domestic media have the potential to be the objects confirming the home *and* the links connecting it with the surrounding world. How do people cope with this ambiguous character of media? Discussing this question is a reflection of the meaning of the home on one hand and media consumption as a spatial practice in globalised everyday life on the other. Empirically, it draws on two studies containing a total of 49 qualitative interviews conducted 1997-2003 in five demographic districts of two Swedish large cities: an inner city district, an affluent suburb, a working-class suburb; a countryside village (50 km from the city), and a district dominated by immigrants.¹ In spite of the fact that these were two different projects, with two different aims, they share the feature that all interviews were based on discussions of everyday life, the meaning of home, and what globalisation means to one's life and media consumption.

The Enclosed Home

The nostalgic depiction of home within popular culture has its counterpart in research in which a number of phenomenological geographers have described the home and sense of place as an essential need in all human beings (cf. Relph 1976; Seamon 1979; Buttimer 1980). This idyllic description has been criticised heavily. As Gillian Rose (1993: ch. 3) notes, unequal distribution of work, conflicts, repression and violence are 'natural' in the home – in the meaning of frequent occurrence – which many women experience. Rose is critical towards the neglect of structural gender differences in the experience of the home. She refers to socialist feminists of the 70's who considered home and family life as the centre of patriarchal and capital repression; the place where women were both unpaid and invisible (ibid: 54; cf. Massey 1994: ch. 7; Morley 2000: ch. 3; Spigel 2001a: ch. 1-2).

What distinguishes the home from other places is the possibility for personal characterisation. A home is not experienced as a home until we have arranged things the way we want them. Therefore, being able to feel at home requires the *creation* of the home (Wise 2000). The material at hand in this creative process is comprised of furniture, artefacts and objects; things that

for us represent symbolic worlds of personal memories, narratives and biographies. As Noble (2004: 253) argues: "accumulation of objects entails the accumulation of being". This is illustrated by a Bosnian informant who keeps small Bosnian souvenirs in different places in her kitchen as reminders of her background; souvenirs brought to her by friends after her arrival in Sweden. Even media – technologies and texts – can be used in this way, as objects of personal comfort, to give the home personal character.

It is common among informants to have a radio in the kitchen and a living room with a sofa, a coffee table and 'the box in the corner'. This is the archetype of living rooms, reproduced through TV series and glossy magazines. This quite trivial empirical evidence could be considered as a sign of cultural belonging; one is taking part in the cultural conventions of interior design (cf. Spigel 1992).² However, the cultural pattern does not prevent such an interior style from being an expression of personal preferences – television is considered so important in one's life that one wants instant access at all times. For example, one informant, a former sailor who is now a pensioner, describes that he has four radios in his apartment, at least one in every room, and he listens to them at different times. These personal preferences or values are even more obvious when it comes to the opposite expressions, for example those who want to dissociate themselves from television and consequently place the set in a remote corner of their home (cf. Jansson 2001: 182f) or hide it (Morley 2003: 448f).³ Thus, the way a home is furnished says something about media attitudes. Among the informants is one man who says he does not have a TV, since he thinks television is waste of valuable time. Instead, he has dedicated a room in the apartment to advanced computers of different kinds, which he uses in his newly started business. A woman tells about the importance of books in her life, and consequently considers the bookshelves as a significant part of the home. She comes from a journalist family:

When I grew up we had always bookshelves with books – not just reference books, but novels and so on. As children, we had them in our faces all the time, and all of us read. In my husband's home they had bookshelves, but with other stuff; reference books, a few records and some fancy items. And I notice that when he reads; he reads mostly technical journals.

According to a Swedish ethnological study (Mörck 1991), people's relation to books – and bookshelves – is an explicit indicator of Bourdieu's social space: the educated middle class have simple bookshelves from IKEA filled with paperbacks and course books, while working class families often have heavy bookshelves filled with things other than books (ibid: 112, 178-81).

Considering the efforts of the media technology industry to produce not only 'mediating apparatuses', but designed and fancy media furniture, it is not surprising media become important in peoples' attempts to create personal and enclosed private homes (cf. Spigel 1992). Perhaps more surpris-

ing is that media texts and representations may also work as building material for the enclosed home. For example, the broadcast of radio is deeply integrated in many people's morning rituals (cf. Larsen 1997). A man working as an engineer and living with his wife in a terrace house, says: "There is always sound in this house, the radio is on at breakfast time, so it's never quiet, actually [...] I usually eat breakfast and read the paper with music on in the background".⁴ Radio, providing the opportunity to do something else while consuming, seems to be second nature in the home for many people, an explicit part of the home atmosphere (cf. Tacchi 1998). A woman even forgets to mention that she listens to the radio all day when she is asked to describe which media she uses daily. The pensioner with several radios states:

It's nice to have music when I sit here and do paperwork. You don't actually listen, but it's there anyway.

Interviewer: Is it important that the radio is there in your home office?

No, not really. It's only because I have placed it there strategically; in this way it's very easy to switch it on. And the radio here in the kitchen is there [points towards the window], which makes it easy to switch on when I sit here at the table. Once it is switched on, it stays on.

Another indication of the domestic naturalness of radio is the fact that several of the interviews were conducted with a radio on in the background. But radio is not the only medium whose 'texts' are part of the home. A woman living in an inner-city district with her husband and two small children describes that she lives in a "cocoon" at the moment, due to the children and the family's economic situation. Talking about the morning paper, she says: "I could not imagine not getting the newspaper in the morning. It's part of the home!". Another woman, who lives on her own, describes watching television as an important way to relax: "you get home from work and just sit down and just watch".

The significance of media texts in creating a personal and enclosed space is particularly evident in the shifts between home and work. Even though several mention that the first thing they do when arriving at their workplace is read the paper and many listen to the radio during work, the most habitual and ritualised media consumption appears to take place in the home, in immediate connection to work time. Media then become symbolic thresholds of the home, marking the transition between the public and the private. This is expressed very clearly by an informant who works with IT support. He describes very stable morning and evening rituals:

Interviewer: What do you do when you come home in the evenings?

First of all I take it calm and easy – the same as in the morning at my job. I change into something more comfortable – loose clothes and no socks! I sit down and browse through the mail, letters, invoices and ads [...] Maybe I browse through a magazine, read a little, maybe I have a cup of tea and something to

eat. I take it easy. [...] Sometimes I put the telly on and then I always fall asleep – that's the reason I put the telly on, actually, not to watch it. I sleep maybe 10 minutes and then I'm prepared to begin the evening.

The newspaper and the television help the man adapt to the different milieu. The media rituals encircle the work and become explicit symbolic markers that mark different spheres in everyday life. It is the ritual aspect of media that provides structures for everyday life, in both temporal and phenomenological senses (cf. Bausinger 1984; Silverstone 1994: 183; Larsen & Tufte 1999).

These media-related transitions are particularly explicit among people who work at home, for different reasons (cf. Bengtsson in this anthology). Generally, domestic life for many (men more than women) means relaxation, with the threshold marking the boundary of a 'laid-back sphere'. He or she who works at home has to find other symbolic structures for his or her everyday life, and media is one of those structuring resources. A freelance architect, with her home as her workplace, illustrates this. She is working on a book project at the moment and tells how work and leisure are constantly mixed together, although she tries to keep them separate. She describes a common working day:

...I work very much in the evenings. I usually take a break around midnight, putting the telly on and watching some trash.

Interviewer: Is it action series or what...?

I don't even know what it is. I watch whatever comes on [...]

Interviewer: Do you watch to relax or...?

Yes, it's good to watch these kinds of things when you have worked all day or you need to get away from what you are doing. And it doesn't matter if you switch it on at the beginning or at the end of the programme...

TV watching represents the threshold of the home; the marker of the transition from disciplined work to relaxing leisure. Sitting down on the couch in front of the television turns the working place to an enclosed home. The close relation between media and leisure (cf. Morley 1986; Gauntlett & Hill 1999: ch. 2) is further stressed by the fact that the same woman says she never listens to the radio when she is working: "I work with language and words and therefore I can't listen to music while working. It has to be quiet if I'm to be able to think". The media consumption becomes a ritual in which the social use is independent of the output (cf. Leach 1968; Lull 1990; Rothenbuhler 1998).

These media rituals do not take place only in connection to the boundary between work and leisure time. Another moment deeply associated with rituals is the end of the working week, i.e. the beginning of the weekend. These media rituals often have media institutional support, with broadcast entertainment programmes suited for cosy evenings with the family. Friday

evening means a TV evening for the most informants with children. This is even true for those parents who normally have a dissociated relation to television. A woman living with her husband and their two children in an affluent suburb comments on their family's Friday evening:

Normally, the kids watch the family shows on the telly while my husband and I sit at the table next to them, eating dinner and drinking wine. In that way we are all in the same room [...] It is the kids who are in charge on Friday evenings. When they have gone to bed, we might watch a film.

The ritual is different from everyday life, in this case in having the dinner at a different place than usual, and in allowing the children to decide the evening's agenda. The cosy atmosphere is further stressed by the TV tables. At different times, popular TV or radio programmes have been the big event of the weekend, something everyone takes part in, and hence become symbols for the weekend. Asked whether the family watches TV together, a woman replies:

Yes, we do. My husband and my sons watch more sports than I do, but we watch other things together. *Wait* a minute, I watch the football game on Saturday afternoon with them! That's really *Saturday*! Then, after my jog, I usually sit down, have a footbath and enjoy.

Furthermore, she sometimes reads the sports pages in the newspaper to know what her male colleagues at work talk about during coffee breaks. In general, however, she does not consider herself a sports fan. In spite of this, a live-broadcast English football game – English football has been broadcast Saturday afternoons in Sweden since the 70's – is a highlight of the week for her. The football game and the domestic context define Saturday, and all the special things that day represents.

A significant part of these media rituals is the social dimension (Carey 1989). In many cases the rituals symbolise the unity of the family, even though this is not always the case. A woman describes how she had an eye-opener while visiting her sister-in-law, concerning how media may split families. During her visit, all the children 'hide' in their rooms, playing music, chatting on the Internet and watching TV, while she and her sister-in-law sat alone in the living room. This, she feels, is very different from earlier, when a visit to her sister-in-law meant that everyone gathered in the living room. More common, however, are expressions like: "In our family the telly is a meeting point". The relatively strong connection between media rituals and family life is further stressed by people living on their own who do not express similar ritualised patterns of media consumption. But the social dimension of media rituals has its limits, being strongly connected to the home and family. For example, there are few informants who have watched television with people other than family members more than occasionally. This social con-

vention seems to be relevant in different social classes. A single woman, formerly unemployed but now a student, portrays herself as a huge TV consumer, following 8-10 series. It is very seldom, however, that she watches TV with someone else. When she is with friends, she videotapes the series so that she can watch them later. That TV is considered a private (including families) practice is further indicated by many informants expressing irritation over switched-on television sets when they are invited to parties or dinners. There are, however, occasions when watching TV with friends are socially legitimate. Some informants talk about video nights with friends. Others talk about the pleasure of watching sports events in bars – even though it is the social atmosphere, rather than the sport event itself, that seems to attract. As a woman without her own television and with a restricted interest in sports puts it: “It’s fun because people are so engaged”.

Watching television is primarily a family business, according to the informants. Media rituals’ strong association with home is reinforced by the fact that they are usually part of larger contexts of practice; having breakfast and browsing through the paper, making dinner and listening to the radio, having coffee and watching the TV news and so on. Media consumption and media rituals could therefore be regarded as a significant aspect of *ontological security*, Giddens’ social psychological concept in which individuals, through routines and habits, keep risks at a distance (Giddens 1991: 35-47). This is the background of considering media as enclosing mechanisms: phenomena that, through rituals, screen off the surrounding world, displaying the home as stable and secure – and the hearth of family. This suggests that mediation cannot be considered solely as transmission of information (Carey 1989: 18; cf. Falkheimer & Jansson in this anthology). The ritual aspect, which links the mediation to maintenance and “shared beliefs”, is crucial in the relation between media consumption and space – especially when it comes to manifestation of places.

The Expanded Home

The home is not only about a withdrawal from public demands to something stable and secure. The enclosing is never complete; there are always connections to public and symbolic realms involved. Considering the material aspect of the home, it is common to use rooms in an expressive way; rooms created to be seen, to be noted. The expressivity is often anchored in reflexivity (‘this is the way we want to be seen’), physical labour (‘here we have painted with fresh colours’) and lived experience (‘we received this picture when we were married’) (cf. Pratt 1981; Jansson 2001: 178-88; Noble 2004). Furthermore, the home is often organised within a framework of public-private distinction, in which the bedroom represents the most private part – guests normally hesitate to go in there. In contrast, there is the ‘semi-

public' living room, where social intercourse is a 'natural' part. The 'semi-public' aspect is illustrated by a woman living with her husband, three children and the children's pets in a suburban apartment. She describes the everyday as a flux: children, children's friends and pets running around, meetings with associations she and her husband are involved in, and besides this there are "circulating TV programmes". As she puts it: "You get blind to what's happening around here. If you were to look at it soberly, you would see things you normally do not pay attention to".

Furthermore, the living room is usually the place for family-related media rituals, those that tend to enclose the home. It is, however, something very contradictory to screen out the surrounding world with media – cultural forms that primarily *connect* different worlds. The domestic media – the computer in the home office, the radio in the kitchen, the book at the bedside table or newspaper sections everywhere – are, in addition to enclosing mechanisms, connections to the surrounding world that symbolically *expand* the home. This is the framework when a man comments on his breakfast routines:

The newspaper brings new news every morning. I sit and read and have an hour for myself, and I get updated about what is happening in the world. It's satisfying and I like it very much!

This man lives on his own in a suburban apartment. He works on a ferry, which means he is away from home for longer periods. The quotation illustrates how he builds up *ontological security*, not only from enclosing rituals but also from links to the surrounding world: the connections that media provide. Reading foreign news becomes an aspect of security, a personal confirmation of being part of the world. The media do not only connect to foreign places; other realms such as phantasmagorical worlds are also potential destinations. The same man from the quote above talks about his fragmental everyday life on the ferry and at home:

Taken together I spend half of the year on the ferry, which means I'm away from home a lot. On the other hand, when I'm off the boat I spend a lot of time at home, taking care of the flat – it's necessary when you've been away – and enjoying myself.

Interviewer: 'Enjoying yourself' means...?

Well, sometimes I watch TV or I make a really good cup of coffee, pick up a book and put on some peaceful music and simply imagine myself away to another world. That's nice!

Media bridge the home to imagined worlds, generating possibilities for double presence; "of being in two places at once, or two times at once" (Scannell 1996: 91). These imaginative experiences can be very powerful. A woman talks about reading books and the intense feelings involved:

A long time ago I read '*Jag brinner*' [*I am burning*], a book about Majakowski by Torbjörn Säfve. Sometimes I had to put it away because I was almost worn out. He writes in such a frenetic way...I get out of breath.

In this context, putting the book away means returning to the home context, taking a break in the imagination and experiencing the taken-for-granted domestic setting for a while. Media represent an escape from routinised everyday life, and one may go back and forth in no time at all. A Croatian couple tells how they like to watch American situation comedies. The husband says:

The characters are so funny, you laugh till you forget about the problems you have. You can relax when you watch these shows. You forget everyday life.

A troubling everyday and a painful past may facilitate these imaginative travels (cf. Morley 2000: 150). There is, however, no distinct boundary between the imaginative travels and the enclosing rituals. The imaginative travels are often embedded in the enclosing rituals described earlier. For example, a Bosnian woman describes how on Saturdays her family often makes a cosy arrangement in front of the television with lemonade, crisps, sweets and a romantic comedy on video:

You enter into the film and feelings and questions arise; some of the things in the film happen today, in reality. My husband usually says 'it only happens in films' but that's not true, it is not only in the film, it happens all the time, it can happen to anyone. You cannot plan and organise everything: 'it shall be like this'. In my experience it's never like you planned. Nowadays I never make long-term plans, as I did earlier. You never know how it will be.

The film and social context constitute an imaginative resort – at the same as they are integrated into one's own life situation and the uncertainty of tomorrow. This 'double' significance makes it hard to talk about escapism in any simple terms.⁵ Another similar example is a female student who leads a life full of different TV series and books in the fantasy genre:

I read books very often. I become extremely restless if I don't have anything to read every day. [...] I enter into the books and they absorb me completely. I'm not saying that I have not cried if it's something other than a book, but a book may really captivate me, almost too much...It sounds dull when you try to explain...But I think it helps in forgetting your own troubles, it is easier to leave them behind.

Interviewer: Yes?

Yes, you may identify with different persons and feel like 'ok, if she can do it, I can do it as well'.

This quotation emphasises the complexity of media-related escapes from everyday life. The mediated narrative worlds may become resources, making it easier to handle problematic situations in everyday life (cf. Ang 1985; Radway 1987; Fiske 1989; Nussbaum 1995; Appadurai 1996). Media receive roles similar to those that fairytales and religion have had in earlier periods; partly as imaginative resorts, partly as substantial models for how to lead one's life. As Arjun Appadurai (1996: ch. 1) notes, there are strong connections between media and human mobility, mediated by *the work of imagination*.

The media could also be used to reflect over the biographical past, to remember a moment, a place, an atmosphere or a culture. A woman living with her husband and two children leads a religious life with restricted use of the television. She and her husband watched *LA Law* when it was broadcast: "We thought it was funny, it is a touch of American atmosphere". Due to her husband's work they have lived in America periodically, and this series about American lawyers gave them the opportunity to catch glimpses of an earlier experienced atmosphere. The possibility to remain a part of communities or places one has physically left is a significant spatial aspect of media consumption (Karim 2003). There are several immigrants in the study who maintain bonds with their home country in different ways. A Finnish woman tells how she and her ex-husband came to Sweden in the 70's, due to the opportunities for work. She is now divorced and unemployed, and lives in a suburban flat with her two teenage daughters. She maintains her ties to Finland through a subscription to a Finnish tabloid magazine and satellite channel. She watches old Finnish films and series – 'texts' that she had already seen when she lived in Finland. This 're-watching' of material indicates that it is not the intrigue that attracts, but rather the opportunity to revive memories of the past. These examples are interesting in relation to the view of communication as transmission or ritual (Carey 1989). At first glance, it seems natural to relate the expanded home to a transmission view and the enclosed home to a ritual view. These examples, however, show that the expansion of the home may have ritualistic dimensions: experiencing community and confirming the already known.

Another example is an Englishman, a former salesman who has lived in Sweden 13 years. He talks about the new possibilities that the Internet has brought him. It has increased his contacts with England in a double sense: he has more contact with his family and his local roots today through e-mail correspondence with his relatives. In addition, he has strengthened his experience of being part of an English national imagined community through BBC's Web service. Furthermore, the Internet has made it possible for him to make contact with his past. When he was young he served in the British army, and some time ago he found a site for veterans where he has met old friends from times long gone:

It was fantastic to meet these guys again, which couldn't take place without the Internet, since all these people are spread around the world. So we meet

each other on the Web and suddenly Yemen is back in front of our faces again. It's quite scary sometimes.

Interviewer: They are strong memories, I guess...?

Oh yes! It's like a dream; you know these intense dreams when you actually think you are there again. It has consequences too; I have started dreaming about Yemen, weird dreams that I have had earlier.

These shifts of experienced spatial contexts may also provide perspectives on one's own imagined national community (cf. Moores 1996: 56-8; Morley 2000: 120-4). Such an example is an engineer who lived in Germany for six years during an earlier phase of his professional career. Today he lives in a large house in a residential neighbourhood, with his wife and children. He has access to at least 30 satellite channels, but watches the Swedish news regularly. He sometimes reacts to the national bias in the Swedish news, for example concerning large industrial affairs, when Swedish companies buy or are bought by other companies on the international market. He sometimes 'goes back' to the German news, which he finds more "based on facts" than a channel such as CNN, which, according to him, is more emotional. This tells us that the new electronic mediascape holds possibilities for national reflection – but this seems reserved for those with 'matching' experiences.

The home is not enclosed and stable. Its demarcations becomes fluid; a news bulletin brings one to another part of the world, or one is temporary captivated in a narrative. Mediated representations are everywhere, as entertainment and as sources of reflections. They afford symbolic raw material for life plans, identity projects and personal castles in the air. Symbols, narratives and encounters are continuously appropriated and, as a consequence, boundaries between inside and outside, us and them, the home and the surrounding world, are always being negotiated. The outside constitutes the inside, and vice versa (cf. Massey 1994; Hall 1995).

Flexible Homes

So far I have discussed the role of media in the enclosed and the expanded home. A significant conclusion is that we are not dealing with two empirical categories in the sense that some people enclose their homes while others strive for expanded homes. There is no explicit opposition between enclosure and expansion. As Moores puts it: "The experience of TV consumption is of simultaneously staying home and, imaginatively at least, going places" (1993: 365). This means that family members may oscillate (and thus multiply their presence) between the desert island of the show *Survival* on the one hand and the living room, framed by a Saturday evening ritual including food, wine, soft drinks and crisps and *Survival* on the 'screen in the corner' on the other hand. Media consumption as a spatial practice is above

all related to the social context and *how* the media is consumed (more so than specific genres or texts) (cf. Bausinger 1984). The question is, what sort of social situations and social contexts promote enclosure and what promotes imaginative travels?

An issue that brings the control of the home's boundaries to the fore is children's media consumption. Several of the informants with small children express worries that the children consume inappropriate material. For this reason, some have tried to regulate what the children take part in. An architect describes her ambivalent feelings about the increased range of media output in general and considering her children:

I guess it's good that there is more to choose from, but on the other hand, when you have children, you cannot let them choose whatever they want. [...] I think there is something wrong when the output is so huge that you can sit in front of the telly round the clock; it is not right.

Her sceptical attitude towards primarily commercial TV has led her and her husband to introduce 'TV-free Sundays', when the whole family read books instead. It is naturally understandable that parents want to protect their children from frightening TV images. However, it is interesting to note that it is not narrative worlds *per se* that worry the parents but the *mode of mediation*. The parents convey an explicit hierarchy among media, whereby printed media with its educative legacy and its empowered consumer are more prestigious than television, by which a distant 'TV house' has the power over the output. This shows how media comprise a significant part of the system of distinctions at the heart of Bourdieu's sociology of culture (Bourdieu 1973). It indicates that resources such as higher education and a large amount of cultural capital promote regulation of children's media consumption. To control the boundaries of the home through regulating which 'links' should be open and closed is thus a question of which cultural status and social reproduction are essential parts (cf. Andersson & Jansson 1998).

The regulation of the boundaries of the home through one's own media consumption differs. Of certain significance in this matter are news and fiction as genre, and what attitude one holds towards them. These genres are often treated as reciprocal oppositions, whereby consumption of news has positive connotations and fiction negative. There are conventions with their origin in citizenship and the political sphere that dictate that one ought to watch the news, but should be restrictive with other genres (Hagen 1992). In spite of this, there are many informants who choose the world of fiction, as they consider the news "boring" and "the same stuff over and over again".⁶ The news becomes an extra burden in an already stressful life. Other informants appear more rational in a civic sense and say that they restrict their consumption to almost only news, with newspapers and radio stations dominated by talk as the most popular sources. One informant even describes how he may get stuck listening to a radio report, forgetting the work he is to

do. While news opens the world for these people, others experience it with ambivalence. Several of the informants consider the news important, but feel that they do not have the power to engage in global problems. A woman comments on what the news provides:

You do not get any insight from reading the newspaper, that is for sure...The pages with foreign news are so boring that I have to force myself if I am to read them. It is not fun at all to read the foreign news in the local newspaper. It is a pity. All you get is 'today's war'.

Interviewer: 'Today's war'?

Well, a little bit of Uganda, a little bit of slaughter...These extreme things are displayed. It is never about how it is under normal conditions – if it is not an American living room with a couch and a stairway in the background...

Paradoxically, if one is curious about the everyday life of the Other as this woman is, one is directed to fiction. Fiction is always there dominating the output, and it is always accessible. But fiction is not the only thing 'disturbing' the consumption of news. The repetitive repertoire and the habitual, routinised consumption contributes to news as something other than an expansion of horizons:

I think news can be interesting to watch. It is relaxing to sit down on the couch with a cup of tea. Sometimes, though, it is annoying as well. It is straggly and there is a lot of foreign news. I feel like – it sounds egocentric and terrible to say – I cannot do anything about it. Sometimes it is too much, Iran and Iraq for instance; I think they have gone on forever. There is no end to the misery...

This quotation illustrates the small step between the media-supported enclosure and expansion of the home. One watches the news, perhaps as part of one's evening ritual, and because one feels one ought to watch it. When the world becomes too real and too tangible, however, one encloses the home by focusing on the ritual, and the world suddenly appears very distant (cf. Morley & Robins 1995: 142). The contradictory television screen is not only related to the news genre; there are other programmes that similarly may be experienced as too 'pushy'. For example, a man describes his ambivalent feelings towards the supposed family ritual in the weekends with family shows on TV:

I really dislike these programmes on Friday and Saturday evenings when families are supposed to gather and everything should be so cosy. I panic. A few people are doing a lot of fun stuff while millions of people are sitting still and watching and not doing anything, except eating crisps.

In spite of this dislike, he watches the programmes with his family, in order to not ruin the atmosphere. Very often though, he says, he does other things

at the same time. In this manner he is part of the family business in front of the screen while excluding himself from the imagined community of the programme.

Media consumption represents everything from being absorbed to being elusive. Because of media's Janus face (Østerud 2000), it seems relatively simple to 'shut' the link, focusing on the context of home and suspending the imaginative travel. The expanded home becomes enclosed. The boundaries of the home are always negotiated – either the surrounding world becomes too close and sticky or the domestic environment too confined. This is the foundation of the *flexible* home, and is based on the double articulation of media: phenomena that manifest *and* disembody the home (Silverstone 1994: 83; cf. Giddens 1990: 21). The double articulation of media lies behind the phenomenological notion of media use as oscillating between different contexts (cf. de Certeau 1984: 175f). Domestic everyday life is perhaps not as local as we imagine.

Concluding Remarks

The home affords space for personal characterisation, but is not external to the question of globalisation. The domestic negotiation of shut or open connections, inside or outside, living room or surrounding world as well as enclosure or expansion makes the home a central arena for intensified cultural, global processes. The connection between globalisation and the home, with its flexible boundaries, relates to an ongoing discussion within cultural theory. Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson (1998: 21f, 33) argue that the anthropological tradition – including the method – has been anchored in an implicit premise that cultures and identities are rooted in place (cf. Clifford 1997; Gupta & Ferguson 1997). This view has been challenged by a 'reflexive turn' whereby identity is related to mobility as well. Such a perspective makes the place-based home something relative. A home is undoubtedly spatially located, i.e. it has physical coordinates (at least in the Western world). However, the spatial location is perhaps not the most vital part of the feeling of home. One also has to consider the social relations and the personal imprints, i.e. the creation of an atmosphere with familiar things (cf. Sarup 1994: 95). Wise (2000) argues that our lives are characterised by leaving traces, marking our presence and personalising places with artefacts and practices, for example putting our legs on the seat of a bus, whistling when entering a dark room, burying one's face in a newspaper at a café, putting a picture of a loved one on one's desk or arranging the furniture in one's home: "milieu are arranged to close off spaces (even while they themselves open up onto others)" (Wise 2000: 298). In this perspective, creating a home is to curb, to discipline, a piece of space by providing it with our personal things and marking our presence. Practice is as important as location. Media and

media use become ways to negotiate the space and mark its boundaries. Complete control seems, however, out of reach. Just like Wise notes, all symbolic markers open links to other places and contexts. The markers – a souvenir on a shelf in the kitchen, a daily newspaper, a bookshelf full of books, a radio in the kitchen window – carry their own narratives, their own connections to other places. No one has complete control over the boundaries of home; all places are multidimensional, with relations to other places. One may create a relatively enclosed home, but it is seldom static; it can never again be what it once was. Nostalgia, as Wise (2000: 305) argues, may be used to create a home, “but it is not the heart of the home”. Mobility, flexibility and external relations are fundamental elements in what we call a home (Massey 1994: 170).

If home is a process and constituted of mobility, does this not leave us with fragmentary experiences, insecurity and rootlessness? I do not experience that the quoted informants are disharmonic people in general. Their homes are valued differently, but no one expresses disapproval with their creation. This is, in my view, the origin of the security. It is important to avoid connecting security to material aspects. Experienced safety and security are not derived from the home *per se* or its geographical location, but from *what* we do and *how* we do it. What matters is not geographical anchored identities, but “ways of belonging” (Allon 2000: 285). The secure is not the same as the static. To base one’s life on routines, i.e. habitual practices that reduce the risk of unexpected situations, could be regarded as a significant strategy for obtaining personal and ontological security (Giddens 1991: 39–41). Routines are not static, as one may think. Something has always changed since the last time we performed an action – in our understanding and in the context. Routines are often connected to spatial contexts, but are perhaps even more dependent on social and situational contexts. Routinisation is a significant context of media consumption. To routinise TV watching implies making the situation evident and natural, for example by watching at about the same time, in the same company, on the same couch in a living room one has arranged oneself, with one’s own things. When everything in the context can be taken for granted, it is easier to feel secure with the mediated links and external relations. The surrounding world, the global and the distant, will always be a part of the routines that make the home a flexible and secure place.

Notes

1. Cultural Identity in Transition (CIT) was headed by Professor Bo Reimer and funded by The Swedish Research Council of the Humanities and the Social Sciences (HSFR). The aim of the project was to generate a broad understanding of the relation between media consumption and cultural identity in times of globalisation. News Media in 2003 was headed by Professor Jonas Löwgren and Professor Bo Reimer, and was funded by the Swedish Board of Industrial and Technical Development (Nutek/Vinova). The project

- aimed at improving the news media in a new digital mediascape (<http://webzone.k3.mah.se/k3jolo/webArchive/n2003/index.htm>).
2. It is important, however, to note that these conventions are cultural. Tufte (1998), for example, points towards the habit of placing the TV set in the doorway, for public viewing, in many places in South America.
 3. There is a similar example in a study by Moores (1996), in which some informants disliked satellite dishes because they ruined the exterior of the house.
 4. This seemingly irrational media use in the morning is also found in a study focusing explicitly on breakfast time (Dickinson et al. 2001) The authors found this paradoxical, considering their informants who stressed shortness of time and a need to be rational.
 5. In the tradition of Uses and Gratification, escapism has been considered one function of the fiction genre (McQuail 1994: 318-22). Even though some of this citation seems to be in line with a functionalist perspective with news being associated with 'serious matters' and fiction being entertainment and therefore more polysemic (ibid: 312-16), I would argue against such an interpretation. In my view, the way of consumption is not determined by the text or genre; one has to consider the social and cultural context of the consumption.
 6. A study of the consequences of the deregulation of the Swedish television market shows that before the deregulation, news brought together all kinds of people in a national audience. After the deregulation, news consumption became a question of class and age; a young working class audience took the opportunity to watch more sports and entertainment in favour of the news (Reimer, 1994: 143-6).

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Chapter 11

Media and the Spaces of Work and Leisure

Stina Bengtsson

In rural society, the cultural meaning of work and leisure differed from our understanding of the terms in everyday life today. Keeping the household going was an ongoing project and a collective urge for a whole family – a group of people with few similarities with the families we know today. Modernity and industrial society changed this, as its ongoing rationalisation separated work from leisure regarding time as well as place (cf. Giddens 1984:131). Paid labour became temporally limited (Hellström 1994) and was carried out at particular workplaces. Thus, the home turned into an arena for intimate relations, recreation and rest (cf. Frykman/Löfgren 1987: Chapter 3).

In the Western world, there are signs indicating that this state has loosened lately. Post-industrial production of information and ideas is less dependent on place, and people involved in service production can again more easily blur the boundaries between workplace and home (cf. du Gay 1995, Castells 1996/2000). This new tendency in the organisation of labour means at least three things: Work is easier to bring along today, less dependent on a particular physical location and certain tools for production; Home can again be used as a dynamic arena, fluctuating between the public and the private – work and leisure (see also Andersson, this volume). Service production and separation of work and workplace also mean that many people spend much more time (on, as well as off, duty) alone. These aspects all raise interesting questions regarding how everyday life, and more specifically the relation between work and leisure, is organised when work as well as rest is conducted at home. The fluctuation of space that follows this organisation of labour is also characterized by certain transformations of the everyday, temporal states in accordance with what we choose to think about ourselves and our present environment (cf. Goffman 1959: 24).

In this chapter I will discuss and analyse how spaces of everyday life are mediatised and thereby symbolically defined in different ways, focusing particularly upon the relation between work and leisure. I will do so by discussing a theoretical perspective aiming at an extended understanding of transformations of the everyday. This perspective will also be discussed in

relation to empirical analyses, illustrating the role of the media in shaping ways of thinking about behaviour and in creating conditions for human life. Two aspects are utterly important to consider here: firstly, the materiality of everyday life, i.e. the physical conditions of acting and thinking, which means taking into consideration the actual character and physical limitations of the room (cf. Lefebvre 1991, 1992/2004). Just as important are the social conditions and norms that create frames of what is regarded as possible or not possible in everyday life.

These two dimensions are intertwined by the fact that we cannot experience the material dimension of everyday life without passing through our socially constructed gaze, and that our normative preconceptions of life are organised in relation to a material and physical reality. To reach the intersection of these two concepts I will firstly return to the early Erwin Goffman term *region* (1959:106-141). Secondly I will discuss its relevance in understanding culture in a modern mediatised society, and finally I will analyse how different kinds of mediatisation of everyday life can be used to shift between spaces of work and leisure.

Media Space and Everyday Transformations

This discussion takes its point of departure in the concept of region first used by social interactionist and sociologist Erwin Goffman in the late 1950s (1959). The background of this concept is an assumption that our everyday life can be regarded as a combination of different temporal ritual states – although *ritual* in a particular quotidian meaning as opposed to the anthropological meaning of the word, which is everything but trivial (Turner 1977, Rothenbuhler 1998, Couldry 2003). Daily, we shift between different kinds of temporal states and adjust our behaviour and preconceptions according to the character of the present state. Work, as well as play, rest, etc. is described by Goffman as such a ritual state. (1959:24). A temporal ritual state is a condition in which we allow ourselves to act and perform in a particular way, and a performance should be understood as a way in which we present ourselves to others (and at the same time to ourselves) within the frames of everyday life. For some of us – teachers, actors or people on TV – this shifting between different roles and the different kinds of characters we present to others in different situations is supposedly a natural and well-known part of everyday life. For others, the various kinds of performances we deliver in different contexts are carried out more unconsciously and therefore seem more gloomy (even though most people certainly have a feeling that they act differently with their children at home than with their colleagues at work). When shifting between these ritual states we also shift our attention to the surrounding environment, and through this our own behaviour changes its character. The distinction between different kinds of ritual states in every-

day life concerns how we think about ourselves in relation to our present social and material surroundings. Our manners are also adjusted to suit the present region. Goffman defines a region as

any place that is bounded to some degree by barriers to perception. Regions vary, of course, in the degree to which they are bounded and according to the media of communication in which the barriers to perception occur. Thus thick glass panels, such as are found in broadcasting control rooms, can isolate a region aurally but not visually, while an office bounded by beaver-board partitions is closed off in the opposite way. (Goffman 1959:106)

Goffman, an anthropologist and a sociologist mostly well-known known for his interest in the play of social interaction in human life, was apparently also well aware of the material dimension of communication in everyday life. The constitution of the region, in itself a social construction, is therefore intimately connected to the material conditions of the physical room in which it is constructed. These conditions hence create space, and frames, of and for human behaviour and social interaction. This material condition of communication can be understood through the term of texture (cf. Lefebvre 1974/1991:42, 2004 see also Jansson, this volume). The texture of space can be understood as the material structure of behaviour and communication, or as Henri Lefebvre articulates it: "Every space is already in place before the appearance of its actors" (1974/1991:57). This material aspect of the conditions of communication might seem deterministic, and in some respect is. Lefebvre continues:

Thus the texture of space affords its opportunities not only to social acts with no particular place in it and no particular link with it, but also to a spatial practice that it does indeed determine, namely its collective and individual use: a sequence of acts which embody a signifying practice even if they cannot be reduced to such a practice. (Ibid: 57)

Consequently, the material conditions of space, or what might be regarded as the actual place within which the communicative act takes place, are important for how human interaction (even when there is only one individual occupying the particular space) is developed. But this does not mean that the conditions of texture are firm and fixed forever. In his later work *Frame analysis* (1974), Goffman points at the social and material settings surrounding human behaviour, constructing opportunities for particular kinds of performances. He also points at the 'keyings' of a situation, subtle indications that a state of an act has fundamentally changed (Ibid:40-83). A slight change in behaviour can be the cue that tells spectators that a playful wrestling game has suddenly turned into a hostile fight. This change in behaviour might be hard to articulate clearly, but is clear to all participants in the event. As Goffman's theory of frames and 'keyings' was developed in a society and an

everyday structure less permeated by the media, his focus lies upon the social interaction of people, and on the lack of interaction in the back regions. Today, from the horizon of our modern media culture, it is important to hold two things in mind.

Firstly, we must consider that our everyday media cannot be regarded as empty artefacts, without cultural meaning. There is always a kind of cultural relation constructed between the television, computer game or book and the individual involved in consuming it. John B. Thompson refers to this cultural relation as 'mediated quasi interaction', a way of experiencing an interaction with the media although no traditional two-way communication is actually taking place (Thompson 1995:84 ff). Certain kinds of socially constructed regions therefore appear when someone interacts with the media, even completely alone. French philosopher Bruno Latour articulates another dimension of this, arguing that our everyday artefacts must be regarded as agents in relation to whom we measure our daily behaviour. This assumption takes as its standing point the fact that human culture has never been constructed around social interaction alone. Instead, and in opposition with almost all other living beings, man has always relied on material artefacts to communicate and express meaning as well as to orient himself in the world and to understand the milieu we are acting within (Latour 1992, 1991/1993). Latour mainly discussed technology and material artefacts. In a media culture, thus, we must consider the media as material artefacts constructing space and as physical sounds, pictures and moving images, but must not forget to also pay attention to the symbolic content of these expressions. The intersection of these three dimensions helps in understanding our media use in everyday life.

Secondly, we must also regard the fact that the material conditions of everyday life can be easily reconstructed by adding or changing the media environment accompanying them. Thus, the materiality of a situation can, through an action such as turning the radio on and off, be subtly changed, and hence also change the possibilities to act, to embody a signifying practice within the frames of a situation. In everyday life in our modern culture, these 'keyings' are often mediated; signifying practices are accompanied by particular kinds of media, constructing an everyday understanding about places (cf. Connell&Gibson 2000:6).

The frame of a situation is thus an abstract category and might be useful as an analytical tool when examining every kind of social situation. A particular situation acquires its characteristics due to many different aspects; whether it is a private or public event, whether the particular room in which it takes place has been constructed for public or private occasions, and the kind of people the situation involves at the moment. In this respect, spaces can have many different kinds of profiles, including and excluding individuals through particular means (Stockfelt 1988:148 ff). The profile of a situation creates frames for what kind of behaviour is appropriate in the particular situation and the different kinds of exclusivity generate norms that the indi-

viduals involved must consider. Personal exclusivity excludes individuals according to whom they are, and the home as arena is a place with a large extent of personal exclusivity. If you found someone in your kitchen making breakfast who did not belong to your immediate family you would certainly be utterly surprised, and acting as if you are at home at someone else's home (for example, changing the TV channel without first asking) is a severe transgression of the exclusivity of the situation. The same kind of mechanisms are also developed in classrooms, offices and other places to which access is delimited on a personal basis. Social exclusivity instead restricts access to a particular place by regulating behaviour. A strong profile creates strict rules for behaviour, such as in churches, cinemas, morgues or concert halls. An example of a less strict profile is that of a shopping mall, where it is regarded odd but not at all forbidden to speak to yourself (which is not accepted at church or during a classical music concert). Stockfelt argues that music, and thus other kinds of media milieus, can be used to create different kinds of exclusivity. In the shopping mall, 'easy listening' music is played to embrace all kinds of music tastes that can be represented by the potential customers. When obscure avant-garde pop music is played at a tiny music club the medium is likewise used to profile the place, but in this case to exclude those who are regarded as not appropriate. The media is thus involved in creating the grade of social exclusivity of a place, and thereby its frame. But different kinds of profiles, at the same time, also create different kinds of spaces for media use. Listening to a piece of music or watching a particular film is a different kind of act depending on whether it takes place alone at home or in the company of others at a music or film festival.

It is thus clear that media use and other kinds of human behaviour are profoundly dependent upon the frames regulating the situations in which the media are used, but also that it is possible to change these frames. Through the introduction of a new element, or cue, into the situation (another human being, a different kind of media content), the character of the situation can fundamentally change, and thereby also the frames of social acts and interaction we have to consider to stay within the social norms of behaviour. These elements can be defined materially (the radio is switched off to mark that breakfast is over) or mentally ("Now let's get useful"). The changing frames also change our possibilities to act individually and socially.

Goffman's theory of the presentation of self was developed to analyse everyday life in a broad sense, and was developed in a society in which mediated communication was a less fundamental part of human life and interaction. In light of this, some important aspects of Goffman's theory ought to be discussed. It is impossible to ignore the impact the media have on human interaction and experiences of the self, as we know, for example, that modern media have loosened up the former 'natural' relation to, and ties between, time and space (cf. McLuhan 1964/1999, Meyrowitz 1985, Thompson 1995, Giddens 1990). However, less substantial aspects are also important for our understanding of modern life. The distinction between front and back re-

gions, in Goffman's version, described two kinds of regions that differed regarding both geography and function; geography, because the back region was formerly to be understood as a place where the individual was able to retire, to step back from the eyes of others and from the demands on behaviour that the public sphere created (even though back regions could also, Goffman points out, be used by groups of people preparing a common performance). Today, though, the back region – the place where the individual can take a step back and rest, prepare for future actions in the former arena or engage in intimate matters – can at any moment be produced with the support of modern media. Items such as Walkmans, Ipods and mobile phones all construct barriers between the individual and the world around him within which private spaces, and in some respects back regions, are developed. The blurring of the private and the public, as well as the back and front regions, due to modern media has opened our eyes to many intimate details of the private lives of others. Another aspect of this is the individualisation of culture that the extended use of mobile phones is itself an example of. Today, many different kinds of media-consuming activities take place in solitude, which certainly affects the user's behaviour. Even though it would be naïve to believe that loneliness demolishes all social conventions and all norms of behaviour, it is still interesting to focus upon the kinds of rules of behaviour that solitude creates. What kinds of frames do we construct for ourselves? And how do we organise space when out of sight of others?

Jussi, Per-Fredric and Sarah: Work and Leisure in Everyday Life

I will deepen this discussion and go further into the analysis by introducing three individuals and their media use in everyday life, or more specifically, that part of the everyday that concerns the relation between work and leisure. These individuals are all representatives of the new labour market in that they work with different kinds of symbolic meaning production; all of them have flexible working hours (at least not controlled by a superior – none actually have one) and a great deal of independence regarding how to organise work and leisure time in everyday life. Despite these apparent similarities of these three individuals, the analysis will also point out some evident differences between them. The most interesting part of the analysis will focus upon how the media, as included in the creation of the texture of (everyday) space, contribute to creating a symbolic room within everyday life in which particular kinds of behaviour are appropriate at the same time as others are not. The persons in focus here are presented below.

Jussi is an autodidact artist in his early fifties, married and a father of three girls (aged from two to ten years old). He lives with his family in a small house in the countryside near the sea. Ever since he decided to become an artist in

his early twenties he has managed to survive economically on his art and therefore few other (job-related) activities compete for his time. He must sometimes leave home to oversee some part of his artistic production (for example, his sculptures are moulded at a foundry a day's trip away) or to discuss exhibitions with museums, art galleries, etc. But he usually stays at home to work in his newly built studio in the garden, just outside the family house.

Per-Fredric, a single man in his early thirties, works as a freelance journalist. He lives in an apartment in a suburb just outside a larger town. Per-Fredric is an educated pharmacist who added journalism to his education and thereafter changed his profession. He still works in a pharmacy one day a week, but the rest of the time he stays home to develop his freelancing. Per-Fredric's apartment has a kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, living room and an office. He enters the office every morning at about nine o'clock, takes a proper break at noon (when he eats and listens to the radio for approximately an hour) and then returns to his office and stays there until six o'clock in the evening.

Sarah is in her mid-twenties and studies humanities at a university. She shares an apartment with a female friend, but spends many nights at her boyfriend's, who also regularly sleeps at her place. Nowadays Sarah's time is more structured than it used to be since the university course she is attending at the moment contains more lectures, seminars, group projects, etc. than her former courses did. Even so, this does not mean more than a maximum of two hours a day. Besides this, she usually works as a waitress in a restaurant during weekend lunch and sometimes (but more seldom) weekday evenings. As Sarah and her friend share a very small apartment, the few rooms must accordingly make space for many different tasks. Sarah's friend sleeps in the kitchen and Sarah's bedroom is living room, dining room, TV room and the place where Sarah works, all at the same time. She usually spends a few hours at the university every day and then goes home to study in the afternoon.

In the following text, the role of the media in creating frames of work space and leisure space in everyday life will be discussed, with these three individuals as a point of departure. The centre of the analysis will be the ritual aspect of the media in creating frames between work and leisure in both material and mental aspects, i.e. constructing particular work rooms and leisure spaces in everyday life, as well as the creation of mental frames of an acceptable everyday behaviour. Besides this, the role of the media in the production of everyday regions will also be analysed.

Media Use and Everyday Structure

In a broader perspective it is easy to acknowledge differences in the overarching structures of the lives of the three individuals. For Jussi, a parent of young children, the social responsibility for the children and the rest of the family is a factor that generates frames for the use of space and time

in his everyday life. The times structuring the children's school hours, kindergarten and spare-time activities are rarely negotiable and the rest of the family life must try to adapt to these fixed time spots. Per-Fredric and Sarah have other social situations. Since both in some respect live by themselves (although Sarah has a female roommate as well as a boyfriend), their social obligations at home are less strict. They both live active social lives outside the home; they meet many friends, visit cinemas, bars and (more seldom) theatres. Many of these activities take place in the evening, something that certainly affects their everyday structure. Per-Fredric must make different kinds of considerations in his work; on the one hand he is dependent on the time structure of those he is involved with in his work – papers and magazines he works for, interviewees he needs to get in contact with, etc. On the other hand, he is free to work whenever he wants and could easily write all his articles at night if he felt like it, not least because all kinds of information today being available 24 hours a day on the Internet. Since Sarah has regular lectures and other school-oriented activities her time is, in a way, more structured. But these activities do not usually control more than two hours a day, and much time is still free. The time structure of these two people shows an interesting difference: Sarah tries to create spaces for particular kinds of activities – TV-viewing, for example, is allowed only after five o'clock in the afternoon since the earlier hours are reserved for studying. Nevertheless, even during the evenings she feels an obligation to engage in her university literature, and often has to read for another hour to be able to watch television without feeling guilty. Per-Fredric organises his temporal life more strictly. He has firm working hours (from nine a.m. to six p.m. and a proper lunch break at noon), even though he admits that he sometimes leaves his office earlier in the afternoon to watch the US cartoon *The Simpsons* or other TV shows. His evenings are free, available for private social activities.

The frames of everyday life and the symbolic rooms they create thus must be understood as a mental aspect in many respects. Jussi, who strives not to work evenings (i.e., after six o'clock p.m.) or weekends due to his family, has severe difficulty separating his artistry from other parts of his everyday life (he often returns to the studio after dinner and transforms weekend family trips into occasions when he can gather material for his paintings and sculptures). Per-Fredric has a great deal fewer problems turning work off at the end of the day, even though his profession is also a fundamental part of his identity and a great source of pride.

Media Changing as an Everyday Ritual

For all the persons discussed here, home has a core position in everyday life as it is an arena for work as well as rest, social gathering and moments of piece and quiet. Home is a place marked by a strong profile of personal

exclusivity in that not just anyone can simply walk into my home or be expected to appear there. For those who work at home, as do Jussi, Per-Fredric and Sarah, this strong exclusivity is loosened. Jussi is visited by customers, co-operators, journalists and others who are invited to his studio at home. Per-Fredric's telephone is used for private as well as job-related phone calls, and Sarah and her university mates may meet regularly at home for their group projects. The profile of the home is thus changeable, and is dependent on the present activity taking place within its four walls and the people spending time there at the moment.

To make the everyday work and to create opportunities for all its necessary tasks, each of the three individuals has his/her own way of making space for the diverse spheres of the everyday, where the media are important in the symbolic transformation of the everyday. In even more symbolically significant events (marriages, baptisms, etc.), particularly symbolically loaded artefacts are used: the ring, the holy water, etc. that beyond a doubt signify that a ritual transgression has taken place, from one state to another (Turner 1977, Rothenbuhler 1998, Couldry 2003). In a more ordinary situation, the media can also be used for a parallel transgression of space from one kind of temporal state to another.

For the three individuals presented here, the most important everyday transgression deals with the relation between work and leisure. The transformation is shown in three different shapes, three dimensions that can be combined in different ways and with individual variations: one geographic dimension, one intermedia dimension and one intramedia dimension. The geographic dimension is truly material: the construction of the rooms at home and the transformation when moving from one room to another as a way of leaving leisure time for work time. The intermedia dimension describes how the changing of media accompaniments are symbolic signs involved in the transformation of everyday space. The intramedia dimension, finally, deals with the changing of channels, programs or genres within the same medium.

Geographic Dimension

The geographic dimension is evidently dependent upon the actual character of the physical milieu. Jussi might be said to have the most manifest division of everyday spaces (but not of everyday spheres, since he is the respondent who is the least capable of separating work from other parts of his life). He has his studio in a separate house in the garden, where most of his artistic production takes place (other parts such as moulding sculptures and constructing frames for his paintings are still done in the basement of the family house). Jussi's workday naturally begins about eight o'clock in the morning when the rest of the family leaves home for work, school and daycare. Jussi usually watches the morning news on TV at home first, then again later when he has moved to his studio. The studio is the base of his work even

though he sometimes has to run back and forth to check the hot pots of wax on the stove. The studio is within sight of the family home and within reach of the rest of the family. Nevertheless it is a separate building, and entering it includes a true geographical transformation.

In Per-Fredric's apartment one of the rooms is his office. His home includes different kinds of media: books, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, video and DVD player, telephone and mobile phone, computer and computer games. There is a clear division between work and leisure media, as the TV, video and DVD player, radio, daily paper, magazines and books are gathered in the living room, bedroom and kitchen while the work-related media (some magazines, books, a tape recorder and his computer) are in his office. The computer, on which he also listens to the radio while working and plays games in his spare time, is thus the only transgressing media (besides his telephone) in Per-Fredric's everyday life. His workdays also involve a physical movement as his morning routine includes not only eating breakfast in the kitchen but also watching the morning news on the TV in the living room. He works from nine o'clock in the morning in his office where the computer, tape recorder and his papers are gathered. Per-Fredric takes a proper break at noon and then leaves for the kitchen (and listens to the public service talk channel on the radio while eating). Moving from one room to another creates and loosens frames for an acceptable behaviour, time for work and time for leisure.

Sarah, who recently moved in with a female friend in a one-room flat, cannot perform any such manoeuvres. Movements in space are prohibited by the small space available. Another important fact is that the places in the apartment already have strict profiles, diminishing the possibility for other activities (the bed, for example, is a place for rest and sleep). Sarah longs to have a computer at home, something she is used to, and perhaps a computer would work as a marker of a proper workplace, which she lacks today. Instead, when studying she is referred to different spots in the apartment: the dining table, her bed, or even the floor. As a university student Sarah could very well spend her days at the university library, something she dislikes as the (alleged) silence and sounds are far too annoying. She does most of her studying at home or, more seldom, at a café.

Intermedia Dimension

The intermedia dimension adds a symbolic dimension to the physical movements in the room, and with help from the media transforms space from leisure to work space (and back again). Both Per-Fredric and Jussi manifestly use the media this way. Jussi watches the morning news on TV both at home before leaving for the studio and when he has entered the studio but has not actually started to work yet. This short period of time is an everyday liminal condition between work and leisure as the material surround-

ings (the studio) connote work but the media surroundings (the television) connote leisure.¹ Work truly begins when the TV is switched off and the radio is turned on. Jussi usually starts his working day with the public service talk channel on, a channel he is very fond of. Per-Fredrik has a comparable morning ritual, also strengthening the physical movement by changing the media: switching off the TV, turning on the radio (albeit the public service classics channel). Sarah, who finds it hard to concentrate in the wrong kind of sound, or silence, does not accompany her studying with any type of media. On the other hand, she accentuates the transformation of her home from leisure space to workplace by putting together the daily paper. Sarah usually takes a lunch break and (re)reads the morning paper after her lecture has finished. She describes this reading as “a legitimate way to keep off the books”. After this, she allows herself no other kinds of media (besides university literature) until five o’clock in the afternoon. Even though she sometimes finds it hard to concentrate and cannot study with the expected efficiency, this period of time is reserved for work, and her home is not transformed back into a private place until five o’clock when the leisure media is allowed again. Despite this, Sarah is not as strict as the other two are in making time barriers in her everyday life. She often feels that she has not worked hard enough and tries to study for another hour in the evening to ease her bad conscience. Only after this can she fully enjoy her TV viewing.

Intramedia Dimension

The intramedia dimension works in the same way. Jussi experiences the most evident transformation in a three-step model by which the physical movement into the studio is emphasized by a changing of media (from television to radio). He finally enters his professional self by also changing radio station: the talk-oriented public service channel is changed to the classics channel, whose instrumental sound he regards as less disturbing. This intramedia change of space indicates that he is now completely in service (after this, he also dissolves the time structure and takes no breaks, not even for lunch).

All three also use media to retransform space from work to leisure and time from work time to spare time again, and the television is the marker of recreation for them all. Jussi, who usually stays in his studio until six o’clock in the evening, changes back to his morning media habits when the afternoon news is on the TV at five p.m. With this, he has an intermediary hour between work and leisure. Per-Fredric turns on the six o’clock news on television and Sarah turns on any TV program at five to mark the fact that today’s work has been done and that leisure time has now begun.

The Texture of Space: Work and Leisure

The transformation of Goffman's ritual conditions in everyday life have been manifested here in physical movements and the changing to different media forms and channels. We have also seen how these acts are 'keyings' in defining situations for particular purposes. These ritually organised states can be understood as regions in which we are determined to act and interact in certain ways, and that are defined by the material preconditions of communication, the fundamental characteristics of the situation and the rules regulating performance including the moral norms of behaviour in that particular situation.

To further understand the significance of the media in organising everyday life, we will now take a closer look at how the organisation of the physical room, together with the media, consents to certain kinds of acting. As the situation is defined by the frame, constructed by significant characteristics and elements as well as the profile concerning rules and regulations for behaviour, it is important to look at both the material conditions of communication and the cultural conventions restraining our thoughts and behaviour. For example, Jussi's studio is constructed to make way for certain kinds of behaviour, but not others. His work room is actually a small house of its own, constructed with an open inner roof that creates a particular kind of open space reminiscent of the art world (museums, art galleries, etc.). It has also been decorated along the lines of a familiar artistic norm: walls, roof and wooden floor all painted white, very few pieces of furniture – an armchair, a small pedestal painted white and some flowers in a vase, the television on its cart (the radio was never seen), a bookshelf with a few (artistic) books and a slanted drawing desk. Another dominant part of the studio is the window that covers a large part of the long side wall and lets nature come close: horses in a muddy pasture with a glimpse of the sea behind them, all drenched in sunshine. This place has room only for art and the artist. Everything else has been removed, and it is easy to imagine how the studio only allows the creative artistic work it has been built for. Newspapers, magazines and books (except for a small number of art books) are excluded from this milieu. The television is the only odd item, but as we have seen, its primary function is as an intermediary sign between work and leisure time. In this ascetic environment there is no stationary telephone (although Jussi carries his mobile phone with him), and words and singing are also forbidden (through the change from talk radio to instrumental classical radio). The texture of work is thus produced materially as well as audio-visually (due to the media).

Per-Fredric's profession as a freelance journalist is far more dependent on new media technology. He is online all day, and spends a great deal of time on the phone. The media also allows regular daily contact with his friends; one morning ritual is to phone a few friends who, like Per-Fredric, are self-employed, and look at interesting websites (mostly news and foot-

ball sites). He also checks the news on the Web repeatedly during the day. Per-Fredric's office is not detached from the outside world like Jussi's is, but instead has a constant link to the surroundings through media (cf. Larsen 2000:165-190). Whereas Jussi's studio is sacral and free from connections with the surrounding world, Per-Fredric's is filled with media technology and ways to communicate with others. His profession is also much more dependent on contact with others, and even though Per-Fredric has created his own time restraints for his working hours these borders are more blurred than Jussi's are, since he constantly leaves his job mentally (to check the news, search for football scores, etc.). The texture of the room is thus defined by its media equipment: a computer, a telephone with recording ability, papers and files with work material. This media milieu is very unlike the other rooms in the apartment, which contain daily newspapers, a video and DVD player, fiction literature, etc., admitting different kinds of (media) behaviour.

In Sarah's home, a small number of square meters have to host many different activities; thereby the room (the one and only in the apartment) determines behaviour less strictly. The apartment is neat, and everything seems to be in its correct place (perhaps due to the fact that they have only lived there for a short period of time). Sara's (work) room thus does not have the clear profile of labour that Jussi and Per-Fredric have created with help from (and lack of) certain kinds of media technology, making space for particular kinds of acting. Neither can she emphasize the ritual transformations of her everyday by moving physically from one room to another. The only room in the apartment holds many different functions; TV, radio, video, all kinds of literature and newspapers – and soon a computer as well – are ever-present, and only her mental structures set the limit. Hence, Sarah's organisation of time is less strict than the others' is and her leisure media use and time for work are often blurred (since she often feels obligated to study during the evenings as well).

Media Frames and the Spaces of Work and Leisure

Despite the similarities between the three analyses, there are also obvious differences in how these persons organise work and leisure in their everyday space. Some aspects of the above analyses ought to be discussed further: firstly, the ways the frame of a situation is constructed materially. This includes not only the way space, as a media milieu, is organised but also how we act in relation to these media artefacts. In Jussi's, Per-Fredric's and Sarah's everyday lives the media have obvious functions as agents used to accentuate certain conditions and thereby the present accepted behaviour. Jussi and Per-Fredric, who both have particular working regions at home, have also combined different kinds of media milieus suitable for work and leisure – even though these milieus are disparate in many ways. Jussi's work environment is created by subtracting the media from his studio. Per-Fredric

instead uses a certain kind of combination of media technology different from the rest of his home. For both, it is also obvious that media artefacts are not the only agents active in the construction of everyday ritual conditions; media content is also significant. Both use the radio during their spare time as well as work time, but emphasize that only certain kinds of radio programs are allowed at work (instrumental classical music). At Sarah's place, which is actually a single room and a small kitchen (which she shares with a female friend), the organisation of space is even more urgent. She sets up limits with help from the media (the daily paper represents leisure time and a border between leisure and work time, and the TV marks the beginning of spare time), but also tries to keep mentally (morally) organised norms. Even though time structure is more fluid for Sarah than for the other two, she still has a rule concerning which kinds of media behaviour are accepted at what times of the day. A second conclusion is thus that the frames of the temporal everyday states are also mentally constructed. In the switching on and off of diverse kinds of media (and diverse kinds of media content), everyday transitions are accentuated and various kinds of conditions are created. The most obvious aspect here is the strong implication of leisure that television connotes for these three individuals, such as when Per-Fredric leaves his work room to watch *The Simpsons* on TV, signifying the end of his working day.

It is also worth noting the specificity of media technology in the production of space. Both Per-Fredric and Jussi feel that only a certain kind of radio is possible to combine with their – intellectual – work (instrumental music), and the concentration that audiovisual television text requires is regarded as too demanding to accompany work. The multi-functions of the Internet also allow the respondents to take several small breaks during work time. Without leaving your chair, or even formally stopping working, the Internet permits small mental pauses. When Per-Fredric checks the news or catches up with the local football team, or when Sarah sends a few e-mails to her sister in Paris, the break from work is much less obvious than if they were to leave the room or turn the television on. The fact that all three regard the Internet as a work tool also covers these short getaways from duty a bit.

This framing of space is thus constructed in different ways by the respondents. For example, Jussi and Per-Fredric act in relation to a manifest material frame by which physical boundaries within the home contribute to symbolic frames between work and leisure. But there are also symbolic signs used as 'cues' in framing the situation, thereby becoming important to our understanding and judgement of it, accentuated here by different kinds of media. The intramedia changing that Jussi uses to gradually transform his home from leisure to work in the morning (and back again in the afternoon) constitutes such a keying, just as Per-Fredric's afternoon session with *The Simpsons* confirms a definite and automatic end of his working day.

So, what does the analysis tell us about the role of the media in making spaces for work and leisure at home? Everyday life in post-industrial society, as illustrated by the three individuals analysed here, is a socially pecu-

liar situation. According to Goffman's theory of presentation of self in everyday life (1959), the frames of a situation are created mainly through social interaction with others. It is in relation to other individuals and social groups that we construct our selves and thereby choose to act and perform in particular ways (see also Giddens 1991). The above analysis, however, points at situations framed, and thereby profiled, by individuals acting in (physical) solitude. Through the use of external factors, such as various combinations of media artefacts and texts and the material construction of space, the correct framing of a situation (and its correct behaviour) is produced despite the lack of others offering opportunities for certain kinds of performances. The mediated profile of behaviour within the material – as well as the symbolic – room thus regulates the behaviour of the three individuals even when they are out of sight of others. The modern separation of public and private spheres hence does not mean, even on a microanalytical level within the household, that the private sphere – perhaps most private when we are also alone – could be characterized by any kind of lack of social norms (cf. Elias 1994). Instead, the three individuals analysed here interact with the media to maintain various degrees of firm structures of work and leisure in everyday life, structures dependent upon material as well as symbolic frames.

Note

1. Since the shifting of states truly is a transformation liminal is the correct term, instead of the more subtle version *liminoid* (liminal-like) (cf. Turner 1982:52 ff, Couldry 2003:33).

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Chapter 12

Media passages in urban spaces of consumption

Johan Fornäs

Media use is always spatially and temporally *located*, while simultaneously both *representing* and *shaping* space and time. In the spatial dimension, mediated communication always both *takes place* and *makes place*. In modern societies, geographies are paradigmatically *urban* and communication is *mediated*. The nexus of *cities and media* thus tends to open up a key venue into understanding modern geographies of communication.

At the same time, as products and practices are increasingly commoditised, media use tends to be *communication* as well as *consumption*. Media hardware (machines) and software (texts) are made, disseminated, sold, bought and used as commodities, allocated by means of various kinds of markets. Circuits of private, interpersonal gifts and of common, public utilities temporarily pull media out of commodity circulation into the differently organised spheres of intimate networks and common culture, respectively. But in capitalist societies, the commodity form tends to dominate as the ruling norm of exchange. This points to the importance of spaces of consumption in understanding late modern geographies of communication. A typical such space is the urban shopping centre. Just like the arcades and department stores of the 19th century, today's shopping centres are sites of communication as well as consumption. In such spaces, people interact with each other as well as with images, sounds and texts of all possible kinds. This is where a wide range of communication media are sold, bought and used, from postcards, books and discs to phones, cameras and laptops. Visitors are as active in this media usage as are staff and shops. The centre management as a whole also uses websites, ads, signs, spatial design and architecture to mediate various kinds of messages.

This chapter will therefore focus on spatial aspects of media use by exploring connections between *media spaces*, *shopping spaces* and *urban spaces*. These three levels of spatiality overlap and intersect in highly complex ways. Interactive shopping spaces mediate between individual or symbolic media space and collective, material urban structures. City space, in turn, is the framing setting that mediates and links mass media to shopping

centres. And, thirdly, media space also mediates shopping centres and urban centres, by remediating them both in the same genres of representation.

Commercial urban spaces are sites of *communication*, but also of *power*. They frame complex flows of communication between individuals, texts and institutions. They are contexts for various kinds of experience, some carefully orchestrated by the management, others spontaneous or oppositional. But they are at the same time also contested spaces where diverging interests collide, thereby highlighting basic societal contradictions between private and public spheres or between state, market and civil society actors. After presenting the empirical background on which this discussion is based, this presentation will proceed in three steps, thematising in turn how media, consumption and urban spaces frame practices of communication and power.

Passages

In the media-ethnographic *Passages project*, an interdisciplinary research team empirically investigated interacting processes of communication and consumption in a large Swedish shopping centre, Solna Centre near Stockholm.¹ The project's name betrays an impetus from the German critical theorist Walter Benjamin's *Passagenarbeit* or *Arcades Project* from the 1930s, exploring the modern urban lifeworld through the culture of the 19th-century Paris arcades and department stores.

Cultural phenomena are defined by the communicative interplay between people and media in specific settings, as identities, meanings and power are produced in multiple and dynamic triplets of subjects, texts and contexts.² Much research in traditional media studies starts with one particular *medium*, media genre or even an individual text, investigating how it is structured, produced, distributed or used by different people in various circumstances. Thus, there are studies of genres, industries or uses of television, or of the press, news, docusoaps or even some particular TV series. Research on reception has instead often chosen to focus on specific categories, groups or even individuals as *media users*, in order to see how they interact with certain kinds of media in different places. There are thus studies of the media worlds of children, of immigrants and of families. The Passages project chose instead to start with a specific physical place and social space. This made it possible to acknowledge how a wide range of media and people cross each other's passages and flows, instead of isolating them from each other.

Deciding to start in a specific *spatial setting*, rather than with one particular medium or genre, or a single category or group of media users, was not a totally unique decision. Growing efforts are being made in social anthropology, interactionist sociology and cultural geography to use ethnographic methods to understand localised media practices in everyday life, and these efforts often tend to enter specific places and map out the media uses taking

place there.³ Still, there are surprisingly few media studies exploring specific locations. This can be partly explained by a traditional division of work according to a habitual fixation to inherited media categories, so that scholars tend to reproduce the divisions between cultural industries (and their corresponding trade unions). But it may also be an effect of spatial blindness: a tendency to treat media processes as if they took place in a placeless vacuum.

Starting with a specific place where people meet media may well tend to reify that space and hide other kinds of surrounding or distant places through which these media and people also move. However, as a corrective to the research mainstream, a place-sensitive approach is enlightening. Also, certain places are extraordinarily open to and densely crossed by plural flows of media and people, thus inviting a problematisation of the very concepts of place and space as such. The shopping centre is characteristically such a space. First, shopping centres are designed to attract wide sets of potential consumers, and thus are not monopolised by very specific social groups, in terms of age, gender, profession, class, ethnicity or cultural taste. Second, they also aim to trade a wide range of media commodities, while also being the setting for use (by visitors, customers, employees and management) of even further kinds of media within the walls of the centre. Third, shopping centres have inherited, from the classical 19th century arcades, the ambivalent characteristics of being “house no less than street”: “houses or passages having no outside – like the dream” (Benjamin 1982/1999:10 and 406). Some visitors make themselves at home and experience centres as bounded spaces with a strong local identity, while others just pass through them, hardly noticing their walls and borders. And while some media are sold or used in ways that help to construct the centre as a delimited space, others do not respect its borders at all. For instance, ads in magazines and on posters will mediate the identifying slogans of the centre, and the photo shop may be filled with images of local celebrities that constantly remind customers of where they are geographically. On the other hand, media chain stores for records, pictures or computer games may not particularly mark out the peculiarities of a certain locality, and a mobile phone user may walk through a centre entrance without paying any notice to that threshold. Centres are thus at once places and non-places: local unities as well as crossroads for open-ended currents of commodities and people.

Shopping centres certainly differ in their degrees of social, medial and spatial openness. Some are rather narrow in scope, geared towards specialised population strata or with a very limited range of media shops, or in architecture and design circumscribing that potential transient openness which big market places have historically always offered. Solna Centre contained the widest possible range of media stores as well as visitor categories. It also turned out to be designed and used in highly open and ambiguous ways.

The decision to start in a specific place, specifically in a large and complex place like a shopping centre, had crucial methodological implications. First, starting in a specific place like a shopping centre made *participant*

observation a main source of knowledge, mapping out the flows and structures at large, rather than beginning with individual ideas or media texts. Interviews and textual interpretation were also used intensely, but the observational aspects of ethnography had a certain priority. Second, the size and complexity of the place made group work necessary. *Collectivity* was developed into a conscious tool for knowledge production, demanding a high degree of careful planning and engineering of the research team.

Starting in a specific space as open and ambiguous as a shopping centre not only dissolved certain artificial boundaries between media types and between groups of media users, but also *problematised basic concepts* like space and place, border and movement, field and locality. This connected to recent trends in media anthropology and cultural geography, whereby attention to mediatisation, migration, globalisation and transnational flows has questioned routine ways of conceiving fieldwork as a focused visit to one foreign and well defined location. The dense mix of people, commodities and media through late modern urban spaces makes such assumptions obsolete. New theorising and innovative methodological development is needed in order to conceive and ethnographically study dispersed fields in globalised late modern network societies where cultural flows seem to respect no geographical boundaries. It may be necessary to abandon conceptions of fields as bounded areas, while still finding ways to respect the importance of spatial localisation.⁴

On such an empirical and methodological basis, it is possible to exemplify two aspects of how media and space are co-articulated in a centre that is at once a media space, shopping space and city space. I will first discuss how the centre functions as a space of communication, i.e., of interaction between subjects, texts and contexts. Then follows a section on its multi-layered mechanisms of power. Both these aspects indicate interesting convergences between mediascapes, shoppingscapes and cityscapes.⁵

Spaces of Communication

The interplay between people and media is always spatially contextualised, in spite of the inherent transgressional character of communication. Places frame and delimit media uses, which at the same time create spatial formations as meaningful geographic places and social worlds. Media texts represent places and spaces, and afford them meaning. Media use also creates social spaces through structuring interaction between humans and the built environment. This is true of all media spaces, as they overlap shopping spaces in particular and urban spaces in general. These are all spaces of communication and consumption.

First, all media use is *spatially located, framed and determined*. On one hand, there are material and technical limitations related to access of elec-

tricity, network coverage, etc. Books and papers tend to dissolve under water and cannot be read in the dark. Before transistors, lightweight batteries, micro electronics and the establishment of far-reaching radiation nets, radio, television, records, telephones and computers were all strictly bound to fixed and mostly indoor stations for use, and there are still geographic or climate conditions under which they normally do not work. On the other hand, there are functional and social limitations as well. It is hard to watch movies on the dance floor or in the football arena – at least for the dancers and players in question. It is considered impolite to let your phone ring while holding a lecture or making love. Likewise, when media can be (and are) used, the place of use interferes with that use, affecting the interpretations made. The place of reading, listening or viewing is not neutral to the meaning or pleasure that media texts offer. Having read a text at home, at school, on the subway or on vacation makes a certain difference to how it is experienced and understood – even when such links are not consciously remembered.

Second, media *represent* places and spaces, and afford them meaning. In our project, we found many examples of mediated “place identities” – media texts representing a location and associating it with historical, cultural and social meanings. In fact, no place or space can ever be thought or experienced in a pure way, without such symbolic meanings attached. We may try to experience a building or street in a raw, physical and “meaning-less” manner, but being human beings, we are doomed to culture, bound to always make interpretations, so that our experiences will always immediately be coloured by signifying associations. All is not already language, but all continuously tends to be drawn into meaning-making. The centre itself was in one respect a nontextual structure of cement and glass, framing material movements of things and organisms, but it was always also more or less consciously understood and experienced as a kind of text – read by management and visitors alike to mean different things. And this faculty of making meaning was actively played with in all architecture and design. In the other direction, all media texts repeatedly refer to spatial forms and symbolically reconstruct them as *virtual spaces*.⁶ The spaces narrated, depicted or implicitly referred to in computer games, posters or film music interact with the spaces in which these media are used. This interaction is sometimes rather arbitrary, but at other times it is deliberately planned and utilised in order to modify spatial identification. The shopping centre used web pages, ads, signposts, placards and mural paintings to remind people of historical events that signified the centre as a unique place and invested it with intentionally positive meanings, in order to attract visitors and make them eager to consume there. Solna Centre identified itself by referring to Solna’s popular football team (AIK) and to the community’s honourable history as the cradle of Swedish film production. Such references in and around the centre marked out its identity and its difference from competing centres. Some visitors were attracted to this local identity, identifying with the place and its history, while others might be repelled, for instance if they had another favourite team. There were also internal tensions in how the

centre depicted itself in its marketing, for instance between the stress on “feeling at home” and the wish to create a sense of excitement with the alternate slogan that the centre was supposed to be a “centre of events”.⁷

Third, media uses *create* social spaces. Mobile phones form “talk spaces” that intersect geographical space, binding physically distant places together while drawing circles around the talking individual, separating him or her from the surrounding others who cannot hear the distant voice and are not expected to interfere in the dialogue. Persons reading the paper in a public place likewise are surrounded by a kind of invisible and silent halo that socially prevents others from disturbing their reading. Social communicative rules for media use sometimes change abruptly, for instance when crossing entrances to the centre and to various stores and other spaces. For example, the Solna Centre library was full of small signs forbidding the use of mobile phones, and the books and papers found there could be read and borrowed but not sold, in contrast to the bookshop offering. Places of and for media use (street, library, magazine shop, etc.) were dialectically intertwined with places in media use – those virtual arenas constructed in media use and those distant places to which media connected. Talking on a phone or reading a paper, you could connect to people and events far away, for instance in your old hometown if you were an immigrant from a foreign part of Sweden or another continent. Certain places in the centre were like doors that opened up for such transitional and often transnational connections, and echoes from those distant places vibrated in a way in the various media shops as well, through sounds, images and memories reminding of somewhere else.

In all these respects, a shopping centre is thus a space of communication: a node for innumerable communication networks overlapping within its half-open walls, but also a unit that itself communicates with its surroundings. The shopping centre is an arena for two interlaced *passages*: flows of people through spaces and media, and flows of media through spaces and people. Together they give rise to several principal kinds of *encounters* or meetings.⁸ First, people encounter media in processes of *consumption* and *communication*. Such encounters may sometimes lead to some kind of interpenetration. In processes of *reception*, media flow through people who make meanings by interpretations of the media texts they use, so that media are incorporated into people’s lives, minds and bodies. Conversely, people flow through media as *representations*, whereby media texts are populated by symbolic representations of human subjects.

A second general kind of encounter occurs between people in forms of social *interaction*. People meet each other in front of media (talking in front of a newspaper placard) or through them (using mobile phones). These interactions may lead to mutual interpenetration in the shape of *identification*, through which individuals influence each other’s understandings of themselves and of others.

A third main kind of encounter is the *intermediality* between different technologies and texts in encounters on bookshelves or on the street. Here

again, texts may not only stand beside but also penetrate each other, in processes of *intertextuality*, where mediated texts are criss-crossed by other texts, through open or candid references.

All these passages and encounters may lead either to transgressing contacts and hybrid fusions or to confrontations and separations. It is due to these encounters that the passages of consumption are communicative practices, since they entail a meaning-making interplay between subjects and texts in contexts, when consumption develops into reception and representation. The spatial framing of these processes in a shopping centre may seem self-evident at first, but quickly turns out to be an extraordinarily *ambiguous space*, with plenty of liminal zones and a lack of consensus among people regarding where its borders are. Sometimes, it is perceived as a relatively clearly delimited building unit, whereas at other times it may not even be noted as such but only transgressed as if it were a completely transparent and neutral passage rather than a specific space of its own.

A Centre for Communication and Consumption

Visitors relate to media while passing through the centre, using them to link to (spatially or temporally) distant others through texts of many kinds. The centre management and its sets of shops also use media to communicate internally, thus uniting it and making it one functional entity. This is accomplished through digital webs for telephones, radio, television, broadband and financial transactions (for instance, ATMs), but also through the stencilled notes, posters and meetings that connect the centre management with the trade association and the individual businesses of Solna Centre. Another linking device is the set of guards, cameras and charge cards that registers customers, gears them towards preferred behaviours and steers them towards the targeted marketing efforts. Yet another example is the “inscriptions and signs on the entranceways” that Benjamin found had “about them something enigmatic”. Their laconic and catchy formulations, store names and other insistent lettering seem to “want to say more” (Benjamin 1982/1999:871). Not only the items on display, but also these signs, are rebuses to decipher, with a kind of poetic surplus of meaning inviting cultural interpretation as forms of symbolic communication. Informative signs, advertising displays and store names are interwoven into a polyphonic hypertext in which intertextual dialogues between visual landmarks create sometimes carefully planned but often also unexpected associations – as in the narcissistic encounter between shops like Ego and Ecco.

Headed by its management, the centre consciously acted as a communicator. The local Solna Centre manager saw his entire centre as one whole communication medium, in which visitors corresponded to the readers of a newspaper. What the centre more precisely intended to mediate was up to

the lodging companies. As a material and spatial as well as an organisational and economic unit, the centre had a communicative power: a force to influence visitors. Its own sole purpose for this power was to maximise the profits of its corporate owners. The aim was profit, the means was a communication that primarily conveyed a wish and a promise of profit: to the shops that were enticed to generate good earnings, and to the customers who were enticed to make profitable purchases in comfortable settings. In order to succeed in the competition for shops and customers with all other shopping environments with identical goals, each centre has to create and display an image of itself as a unique and attractive place. It communicates its *place identity* through websites, advertisements, signs, decoration and architecture.

A visitor to Solna Centre is struck by the impression of a bright expanse, a wide modern city street with shops and houses under an elevated, suspended glass roof.⁹ But the internal space soon reveals a series of ambiguities. Not only is it, in Walter Benjamin's words, both street and house, both outdoors and indoors; it is also both bright and dark, open and secret, transparent and opaque, ultramodern and archaic, futuristic and nostalgic. Typically, modern shopping environments try to create an urban feel, and mall architecture therefore also connects directly to city planning. Alongside the "high-tech" urban style, Solna Centre offers plenty of historicising elements of the "old town" type.¹⁰ The former uses steel, glass and plastic materials to construct an abstract city of metropolitan greatness and geometric openness, with open elevators running up and down, producing a feeling of three-dimensional rapidity, and a soundscape crafted to give a sense of grand technological expanses. The latter uses kitsch and nostalgic traits in stone, wood, brick and paint to simulate a traditional, dense and intimate town labyrinth. In Solna, this was done through explicit (though to most visitors and even the management, not consciously registered) references to the winding and enigmatic passages of 19th century London and Paris – precisely the arcades described by Benjamin. Together, these are balanced to offer an impression of *safe excitement* – a secure place to "feel like home" and pursue one's daily routines, but also an attractive centre of events and entertaining experiences.

To achieve such effects, architectural design is used as a means of communication, but decorative elements are also used. Solna Centre made direct references to the Paris arcades in its design of walls, windows, roofs and lamps. It also featured a couple of mural paintings made when the centre was constructed in the late 1980s, reminding of old-town Solna houses. A unique feeling of the particular place was then further elaborated in Solna Centre ads published in the daily papers and frequently exhibited in the centre itself, meant to link a clear image and character to the body of the buildings and induce a positive mood around themselves. The material body and symbolic soul of the centre were developed jointly, using all conceivable kinds of communication, from glass and stone to print and electronic media.

One typical Solna Centre ad featured a young family on a living-room sofa in the middle of the centre, with the slogan "Feel at home at Solna

Centre". The image is reminiscent of Benjamin's comparison of city and home spaces, in which he likens the arcade to the drawing room: "More than anywhere else, the street reveals itself in the arcade as the furnished and familiar interior of the masses" (Benjamin 1940/1999:423 and 879). Solna Centre's campaigns connected to the homey feeling as a means to create the safety required for maximal consumption but also to foster an emotional identification with the centre in all visiting family members.

A complementary communicative aspiration in contemporary shopping environments is to market themselves as arenas for memorable experiences. The late-modern rhetoric of the "experience economy" engages a wide set of "creative industries" that think of themselves as producing and marketing experiences rather than products or services.¹¹ This implies a culturalisation of the economy, in the form of an aestheticisation of marketing practices, but also indicates a corresponding economisation of culture and a commercialisation of artistic practices. Both high-tech and nostalgic styles can be drawn into this process. In recent years, hardly any shopping ad text can be found that does not include some variant of words like "experience", "feel", "explore", "discover" or "event". It was no coincidence that one of the slogans we found was: "Solna Centre – the centre of events!" Another expanding centre in the Stockholm region, Kista Centre, has a similar slogan on its website: "Experience Sweden's smallest metropolis!" What is communicated is an invitation to experiences that combines the receiving appropriation of shopping with an emotional subjective intensity that exceeds the cool rationality of pure purchase and consumption.

The management also saw Solna as a particularly "popular" centre. The manager had a kind of "essentialist" perception of the centre as an organism with a pre-existing soul to which all commercial efforts had to adjust in order to be maximally successful. His task was therefore to discover the unique character of his centre, by which he didn't mean the building as such, but rather the people inhabiting it. As Solna was inhabited by a rather average set of Swedes, the centre had to make itself "ordinary", accessible, middle-of-the-road, neither snobbish nor sluggish. "Authenticity" was a key term for the manager, as he detested how some other centres were abstractly constructed from nil, and instead expressed a deep fondness for the sometimes troublesome popular "soul" of his centre, to which he had to adjust. This idea of authenticity was legitimated by loose references to the specific history of Solna city, which appears to be infused into the walls of the centre, as well as painted on them.

This outward communication and identification of the shopping centre has parallels in the way each mass medium and text communicates its identity – its style and genre. In similar ways as Solna Centre projects and breeds its specific self-image through a wide set of communicative tools, so does any record company or weekly magazine. In the other direction, it also parallels the manner in which cities identify themselves and are identified by others, through complexly evolving sets of markers: names, slogans,

monuments, rituals and accidental or engineered events. Together with other political, economic and cultural factors, a wide set of media texts contribute to making certain places into “hot spots” for both social practices and symbolic representations. The production of urban centrality can be set in motion by a combination of dramatic events, performances and conflicts, a constantly evolving set of collective rituals, social practices and textual representations reproducing the centrality of city sites. The representation and construction of place is a central theme in a period of “glocalisation”, whereby global flows mix with localised “place identities”.¹² The double image of the city as specific and universal is mediated through monuments, guidebooks, news reports, works of art, songs, poetry, novels and other narratives, artefacts and images. In such processes, media, consumption and urbanity work together, as media events are strong attractors for shopping centres as well as for city centres, and media texts offer representations of place identities.

Spaces of Power

All the practices in which media use is spatially localised and localising are simultaneously also *struggles for power over space*. Power plays involve all the kinds of spaces discussed here: of media, of shopping and of cities. The distinction made here between communication and power is only analytical, never factual. Both aspects are always co-present, in that power may be seen as a (coercive) form of communication, and communication as a (communicative or symbolic) form of power.¹³ Media are deeply involved in regulating access to and use of space, not least in shopping centres and cityscapes.

Shopping spaces are not only crossed by people and media, but also by structurally anchored interests and practices. There turn out to be continuous struggles between individual shops and chains, centre staff and management, producers and distributors, and visitors and customers of different kinds. Some of these relate to the centre’s ambiguous position on the border between private and public. In some respects, all spaces tend to be ambiguous or ambivalent, albeit to varying degrees. Just like Benjamin’s Paris arcades, Solna Centre is *both house and street*, with not only glass roof and entrance doors but also named street and shop entrances. A further ambiguity concerns its status as combined *shopping centre and city centre*, and thus as both *private and public space*. It is the municipal square and main streets that have been placed within glass walls and under the rule of a private institution, the multinational property owner Rodamco. This peculiar mixture of public and commercial interests lets basic societal contradictions come to the fore.

The commercial interests of market agents intersected conflictually with state interests administered by municipality institutions and with private and public interests seated in civil society, defended in the public sphere by individuals, groups, associations, and the media. Not only did senior citi-

zens and shop owners quarrel about the number of benches for resting; there were also contradictory views on the balance between public art and commercial ads in a place that was simultaneously a town centre and a shopping centre. Another line of debate related to the amount of freedom of expression for political and other associations on the squares and streets that had been made indoor spaces with the addition of a glass roof in 1989. Issues of communication thus related to issues of public and communal versus private and commercial space. The border between private and public is notoriously blurred, and the precise rules concerning what is allowed in the centre are unclear. Political protests are allowed on streets and squares in other city cores, but hardly when these have been put under glass roofs and fenced in with doors locked at night. That would disturb business.

In Solna Centre, even the Lutheran Church had difficulties obtaining access to meeting facilities, since they had problems paying what the centre charged. In December 2003, this led them to organise an open hearing on “the power over public space”, to which they invited the bishop of Stockholm, the manager of Rodamco Sweden, the conservative chair of the local council and the Swedish Minister of Culture. At this hearing, the Rodamco manager ensured them that the centre would willingly offer meeting premises for the church and other NGOs, but that the local authorities should then pay the rental costs. The council chair responded that in that case they could not rent such premises in Solna Centre, since they were far too expensive. The structural result of the total commercialisation of central city space is thus that non-profitable public activities are effectively pushed outside the centre’s glass cage.

There were still several traces of the public character of space within Solna Centre. One such trace was the signs with street names left on the corners of buildings: “Solna Square”, “Town Hall Walk”, etc. Another was the “Hollywood Stairs” in the middle of the centre, used for various events, including both commercial sales events and certain communal celebrations during which the room fulfilled a more traditional function as the true common and public centre of the town, for instance at certain seasonal festivals like Christmas or the typically Swedish Santa Lucia celebration. The name of the stairs was supposed to be reminiscent of Solna’s honourable history as the cradle of Swedish filmmaking, and to this end there was also a wall painting with Greta Garbo who was first filmed there.

The privately owned space also contained certain public utilities. There was a large and active public library in which citizens could dwell, read and listen, with no demand for payment. There was also a town hall that offered certain public services for citizens. A small cinema didn’t manage to survive, but was the last remnant of a communal Citizens’ House, with rooms for conferences, meetings and theatre activities. This was gradually taken over by commercially run shops and offices, as part of a general trend towards privatisation and commodification of the public spaces of communication in Solna.

The interplay between commercial and municipal interests includes both co-operation and competition. The local centre manager clearly saw the advantages of having non-commercial public and cultural service institutions integrated in the centre:

We want good co-operation with the municipality. It wants to keep a high level of general service in Solna Centre. And thus Solna Centre becomes the evident choice for Solna city to arrange various activities. Which attracts people... We have a very good library, which draws lots of people. There is a job centre, there is a citizen forum, a regional social insurance office. And all that generates people, which in turn after a while generates trade. And we do have a rather large amount of traffic with visitors here.

The museum curator responsible for the visual design of Solna city in her turn explained that the municipality had "mighty good co-operation" with Solna Centre, which allegedly understands that "the combination of the commercial and the cultural" is "a rather wonderful mixture," where it is important "to give and take from each other, that it is important for business to also have an artistic or visionary outlook, to have this mix...." She repeatedly referred to art in terms of "enrichment": "you actually get enriched by looking at the visual arts." The striking parallel to the market striving for economic enrichment ensures a productive co-operation between the two systems, local state authorities and the private market interests. People need to buy, "but also to have the chance to enjoy," said the curator, explaining how shops and public cultural spending happily combine. Art was readily integrated in a consumption-promoting experience industrialism.

At other times, however, the curator instead stressed the division between the systems that is the basis for their mutual exchange to be at all meaningful. For instance, she mentioned that "the municipality has a small free zone" in front of the town hall, where "it owns the ground; therefore it's free". She also mentioned instances of a "cultural clash with the commercial", so that art had to be protected against the intrusion of marketing.

In practice, all spaces of consumption are mixed spaces. Visitors shop but may also stroll around, pass right through without even recognising that they have crossed a delimited area, borrow books or read papers for free in the library, rest their legs on a bench, chat with friends on some corner or watch people over a cup of coffee. Some do experience the centre as a pure shopping space, while others also use it as a public, social or aesthetic space. But there is no doubt that commodity consumption is the activity preferred by the controlling space owners. Ownership of the grounds and buildings is a key factor for securing commercial hegemony. The progressive selling out of city centres to multinational shopping centre enterprises shifts the power balance from the public sphere of the state system to the private sphere of the market. The private property owners must give maximum dividends to their shareholders. If art or public services can assist in this, they may be

accepted, but as soon as urban space is sold to private owners, there is no general chance to consider values other than those of sheer profitability. Nor is a private company answerable to public deliberation: as long as it adheres to the law, Solna Centre need never defend its actions in any public arena.

In August 2001, an extended part of Solna Centre was jointly inaugurated by the Rodamco manager and the local council chair. Their speeches of mutual admiration shed light on how state and capitalist interests worked together to reconstruct increasing parts of the city as a gigantic and thoroughly surveilled and planned shopping centre with total service for all inhabitants (Fornäs 2002b:331ff). Many towns and suburbs behave the same way. This forces shops and visitors who do not fit in further and further out to marginal places outside. Some welcome this development and others are sorry about it, as in the British television comedy series *Absolutely Fabulous* when the shopaholic Edina, during a Paris visit, with a gesture of resignation sighed to her critical daughter Saffy: “The world is becoming a shopping centre – and you are looking for an exit?!” Another Stockholm region centre, Kista Galleria, has been described as “a small town, nicely wrapped in a glass case”. “Inhabitants will simply never have to leave Kista, since all they can wish for and need will be there” (Collin 2003). Such are the visions for city centres to be transformed into shopping centres.

Such developments have provoked a growing awareness of the fragility and importance of public communication in society. Critical scholars – from Raymond Williams and Jürgen Habermas to Néstor García Canclini – have in shifting terms analysed the importance of common culture, civil society lifeworlds and cultural citizenship in which free and mutual communication is a key part. When material space is transformed into pure consumption spaces, public spaces can become more virtual, more mediated. But even the most advanced media use remains bound to specific localities, and there is a continuing need for physical meeting places where people can do things besides selling, selecting and buying commodities.

On the other hand, consumption sites are never pure marketplaces. The more they grow and swallow up their surroundings, the more practices they have to accommodate. There are reasons to fear the growth of a totally administered panoptical surveillance society in which state and market institutions integrate all sectors into maximally profitable structures. But contradictory moments remain active within these structures, where even the most commercial shopping centre is still an ambiguous space.

Concluding Remark

In media studies there is a renewed interest in spatial aspects of communication. The interface between media ethnography and the field research of social anthropology is a particularly inspiring borderland, where anthropolo-

gists' increasing interest in media phenomena converges with media researchers' use of ethnographic fieldwork. The Passages project is a multifaceted example of these new efforts, exploring the various ways in which media processes are spatially situated but also represent and produce space. By focusing on media practices in a specific shopping centre, it also highlighted how media practices are deeply implicated by power struggles in urban public space.

There are thus several levels of spatiality in communication. First, communication occurs in specific geographies, from the transnational networks of uneven access and distribution through which media flows move to the particular local site where each communication act takes place. Second, communication contents represent geographic space, investing physical places with meaning, relating them to the identities of the people who populate and transverse them, and thus giving rise to a complexly mediated crossroads of identification of people and places. Third, communication practices create spaces for media use: virtual spaces that overlap and affect physical spaces. A new agenda for media studies should develop a sharper sensitivity for these multiple spatialities of communication.

Notes

1. After an initiating conference in 1996 and a full-scale project start in 1998, with funding from the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation (Riksbankens Jubileumsfond), the interdisciplinary research team investigated interacting processes of communication and consumption in a specific shopping centre for five years. Results are reported in four Swedish books (Bjurström et al. 2000, Becker et al. 2001 and 2002, Gemzöe 2004) and one English volume (Fornäs et al. forthcoming), as well as a hypertextual CD-rom disk, distributed with the last two volumes. See also Fornäs (2002a and 2004).
2. Spatial terms like "space", "place", "room" and "locality" are notoriously vague and polysemic, due partly to the dense superposition of metaphorical uses of them (Fornäs 1995:49ff; also 2001:381f). I will follow the widespread practice to let "space" denote a more abstract extension while allowing "place" to indicate a more specific geographical position.
3. See, for example, Hannerz (1996 and 2001), Clifford (1997), Gupta & Ferguson (1997), Ortner (1999), Thrift (1999), Ang (2001), Askew & Wilk (2002) and Ginsburg et al. (2002). A growing awareness of spatial aspects in media studies can be discerned in Moores (1993), Ang (1996), Drotner (2000), McCarthy (2001) and Couldry (2002).
4. These and other methodological reflections on media ethnography and reflexive anthropology are offered in Gemzöe (2004). Besides the concept of field, topics include: the implications of cultural studies perspectives and hermeneutic ethnography; agency, structure and role conflicts in fieldwork at home; uses of photography and of historical sources; and the administrative, social and scientific aspects of organising interdisciplinary project collectivity.
5. Appadurai (1996:33ff) proposes five dimensions of global cultural flows: ethnoscap, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes and ideoscapes. The suffix "-scape" is supposed to acknowledge both the "fluid, irregular shapes of these landscapes" and their character of being "deeply perspectival constructs". In my use of the term, "scape" is used to depict a particular configuration of phenomena in a given spatial and temporal setting, analogous to how a landscape is a style and shape of some geographical place in

- space. For instance, a "mediascape" is then a dynamic set of media forms and texts that surround and are available to specific people at specific times and places.
6. Langer (1953) offers a fascinating theory of virtuality as the basis of cultural imagination (virtual space, time, powers, life, memory, history, etc.), long before the cybercultural inflation of the word; see Fornäs et al. (2002a:29ff).
 7. These issues were discussed by Hillevi Ganetz, Karin Becker, Erling Bjurström and myself in Becker et al. (2001 and 2002), and Fornäs et al. (forthcoming). See also Goss (1993).
 8. This idea is developed further in Bjurström et al. (2000:42ff and 143ff), Fornäs (2001 and 2002b:302ff) and Fornäs et al. (forthcoming).
 9. Ganetz (2001) makes a contextualising reading of Solna Centre as a signifying material text.
 10. Gottdiener (1995) distinguishes "High-Tech Urban" from "Olde Towne" style elements in shopping architecture.
 11. Pile & Gilmour (1999) is an often-cited example of this ideology.
 12. On city culture and city images, see Gottdiener & Lagopoulos (1986), Zukin (1995), Balshaw & Kennedy (2000), Blum (2003) and Johansson & Sernhede (2003).
 13. Cf. Habermas (1992/1996), Fornäs (1995:72) and Couldry (2000) on forms of media power.

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Chapter 13

Magic, Health and the Mediation of the Body's Geography

Tom O'Dell

It had been a long week. A long month. A long year. The office calls even as we begin the three-hour drive to the spa, meaning I have to finish one last assignment through some jury rigging of cellphone and laptop from the passenger seat of a rented Hyundai in a pounding rainstorm on a Saturday night. So the next morning, when Milt, the massage therapist, gently knocks on the door to ask if I am ready for my treatment, I practically holler, "Yes".....(Kate Zernike, 2005: Travel section 5:1).

Repetitious spaces are the outcome of repetitive gestures (those of the workers)....//...Are these spaces interchangeable because they are homologous? Or are they homogeneous so that they can be exchanged, bought and sold, with the only differences between them being those assessable in money...? (Lefebvre, 1991: 75).

Take a few deep breaths, unwind, relax – now it's your time (advertisement text from Varberg's Kurort Hotel & Spa Brochure, undated).¹

In the early summer of 2003 *BusinessWeek* carried an article with devastating news for the tourist industry. The combined effects of bad weather, unemployment and the threat of terrorist attacks had all contributed to a situation in which 54% of all American adults were not planning to take a vacation that year, and the number was as high as 68% in the Northeast (Arndt, Palmeri & Arner, 2003: 42). At approximately the same time, however, the Hyatt Corporation had a slightly different story to tell the world. It had found a new pocket of hope, and identified the spa industry as "one of the fastest growing trends in travel" (Press release published on Hotels-Weekly.com). The vitality of this trend was reconfirmed by statistics published in 2005 by the International SPA Association, which revealed that there existed over 12,000 spas in the United States alone, and that this number represented a 25% increase since 2002.²

Riding on the coattails of this trend, the industry has subsequently proven to be extremely resourceful in finding new consumer niches, including

weekend getaways, spiritual makeovers, “Botox parties”³ and spas for children (cf. Orecklin, 2003: 54). This is in many ways a very diverse market, but at the same time it is united by the fact that most spas strive to offer their patrons a series of experiences that are framed in terms of wellness, serenity, rejuvenation and relaxation.

In this chapter I shall examine some of the ways in which this is done through the construction and mediation of the space of the spa in conjunction with the bodies of its patrons. In order to do this, I shall begin by briefly examining the manner in which spas are organised as conceived spaces in their own promotional material. In the process, this material is placed in a historic context and illuminates the manner in which spas have mixed medical, magical, and spiritual influences in the name of health and leisure. Following this, the chapter then moves on to more specifically problematise some of the ways in which a few contemporary spas actually organise themselves materially and spatially, and impress themselves upon the bodies and senses of their guests. In this section, and throughout what follows, the text focuses upon the body and discusses the central role corporeal and sensual impressions play in making sense of the world around us.

Medicine, Magic and Modernity

One of the most damaging ideas that has swept the social sciences and humanities has been the idea of a disenchanting modernity...This act of purification has radically depopulated thinking about Western societies as whole sets of delegates and intermediaries have been consigned to oblivion as extinct impulses, those delegates and intermediaries which might appear to be associated with forces of magic, the sacred, ritual, affect, trance and so on....(H)owever,...magic has not gone away. Western societies, like all others, are full of these forces (Thrift, 2000: 44).

The idea is that our guests will shut out the outside world, and essentially do nothing. It is these types of moments in which you can catch your breath, which we need in our lives. It is in these moments that we *gather strength, replenish our energies*, have time to reflect, and perhaps learn to think from the inside out (Tryggstad, undated: 5, my emphasis).

As close to perfect as humanly possible (slogan for Le Blanc Spa Resort, in *Luxury Spa Resort* 2005).

The images that spas present of themselves are in many ways as diverse as the offerings of the industry itself. Go to a newsstand and pull the latest issue of any spa magazine off the rack and you will find yourself thumbing through a world of tropical paradises, beach resorts, mountain chalets or the occasional Manhattan oasis located atop one of New York’s well known

skyscrapers, and featuring the interior design of a famous architect. This is a landscape populated by healthy, youthful, beautiful people sitting in the lotus position, meditating, lounging in hammocks, floating in water or simply lying prone and being served. Scan the advertisements in a single magazine such as *Luxury Spa Finder* (July/August 2005 issue) and you will not only find exquisite jewellery, fine creams and private jets for hire, but even ads and articles promising “serenity”, “total makeovers,” the latest medical advances in personal health, and exclusive seaside resorts in which, “ancient rejuvenating techniques blend with modern amenities to energize and beautify you from the inside out”.

Turn to a modest day spa in Lund, such as the Sensa Spa. The cover of their brochure features a small picture of an Asian woman, her eyes closed, and head tilted upwards towards the sky. She is leaning slightly backwards, in the corner of what appears to be a pool or bathtub, her arms stretched out in front of her, floating on the surface of the water. This image is framed by the words, “Treatments for the five senses...Harmony, Relaxation, Luxury (...) balanced beauty for soul, body and skin” (Sensa Spa brochure, 2003).

From the most grandiose spas in the world to some of the more ordinary ones in Sweden, this is a world represented by images of luxury and privilege – at times, these qualities are framed against the relief of the natural surroundings in which the spa is located, and at other times they are depicted via images of a “colonial present” (cf. Gregory, 2004) in which ethnic Others are shown catering to wealthy white Westerners. The imagery that spas invoke can, in short, differ dramatically from case to case; nonetheless, behind these differences, it is even possible to identify recurring themes.

In addition to luxury and privilege, for example, this is also a world that balances precariously between the logic of medical rationalities and the realm of the magical, mystical, and spiritual. Upon first reflection, the mixing of the disciplined routines and systematic procedures of medical orthodoxy with the hocus-pocus tomfoolery of magic may seem to be something of a contradiction. But magic and medicine have a long and entangled history of coexistence and interdependence that is all too easily obfuscated by the predominant image of medicine as field of study marked by white lab coats, electronic microscopes and CAT-scan technologies (cf. Pels, 2003; Verrips, 2003).⁴ As Marcel Mauss has pointed out, magic is the forbearer of science and technology. It is, as he argued, the field of activity through which nature was first explored and classified as the properties and “secrets” of plants, animals, and inanimate objects in the surrounding world were scrutinised. It is here, Mauss asserted, that medicine and astronomy have their roots (2001: 176ff.).

The linkage between medicine, magic and spirituality lives on in the world of spas. Indeed, this linkage is part of the cultural heritage of spas. Historically in Europe, water, wells and springs have been mythically enshrouded places inhabited by sprites, fairies, and other supernatural creatures since the time of the Celts (Strang, 2004). Towards the end of the 17th century and up to the beginning of the 20th century, the fascination with the magical

properties of water successively gave way to medical theories that were developed in an attempt to explore and explain the potential medicinal qualities of water in curing diverse illnesses and psychological disorders: from rheumatism, gout and dermatological problems to digestive disorders, hypochondria, and hysteria (cf. Mackaman, 1998; Mansén, 2001; Weisz, 2001).

In the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries in Sweden, medical doctors often played a key role in establishing and running the country's resorts, wells, and springs (Mansén, 2001: 42). But priests were also present from the very beginning, and constituted a central and necessary accoutrement to most Swedish spas. In addition to leading the daily religious services, they also played an important role in delineating the moral landscape of the spa, laying down the rules of acceptable behaviour and watching over the behaviour of guests. In this context, water was believed to be a specially empowered gift from God, which humankind had the responsibility to use for its betterment – and in its service, doctors and priests found a common cause (Mansén, 2001: 127ff.).

The spiritual imagery invoked in association with spas today is still extraordinarily vital, but has changed slightly and moved, in many instances, in the direction of New Age philosophies.⁵ In this context, the Orient has become a source of great inspiration in which vastly different influences from diverse Asian settings are regularly mixed into new spiritual forms of relaxation and reinvigoration that have a coherency of their own. For example, in Stockholm, the Japanese-inspired Hasseludden Conference and Yasuragi advertises its services by clarifying, "Yasuragi means inner calm and harmony. And that is exactly what we want you to experience when you visit us...//...In order to create a harmonic wholeness in which energies flow in the right way, we have received advice from a Feng-Shui master" (Yasuragi Brochure, undated: 5). Working in slightly different ways, other spas promote themselves by liberally invoking references to "native healing traditions", or "magical clay".⁶ The Golden Door Spa in Arizona even goes as far as to employ shamans to help care for their patrons (Zernike, 2005: 9).

More than anything, however, the influences of New Age philosophies upon the spa industry are most apparent in the manner in which spas currently strive to capitalise on the claim that they can, in one way or another, tap into unused (or hidden) sources of energy. And while Hasseludden (in the example above) plays very explicitly upon New Age imagery, other spas that would otherwise not directly associate themselves with New Age philosophies find themselves, nonetheless, entangled in a discourse of untapped, hidden, or better-utilised energies. Exemplifying this, Sensa Spa informs potential patrons, "The goal is a healthier and more complete life. Increased well-being, better balance, less detrimental stress, and a greater flow of energy" (Sensa Spa Brochure, 2003: 3), and Varberg Kurort Hotel & Spa urges patrons to "Visit our spa and come to feel wonderfully relaxed and filled with new strength and energy (Varberg Brochure, undated: 23).

The examples of this discourse are so prevalent in the promotional material of spas that it would be all too easy to dismiss them as simply a mar-

keting ploy or gimmick.⁷ But perhaps there is more at issue here than good slogans and simple gimmicks. Many of the managers and personnel whom I have interviewed at Swedish spas seem to earnestly believe in the product they sell, and would protest vehemently against the accusation that they did little more than dupe gullible patrons. Beyond this, a very large number of people who visit spas openly attest to the spas' abilities to deliver what they promise.⁸ As one informant explained while reflecting upon a recent spa visit, "I found myself just being there, there and then, reflecting neither backwards nor forwards in time. When I left, I felt like an entirely new person, from the inside out. I had more psychological energy than before". To be sure, not everyone I questioned described their spa experiences in these terms. On the contrary, some describe boredom or uncertainty. But many do describe sensations of reinvigoration, of finding new energy, vitality, power and strength, as if they possessed batteries that could be recharged – as if magic had been performed upon them.

Beyond the Text

To underestimate, ignore and diminish space amounts to the overestimation of texts, written matter, and writing systems, along with the readable and the visible, to the point of assigning to these a monopoly on intelligibility (Lefebvre, 1991: 62).

In the proceeding it should be pointed out that up to this point, the images I have invoked and the contours of the landscape of magic and wellness that have been sketched out here constitute a space of representation defined along the edges of pages. This is a printed space (with historic referents) which is read, and along which the eye scans. It is a very flat space and in many regards is a limited representation of the world of spas. True, it is, in the words of Henri Lefebvre (1991: 40ff.), a "conceived" landscape that has been strategically constructed with the intent of affecting the reader. And in this regard it is even a space of anticipation in which the expectations of potential spa visitors begin to take form. However, there is reason to pause before conflating the affective intentions of the (marketing) strategist with the experience of its targeted audience. As Michel de Certeau has argued,

Today, it is the socio-political mechanisms of the schools, the press, or television that isolate the text controlled by the teacher or the producer from its readers. But behind the theatrical décor of this new orthodoxy is hidden (as in earlier ages) the silent, transgressive, ironic or poetic activity of readers (or television viewers) who maintain their reserve in private without the knowledge of the "masters" (1988: 172).

There is, in other words, a field of tension located between the strategically organised and conceived space of the page and the lived space of the

retina and the body (and consciousness) just behind it. de Certeau goes on to remind us that there was a time in which the act of reading was intimately linked to the act of oration and the actual presentation of text. In times when most could not read, the reading of text before an audience was a corporal act. Today, we are accustomed to forms of reading in which the body – except for the eye – remains still. This could, de Certeau argues, be interpreted as further evidence of the pacification of the consumer, a perspective with roots in the work of enlightenment thinkers who argued on behalf of the power of the text (the power of the writer over the reader) to convert the benighted, shed light on the truth and produce unquestionable knowledge. This is a conclusion that leaves de Certeau uneasy, and he warns that “...it is always good to remind ourselves that we mustn’t take people to be fools” (1988:176).

However, de Certeau is not simply arguing for a greater appreciation of consumption as a form of agency. He is simultaneously interested in placing the body back into the equation by reminding us that while silent reading removed the body from old routines of oration, it opened the way for new corporal activities – which might subvert the printed text. The question is, what is happening at spas that cannot be fully explained via a reading of their promotional materials? What do spas, and the people who visit them, actually do as part of the process of “finding new energy?” In order to investigate these questions, let me turn to two Swedish spas: Hasseludden and Varberg.⁹

Material Culture and Sensual Communication

Magic is not performed just anywhere, but in specially qualified places. Magic as well as religion has genuine sanctuaries (Mauss, 2001: 57).

The bandwidth of language is far lower than the bandwidth of sensation. Most of what we know about the world we can never tell each other (Nørretranders, 1998: 309).

Varberg and Hasseludden are interesting as empirical examples because, while both facilities are in the market of selling the experience of “well-being”, they have chosen to do so in very different ways. In part, these differences have a historical explanation. Neither of these two spas was originally constructed to function as a spa. Varberg was a sanatorium that was later used as a health resort and converted into a conference centre in the 1990s. Echoing its past, the facility’s main building clearly reflects the early modern aesthetics found in most hospitals built in the early part of the 20th century. The main lobby, however, takes its cues from English aesthetics and includes walls of panelled wood and deep green, stuffed leather furniture. This is a dark lobby by Scandinavian standards. But together, the spa’s historic roots, 20th century institutional architecture and classic English-style lobby all work to

symbolically assure visitors that this is an establishment rich in tradition, with a well-rooted heritage of its own that is coupled to a deeply anchored history of professionalism.

In contrast, Hasseludden was built in the early 1970s by the Swedish Labour Union LO, with the intention of using the facility as a conference and educational centre (Brink, undated: 153ff.). The building itself was designed by Yoji Kasajimi and incorporates Japanese styles and aesthetics with the functionalistic ideals that dominated much of Swedish architecture in the early 1970s. In the 1990s, the Japanese theme permeating the building's architecture was expanded upon and developed into the Yasuragi spa concept.¹⁰ This concept includes Japanese-inspired treatments and massages, the Yasuragi bathing facilities and several restaurants serving Japanese food. It is even requested of guests that they wear traditional cotton Japanese robes called *yukata* throughout their stay.

Both spas utilise a wide range of props and actions whose coordinated use is intended to affect the sensation of a channelling of energy. The entrance lobby of Varberg, and the Japanese theme of Hasseludden, both work as framing mechanisms that help to signify that these are places that force altered states upon those moving about within their confines. The lobby at Varberg evokes, as a manager at the spa explained to me, a "sense of serenity" amongst visitors. As people enter the lobby in the morning, they not only move into a room that is darker than the outside surroundings, but they actually do enter an institutional environment (that of a previous sanatorium). Loud voices and noises produce echoes that, like ghosts, bounce off the walls and hard floors, and come back to haunt all within the lobby. This leads not only to the dampening of voices, but even (at least for some) to diminished and more constrained gesticulations and softer footsteps, which in their turn lead to slower and shorter strides. In this sense, synaesthesia, "the transposition of sensory images or sensory attributes from one modality to another" (Marks, 1978: 8 quoted in Feld, 2005: 181, see even Howe 2005: 292 and O'Dell, 2005b), is an important catalyst in the production of a "sense of serenity" in the Varberg lobby that implicates the collusive interaction of the eyes and ears upon the unsuspecting musculature of the body.

The Japanese theme at Hasseludden – featuring a sparsely decorated interior – plays upon the notion of stripping away all that is excessive, of returning to a purer aesthetic and spiritual state. This aesthetic state is then transferred into the body of visitors, at least in part, with the aid of the *yukata* robes that guests are asked to wear. As one of the managers of Hasseludden explained to me, the *yukata* sits tight around the body and inhibits movement. It is, in other words, physically constraining, and forces visitors into a new slower rhythm of movement, which is then further accentuated by thin, light cotton slippers which guests are provided along with their *yukata* and are encouraged to wear. The slippers do not sit well on the foot, and have a tendency to glide off as you walk. They are also very slippery on the sleek wooden and stone floors of Hasseludden, providing a sensation akin to ice

skating in untied skates. The combined result of the *yukata* and slippers is a radically altered kinaesthetic condition, provoking not only new schemata of movement (shorter steps, shuffling feet, the working of the toes to keep the slippers on, etc.), but even a new form and focus of concentration (and consciousness) upon bodily tempo, tactility, and coordination.¹¹

However, the efforts of spas to reach into and affect bodies do not stop there. Massage and treatment rooms are also carefully arranged and organised. As part of this, different colours are used in the interiors of these rooms in order to evoke different moods. At Varberg, for example, the spa management explained that they periodically change the colour schemes of the waiting rooms that lie in conjunction with the Tong baths, in the hope that this will provide returning guests with the sensation of having experienced something new. In the world of hotels, rooms are continuously refurbished as they age and become worn. Refurbishing is, in this sense, performed in order to maintain a certain standard of convenience. In contrast, the logic driving the refurbishment of the Tong bath waiting rooms is more explicitly driven by a desire to reach into the visitors' being and have an emotive effect upon him or her.

In this sense the boundaries of rooms are delineated not only by doors, walls and windows, but also by divergent atmospheres of sensuous stimulation. Rooms containing indoor pools, for example, feel humid, smell of chlorine and possess a unique reverberative sound quality that is very different from a carpeted hotel corridor. Similar principles work as one moves from room to room in a spa. One area may smell of fresh flowers, while another carries the lingering scent of disinfectant and a third is marked by a new and strange odour that may be an aloe vera oil, a body lotion or burning incense. The result is that as visitors dampen their voices and physically slow down, their olfactory senses are constantly triggered and spurred to new states of arousal.

In a similar manner, music is used to furnish treatment rooms, providing each room with a unique soundscape. To this end, New Age, oriental or classical music, as well as sedate forms of modern pop, are utilised to create what Jo Tacchi has likened to an auditory "texture" (1998: 26) in the spa experience. But the rhythms of the music that accompany a treatment do more than just provide the experience with a further texture. Sound leaves traces after itself; it moves, and is consequently marked by a time of its own (Feld, 2005: 185). Doppler effects, for example, mark comings and goings, indicating the future, present and history of sound through shifts in pitch. Footsteps fade as others walk away from us. In the massage room, New Age music may be played in the hopes that it will have a calming effect; however, part of this effect is derived from the fact that the music does not actually move anywhere in relation to the person being massaged. In a world in which we are (unconsciously) used to the fact that sounds circulate and move, stasis and immobility are further accentuated by the experience of "audio immobility" that lasts throughout the duration of the massage or treatment at the spa. In a sense, audio time does actually stand still here.¹²

To some extent, it might be argued that the primary commodities that places such as Varberg and Hasseludden have to offer are an *alteric time* and *space* in which patrons are temporarily isolated from all outside disturbances, and in which time, as well as the pace of daily life, is slowed down. This is a dominant image in the promotional material of spas; it is one of the central ambitions that spa managers claim they strive to provide, and as I have indicated above, it is at least in part one of the potential consequences that the spatial organisation of spas may have upon visitors.

However, when viewed from a slightly different perspective, it might be argued that spas expend a great deal of effort setting things into motion rather than endeavouring to slow them down. In line with this, bodies are activated in gymnastic and aerobic exercise, as part of the ritual of recharging. And of course, efforts are continuously made to mobilise new flows of energy via the massaging, rubbing, touching, and stroking of bodies. As one spa manager explained, "We know that when you have a massage, many things happen in your body. Anti-stress hormones accumulate, knotted muscles loosen up and blood circulation increases. Being touched is vitally important to us." The power of tactile stimulation is believed, in other words, to free untapped, locked-up energies within, setting them in motion. In this case, the caressing of the surface of the body cuts right to the core of the neurological system and works directly upon the stressed and stress-producing units of the body – this is at least what people, in one way or another, say they feel.

Rather than unlocking "powers" hidden within the body, other aspects of the spa are intended to transfer power into the body. For example, muds are spread along the surfaces of people's bodies, and their different qualities are said to seep into the skin. Oils are used in a similar manner, and can even be coupled with the use of heating blankets that are said to further facilitate the ability of the oils' properties to penetrate the body. Saunas, on the other hand, work in a slightly different way to penetrate the body and provide rejuvenation. They invoke heat to open the pores of the skin and facilitate sweating, thereby potentially creating the conditions that might lead to the purging of detrimental residues and deposits from the body.

On one level, the promise of health, wellness and rejuvenation that spas make in their promotional material can seem to be highly ephemeral. In print, they are often reduced to representing this through the invocation of symbolically laden visual aesthetics that may signal wellness in one way or another, but say very little about how they actually achieve this goal. As a result, Varberg's promotional material is full of images of Swedish nature that harken upon a discourse of "being closer to nature" (and implicitly further from the stresses of modern urban life). And Hasseludden continuously reiterates its loyalty to its Japanese theme, "A solitary stone. The clean line of a sofa. We have modelled Yasuragi according to the Japanese aesthetics in which wabi stands for beauty in all that is simple, and sabi is the hard to define elegance which you can see in an old, small object" (Yasuragi brochure). The message "simpler is better" shines through, but the connection

between Japanese design aesthetics and better health remains highly abstract. As I argue here, however, an understanding of the complex processes of cultural production that spas are engaged in begs for an analysis that moves beyond the text.

Spas have a materiality that not only shapes the experiences of people who move about within their confines, but this materiality “matters” (Miller, 1998) because it has a way of mapping itself into the bodies of patrons. By stimulating the senses it creates impressions and emotions, and informs consciousness – potentially affecting visitors in ways that may not always be completely apparent to them. Understanding the role of the body and senses in this context is important because, while our senses play an enormously important role in shaping conscious thought, a very large portion of the impulses and information that we process works below the radar of conscious thought. As Lakoff & Johnson have argued:

Conscious thought is the tip of an enormous iceberg. It is the rule of thumb among cognitive scientists that unconscious thought is 95 percent of all thought – and that may be a serious underestimate. Moreover, the 95 percent below the surface of conscious awareness shapes and structures all conscious thought. If the cognitive unconscious were not doing this shaping, there could be no conscious thought (1999: 13, see even Thrift 2000: 40).

In this context, the spa is not only a geography of health and leisure consumed by patrons, but through its material organisation works the senses, stimulating different forms and tempos of mobility and immobility in its attempt to affect the moods and emotions of patrons. To the extent that it succeeds in making visitors feel reinvigorated, it does so through a rich multiplicity of sensuous cues that are registered only partially consciously in the minds of guests. It is the “feel of the experience” that is more important here than any logical understanding or awareness of it. But at the same time, the space of the spa is not simply something that is designed and orchestrated from above by the spa’s management; it is also created as people move through it and produce competing understandings of it. Let me expand upon this point with the aid of two more examples, before proceeding to some final comments.

The Organisational Space and Mobile Bodies

Behind the scenes, there are even other types of mobilities taking place than those described above. Varberg, for example, employs over 200 people (predominantly women) in any given month. This is a workforce that is constantly in motion at the spa, silently and discretely coming and going from room to room. The majority of these employees work on a part-time basis,

and like most employees in the service sector, receive modest wages. Many find their jobs so physically demanding that they cannot work full-time, and within the industry there is widespread recognition of this fact. As one branch publication explained, "Spas give you the impression of being about luxury, but no one in the field is strong enough to work full-time. At the same time, they have to make a living, so they keep on working" (Kellner, 2003: 22). The ability of masseuses to plan their free time and recuperate from a week of heavy work is hindered by a rotating on-call system used by some spas in which personnel are on-call and expected to come in to work if they are needed. Weekends tend to be the busiest time of the week for spas and as a result it is fairly common that employees who are on-call find themselves working weekends when they would otherwise have been free. Other strategies are also available. Another of Sweden's larger spas relies heavily upon young women who come directly from diverse masseuse training programs, and puts them to work full-time. As a result, many quit their job within a year (*Svensk Hotellrevy*, 2003: 23). Here it seems to be easier to replace worn-out employees than to make their working routines bearable.

Spas are labyrinths of mobile bodies. In the worst of cases they are sites of stress production, invoking a revolving-door policy of consuming bodies, wearing them out and ultimately discarding them. In other cases, attempts are made to avoid this by employing people on a part-time and flexible basis, or by encouraging employees engaged in strenuous activities to also perform less physically demanding tasks such as receptionist duties or serving in a facility's restaurants. Work schedules divided into days, half-days, weekends and evenings steer the constant flow of bodies between employment positions and stations.

This is, however, not a flow that is limited to the bodies of employees. The visiting of guests has a distinct rhythm of its own. And while spas make their best efforts to present themselves as places of relaxation that are disconnected from the problems and stresses of the outside world, they are nonetheless intimately interconnected with the pulse of the larger cultural economy in more ways than one.

Spas such as Varberg and Hasseludden tend to accommodate thousands of visitors every week. No single service could meet the wishes of all these clients. Consequently, larger spas such as these have had to develop innovative and creative strategies for delivering mass services that seem to be entirely individualised. Varberg achieves this, in part, by "mass customising" its product (cf. O'Dell, 2005c; Pine & Gilmore, 1999 & 1998). That is, the resort meets the desires of its clients by offering a standardised but wide-range of treatments and activities that people can choose from, combine and put together in a manner that allows them to *produce* their own individualised experience.

The package deals that Varberg offers constitute one way of handling this organisational need, allowing the spa management to more easily calculate room vacancies in advance, as well as anticipate personnel requirements in

meeting the shifting demand for meals, treatments and other activities in the spa's immediate future. Another organisational technique comes in the form of a timetable called an "Activities Menu". The menu divides each day into blocks of time ranging from 30 to 60 minutes, and guarantees exactly which activity or treatment patrons can participate in at any given time on any day. A sign-up sheet is posted in the spa's lobby that specifies the number of people who can participate in each activity. So, on Monday morning the schedule indicates:

07.30-08.00	Oriental morning
08.30-09.00	H ₂ O-Spinning
09.15-09.45	H ₂ O
10.15-11.00	Qi Gymnastics
11.15-12.15	Yoga

No two days offer exactly the same schedule, and the rule of first come-first served applies to many of the activities on the sign-up sheet. While relaxation is the goal, the clock rules here in much the same way as it has throughout the industrial era. The difference in this case lies in the fact that "spa time" is more cyclical than linear in nature. If you miss a specific activity that you have been looking forward to, it is bound to reappear on the schedule in the coming days. In other words, it is still available to you if you stay long enough. In the end, however, it is through processes of internalised discipline – which were themselves honed and developed with the breakthrough of the industrial era – that the spa and its patrons work to alleviate stress and burnout.

Time is of the essence, meals are served within the span of rather exact time periods, and treatments are measured in minutes. Varberg instructs its guests to arrive at their pre-ordered treatments five minutes ahead of schedule. By spa standards, these are rather lax time constraints. Other spas go as far as to demand your presence fifteen minutes in advance of your massage or treatment, and can even explicitly warn that lateness will be deducted from the time of your treatment. In other words, it is the consumer and not only the labourer/producer who has the primary responsibility of watching the clock and meeting time requirements. The spa is presumed to function like a well-ordered institution in which its employees are in their places and waiting for the next scheduled production unit to pass through. The greatest threat to this order is the undisciplined body of the visitor that finds itself unable to meet the agreed upon time schedule. Discipline is essential to the functioning of this machine. Backups in production can simply not occur, as they threaten the quality of the product provided to the next customer.

At Varberg, work schedules, activities menus and package deals are crucial organisational instruments that help the spa handle and facilitate a regime of flexibility that keeps both patrons and employees on the go – moving them

from room to room, providing them with a series of activities to keep them busy, and clearly defining the stations and time frames in which to perform their work (or leisure). Other cultural theorists have assertively argued for the need to more greatly appreciate the capacity of flexibility to “arouse anxiety” (Sennett, 1998:9) and “uncertainty” (Bauman, 2000: 147) within the ranks of the labour market. These are aspects of working-place flexibility that spa employees face; somewhat paradoxically, however, it is also via an exposure to similar processes and organisational strategies that spa patrons strive to flee stress and anxiety – and in many cases, claim to succeed in this pursuit. Regimes of flexibility, it seems, do more than produce stress.

In other places (O'Dell, 2004 & 2005b), I have argued for a need to better understand the kinaesthetic tension between cultural processes of stasis and mobility and the manner in which they become morally charged in daily life (see also Klinkmann, 2005).¹³ By juxtaposing the work schedules of spa employees with the activity schedules offered to visitors, my intention here is to argue for a need to further interrogate the question of what the demands (and expectations) of flexibility and mobility do with us in shifting contexts. Why do regimes of flexibility and mobility seem to “break people down” in some contexts but “build them up” in others? As I have argued throughout this text, spas endeavour to produce serenity and recharge their patrons, by carefully managing processes of cultural kinaesthesia, targeting guests' bodies and senses to affect their emotions by continuously working competing modes of mobility and stasis in a morally charged context that is defined in terms of wellness, health and (via the protestant ethic) increased economic productivity. Interestingly, at Varberg corporal tempos of activity, which among other things are associated with productivity in working life, are re-invoked and re-contextualised in a manner that (perhaps not so surprisingly) seems to reassure guests of the facility's ability to have a productive and rejuvenating effect upon them.¹⁴ This may seem paradoxical, even “illogical”, but to the extent that it works, it does so because it all makes sense to the body, at some level. And this is perhaps what is most important in this context.

As Nigel Thrift has pointed out (2004), drawing upon the work of cognitive theorists, we live in a world in which our consciousness lags after us by 0.8-1.5 seconds. That is, most people require nearly a half to a full second of “thinking time” in which to become aware of occurrences around them. Consciousness is, in other words, something that forms and develops in us, and because of this, it is something of an after-the-fact construction (Nørretranders, 1998: 289f.). In targeting our senses, spas (and many other actors within the experience economy) are essentially engaged in a project that aims to colonise the pre-reflexive gap between our bodies and our consciousness, working to affect the latter through the former. Meaning, in this context, is transferred/communicated not solely by words, text or language, but more importantly through the corporal impressions generated from spatial practices (Lefebvre's first space, 1991: 38; see even Merrifield, 2000: 174f.; Soja, 1996: 66).

It is here, I would argue, between the body and conscious thought, that magic is worked. As Marcell Mauss has pointed out, magic is nothing if not a social phenomenon that works to meet people's particular needs in specific cultural contexts (2001: 174f.). And here it must be noted that the rise of spas' popularity in Sweden over the past decade curiously coincides with an anxiety-ridden discourse found throughout the country addressing issues of burnout, stress and sick leave. It is a discourse in which politicians, doctors and other experts have continuously painted a picture of a public health problems of epidemic proportions, which newspaper headlines would have readers believe is spiralling out of control.

At the same time, the effects of Neoliberalism have increasingly made themselves felt in Sweden, leading to a condition in which the welfare state with its protective and paternalistic social policies has been put on the retreat. Whereby citizens once expected to receive support from larger collectivities, they are now increasingly left with the responsibility of taking care of themselves.¹⁵ Within this context, it is perhaps not surprising to find that people's anxieties have led to the development of "new" arenas – such as spas – in which they hope to find not only relaxation and wellness but even "new energies", rejuvenation and a last defence against burnout.

The degree to which spas can actually provide these sensations varies from case to case. Nonetheless, whether one speaks with managers, masseuses or the patrons they serve, there is a widespread belief in the power of touch, and in the fact that a stay at a spa can help people feel better. In the cases in which patrons do leave the spa feeling better, magic has been worked – but it is a magic that emanates from the subtle mobilisation of the body and senses, produced in a context in which patrons often hopefully anticipate an affect. To some extent, it is a magic whose greatest power may be derived from the fact that it comes from within, almost sneaking up through the senses into consciousness. But this is also its frailty.

Spas utilise their promotional materials to help develop a space of anticipation for their patrons' visits, and carefully design their facilities to stimulate the senses in an appropriate manner that may work magic. However, they never fully control the processes they set in motion. In this regard I am reminded of Anita, a 69-year-old woman who regularly practiced Qigong and had been visiting Varberg for nearly ten years when I met her. She glowingly described her spa experiences and the joys they provided her, including a feeling of being pampered and being taken care of. But with disappointment in her voice, she admitted to having recently been let down by a yoga session she had attended. Her body would not conform to the demands of the Lotus position, and protested. She was surprised, and assured me she would probably never try yoga again. In the lived space of daily life, her own body had betrayed her expectations and the magic was broken, at least temporarily.

Anita's disappointment is important to reflect upon here in closing, because it was neither planned nor expected. It was a product of lived expe-

rience, and worked to subvert the best efforts of Varberg, at the same time that it destabilised Anita's own strong belief in the spa's ability to make her feel good. In this regard, it returns us to de Certeau's words and reminds us, "we mustn't take people to be fools" (1988:176). The processes of everyday life may be highly structured and steered by many different interests, spatial practices and market forces (among other things), but they can also produce unexpected responses that challenge taken-for-granted understandings of the surrounding world. In this context, the body and senses play an important role as geographies of meaning production that we still need to understand more fully. My intent here has been to highlight some of the ways in which this works, and to argue for the further development of a form of cultural theory focussing more explicitly on the manner in which the body and senses shape our understandings of the world around us – not solely via processes of logic, but even through hard to describe feelings and emotions. As it turns out, the linkages which exist between the body, senses and emotions may be more important in the interpretation of culture than we ever imagined, working subtly below the level of conscious thought, ever affecting how we think.

Notes

1. I have translated this and all other quotes that originally appeared in Swedish. It should also be noted that all references to this undated Varberg brochure were published after the 2002 brochure, most likely in 2004).
2. The Travel Daily News reported these numbers on September 20, 2005 (www.traveldailynews.com/makeof.asp?central_id=521&permanent_id=17).
3. The term "Botox parties" is a slang expression for a form of spa alternative that is currently trendy in Manhattan and that is in some cases more formally referred to as "Medical Spas". These are facilities that offer everything from ordinary, non-intrusive facials to Botox procedures and plastic surgery (see Cooke, 2004).
4. This phenomenon is not limited to medicine. As other cultural theorists have argued, much of the cultural phenomena associated with modernity have unfortunately often been aligned with processes of demystification and disenchantment. Increasingly, however, these and other scholars have questioned the accuracy of this academic (and popular) propensity to define magic and modernity as antagonistically opposed, and have insisted upon the need to reconsider the manner in which magic may still operate as an integral aspect of modernity. My intention here is to align myself with this perspective, and illustrate one way in which magic might be understood as a vitally integrated aspect of daily

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life in contemporary society (for a larger discussion of this issue, as well as examples of other studies working in this vein, see Berg, 2003; Löfgren & Willim, 2005; Meyer & Pels, 2003; Taussig, 1993; Thrift, 2000).

5. Although, as I have argued in other places (O'Dell, 2005a), the world of spas is also very rich in Christian iconography, and quite often legitimates its own activities through contemporary appeals to the Protestant Ethic (Weber 1958).
6. These specific quotes are taken from Zernike (2005: 9) and Cereceda (2002: 49), respectively, but are representative of a few of the larger trends currently in vogue in the spa industry.
7. This being said, it should be noted that the spa managers I have spoken with are, in many cases, very market savvy. They weigh their options carefully before developing new profiles and products. And as I shall describe below, they pay close attention to the details of their spas' appearance, organization, and image. The successful marketing of these establishments *is* an issue of which they are keenly aware. However, in what follows I argue that this is not enough to explain the success of the spa industry in the decades around the turn of the 21st century. There is more at issue here than slick and appealing promotional material.
8. Not only is this confirmed in the words of spa visitors I have spoken with, but also in the fact that management at a few of the spas I have studied point out that a large portion (in some cases nearly 50%) of their business is generated by return visits. A weekend visit to a spa can cost well over 5,000 SEK (while a five-day stay can begin at over 8,000 SEK) with extra treatments, activities and spa products pushing the price even higher. Against this background, the occurrence of repeat visits is a strong indicator of customer satisfaction.
9. The analysis provided in the following section is based upon fieldwork I have conducted at Hasseludden, Varberg and other spas. It is constituted by a form of autoethnography based on my own perceptions and impressions of the sites at which I worked. But it is also informed by interviews I have conducted with spa employees and management, as well as discussions I have had with spa patrons, as well as conversations I have overheard in the course of participant observation. For a broader discussion of the advantages and limits of autoethnography and the use of the ethnographers' own experiences in the production of knowledge see Marcus, 1998: 246; Mathiesen Hjemdahl, 2003; O'Dell, 1999: 257ff. and Reed-Danahay, 1997.
10. Hasseludden's homepage explains that "Yasuragi is...the name of our bathing facilities in which you can enjoy several different types of pools – warm indoor springs, hot outdoor springs, and cooling swimming pools" (www.hasseludden.com). Ironically, a manager at the facility claimed that until the *Yasuragi* concept was developed, the place looked like any other bland municipal Swedish bathhouse from the early seventies – a concrete bunker constructed of poured cement. It was, in his view, a place that originally lacked any deeper sense of charm or aura.
11. The preconditions for movement established by the *yukata* may be even more apparent for people, such as myself, not accustomed to wearing robes or tight-fitting dresses. In this sense, issues of gender and previous experiences of mobility may work to heighten or diminish the perceptions facilitated by the *yukata*.
12. This being said, it should be noted that impressions of auto-immobility are fragile. They are constantly destabilized by forms of micro-mobilities built into the textures of the music that is used to create a sense of serenity and stillness. This includes everything from the very rhythm of the music and the subtlest of stereo effects it may include, to such phenomena as the sounds of running water, rain, and wind that can accompany many New Age recordings. The sensations created in the treatment room may be described in terms of calmness, serenity, or a slowing of time, and these are sensations that may be partially reinforced by processes of auto-immobility, but it must be pointed out that they are also achieved through the subtle (and not so subtle) invocations of different forms of mobility.

13. Webster's *New World Dictionary* defines kinaesthesia as "the sensation of position, movement, tension, etc. of parts of the body, perceived through nerve end organs in muscles, tendons and joints" (1984:776).
14. The processes involved here might be likened (perhaps not coincidentally) to the processes of turning your enemy's powers against her/him, which Weiner (2003: 148:f.) has argued are an integral aspect of the working of magic in some contexts.
15. Cf. Bauman 1997 & 1998; Harvey 2000; Sennett 1999:19ff. See also Castells (1997:252ff., and to a lesser extent 1996:213) for a discussion on the manner in which the downsizing of the welfare state is linked to larger economic processes and competitiveness between nation-states.

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IV

A Mediatized Sense of Space

Geographies of Tourist Photography

Choreographies and Performances

Jonas Larsen

Tourism and photography are modern twins. Since its early invention, photography has become associated with travelling. At a time when steamships and railways made the world physically more within reach, photographs made it visually at hand. Photographers travelled to faraway places, photography soon became a ritual practice of tourism and photographic objects roamed the globe, which, in turn, engendered a train of ideas, objects, places, cultures and people. The modern world's lust for visibility and geographical movement accelerated tremendously with these inventions; by working *together* they caused a profound multiplication of images and sights, an unprecedented geographical extension of the field of the visible. Photography is very much a travelling phenomenon – a constitutive part of modernity's travelling cultures.

Contemporary tourism is intrinsically constructed culturally, socially and materially through images and performances of photography, and vice versa. The tourism industry invests enormously in photographic images to choreograph desirable “place myths”, desiring bodies and photogenic places, and it has become almost unthinkable to embark on holiday without taking the camera along, writing postcards and returning home with many snapshot memories. We know that we are reproducing a cliché, but photography performances are pleasurable and our holiday photos that celebrate the world's famous places, our achievements and personal relationships are precious belongings.

This chapter explores the roles of photography in tourism and how photography and place intersect in tourism. It is an introduction to how tourism photography has been studied across tourism studies as well as sociology, geography and cultural studies. It is particularly concerned with examining how the relationships between cameras, images, places and tourists are portrayed. How does photography mediate tourists' experiences of places and produce tourist geographies? How is modern tourism shaped by modern image cultures and what are the connections between tourism studies and media studies?

The first part of the chapter discusses how cultural accounts of tourism have been dominated by sociologist John Urry's notion of the "tourist gaze" (1990/2002), which brings out the image-mediated nature of seeing and picturing in tourism as well as the "imaginative geographies" of tourist landscapes. I review research that examines how media geographies produce tourism geographies, how representational spaces and physical spaces are complexly folded into each other, substituting and enhancing each other in contingent ways (see also Crouch and Lübbren 2003; Crouch, Jackson and Thompson 2005).

The second part of the chapter examines practices of tourist photography more explicitly. I show how the performed nature of tourist photography paradigmatically is explained via a "vicious hermeneutic circle". I make the argument that this model portrays commercial photography as all-powerful machinery that turns the photographic performances of *tourists* into a ritual of 'quotation' by which tourists are framed rather than framing; they are drowned in a sea of swirling images. Drawing on theoretical ideas of embodiment and performance and earlier ethnographic research of tourist photography (Larsen 2003, 2005), I write a new account that sees tourist photography as *performed* rather than preformed, and tourist photographers as framing as much as being framed. It is suggested that the nature of tourist photography is a complex 'theatrical' one, of corporeal, expressive actors, scripts and choreographies, staged and enacted "imaginative geographies". Tourist photographers are thus choreographed by images, but their picturing practices are not fully determined by this scripting.

The Tourist Gaze and Compulsive Photography

The first work that actually touched upon the relationship between tourism and photography was cultural commentator Susan Sontag's *On Photography* (1977). She made the case that photography dramatically transformed the perception of the world by turning it into a "society of spectacles" where circulating images overpower reality: 'reality' becomes touristic, an item for visual consumption. Prior to photography, the visual texture of objects and places did not travel geographical or social space well. Painters have always been keen travellers, and long before photography's invention they lifted particular places out of their 'dwellings' and transported them into new spatial and temporal contexts as objects. However, these objects were time-consuming to produce, relatively difficult to transport and one-of-a-kind. The ability of photography to objectify the world as an exhibition, to arrange the entire globe for visual consumption, is particularly stressed by Sontag:

[Photography's] main effect is to convert the world into a department store or a museum-without-walls in which every subject is depreciated into an article of consumption, promoted into an item for aesthetic appreciation (1977:110).

Mobile photographers and touring photographic reproductions visualised and mobilised the globe by putting it on spectacular display. With Capitalism's arrangement of the world as a "department store" "the proliferation and circulation of representations ... achieved a spectacular and virtually inescapable global magnitude" (Grenblatt 1991:6). The real multiplication of circulating photographs took place with the introduction of the half-tone plate in the 1880s. This made possible the inexpensive mechanical reproduction of photographs in newspapers, periodicals, books and ads. Photography became coupled to consumer capitalism and the globe was now offered "in limitless quantities, figures, landscapes, events which had not previously been utilised either at all, or only as pictures for one customer" (Benjamin 1973:163; Osborne 2000:11). Thus, gradually, photographs became cheap mass-produced objects that made the world visible, aesthetic and desirable. All experiences were "democratised" through their translation into inexpensive photographic images (Sontag 1977:7). This is a society where participating in events becomes tantamount to seeing and capturing them as spectacular 'imagescapes':

It would not be wrong to speak of people having a *compulsion* to photograph: to turn experience itself into a way of seeing. Ultimately, having an experience becomes identical with taking a photograph of it, and participating in a public event comes more and more to be equivalent to looking at it in photographed form ... Today everything exists to end in a photograph (Sontag 1977:24).

Thus, tourism is one social practice that simultaneously shaped and was shaped by the "compulsive" photographic culture of cameras and images: "it seems positively unnatural to travel for pleasure without taking a camera along. Photographs will offer indisputable evidence that the trip was made, that the program was carried out, that fun was had". This observation leads her to the more speculative statement that "travel: becomes a strategy for accumulating photographs" (1977:9). According to Sontag, the very essence of late modern tourism is a gazing upon, and a picturing of, the already pictorial. In a similar fashion the influential human geographer Relph argued that the mass media created "placelessness", and that "the purpose of travel is less to experience unique and different places than to collect those places (especially on film)" (1976:85). Permeating both works is an assumption that mass media destroy authentic experiences.

Sontag's ideas were transported into tourist studies by John Urry, who dates the 'birth' of the "tourist gaze" to the same year as the invention of photography (the 'birth' of photography can formally be dated to around 1839-1841 with Talbot's and Daguerre's almost simultaneous announcements of two distinct photographic processes – the negative/positive process and the Daguerreotype):

This is the moment [1840] when the 'tourist gaze', that peculiar combining together of the means of collective travel, the desire for travel and the tech-

niques of photographic reproduction, becomes a core component of western modernity ... tourism and photography came to be welded together and the development of each cannot be separated from the other (2002:148,149).

Photography, the “tourist gaze” and tourism comprise an ensemble in which each derives from and enhances the other. Travel and gazing are modern twins, and by working together have caused an unprecedented geographical extension of the “tourist gaze” (see Larsen 2004). In Urry’s work photography simulates, choreographs and stimulates physical travel in complex ways.

One reason tourism and photography cannot be separated is that mobile photographs afford what Urry has termed “imaginative mobility”, armchair travel through books, images and television (2000). The lust for “imaginative travel” or “mechanically reproduced” images, as Walter Benjamin once argued, represents “a desire of the contemporary masses to bring things ‘closer’ spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction. Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction” (1973:225). Transported to tourist studies, Benjamin’s work suggests that sightseeing no longer requires corporeal travel and bodily proximity to sights. Paintings and attractions now travel to the spectator as photographs rather than the other way round. Studies by historical geographers and art historians have documented how photography’s “department store” or “museum-without-walls” was immensely spellbinding to the general public, for whom foreign travel remained a figment of the imagination well into the twentieth century – expensive, risky and fatiguing. The photo book and armchair provided delightful world world-tour tickets that released the body from tiring and daunting travelling (Schwartz 1996; Osborne 2000; Larsen 2004).

Secondly, photography and tourism comprise an ensemble because photography has been crucial in constructing tourism’s visual nature of *sightseeing* or gazing. As Urry says:

The objects and technologies of cameras and films have constituted the very nature of travel, as sites turn into sights, they have constructed what is worth going to ‘sightsee’ and what images and memories should be brought back (2002:129).

Elsewhere he argues:

Indeed much tourism becomes in effect a search for the photogenic; travel is a strategy for the accumulation of photographs... (Urry 1990:139).

With the notion of the “tourist gaze”, Urry makes the argument that the visual sense is the organising sense within otherwise multi-sensual encounters, since it is the “tourist gaze” that identifies what is out-of-the-ordinary and what is

the 'other' (2002:145). That modern tourism is organised around the visual sense is for Urry fundamentally bound to circulating objects and technologies of cameras and films, which again reflects modernity's "hegemony of vision" (Levin 1994; Jenks 1995; Urry 2000). In science, art and popular culture, vision has long been regarded as the noblest, most reliable and delightful of the senses. Western epistemology has tended to equate knowledge with representations, and they are judged according to how well they reflect an external reality (Evans 1999:12). In *The Birth of the Clinic* (1976), philosopher Michel Foucault shows that in nineteenth-century medical discourses and practices, "the eye becomes the depository and source of clarity". "This sovereign power of the gaze", science's empirical gaze, was said to have "marvellous density of perception, offering the grain of things as the first face of truth" (1976:xiii). The world of art and aesthetics, from the Renaissance to today, has valued vision and visual representation. John Ruskin claimed that "the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something...To see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion" (in Hibbitts 1994:257). Visual arts and mass media are crucial features of contemporary western societies where the most advanced and pervasive technologies are visually based. Vision is the sense that most have the greatest fear of losing (Rodaway 1994:119).

The concept of the gaze highlights that looking is a learned ability and that the pure and innocent eye is a myth. What the medic gaze saw, and made visible, was not a simple pre-existing reality simply waiting 'out there', according to Foucault. Instead it was an epistemic field, constructed linguistically as much as visually. Vision is what the human eye is competent in seeing, while gazing refers to the "discursive determinations" of socially constructed seeing, or "scopic regime": "how we are able to see, allowed or made to see, and how we see this seeing or the unseen herein" (Forster 1988:ix). To depict vision as natural or the product of atomised individuals naturalises the social and historical 'nature', and the power relations, of looking. Our eyes are socio-culturally framed and gazing is a performance that orders, shapes and classifies, rather than reflects, the world.

In this fashion, the "tourist gaze" draws attention to the organised and systematised nature of vision and picturing in tourism. While not authorised by a knowledge-monopoly institution, many professional tourist experts and language mediums such as film, television and photography attempt to construct and regulate our gaze as tourists (1990:1). The "tourist gaze" is not a matter of individual psychology but of socially patterned and learned "ways of seeing" (Berger 1972). It is a vision that is constructed through mobile images and representational technologies. Like the medic gaze, the power of the visual sense in modern tourism is crucially tied to and enabled by technologies such as camcorders, cameras and audio-visual shows at attractions. Even before the invention and later popularisation of photographic cameras, gazing was mediated by technologies – hybridised, prosthetic. To realise the desired picturesque scenery that the unassisted eye struggled to

form and possess, pre-photographic tourists employed technologies such as camera obscura and especially Claude Glasses (Andrews 1989; Ousby 1990).

The “tourist gaze” suggests that tourist places are produced and consumed through images and representational technologies, and that gazing is constructed through and involves the collection of signs. Unlike Benjamin (1973), Urry suggests that photographic reproductions produce appetites for seeing places at their unique place of residence: to be bodily co-present with them.

He builds upon insights in the classical *The Tourist* (1999[1976]), in which sociologist Dean MacCannell argues that mechanically reproduced “markers” are “most responsible for setting the tourist in motion on his journey to find his true object. And he is not disappointed. Alongside of the copies of it, it has to be The Real Thing” (1999:45). Travelling reproductions produce place-bound sights’ importance or authenticity. The sight becomes authentic only when the first copy is produced. MacCannell defines a tourist attraction as relational network of *tourists*, a *sight*, and what he calls *markers* (1999:41). Markers are any piece of seducing or thrilling representation labelling an object as a sight to the “tourist gaze”. They are both “on” and “off” the attraction’s location and take many forms: guidebooks, travel literature, souvenirs, advertisements, postcards and so on (1999:41,110-111). Markers instruct what to see as well as how to see it and value it. Tourists consume places visually through participating in a sign relation between markers and sight: “...the important element in (pleasant?) sightseeing need not be the sight. More important than the sight, at least, is some marker involvement ... a tourist may elect to get his thrills from the marker instead of the sight” (1999:113, 115).

The “tourist gaze” suggests that tourists are folded into a world of texts, images and representational technologies when gazing in and upon landscapes. This is even the case with the “romantic gaze” that is drawn to historical attractions and auratic, untouched landscapes (Urry 2002:150). Historically, the “romantic gaze” developed with the formation of picturesque tourism in late eighteenth-century England. The hybridised picturesque eye of skilled connoisseurship and Claude glasses derived pleasures from landscapes features that possessed resemblance to known works of writing and painting. They searched for, and valued, “that kind of beauty which would look well in a picture” (Ousby 1990:154; Andrews 1989; Löfgren 1999). North European tourists constantly consumed and pictured places through imported landscape images, and the distinction between nature and art dissolved into a beautiful circular. Landscape became a reduplication of the picture that preceded it. An illustrative example of the conventions of picturesque sightseeing is provided in Thomas West’s guidebook to the Lake District, highly influential at the time:

By this course the lake lies in order more pleasing to the eye, and grateful to the imagination. The change of scenes is from what is *pleasing* to what is surprising, from the delicate and elegant touches of *Claude*, to the noble scenes

of *Poussin*, and, from these, to the stupendous, romantic ideas of *Salvator Rosa* (in Andrews 1989:159).

This is West's much-loved route as the Lake District in this perspective imitates the Italian landscape paintings of the leading painters: Claude, Poussin and Rosa.

Tourism vision is increasingly media-mediated, and Urry suggests the "*mediatised gaze*" (2002:151). This gaze celebrates places made famous in media worlds of global popular culture. Increasingly, people travel to actual places to experience virtual places. Major films and soap operas often cause incredible tourist flows where few roamed before the location was made visible on the silver screen (Tooke and Baker 1996; Riley, Baker and Van Doren 1998; Couldry 2005). This frees tourism to invent an infinitude of new destinations. There has been an upsurge in 'media pilgrimage', according to media scholar Nick Couldry, which "is both a real journey across space, and an acting out in space of the constructed 'distance' between 'ordinary world' and 'media world'" (2005:72).

In 1996, for instance, the British Tourist Authority (BTA) launched a *Movie Map* and *Movie Map Web Site* to promote Britain's cinematic geographies as tourist geographies¹. This movie map reflects, in their own words, "that an increasing number of visitors to Britain come in search of the locations featured in their favourite films and TV shows". Their latest campaign utilises the tremendous global success of *Harry Potter* as the lens to "discover the magic of Britain – its 'magical and mysterious attractions'".

So while the sense of sight affords geographies of instant surfaces, we can see that tourists do not face them head-on or passively. Gazing is not merely seeing, but involves the cognitive work of interpreting, evaluating, drawing comparisons and making mental connections between signs and their referents, and capturing representative signs photographically. Gazing is a practice. Individual performances of gazing at a particular sight are framed by cultural styles, circulating images and texts of this and other places, as well as personal experiences and memories. As ethnologist Orvar Löfgren says: "simultaneously moving in physical terrain and in *fantasylands* or *mediaworlds*, we create vacationsapes. Personal memories mix with collective images" (1999:2). There are several ways of gazing in tourism, and different tourists look at 'difference' differently.

Through representational performances, over time most tourist places have been inscribed with specific "imaginative geographies" that are materialised and mobilised in and through books, brochures, postcards and photo albums. Tourist places are not given or fixed; they can appear and disappear, change meaning and character, and move about according to how they are produced and reproduced in media cultures (Shields 1991; Coleman and Crang 2002; Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Larsen, Urry 2004). As literary theorist Edward Said says: "people, places, and experiences can always be described by a book, so much that the book acquires greater authority, and use, even than the

actuality it describes" (1995:93). It is virtually impossible for Western people to visit places where they have not travelled imaginatively some time ago, if not many times. We have all been to New York countless times through *NYPD Blues*, *Spin City*, *Seinfeld*, *Friends*, *Sex in the City*, Woody Allen, Spike Leigh, Wayne Wang and many other series and film directors. Walking the streets of New York triggers the memory of infinite images. Contemporary sightseers, when walking and driving in foreign asphalt worlds, are constantly folded into a 'multimediascape' of books, magazines, paintings, postcards, ads, soap operas, movies, video games and music. "Markers" of tourism seem to be everywhere these days, where the "tourist gaze" and "media gaze" highly overlap and reinforce each other, whether people travel corporeally or simply imaginatively through the incredible amount of global images that make up our everyday media cultures.

"Imaginative geographies" have material consequences, and thereby undermine the distinction between the real and the perceived. They constantly produce remarkable buildings, views, photographs and places (Haldrup and Larsen 2007). Photographs do not only make places visible, performable and memorable; places are also sculptured materially as simulations of idealised photographs: 'postcard places'. To cite art historian Peter Osborne:

All tourists, whether or not they take photographs, consume places and experiences which are photographic, as they have been made or have evolved to be seen, above all to be photographed ... Such places are often photographs materialised in three-dimensional form (2000:79).

So instead of understanding photographs as reflections or distortions of a pre-existing world, geographers have begun to grasp photography as a technology of world-making (Crang 1997:362; Schwartz 1996; Schwartz and Ryan 2003). Photography performances are thus not separate from the places where they contingently happen; they are not taking place in inert, fixed cartographically coordinated spaces. They are performances *of* place that partly produce, transform and connect them to other places. Places are always part and parcel of performance events and narratives (Crang and Coleman 2002; Larsen 2005).

Performances of Photography

In most writing, tourist photography comprises artful photographers, touring images and pre-programmed tourists (on the following, see Larsen 2005). The metaphor of the "vicious hermeneutic circle" is paradigmatically employed to illustrate the choreographed nature of actual photographic sightseeing (Albers and James 1988; Osborne 2000; Schroeder 2002; Jenkins 2003). In Urry's words:

Much tourism involves a hermeneutic circle. What is sought for in a holiday is a set of photography images, which have already been seen in tour company brochures or on TV programmes. While the tourist is away, this then moves on to a tracking down and capturing of those images for oneself. And it ends up with travellers demonstrating that they really have been there by showing their version of the images that they had seen before they set off (2002:129).

Thus, effectively, people travel in order to see and photograph what they have already consumed in image form: thus, mobile reproductions are far more important than the sight itself that, in turn, is reduced to nothing but (another) picture. To cite Osborne:

In tourism the distance between the promotion and the promotion's object has been all but abolished. With photography and photographic seeing as prime commodity forms in tourism, the photographic image that promotes it is in many instances the very item consumed – the advertisement has become its own commodity (2000:84).

The “vicious hermeneutic circle” thus captures the idea that sightseeing is about consuming signs or markers. This model essentially portrays commercial photography as all-powerful machinery that turns the photographic performances of *tourists* into a ritual of quotation by which tourists are framed and fixed rather than framing and exploring (see Osborne 2000:81). Being apparently too automatic and too instantaneous, it is not regarded as a performance as is dance, walking, painting and so on; it is pre-formed rather than performed. It renders an image of tourist photography as an over-determined stage that permits no space for creativity, self-expression or the unexpected. Such models “rapidly pacify the tourist – that is they tend to experience, perceive and receive but not *do*” (Crang 1999:238). This explains the many studies of commercial images² and the neglect of photography performances enacted, and the images produced, by tourists themselves³. Tourist studies have predominantly been preoccupied with ‘dead’ images, thus excluding from analysis the lively social practices producing tourism’s sign economy. A too-fixed focus on *already* produced images and *already* inscribed sights and places render the tourist a passive sightseer – “all eyes, no bodies” – consuming sights in prescribed fashions and places become lifeless, predetermined and purely cultural. Analysing photographs “without looking for practices can only produce a mortuary geography drained of the actual life that inhabits these places” (Crang 1999:249). Implicitly at least, too often real places and their images, media and tourism experiences are conflated with the result that tourist places are dematerialised and tourists are disembodied. Writings on tourist photography have produced lifeless tourists, eventless events and dead geographies.

Edward Said once briefly observed that “the very idea of representation is a theatrical one” (1995:63). The “vicious hermeneutic circle” obscures the fact

that much camerawork might be densely performed, bodily and creatively. Grasping tourist photography as a performance can highlight the embodied practices and social dramas of it. The camerawork of tourists is concerned not only with “consuming places” (Urry 1995) or hegemonic “place-myths” (Shields 1991) but also with producing social relations, such as family life (Haldrup and Larsen 2003; Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Larsen, Urry 2004). Humans enact photography bodily, creatively and multi-sensually in the company of significant others (one’s family, partner, friends and so on) and with a (future) audience at hand or in mind. The humanly performed aspects of photography are visible in relation to practices of *taking* photos, *posing* for cameras, and *choreographing* posing bodies. Tourist photography is intricately bound with self-presentation and monitoring bodies, with “strategic impression management” (Goffman 1959). Photography is part of the ‘theatre’ that modern people enact to produce their *desired* togetherness, wholeness and intimacy (Kuhn 1995; Hirsch 1997; Holland 2001). The act of being photographed makes one acutely aware of one’s body and its appearance; cameras make one act. As Roland Barthes reflects: “I have been photographed and I knew it. Now, once I feel myself observed by the lens, everything changes: I constitute myself in the process of “posing”, I instantly make another body for myself, I transform myself in advance into an image” (2000:10). In performances of posing, the body is brought into play as a culturally coded sign – of happiness, politeness, attractiveness, intimacy and so on.

‘Shooting’, posing and choreographing are acted out, consciously and not least unconsciously (habitually), in response to dominant mythologies, present and new, ‘touristic’ and ‘non-touristic’, circulating in photo albums, television, films and magazines; they are choreographies that enable people to picture tourist places as picturesque and families as loving and intimate and the like. When stepping into particular stages, pre-existing discursive, practical, embodied norms and concrete guidance regarding good photographic views by guides and signs choreograph tourists’ cameras (Edensor 1998:130-131). The problem with the “vicious hermeneutic circle” is *not* that it stresses structures of choreographies, but that it does it in a *too* deterministic fashion. Such choreographies are guidelines, blueprints, and nothing more (or less), and enable as much as they constrain creativity between prefixing choreographies and improvisational performances. Tourists are not merely written upon, but are also enacting and inscribing places with ‘stories’. I follow anthropologist Schieffelin, who argues that “performance is located at the creative, *improvisatory* edge of practice in the moment it is carried out – through everything that comes across is not necessarily knowingly intended” (1999:199). Tourists occasionally perform tourism reflexively, but a great deal of tourism life is conducted habitually.

From a performance perspective, tourist photography does not so much mirror – good or poor – realities as it creates new ones. Photographing is about producing rather than consuming geographies. “Images are not something that appears over or against reality, but parts of practices through which

people work to establish realities. Rather than look to mirroring as a root metaphor, technologies of seeing form ways of grasping the world" (Crang 1997:362). This is a world where embodied, expressive subjects enact, re-enact and transgress cultural scripts of connoisseurship, aesthetics of the body, "impression management", family life, friendship, love and so on. This is why it is pivotal to study *how* embodied families go about making photographs.

My ethnographic research at a famous tourist sight in Denmark showed that most tourist photography consists of enacted, lengthy embodied visions involving touch, body language and talking, rather than a quick shutter release. In words and actions tourists express their eagerness and passion in making pictures, experimenting with composition, depth, choice of motif, directing, staging, clicking, moving on. Bodies of photography erect, kneel, bend sideways, forwards and backwards, lean on ruins, lie on the ground (see Larsen 2003; Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Larsen, Urry 2004).

Collage 1. (first part) 'Choreography'



Collage 1. (second part) 'Choreography'

Collage 1 (paparazzi-style pictures taken by me) shows two women's determined and sustained efforts to stage and capture their children. First, we witness the staging of the event. As if ill-clad for camera work, perhaps feeling too hot and stuffy, the camera-wearing woman takes off her jacket. Then, meticulously, one after another, she positions the boys (only the older one is taking his own seat). Next, the actual shooting begins. She squats so that the 'camera eye' is more level with the eyes of the children. Direct eye contact is established. The other woman now joins in the action. Standing just behind the kneeling photographer with her eyes fixed on the boys, she waves vigorously with her arms in the air. Then, a small break occurs and the photographer changes shooting position, straightening up her body slightly. Now events intensify. For the next minute or so the photographer constantly frames and shoots, while the other woman's arms make all sorts of disco-aerobic moves and shakes – all acted out with a big smile on her face. Al-

though the boys' arms are not 'joining in', their faces are probably laughing and a joyful holiday photo is produced.

The collage also illustrates how the object of tourist photography is not merely static, distanced scenery, but also significant others. In addition to looking at landscapes, tourists enact them corporeally, playing, acting, directing and posing. Photography is as much a 'way of directing' and 'way of acting' as a "way of seeing". Places are not only, or even primarily, visited for their immanent attributes but are also, and more centrally, woven into the webs of stories and narratives people produce when they sustain and construct their social identities. Places become scenes for acting out and framing active and tender life for the camera.

People have learnt the importance and the pleasure of exhibiting themselves in a world in which the consciousness of one's constant visibility has never been more intense. Reflecting that photography generally does not reflect geographies so much as it produces them, *new* bodies and 'ways of being together' are constantly produced when camera action begins. In accordance with the late modern cultural code that tenderness and intimacy epitomise blissful family life, families act out tenderness and intimacy for the camera and one other: they hold hands, hug and embrace. Family frictions are almost automatically put on hold when the camera appears. Tourist photography produces unusual moments of intimate co-presence rare outside the limelight of the camera eye. Tourist photography simultaneously produces and displays the family's closeness. The proximity comes into existence because the camera event draws people together. In this sense, it is cameras, public places and cultural scripts that make *proper* family life possible – relaxed and intimate. However, to produce signs of loving and intimate family life, families need to enact it physically, touching each other. To produce signs of affections they need to be affective. Signs of affections equal affections (signifieds) in family hugs.

Conclusion: New Technologies, New Performances?

This article has discussed how traditional representational accounts of tourist photography have studied tourists' photography practices through decoding commercial photographs as these are believed to choreograph tourists' cameras to such an extent that they return home with copies of the images that lured them to travel in the first place. Here, camera-working tourists are too easily and too quickly seen as passive, disembodied and pre-figured audiences, rather than as producers of meaningful photographs. The popular "vicious hermeneutic circle" parallels the classical media studies opposition between powerful media institutions and passive audiences. This model uncritically assumes that tourists' cameras are unambiguously choreographed

by commercial photographs and official glittering “tourist gaze” or “place myths”, so practices of photographing are reduced to a disembodied, mechanical press-of-the-button: even when producing images, people are still consumed by commercial images. To reinstall bodies, practices and creativity, tourist photography should be reconfigured as an embodied performance that takes place in the ambivalent space between prefixing gazes and images, technological affordances and productive, expressive bodies that encounter places and place-images multi-sensually, materially as well as symbolically.

This rethinking of tourist photography is inspired by recent nonrepresentational theories and methods arguing that future geographical research should be less concerned with representations and more with embodied, hybridised practices (see Lorimer 2005 for a review). This is also known as a “practice turn”. “Nonrepresentational geography is concerned with ‘performative’ ‘presentations’, ‘showings’ and ‘manifestations’ rather than merely ‘representation’ and ‘meaning’” (Thrift 1997:127). It works with the everyday as a set of skills that are highly performative. Nonrepresentational theory is concerned with bodily doings and technical enactments rather than images and meanings. However, it is *not* opposed to representations and imaginations as such; it seeks “critically to complement interpretations of the world that prioritise representations by engaging a path through which those representations may be negotiated in everyday life” (Crouch, Aronsson, Wahlström 2001:258). It is concerned with the “more-than-the-representational” (Lorimer 2005). Nonrepresentational research is therefore paradigmatically conducted through ethnographic studies of how circulating people, technologies, objects and representations perform places and social life (Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Larsen, Urry 2004). In this article I have briefly discussed how such non-representational ethnography allowed me to capture the corporeality, creativity and social dramas that make up the lived life of tourist photography at a tourist attraction like Hammerhus, thereby rescuing the study of tourist photography from the ‘still life’ of promotional literature.

A nonrepresentational approach to media studies shifts the focus from consumption to how ordinary people, as creative, expressive, hybridised beings, go about using media technologies and producing media products such as telephone calls, emails, music, film, web pages and photographs. It suggests that we speak of people as producers rather than consumers or audiences and everyday practices rather than spectacles.

Such a non-representational practice outlook is particularly helpful in analysing how the shift from paper-based to digital photography and camera-phone photography change performances of tourist photography – of making, storing, exchanging and valuing photographs – as these new technologies have material affordances that are different from those of traditional photography. One may speculate that tourists traditionally invested a great deal of energy in making and choreographing holiday photographs because the photos were expensive to develop and it was wrong to discard photo-

graphs of 'loved ones' being material objects 'full of life'. Almost no matter how the image turned out on paper, every click of the shutter-button was destined for a long life as a material object (Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Larsen, Urry 2004: Ch.6). However, with digital photography, if the 'image' does not charm instantly on the camera's screen it can be erased and a new one can be made at no extra cost. The affordances of digital photography potentially de-materialise, and make erasable and instantaneous, photographic practices and images. In what ways does this change how people go about performing photography, at attractions and at home? Are present photography performances taking place in front of a relatively instantaneous audience, now that camera-phones, Internet cafés, emails and travel blogs are the new ubiquitous material infrastructures that 'timelessly' transport images over great distances? The new temporal order of tourist photography seems to be 'I am here' rather than 'I was here' (Bell and Lyall 2005).

Notes

1. <http://www.visitbritain.com/corporate/links/visitbritain/campaigns.htm>.
2. See, for instance, Goos 1993; Dann 1996; Edwards 1996; Marckwick 2001; Waitt and Head 2002.
3. However, see Markwell 1997; Crouch and Grassick 2005.

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Chapter 15

Terra (in)cognita

Mediated America as Thirdspace experience

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Imaginary America

The United States of America is arguably the most mediated nation in the world. America – with its urban and suburban areas, its natural sceneries, vast deserts, roads, and motels, its media- and consumer culture, sports and superstars as well as the dreams, myths and *way of life* of the culture – has, by means of mediation, become a geo-psychic space across the globe. As is well documented, this territory occupied such a position in the European imagination for centuries¹, but in the post-war era (in Sweden as well as in other European countries engaged in nation-building projects) there was a renewed and unsurpassed need to relate to America as a myth and an ideal (Fehrenbach and Poiger 2000: xiv-xv). After the war the imaginary spell of the United States was reinvigorated, partly by modern media and communication technologies. One consequence of mediatisation was that America became highly *present*. In a Swedish radio show the US was even described as “our closest neighbour after Norway.” For Swedes, America seemed close by.

This chapter elaborates key deliberations of my doctoral dissertation *Amerikafantasier. Kön, medier och visualitet i svenska reseskildringar från USA 1945-63* (2005) (*Imaginary America: Gender, Media and Visuality in Swedish Post-war Travelogues*), which investigates the construction of an imaginary America in Swedish travel writing during the years 1945-63, paying attention to the three intersecting dimensions of *gender*, *media* and *visuality*.² The aim of the study is to place the Swedish relationship to the US within a cultural history of the media. I highlight the usefulness – if not the necessity – of a *media studies approach* and particularly a *visual studies perspective* for investigating the Swedish post-war relationship to America. When addressing the issue of an imaginary America, focusing one-sidedly on important contexts such as the cold war, the evolving welfare state or the building of a Swedish national identity fails to grasp vital aspects of the issue. Important shifts occur when we place media culture at the centre of the

analysis of 'images of America' or as I would rather express it, *fantasies* about the nation. It allows the embracing of more of the conflicting and incompatible notions and affections, as well as dreams, myths, symbols and visualising strategies. It further allows for moving beyond searching for "pro-" or "anti-" Americanism in the material, something that has been the organising principle in many previous studies on 'Americanisation'.

This process of cultural dissemination has been conceived in different ways and the focus has been primarily on the alleged consequences of the spread of American lifestyle, values, ideals and behaviour across the world.³ In this chapter I wish to resume the issue by framing it within an understanding of how, in the course of the twentieth century, (audio) visual geographies became increasingly detached from the symbolic spaces of national cultures (Robins 1995: 250) and realigned within a broader transnational visual culture or within a mass-mediated imaginary (Appadurai 1996). More specifically, I will focus attention on *the specific spatial experience* caused by this exposure of mediated image ideals of the physical locale of the US, for travelling Swedes in the 1950s. In this pursuit I will take on one of the key contentions among globalisation theorists, that in a globalised world, the ties of culture to place are weakened, and people are furnished with new cultural resources: a global cultural awareness (Tomlinson 1999). This awareness, the result of images migrating, includes acquaintance with remote landscapes. Distant places seem – and in effect become – highly *familiar* before they are experienced (see for instance Giddens, 1991: 26ff). In calling for a historicised approach to such claims, moreover, I will to some extent problematise them.

One expression of the magnetism exerted by the US after World War II was the fad among Swedes to cross the Atlantic in order to 'discover America.' The stream of travellers comprised journalists, writers, academics, artists, engineers, businessmen, diplomats and pastors. For many of the thousands of Swedes who embarked upon journeys to America in the immediate post-war period, travelling was not enough; many also felt the compulsion to communicate the journey, in words and images, in a travelogue. Quite a few of them were sent to the large country by a foundation, congregation, newspaper or organisation to evaluate particular features of America. The lure of the mediated nation also triggered them to 'edutain' the audience with stories about Americans and their way of life. The journeys were undertaken mostly from east to west and back again – or with a detour through the South or the northern states – but in some cases the travelogue represented only one specific site or region (Chicago or California, for example).

The travel books covered a large quantity of sites, themes and subjects. They were rife with diverse opinions and positions, which often resided within the same individual traveller. America seemed impossible to grasp in all its dynamic mobility, vastness and hybridity. Americans were not one people, but consisted of all peoples. This culture was equally odd in its implicit feminine character, as a young and visually dominated mass culture. Mass cul-

ture was viewed in an altogether ambivalent way as travellers were enthused by drive-in movies, advertising, etc. while at same time critiquing the lack of cultural standards in the young nation – bedside murders on radio shows, violence in comic books, the risk of television dulling the intellect and, last but not least, a whole array of problems related to American film. The large American cities also evoked a number of reactions and gazes, ranging from admiration and fascination to dystopian visions. Travellers exposed a possessive gaze of detached mastery, a neutral and scientific stance, zealous responses by overwhelmed tourists, as well a sentimental indignation or critique springing from identification with emigrants and less fortunate fortune seekers (Lagerkvist 2004). These journeys, alongside the habitual everyday mediations of the country in other media during this era, were pivotal in the production of an imaginary America in Sweden.

For one of these post-war travel writers, the author and journalist Vilgot Sjöman, travelling to the USA had meant a revelation. What was revealed to him was the truth beyond those filmic myths about the country that he had consumed as a child at afternoon performances in the movie theatre. Contrasting the visually mediated nation with the real one, Sjöman was disappointed. But, despite this, and despite his critique of McCarthyism, he found the nation to be “beautiful to inhale.” It was: “liberating and frightening and bitter and repulsive and once more liberating – in a never-ending chain of ambivalences” (1961: 23).

This chapter undertakes what happens to people’s relationship to and senses of places that have been subjected to a high degree of mediation. Media scholars have pointed to the specificities of mediated experiences (Thompson 1995: 228-232; Tomlinson 1999: 159). My concern regards how mediated experiences become interlaced with lived experiences. By focusing on the element of Lefebvre’s theory of spatialisation (1974/1991: 39-41) of “representational space” or, in Edward Soja’s terms, “spaces of representation” (1996: 61) – which is both fiction and fact, both imagined and lived – I will pay attention to instances when America was represented and fantasised about but was also reached and traversed, i.e. physically at hand. How did Swedish travellers experience the place they carried within them, as mediated visual memories, while touching ground in America? My purpose is also to show that the “chain of ambivalences” referred to by Sjöman as evoked by America – in fact the key notion that Swedes came to develop towards the country – is a matter which is chiefly made sense of within the realm of mediatisation.

I begin this trajectory by theoretically framing how the integration of the media culture of the time into travellers’ perceptions of the visited place, as well as into their previous fantasies about it, may be conceived of. This requires an understanding of the relationships between travelling and mediation.



Figure 1.

Source: Munthe (1960: 166-167)

Charting through Mediascapes and Memoryscapes: Travelling and Mediation

A recently initiated dialogue between travel theory/tourism studies and media studies has spurred queries about the relationships between travelling and mediation (see, for example, Rojek 1997; Edensor 1998; Duncan and Gregory 1999; Jansson 2002; Urry 2002; Lagerkvist 2004, 2005; Crouch et al. 2005). Crouch et al. (2005) delineate two main poles in the scholarly discussion of media and tourism which corresponds, in broad and simplified terms, to the divide in media and communication studies between approaches that emphasise cultural control and the power of the media and those cultural studies approaches that stress the creativity of media cultures as well as audience resistance to media output. (Media) tourism is regarded in terms of either *restrictions* by media and tourist institutions on the utopian urge among tourists, or of utopian *unboundedness* at the individual level. While I will return to the divide throughout this chapter, the purpose here is not to take a stand

on this issue. Instead, I will interrogate this intersection in detail, in search of how the journey to America became a *meaningful experience* for travellers.

To begin with, the issue of *mediation* needs to be expounded on. Scott Lash and Jonathan Friedman have highlighted the dual role of mediation, emphasising that communication involves *circulation* on two levels (1992: 20). Mediation, they argue, includes 1) the circulation of symbolic messages and 2) the technological apparatuses and media forms that are physically present in the built environment where people circulate. In America, correspondingly, travel writers encountered concrete physical objects and phenomena: built environments, landscapes and, not least, *media technologies*. How did they make sense of this tangible aspect of the media landscape? The sight of advertising in cities and along highways seemed to fascinate visitors (Figure 1). At Times Square and on Broadway in New York or on Hill Street in Los Angeles, the many media forms, sounds, lights, smells and people were regarded with ardent curiosity and thrill. In experiencing a number of new or old media forms including their *symbolic content* – advertising, television, drive-in movies and movie theatres such as Radio City Music Hall – travellers were, however, both inspired and repelled. Both dangers and hopes were projected onto (audio) visual media forms with an American accent. Uncle Sam was “image-minded” (Sundström 1955: 85) and the duality that visitors experienced before cultural expressions such as films and comic strips was a salient aspect of travellers’ mass culture debates.

To Friedman’s and Lash’s observation, however, one could add at least one more dimension. The material landscape was at once an *imaginary space* and travelling through America was in part travelling through an inner visual landscape of childhood and adolescence, dreams and memories. As people dwell and circulate in or pass through landscapes, cityscapes, etc., memories of media consumption are reactivated; journeys through America were journeys through *mediascapes and memoryscapes*. Hence, travelling is preferably analysed within the media culture out of which the journey grew.⁴

In *The Conquest of America*, Tzvetan Todorov places Columbus’s journey from 1492 within a long tradition of mediated interactions between Europeans and other cultures. Even at this point in time, centuries before the advent of the mass communication society, the pivotal role of mediation is emphasised when he asks: “but is not the travel narrative itself the point of departure, and not only the point of arrival of a new voyage? Did not Columbus himself set sail because he had read Marco Polo’s narrative?” (Todorov 1982/1999: 13).⁵ In this perspective, travelling becomes a *hermeneutic circle* in which itineraries and tracks are set in advance, and gazes are directed in accordance with those media representations that preceded the journey (Gunning 1995; Duncan and Gregory 1999; Crang 1999; Urry 1990/2002). In a media age, these traits of travelling become even more pressing. I have chosen three mutually dependent and overlapping concepts – yet, each with distinct analytical thrust – to describe how media cultures inform the hermeneutic circle of travelling and travel writing.

Travel accounts are the result of physical travel practices that follow – i.e. are inspired, although never completely determined by – a *script*. The outcome of the journey is a new travelogue, which contributes to new layers of imagined geographies: new input into the script. Hence, the script is both performed and produced by the traveller. Scripting, according to Derek Gregory “...accentuates the production (and consumption) of spaces that reaches beyond the narrowly textual” (Gregory 1999: 116). Scripting is an analytical tool that foregrounds the performative and thus brings into view practices that take place on the ground. Travel books are involved in “the staging of particular places: in the simultaneous production of ‘sites’ that are linked in a time-space itinerary and ‘sights’ that are organised into a hierarchy of cultural significance” (ibid). Taking the notion of the script further than Gregory, however, I include the broader mediascape of the era in my definition. Apart from travelogues, media forms such as photographs, television, radio shows, novels, letters, postcards, films and weekly magazines all contributed significantly to the scripting of America, and were decisive for routes, gazes and patterns of interpretation and experience. They produced a circuit of fantasies about the nation and these fantasies, in turn, became crucial to the reproduction of the script.

One might ask what was in the mind of the traveller as s/he embarked upon such a scripted journey? Borrowing from Edward Said’s notion of the textual attitude, I have discerned among the travellers what I have termed the *medial attitude*, which means that our preconceived ideas about a place, constructed through prior textual and visual representations, are taken to express the unequivocal truth about the visited culture (Lagerkvist 2003, 2004). The medial attitude, convincing the traveller about possessing knowledge about the essence of America, was composed of a strong sense of anticipation. As Sam Rohdie concisely puts it:

Travel is often a search to find a reality to confirm a prior image of it, that on a postcard, a tourist brochure or a travel guide, itineraries and sights set in advance. In theory these images are unlimited. In fact, they are not. In practice, reality transformed into images becomes the limit of the reality we see. (Rohdie 2001: 138)

In this manner, travellers often searched for certain scripted facts in America that they were convinced beforehand should be in place. The medial attitude was especially prevalent in the practices of amateur photography and drawing (Figures 2 and 3).

This was also salient in the author Thorsten Jonsson who admitted that, at the Tuskegee Institute in the South among the black youth, he had *looked for* a soft musicality and a smiling self-asserted friendliness in the Afro-Americans he met there (1946: 80). Expecting to find certain characteristics of the inhabitants or certain views at metropolitan sites was an important aspect of the travel script. Jöran Mjöberg commented on the sense of familiarity caused



Figure 2.

Source: Thelander
(1948: 133)



Figure 3.

Source: Munthe
(1960: 60)

by media representations: “We all know it,” he said, “the silhouette of the giant city” (1957: 47). Referring to the same sight as Mjöberg, reverend John Hedlund remembered having seen the Manhattan Skyline as a child in geography books, and thereafter seeing it a countless number of times (1948: 17).

Another way of capturing how mediation informs travelling cultures and specifically this sense of expectation is through employing the concept of a *mediatised gaze*, which also pinpoints the *visual aspect* of travelling and

experiencing places and spaces. Although the journey obviously involved the whole body and the spectrum of senses, as many scholars have rightly stressed (Rogoff 2000; Bruno 2002; Veijohla and Jokinen 2003) it can be argued that there is a primacy of the visual in sensing places (Machnaghten and Urry 1998: 104-133). In addition, before Swedes even set sail they were surrounded by the predominantly *visual presence* of America within the Swedish mediascape, which to a substantial degree triggered their travel. The mediated gaze, which according to John Urry directs our attention to famous spots while reactivating aspects of the media events that preceded the journeys (Urry 2002: 3 and 151), was prevalent in, for example, Eva von Zweigbergk's *What was it like in America?* Recounting her arrival in New York on board a Swedish America Boat, she exclaimed: "[...] as far as forty sea miles from the coast *one could see the Empire State Building* through the enchanting radar apparatus [...] It all looked quite remarkable, *one felt like one was at the movies*" (1947: 152, my emphases added). Another obvious object of the gaze, the Statue of Liberty (Figure 4), frustrated pastor John Hedlund's hopes and expectations: "Grey and clumsy she emerged from the haze. And hardly impressive" (1948: 18).

By contrast, at times anticipations were more than fulfilled. In approaching Manhattan Island, curator Ernst Manker was taken aback because the skyline was even more daunting than he had expected:

The silhouette emerges from the morning haze, the sight we have expected during the Atlantic crossing. Just like a presentiment at first...Rises up like a mirage above the water desert...The Skyscrapers like oriental minarets...the sight is materialised.... The silhouette becomes more solid, sharper in its appearance, while we slowly approach it. It grows, becomes more than we expected, overwhelming: Manhattan: New York, the Metropolis of our time. (Manker 1963: 9)

Confessing to a prior series of events of media consumption, he then continued:

One has, no doubt, seen images of the New York skyline, images in abundance, banal tourist images. But there was no adhesive banality at the sight of this motif in its reality – at least as I saw it when I as a privileged passenger stood alone with my camera on the roof of the captain's bridge, during Kungsholm's approach in the early morning. (ibid)

There is, however, in the Swedish travelogues from the 1950s, a notable element of an expansion and extension of the mediated gaze. In effect, the way travellers sometimes depicted their experiences approaches the notion of a *virtual gaze* (Friedberg 1993: 16). America was more than a web of images, unfolding before the eyes of these visitors. It was perhaps even a kind of 'holographic projection' into which travelling Swedes could enter and perform their fantasies. Such a gaze emerged when travellers felt like

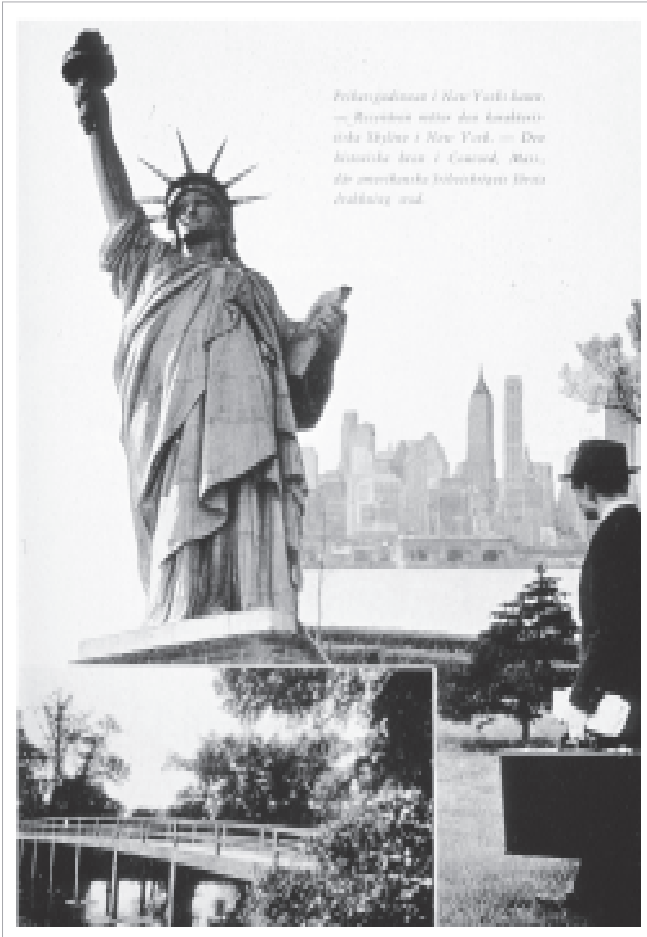


Figure 4.

Source: Sundström
(1955: 16-17)

they were *acting in* an American movie (Sandqvist 1950: 53; Nordström-Bonnier 1946: 157). Jan Olof Olsson, who spent a longer period of time at the University of Chicago, described how it felt to be questioned by a detective after a suicide had been committed on campus. His impressions were of a cinematically constructed world as he asked himself: “What kind of movie was I acting in?” To answer his question, the combination of a documentary, film noir and Hitchcock movie come to mind since “[t]he detective expanded into a huge close-up, which covered the screen” and the line of questioning was like “a pertinent, documentary and convincing series of images.” This film, Olsson continued, “required my Swedish anxious face” which “froze in a close-up before new and more difficult questions” (1958: 172-173).

The three concepts discussed above pin down the intense experience of *knowing* the land these Swedes had come to narrate. The notions of the mediated gaze, the scripting of journeys as well as the concept of the medial

attitude embrace the notion of the media, which emphasises cultural power and control. But as much as travellers were inspired and to some extent directed by the script, they were never determined by it (cf. Gregory 1999: 116). In fact, as time went by and as they travelled further, this 'knowledge' was seriously mitigated in the travel books. Many travellers exposed a high awareness of how the media, and particularly the moving image, informed their impressions and directed their attention and gaze. This *media reflexivity* is one example of how the absolute certainty of the medial attitude and the mediated gaze were gradually eroded along the road. In search of a truer story, travellers turned into 'detectives', highly critical of American mass media and particularly of Hollywood (Sundström 1955: 9-10; Moberg 1995: 54; Lagercrantz 1961: 29). Listen to Vilhelm Moberg, for instance: "Hollywood shows the world a false image of America. Certain standardized types recur all the time [...]." The brave and skilled men or beautiful and dreaming pioneer girls of the films had never lived in the real American world, Moberg contended. "When you have spent some time in the States, keeping your eyes and ears wide open all the time, you discover one thing: American life is hardly at all similar to those images which are produced in Hollywood studios." The life we see on film, Moberg continued, is nothing but a "*gross deception*" (Moberg 1995: 54, my emphasis added). This deceitful aspect of films and other media however also overlaid the way travellers observed the factual life and physical territory of the US, producing a particular in-betweenness of America, to which I will devote the remainder of this chapter. I hope to show, ultimately, that the relationship between travelling and mediation also carries other important properties that call for a different and complementary mode of conceptualisation.

Travels in Thirdspace

Echoing Alexis de Tocqueville's depiction of arriving in New York in *De la Démocratie en Amérique* from 1840, in the journalist Eva von Zweigbergk's encounter with the city in 1947, the lights of Long Island shone like "an imitation ornament" in the dark (1947: 152). De Tocqueville, in a similar vein, was stunned by the deceitful character of pieces of classic architecture on the shore of the East river:

When I arrived for the first time in New York, by that part of the Atlantic ocean which is called the East river, I was surprised to perceive along the shore, at some distance from the city, a number of little palaces of white marble, several of which were of classic architecture. When I went there the next day to inspect more closely one which had particularly attracted my notice, I found that its walls were of whitewashed brick, and its columns of painted wood. All the edifices that I had admired the night before were of the same kind. (de Tocqueville in Trachtenberg 2001: 13-14)

Both travellers witnessed an imposture in America. Paying attention to this deceit, fraud or pretence of the real thing potentially turning out to be a copy, an imitation, a simulacrum, a pseudo-event or an *image*, is a distinctive trait in (post-war) travel writing from the United States. As I have argued at length elsewhere in an analysis of those many viewing possibilities and gazes that New York invoked in travelling Swedes, in European intellectual history there has been a fusion of America with 'the image' (Lagerkvist 2004; cf. Brunet and Kempf 2001).⁶ The connection between America and the image – and media forms in general – however, generated a strong sense of ambivalence toward the nation. Was it real, was it fake or was it something in-between? Out of this in-betweenness of America grew a specific spatial experience, which has to be related to the evolving media culture of the time and to the expectations about *the essential qualities and functions of media forms*. While there are a number of other plausible explanations for the series of ambivalences in Swedish post-war travel accounts from the United States,⁷ one cannot neglect the role of the media as a human construct, invoking cultural meanings of expected documentary truthfulness as well as a fear of a possible deceit, due to the power of images (Jensen 1991; Mitchell 1994; Becker 2003). In moving between these two imaginings of America/the media, travellers traversed the country with increasing apprehension.

Thus, there was (and is) always something slippery, elusive and enigmatic, about this 'knowledge' of America. The mediated nation was in fact a kind of *borderland*: completely familiar and yet unfathomable, close by and far away (Figure 5). This feature of the place was emphasised in Harry Iseborg's travelogue. Before crossing the Atlantic, Iseborg struggled to obtain a visa. At this point his America was distant, yet surrealistically present through his intense fantasies:

When you hold the magic paper in your hand and when you've got it safely in your wallet, you are stunned by light blue dreams and in some way you become double; one part of you experiences the presence of the old familiar streets, the trams, the buildings, while the other half of you sees nothing but skyscrapers and subways. (1948: 23)

These inner dream images of skyscrapers and subways, projected onto the streets of Stockholm, illustrate that America was indeed a phantasmagoric geo-psychic space, as much as a real place. The US had a life of its own within the inner world of memories, fantasies and dreams of travellers, as an imaginary space, resting between the media representations that Swedes both consumed and produced and the materiality of the American continent. Images and audiovisual fantasies – when Harry Iseborg met 'Bill' (an American railway worker who suddenly came to life and talked to him from a photographic reproduction in a display window on Drottninggatan in Stockholm) or when cowboys and Indians were rendered a suggestive presence (Iseborg 1948: 8) – were pivotal for westward travelling in the post-war period.

But these fantasies also executed spaces in-between, which gave rise to *series of ambivalences* or *spatial ambiguities* (cf. Jansson and Falkheimer, this volume). Such ambiguities were a striking feature of a Californian travel note. While driving her car along a highway, the author Tora Nordström-Bonnier encountered a native American. Her impressions of the event were laden with memories stemming from a well-known media genre: “It came so close, as if we had been acting in an American Western.” The important point is that she was both taken by surprise by the Indian chief from Oregon driving past her, and simultaneously felt that his appearance was fully expected: “*It was quite in order* that the next magnificent car which was hooting angrily as it passed us by was driven by a hook-nosed and black-haired man in a shirt with a large floral pattern and a peculiar headdress” (Nordström-Bonnier 1946: 157-158, my emphasis added). When travellers made hands-on contact with America, consequently, *sites were familiar, yet dreamlike* as Vilgot Sjöman wrote about the sight of advertising on the wall of a building in New York City (Sjöman 1961: 24).



Figure 5.

Source: Eklund (1949)

Apart from mobilising the mastery of the medial attitude and the mediated gaze – which in its omniscience is detached, possessive and in control – when phenomena were perceived as ‘filmic’ or mediated, the media operated as a *heightener of unreality*. Jan Olof Olsson, in his travelogue *Chicago* from 1958, said it outright: “*I never really believed in the houses and the vast lawn, and this Saturday morning I had the nagging feeling of walking around on a movie screen*” (1958: 171, my emphases added). The imaginary status of the country, however, also generated *more reality* and an extended and intensified notion of the real – a sense which renowned late twentieth-century media theorists/travel writers in the US have sought, in blatant estrangement with America, to conceptualise in terms of *the hyper-real* or *the simulacrum* (Eco 1987; Baudrillard 1986).

This both-and or in-between character of the country encompassed a strong tension. America was easy to recap, and yet also completely enigmatic since it was simply *unbelievable*. It was both mythically foreign and exceedingly familiar, both a mental imaginary space and a concretion, both “filmic” and highly tangible. Experiencing America was perhaps experiencing a *Thirdspace* (Soja 1996) that called for an expansion of the geographical imagination. In this real-and-imagined place, the known (knowable) and the unknown (unknowable) were held *in suspense*. Thinking about space in these terms precludes ascribing either a pure materiality (a *Firstspace* objectivity; in Lefebvre’s terms “spatial practice”) or a pure ideational quality (a *Secondspace* mediated quality, Lefebvre’s “representations of space”) to this place (ibid: 74ff). Instead, America contained both of these – and more. Thirdspace (Lefebvre’s lived space, “representational space”) is distinguishable from the other two, yet encompasses both of them. In Soja’s words: “Thirthing produces what might best be called a cumulative *trialectics* that is radically open to additional otherness, to a continuing expansion of spatial knowledge” (ibid: 61). Travelling to the United States – a terra (in)cognita replete with mediations and visual memories – displaced travellers. The journey incited an affective movement between astonishment, a sense of second nature and uncanny sensibilities before this in-betweenness (cf. Gunning 2003). The experience was as irreducible as the relationship between media and space itself (Couldry and McCartney 2004).

Conclusive Remarks

Two points may be made at the closure of this investigation. First, globalisation theorists often stress the proximity achieved by the shrinking of distances accomplished by the reduction of time that is needed to bridge spaces, physically or through electronic media, as a distinct feature of our global era. In accord with this line of reasoning, Neil Campbell has recently defined the media consumption and consequent *production of America* as a

form of tourism. We don't have to travel to visit America since producing America today involves the complex and overlapping touristic sensibilities of the post-tourist experience. The post-tourist negotiates fragments and representations of America in itineraries of everyday life that connect him/her, wherever s/he is, with "America as a real and imagined space, seeing it from the outside, as mediated, simulated, mythic and as actual, lived and tangible in life's everyday and multi-layered spaces" (2005: 199). Such complex tourist sensibilities are, allegedly, a late modern phenomenon.

In this chapter, however, I have shown that the awareness, or lived textuality, of other distant places and phenomena far away was a striking characteristic of both everyday life worlds and of travel experiences already in the mid-twentieth century. "Over there" was simply the raw material for daily fantasies among Swedes "over here." Bringing media studies into dialogue with tourism studies calls for historicising both media cultures and cultures of travel. In seeking out the textual and pictorial traces of the travelling culture of Swedes from the 1950s, I have identified 'virtual moments' and tendencies that are, no doubt, amplified in our era of hypermediation, but that seem to be abiding from the mass communication era rather than creating a qualitative and decisive rupture or shift.

Second, while the notions of the mediated gaze, the scripting of journeys as well as the concept of the medial attitude seem to – at least to some degree – comprise the conception of the media as exerting cultural control and power, this chapter has, however, also emphasised a different level of interplay between media and tourism/travelling. I have shown that mediated space (representations of America as consumed and produced by travellers), mediated space (travelling through the mediascape, encountering new and old media forms) and a mediated sense of space (the media-saturated experience of space) are *entwined levels of produced spatiality, all embedded within travel culture*. Placing the focal point on the last concept, where the mediated intermingles with the imagined and the lived, brings quite a different aspect of the media into sight: it approaches an understanding of the *series of ambivalences* caused by mediation. I have suggested that the popular discourse of expectancy, which depicts the media's functions either in terms of documentary truth or as distorted truth, might be contributing to the ambivalent experience of travelling through extensively mediated spaces. My primary question has dealt with those fantasies about America that were part of a medial cycle – they were nourished by, as well as gave new momentum to, the emerging media culture of the time. Since such imaginations were confronted, challenged, complicated and displaced along the beaten tracks through America, I have suggested that as the physical world is superimposed by mediation, media consumers/travellers are left in *Thirdspace suspense*. In all its materiality, America was – *potentially* – a figment of the imagination.

Edward Soja defines Thirdspace as a purposefully tentative and flexible term which invites us to a place of critical exchange "where the geographi-

cal imagination can be expanded to encompass a multiplicity of perspectives that have heretofore been considered by the epistemological referees to be incompatible, uncombinable” (1996: 5). The idea that there is always a third alternative – deriving here from Lefebvre’s trialectic thought – could also revitalise media studies, in a move away from ‘either/or’ into ‘both and also.’ The media – as well as discourses surrounding them – have the cultural power to instigate more than (‘false’) knowledge and playfulness. As mediation interlaces with the imagined and the lived, dissonances and incommensurable affections toward the places at hand are generated. This allows for a moving away from polarised understandings of the media to a grasping of the multifarious and contradictory meanings that mediation carries.

Notes

1. The notion of America as an imaginary geography – as a myth and a symbol – has its roots in the early modern European consciousness (Evans 1969; Kroes 1996; Pells 1997).
2. Examining 31 travel books written by 29 travel writers (of which four were female), I analyse travelers’ encounters with New York, their reactions to mass culture and modern media phenomena, and finally their representations of the inhabitants.
3. Within different understandings of cultural diffusion, concepts such as Americanisation, cultural imperialism, hybridisation, creolisation and transculturation have been employed. Regardless of the way one chooses to interpret these processes, there is no doubt that mediatisation in Sweden in this era was permeated by American influences. This included the import of American *media products* (e.g. the TV series *Bonanza*, the import of Hollywood films, the introduction of comic books such as *Donald Duck* which came to Sweden in 1948 and the introduction and advertising of *Coca Cola* in 1953). It further included *technologies* with a distinct American accent (e.g., television and Hollywood widescreen technology), *formats* (e.g., the early morning entertainment radio show *Frukostklubben*, which began in 1946 and was inspired by American radio) and *genres* (e.g. the evening tabloid *Expressen*, which began in 1944, was inspired by American news journalism and the magazine *Se*, modeled after *Life*, was launched during the war).
4. There are three more important relationships between traveling and mediation. As I show in my dissertation, apart from this, traveling entails a number of *media-related practices*. In the period 1945–63, these typically involved reading travel and guide books prior to the journey, documenting and visualising the trip by typing or drawing sketches or itineraries onto maps, or taking diary notes and amateur photographs with a brown box camera. On another level, mediation also plays into how *simulated journeys* may be experienced through different media such as travel accounts, films, television, etc. Further, *travel means* are also related to mediation since the gaze which is fostered by vision machines can be described as superimposing and feeding into experiences of, for example, film gazing and vice versa (Lagerkvist 2005: 56–78).
5. Apart from underlining the *imaginary role* of the visited westward place, Todorov’s reading of ‘the first modern travel writer’, Francois-Renée Chateaubriand, who traveled in America in 1791, also shows how prior anticipations structured the way the traveler experienced the new world.
6. Chateaubriand, Todorov writes, did not go to America solely to make a geographical discovery but also because he had a literary purpose, to write the epic of natural man. This was a pursuit with predicaments: “What Chateaubriand wants to see is entirely determined by his identity as a Frenchman, not by what the Americans are – which interests him hardly at all. And in the last analysis the characters in his book are the product

not of his observation but of his imagination – which his travels in America have simply awakened” (Todorov 1993: 298).

7. America was recurrently depicted with a distinctly visual metaphorical language – as ‘a scene’, ‘a painting’, ‘a motif’, ‘fireworks of drastic imagery’ or ‘a web of images’. America was a representation, and that representation was perceived to possess some essential visual quality (Lagerkvist 2005).
8. One obvious explanation has to do with the genre of travel writing in which the journey is understood to transform the mind of the traveler, and where s/he is situated in a transcultural in-between where authority is challenged (Leed 1991; Todorov 1993; Duncan and Gregory 1999). Another generic trait is the ‘edutaining’ ambition in these books: the double nature of aiming to educate and learn from the large country and to entertain readers with colorful portraits of the Americans. This may account for some of the contradictions. Further, it is likely that the connection between America and modernity – that the nation is believed to incarnate Modernity itself – rendered the country a ‘double doubleness’, noticeable in the narratives. A third explanation concerns travellers’ relationship to emigration. It is a workable hypothesis to regard their reactions to American mass culture as a response to *the other within themselves*, since America had sprung from the European continent and seemed to *come back* to Europe through the media in ways that made them uneasy. One suggestion is that these ties and connections between travellers’ cultural self-understandings and the culture they visited were not consciously worked through, which contributed to the ambivalence.

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Chapter 16

Digital Geographies

From Storyspace to Storied Places

Jenny Sundén

An espresso in hand and with the slightly old-fashioned voice recorder pressed to my ear, a conversation with one of the creative fathers of the hypertext software *Storyspace* is fused with the sounds of a small southern Italian town: dogs, cars, the ambulant fruit salesman (speakerly amplified these days). It is a challenge to filter out background noises both on and off-tape to keep from disrupting the flow of my fingers, quietly playing the computer. The old town climbs a steep hill constructed through a jumble of narrow alleys as its arteries, a web-like creation that has been gradually expanding. The oldest parts of the current street-web date back to the 18th century, perhaps further. Several streets were possibly redrawn after the big 1694 earthquake, and others have been added. The present buildings are mostly from the 1820s and onwards, ranging from carved-out, peculiarly cave-like, housing to polished show-off flats with designer armature. Mobile phones in virtually every pocket, but no easily accessible computer connections, no networks, no Internet café in sight. Place matters.

With an intimate relation between language and architecture – between a particular dialect never grammatically structured in writing and the random jumble of streets never planned out on a two-dimensional map – it may be as hard to know where one word ends and the next begins as it is to know where one street twists and turns into another. Finding one's way through the narrow streets of the hill is similar to navigating a cleverly constructed hypertext fiction or computer game: A labyrinthine layout with paths connected through steep stairways, streets running straight through buildings and unexpectedly cut off by dead ends, buildings on top of each other or halfway on top of each other, some accessible only through gangways. A topology like a roller-coaster. High up, closer to the top of the hill, the town turns into a ghost town, houses evacuated and left behind after the latest major earthquake in 1983. A half-open window creaking on its hinges in the wind, hundreds of bats hanging in the dark from roofs of times past.

There is a town map of sorts these days, a post-construction along the conventional cartographical logics of flight photography. This map gives the

visitor an idea of distances and relations between certain places (the church, the town hall, the castle), but not necessarily an idea of the best route between locations. It is easy to get lost, temporarily, to all of a sudden find oneself at a forking path, a corner, an archway never walked before. Learning to navigate becomes more a matter of trial and error, of learning corporeally by walking rather than trying to understand the cartography. Pen and paper two-dimensionality does not take you far in a landscape characterized by vertical overlappings along three dimensions.

Perhaps the *Storyspace* manual following Shelley Jackson's (1995) hypertext fiction *Patchwork Girl* (written and read in *Storyspace*) would make more sense to this particular south-Italian architectural randomness:

Click on the arrows of the Compass tool to move around in *Patchwork Girl* according to the placement of spaces (not their links). The up arrow moves to the space that contains the space you were reading. The down arrow moves to the (first) space contained within the space you were reading. The left and right arrows move to the spaces preceding and following the current space, at the same level of *Patchwork Girl*. If there is no space in the direction you attempt to move, the Compass tool will just beep.

The name of the town is Calitri, situated right between the coasts, at approximately the same longitude as Napoli. To use an imagery of its street-maze and patchwork architecture as a point of departure for a chapter on digital spatiality and placefulness is more than a rhetorical trick. Not only are the paths and veins of the hill *just like* a hypertext or game space, although such an understanding gives its topology an intriguing poetic dimension. It is not only a question of metaphor. On a more fundamental level, it is a question of navigation, of learning how to move through unfamiliar and perhaps not immediately intelligible landscapes. It is about the making of a place – through movement.

This chapter explores notions of digital geography in three media environments: Hypertext fiction, text-based virtual worlds (MOOs) and computer games.¹ These digital media genres facilitate and display layers of texts and images that are in significant ways spaces, or what Henry Jenkins (2002) refers to as “narrative architecture”. Besides describing and representing space, these literary, social and playful environments become spaces for users to navigate through, explore, inhabit and sometimes also manipulate, change and (re)create. The chapter moves from a look at the hypertext fiction software *Storyspace*, via an interlude in the social and imaginative worlds of a MOO, to a brief exploration of computer game spatiality. The construction and experience of space – but not very often of *place* – has been a matter of discussion for some time in all of these three fields of research, and one of the key arguments in this chapter is that digital geographies have everything to do with new senses of place, location and situatedness. The title “From Storyspace to Storied Places” lays out a strategic reorientation in cybercultural



Calitri 2005

Photo: Alexander Armiento.

studies of geography: Away from the often abstract and universal ‘space’, toward the more grounded ‘place’ and an updated ‘politics of location’ (cf. Rich 1986). Moreover, “storied places” alludes to the ways stories can also be carefully structured places to explore and inhabit (as in “a six-storied building”).

Drawing from online ethnography, close readings/playings and interviews, the discussion moves between the ‘serious’ and the popular, between text and image, and between isolated space-making on CD-ROMs and DVDs and the collaborative making of storied places on the Internet. The study of *Storyspace* is based on an interview with one of its creators, Michael Joyce, alongside close readings of Shelley Jackson’s (1995) hypertext fiction *Patchwork Girl*, as well as discussions with my students about *Patchwork Girl* – in class and in writing – during their final semester of a three-year university multimedia program. The MOO study is a two-year online ethnography (discussed at length in Sundén 2003). Empirically speaking, the study of computer games is the most tentative of the three studies at the current stage, based primarily on literature and first-hand ‘playings’.

Cybergeography

It appears nearly impossible to speak of cyber-geographies without the seemingly mandatory etymological trace-back of the concept 'cyberspace'. From cyberpunk writer/father William Gibson (1984) who coined the term in *Neuromancer*, back to the early days of intelligent machines and the founding father of cybernetics Norbert Wiener, cyberspace as concept, experience and form of knowledge has travelled in time as well as across disciplines. Wiener (1948), professor in mathematics at MIT, coined the term *cybernetics* from the Greek word for steersman. In cyberspace, Wiener's steersman becomes a driver on the information highway, a surfer or navigator on unknown informational seas.

In the early to mid-1990s, cybercultural theorists turned to Columbian voyages of discovery and "new world" narratives (see Fuller & Jenkins 1995, Gunkel & Gunkel 1997). Cyberspace was brought into view as the "new frontier" – a landscape where nothing seemed solid or determined. New world narratives also brought with them stories of exploitation, tales of the violent execution of power imbedded in every act of discovery and colonization. Nevertheless, the cyber-appropriation of new worldliness seems surprisingly light-footed when it comes to questions of old-world conceptual domination. Or, as David J. Gunkel and Ann Hetzel Gunkel (1997: 126) put it in their article "Virtual Geographies: The New Worlds of Cyberspace": "Cyberspace has the potential to interrupt the very structure, substance, and control of modern epistemology."

In telling this partial story of cybernetic spatiality, it is striking how it is primarily a story of the founding *fathers* and of geography as a site of male dominance (i.e., colonization). What about mothers? When cyber-enthusiasts (re)dreamt the ancient dream of physical transcendence, of leaving the body – the meat – and all its classification principles behind in virtual space, cyberfeminists pointed out how these discourses are always dependent on the specific, local and concrete; on the maintenance and essentializing of embodied 'others' (Braidotti 1996, Stone 1991). Obscured in Western thinking under the universalism of infinite space – an abstract 'everywhere' that does not easily give in to a particular 'somewhere' – place, along with a politics of location (cf. Rich 1986), vanishes from sight. Erasing the level of the local, even in a seemingly placeless space, obviously has its price for those who do not occupy positions from where they can be heard. Only for those who already speak from privileged locations does 'placelessness' seem to have liberatory potential. They have nothing to lose if their referents are dissolved. But in parts of the world where computers are rare, or where electricity is not even an option, place makes all the difference.

To Adrienne Rich (1986), a 'politics of location' concerns making visible the location from which one is speaking, of acknowledging the material conditions that constitute subject positions. In cyberspace, theory and politics of location need to be elastic. If masculine (but not necessarily male)

cyber-subjectivity has typically been about placelessness and navigational control, and the feminist response typically about groundedness and accountability, there is a need to rethink what is meant by being grounded. How could a politics of location encompass computeresque geographies? Or better yet: Is there a way to formulate a politics of virtual place-making? In which ways do the making of virtual places relate to the making and shaping of cyber-subjectivity? Could the creative processes through which places and subjects come into being 'short-circuit' the cybernetic masculine control subject? What other landscapes and subjects could be imagined in his place?

Writing Storyspace

Following the frozen contours of the Hudson River, I was travelling north from New York City by Amtrak to the prestigious, previously women's only, Vassar College (where men have been allowed since 1969), comfortably settled in the worn fake leather seat, with interview questions dancing on notebook pages before my feverish eyes. Vassar is the institutional home of Michael Joyce (one of those hypertext fathers) these days, who almost immediately tells me: "You won't believe how marginalized we were, and still are, me and Jay." Fathers on the margin? Hillary Clinton went to Vassar. Place matters.

What then is hypertext fiction? If pages of paper in a book are bound together in a determinate sequence, stories written in hypertext often have more than one point of entry, many of internal connections, and no clear ending. They might unfold differently each time, depending on which of all potential routes is actualized. Reading hypertext fiction is inherently intimate with notions and experiences of spatiality, mapping and navigation.

Storyspace is a hypertext writing (and reading) software publicly demonstrated at the first ACM hypertext workshop in 1997 by Michael Joyce, Jay David Bolter and John B. Smith, and was published in 1991 by Eastgate. *Storyspace 2* for Macintosh was introduced ten years later. Even though there are differences between the two versions, the basic ideas behind the node and link system are the same. *Storyspace* has two types of overlapping windows: Text windows (containing nodes called 'writing spaces' with text, images, and sound to explore) and map windows (visual representations of the architecture of writing spaces and their neighbors). There are several ways to view spaces – tree maps, charts, outlines – but the most common and distinctive view is the *Storyspace* map. Each 'box' in the map visualizes a writing space, and each arrow represents a link between spaces. Links can run between words, paragraphs, writing spaces etc. – from any one place in the hypertext to any other place.

Since hypertext fiction is usually exceedingly complex in terms of interconnectivity, the *Storyspace* map systematically hides information. If both

the source and destination of a link are on the current level in the hypertext, the full link is shown. But if source and destination are on different levels, only incoming or outgoing arrows appear. To examine what is hidden from view in one map, the reader needs to either go deeper into the structure or use the reverse strategy and climb to a higher level, much like the endless climbing of the steep stairs of Calitri.

In our conversation, Joyce keeps coming back to the intricate relationship between the viscosity of the medium and the ideas and visions he and Bolter had about the system they were building. The standard critique today of (early) hypertext fiction is that the node and link system is passé, that hypertext systems like *Storyspace* are inherently hierarchical. "We were always aware of the limitations of the medium that we were stuck with, boxes and lines. We always knew that we hated the fact that there was a topmost node, we hated the fact that we were stuck with boxes as opposed to multiple shapes."

On the other hand, there are attempts at subverting hierarchies in *Storyspace*, of making a three-dimensional writing and reading experience based on two-dimensional representations. "The links were for us spaces. [...] We wished that links had the same kind of interpenetrability and the same kind of multiplicity that spaces do." Even if map windows often appear hierarchical, the relation between spaces can be much more complex. As Joyce points out, any writing space in *Storyspace* can contain or be contained in another:

It's not simple rhetoric of place and space. The box, the space inside it would have places. What we were always pleased about is that anyone container, so to speak, could be at the same time part of another. In *Storyspace* you can be endlessly nesting. And the suggestion is that probably at some level, things are so intertwined, so interconnected that these relations that seem hierarchical, seem Cartesian, are not. [...] What if the space itself is one of the places inside another space?

To be "endlessly nesting" is a fitting description for reading (and writing) hypertext fiction. Hypertextual thinking can make you dizzy. "What if the space itself is one of the places inside another space?" No matter how much you zoom in and out of the hypertext structure, to make visible in your mind those links that are merely broken arrows in the map views, the overall image will still be incomplete, still partial. To think critically about links and linking is a reading between the lines of sorts. But to view links as writing spaces in their own right can also be hard, especially on the part of the reader. Where do you locate something that is always hidden from view, which somehow is always elsewhere, outside the map, displaced onto the next map, but never fully? How can non-location, or un-location, be approached and understood? How can that which is on the margins be perceived as equally important as something more clearly placed in the center?

Shelley Jackson's already classic, provocative, witty hypertext fiction *Patchwork Girl* is in more than one sense writing on/from the margin. It is a story of female artificiality, queerness, and monstrosity. In particular, this is a story of the female mate of Frankenstein's monster who, after having been deleted/aborted by Percy Shelley's editorial pen, is secretly written and sewn together by Mary Shelley herself.² The reader encounters the monster's body – along with her story – in pieces. Reading then becomes needlework which pieces together texts and body parts, whose heterogeneous origins are always visible through scars and stitches. The scars traversing the monster's body parallel, most cunningly, the meaning of hypertextual links between writing spaces. In a reflexive passage on hypertextual structures, Jackson writes:

When I open a book I know where I am, which is restful. My reading is spatial and even volumetric. I tell myself, I am a third of the way down through a rectangular solid, I am a quarter of the way down the page, I am here on the page, here on this line, here, here, here. But where am I now? (<this writing>).

What constitutes a sense of location in narrative? In a novel, the question of location may be answered by a summary of content, or simply a steady grip of passed pages in one hand and upcoming pages in the other. Where one is in a story is as much about a concrete, physical location in the text as it is about conceptual location. A dog-ear tells you how close to the end you are. But where are you in hypertext? When I had my multimedia design students read and discuss *Patchwork Girl*, they emphasized the importance of having *a sense of place* in their readings, without which they felt lost, or simply stuck, in the story:

I'm not used to this kind of reading and thought it was very messy. I was stressed out about not knowing where I was. You don't know if you're in the middle or in the end or how much you have left. [...] How do you know that it's ending if it feels as if everything is in the middle?

There appears to be a tension between the *Storyspace* creation of intricate spaces and links and a sense of (not) knowing where one is on the part of the reader. Hypertext criticism (like literary criticism in general) has been pre-occupied with texts and (scholarly) readings. While 'close readings' of hyperworks are essential, surprisingly few critics have been equally close to readers, to their situated hypertexted experiences and ways of engaging with the work.³

A couple of my students fell in love with the girl monster and the way the work was put together. But most rather expressed hypertext anxiety or frustration:

I expected the reading to be as easy as reading a book. I could not accept the loss of overview and hence a loss of control over the reading. I felt as if I never got anywhere in the story, but instead was stuck in the middle.

Instead of being given a sense of freedom, as proposed in hypertext theory (Landow 1997, Landow and Delany 1993, Lanham 1993, and Moulthrop 1988), these readers experienced frustration in not knowing the (hypothetical) outcome of paths *not* taken, and in not being able to get an overview of the work. Loss of overview might, paradoxically, lead to a sense of being *more* controlled than in the case of a narrative bound to book pages easy to flip through (cf. Aarseth 1997: 1-23).

Lots of hypercritical ink, so to speak, has been spilled on the question of closure in hypertext (Bolter 1991, Douglas 2001, Gunder 1999, Moulthrop 1988, and Svedjedal 2000). Closure is an essential component in (traditional) narrative, intimately tied to the pleasure of reading, the thing that both prompts reading and makes it possible to read. But even though the students worked hard to understand how to end something endless, what seemed to make them struggle even harder was the loss of ground, orientation and sense of narrative direction. But not only did the Storyspatial nodes and links make them lose their bearings, the fragmented nature of *Patchwork Girl* and the question of how to approach and read this work made them quite uneasy:

I felt that I became a bit hesitant and nervous when I started to read. Where to begin? What if I'm not doing this right? These feelings were with me during the entire reading experience. Many times I wondered whether I was doing this right, did I find the right paragraph, what is it that I'm reading? But since you can start anywhere you like it cannot be entirely wrong.

What struck me as interesting was that most of these students belong to the web generation. They have more or less grown up with the web and the endless activity of surfing the web and playing computer games in which you create the 'story' as you go along. According to literary scholar Anna Gunder (1999), hyperfiction needs hyper-readers, or what she calls readers with hyper-literary competence, for whom rereading and 'multiple reading' (cf. Bolter 1991) comes natural. The students in question are not students of literature. On the other hand, they are savvy computer/web users and designers. Had they approached *Patchwork Girl* as a game or a website, it might have made more sense. But to them, hypertext fiction seemed to resemble book fiction more than anything else, which caused their hypertext readings to be limited by the paradigm of the Codex book:

I love the traditional book and everything that comes with it. – The magic of making a cup of tea and cuddling up on the couch under a blanket, together with a good book, that is wonderful compared to sitting in front of a computer and reading on a screen until your eyes bleed.

There is a significant difference between the alert posture in front of the tabletop computer and the laid-back couch position, book in one hand, tea-cup in the other. The question of narrative location is here transposed from the question of location in narrative to the location of the reading itself. My students referred to two kinds of reading: the upright, goal-oriented, information-seeking, game-play kind of reading, versus the stretched-out or perhaps curled-up, relaxed and pleasure-oriented type of reading. On the other hand, there is naturally a whole pleasure-culture developing around lightweight, mobile, even wearable computer technologies. On the far side of the romantization of the Codex book is the reverse pleasure politics of laptops in bed glowing in the dark, all warm and purring flat on the stomach, stuffed with music, movies, the latest news and wonderfully complex, confusingly entangled art and literature. Being cozy with computers is not a contradiction of terms, rather an increasing possibility as the machines get smaller, lighter and more powerful.

Literary theorist Katherine Hayles (2000) argues that “five hundred years of print have made the conventions of the book transparent to us”, pointing out how digital modes of literature shed light on the situatedness and material specificity of all writing technologies (which ultimately reveal the habitual safety of the printed page as merely illusionist). Reading, then, is never safe. It is precisely such implicit un-safety that is becoming quite explicit in hypertexted storytelling. The hypertext reader needs to let go of the sense of control that comes with naturalized, habitual, everyday media use and dare to explore the digital in-betweens of hypertext link systems. Like the visitor in Calitri, who needs to learn a corporeal way of navigating the street maze, the hyper-reader needs to make mouse clicks and the going back and forth between text windows and map windows as easy as turning pages of paper.

Storied Online Places

Visionaries have often pictured the Internet as a placeless medium – as an abstract, electronic space that lacks location, yet exists everywhere. But no matter how geographically dislocated the Internet appears to be, new spatial – if not *placial* – understandings are continually constructed when people use digital media. In my two-year online ethnography of a particular virtual world (which in my writing goes by the name WaterMOO), it became clear that when typists connect to the MOO world, ‘place’ is at heart of their experience. Rather than dismissing place as irrelevant, this technological engagement creates ‘another sense of place’ (cf. Meyrowitz 1985), a virtual place. Being in WaterMOO is not to be nowhere, but rather to reside in a very specific somewhere, a place that, like Foucault’s (1986: 24) ‘heterotopia,’ is “at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there.”

MOO is an offspring of something called MUD (Multi User Dungeon), which in many ways is a textual forerunner of graphical MMORPG's (Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games), such as *Everquest* and *World of Warcraft*. MUD can be described as an ongoing, collaboratively written, online performance and consists of the writing of scenery, characters, movement, dialogues and action. But there is also the writing of a wider social landscape and structures, such as public rooms and their objects. A MUD is organized around the metaphor of a three-dimensional space. It provides participants with a hypertext geography of thousands of interlinked rooms that are available to navigate, explore, and inhabit, which gives the user of these systems a feeling of 'being' somewhere.

WaterMOO architecture is a confusing mix of a relatively coherent core structure of public rooms (written primarily by those who founded this world), and a bewildered mix of thousands of individual private rooms. Each room carries its own description, like the one of the virtual office space on the top floor of Hotel California that used to belong to my researcher character, Jenny:

Her Office

You find yourself in the middle of a cozy messiness. The walls are covered with bookcases, filled with books and piles of papers, embracing what seems to be an awful lot of knowledge. The room is surprisingly airy, for being a hotel room, and a window reveals one of the most amazing views you've ever seen. Next to the window, there is an old French writing desk with lots of small drawers, and probably even some secret ones behind the movable panel. The desk is covered with books, journals and notebooks, and in the middle of all this you see an open PowerBook. In the pale blue flicker you capture a glimpse of a direct connection to... WaterMOO on the screen. In front of the desk, there is what seems to be a very comfortable chair. And if you were to lay your hand on the seat, you would notice that it was warm... as if someone a moment ago had been sitting there.

Obvious exits: Hall to Eighth Floor

Private rooms are the locations where characters wake up (connect) and go to sleep (disconnect), where they invite friends and lovers away from more trafficked parts of the MOO. One way of approaching virtual homes, these microcosms of online life, is through a Bachelardian 'topoanalysis.' In *The Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard (1958/1994: 8) explores the interconnectedness of poetic imagery and the psyche, and uses the term 'topoanalysis' to sketch out a field where the location of images in dreams becomes visible: "Topoanalysis, then, would be the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives." To Bachelard, the primary site for such an analysis is the house and consists of an exploration of houses and rooms as imagined and remembered.

From the horizon of WaterMOO it is interesting how, to Bachelard, the imaginary – as reflected in images of rooms: garrets, cellars, stairs, corners,

drawers, wardrobes, etc. – is anything but chaotic and diffuse. On the contrary, the way dreams and memories are structured are rather ‘placial’ in orientation. This way of thinking about the imaginary is highly persuasive, since a place like WaterMOO is a dream world in a sense, but one that is carefully structured with ‘rooms’ and directions. This is what scrolls down the screen if I take ‘Jenny’ through the hall on the top floor and up onto the roof of Hotel California, walking her over the edge of the roof:

ball

Eighth Floor

As you enter this hallway, you fell slightly disorientated. The walls, with their twisty, twirling, black, and white spirals, seem to turn and rotate. Causing you to enter a hypnotic state. A rainbow of colors float past your eyes, flashes of light blinds you. The world is becoming a rainbow blur. You better enter one of the doors in the hall quick, before you pass out! You see a button that when pressed will call the elevator.

Stairs: DOWN to Seventh Floor and UP to Roof

up

Roof

You see a large tar covered roof. As you look around you can see all of WaterMOO... You are awed at its vastness...

Obvious exits: DOWN to Eighth Floor

jump

You take a deep breath.

You walk over to the ledge and slowly walk off.

You land on the ground with a bounce.

You stagger to your feet.

The most interesting part of this textual walk is probably the moment after the command <jump> (from the top of the roof) is typed, which produces no less than 26 blank lines quickly scrolling over the screen, illustrating how even virtual bodies depend on gravity.

A Bachelardian topoanalysis also explores imagined houses through the relationship between ‘outside’ and ‘inside’ – in which the symbolics of doors and thresholds play important parts. The possibility to dwell in the doorway signifies how the notion of ‘place’ is not easily captured in static opposites. Bachelard shows how outside and inside form an absolute divide that blinds us to the shades and nuances of the in-between, the neither/nor. How can daydreams, for example, be forced into this razor-sharp split of on or off, here or there, this side or that side, absence or presence, being or nonbeing? What about online daydreaming?

ElBosso (Proudly Canadian) [to Orangina]: “where you mooing from?”
 Orangina [to ElBosso]: “the library.”
 Jenny chuckles
 Tom is here.
 Orangina [to ElBosso]: “the u of t library.”
 ElBosso (Proudly Canadian) [to Orangina]: “I mean where in the world??”
 Orangina [to ElBosso]: “downtown TO.”
 Sunnysideup floats into this location.
 Tom hugs you.
 Oxford [Guest] drops a giant beach ball.
 Sunnysideup smiles and waves Hello!
 ElBosso (Proudly Canadian) [to Orangina]: “Oh, I’m in Ottawa!”
 Orangina nods at ElBosso.
 Jenny smiles at Tom
 Orangina [to ElBosso]: “cold up there?”
 ElBosso (Proudly Canadian) waves to Sunnysideup
 Sunnysideup [to Tom]: “Hi.”
 ElBosso (Proudly Canadian) [to Orangina]: “not so bad...around 12”
 Dana (when I sing, I see the world) teleports in.

Conversations in WaterMOO are constituted through at least two different types of references, relating to two kinds of placial geographies: those that point toward the physical world of the typists (“where you mooing from?”), and those that refer to the textual world itself (“Sunnysideup floats into this location”).⁴ The dialogue between ElBosso (Proudly Canadian) and Orangina is concerned with where in the world they are physically located. Questions like “Where are you?” or “Where do you live?”, here phrased as “where you mooing from?”, are posed frequently, which seems to suggest a wish to disrupt the uncertainty of location inherent in online worlds. When Orangina answers the question “where you mooing from” with “the library,” she seems much less eager to elaborate on the topic than ElBosso, wittingly avoiding the question altogether. But ElBosso keeps trying: “I mean where in the world??”, and eventually gets the answer “downtown TO” (Toronto).

WaterMOO is constituted simultaneously as a place ‘in itself’ and as a place with diverse origins. Taking advantage of the comedy of textual presence

("Oxford [Guest] drops a giant beach ball") does not contradict questions of geographical location ("cold up there?"). To inhabit the world of WaterMOO is to be both outside *and* inside, here *and* there, visible *and* hidden. The door to this place is neither closed nor open but is, as Bachelard would have it, *half-open*. The entrance to a virtual world provides the possibility of residing in an extended state of dreaming wakefulness, transgressing simple metaphysical determinations. Following Bachelard's poetics of the doorway, the notion of place in WaterMOO seems constantly displaced, or perhaps expanded, in the sense that it balances right on the border between 'real' and 'virtual', both creating and dissolving a place to stand.

Navigating Subjectivity

In her "Navigating the Narrative in Space: Gender and Spatiality in Virtual Worlds", cyber-theorist/activist/artist Mary Flanagan (2000: 75) asks: "How does the user of virtual space, especially the 3-D space of a game or an online experience, become a subject? Users navigate". One unmistakable aspect of the emerging field of game studies is the strong polarization between narratologists, who understand 'games as stories' (Murray 1997, Ryan 2001, 2004), and ludologists, who approach 'games as games' (Aarseth 1999, 2004, Eskelinen 2001, and Juul 2001). What if (computer) gaming experiences are not primarily about narratives or the game-specific, but about *moving through* the game world. To *become* through navigation.

There is of course a range of different game worlds, and some are more clearly about navigation and spatiality than others are. Simulation games, like *Civilization I* and *II*, are fundamentally cyber-geographical in the sense that they are all about transformation and control over geography and maps (cf. Friedman 1999). Whereas many other games, like *Myst III – Exile* and *Final Fantasy X-2* in the adventure game genre, or *Halo* and *Half-Life 2* among first-person shooter games, provide intriguing, persuasive, provocative game worlds for the user/avatar to move through, interact with, and ultimately control.

Half-Life 2 – the much anticipated sequel to *Half-Life* – was released in 2004 and was immediately a huge success. The game received rave reviews, due primarily to its groundbreaking improvements in computer animation and graphics.⁵ The amount of detail and work put into shaping and designing the game space provided the players with what was claimed to be a game world with unparalleled sensitivity and adaptivity – encompassing everything from the behaviors of friends and enemies to the physical environment itself with its slick, industrial, Eastern European-like realism. Add to this the fact that Gordon Freeman is a silent protagonist (i.e., the leading male does not speak) and that the entire game is viewed through Freeman's eyes (i.e., there are no cut scenes), which makes for an uninterrupted journey through the game.⁶

Henry Jenkins (2002: Under “Spatial stories and environmental storytelling”) carves out an interesting middle ground between narratology and ludology in that he does not deny the specificity of computer games, but nevertheless understands them as media with certain narrative potential: “Game designers don’t simply tell stories; they design worlds and sculpt spaces.” To understand game design and navigational strategies, it is important to see the connection to other kinds of spaces and landscapes. Jenkins makes comparisons with literary spatial stories such as odysseys, quest myths and travel narratives, as well as with the ‘environmental storytelling’ of contemporary theme parks. In her discussion of the adventure game genre, game researcher Bernadette Flynn (2003: Under “Geography of place”) takes the argument of game spatiality one step further:

Whilst adventure games may have narrative attachments or traces of story association, they are generally not narrative spaces and operate outside of the narrative causality structure. Rather they are based on constructing and experience of shifting perspective and illusionism gained through the process of navigation. [...] The pleasure of aesthetic interaction is derived from having agency in this imaginary world of representation and pictorial illusionism rather than being based on storyline or narrative progression.

We appear to be back to Norbert Wiener’s cybernetic control theory, in which the computer becomes a dashboard in the hands of the steersman subject, a control panel for interacting with and mastering the (game) world. Certainly much of the pleasure in ‘aesthetic interaction’ and navigation through the game world derives from having agency in this imaginary, yet increasingly real, parallel universe. Then again, spatial practices are not politically neutral. There must be ways of moving through the game world differently – to become a subject not necessarily constructed through the characteristic masculine cybernetic control apparatus that dominates the computer game industry today (cf. Flanagan 2000). There are other navigational pleasures.

Game design would benefit from simultaneously moving in multiple directions, one of which could learn from lessons taught in the field of hypertext fiction. What if moving through a game world instead went into the hypertextual mode of *a need to let go*. What if game designers acknowledged our limits of control over technology and allowed for the pleasure in not being able to fully master? What if they made room for an engagement with the game in ways that granted agency to technology as well? What if, instead of you playing the game, the game was playing you? Alternative modes for the becoming subject in games would rely on an elastic conceptualization of a politics of location that, just like with MOO performances, manages to balance on the threshold between the body playing and the body being played. This alternative subject would come into being thorough a politics of location that plays with the feeling of, temporarily, being in another body, yet still in the body of one’s own. Certainly, along with alternative ways of

seeing and moving, there would be a drastic widening of the kinds of subject positions to be had, not least in terms of gender, sexuality and ethnicity.

If I initially called for a need to rethink what it means to be grounded – to formulate a politics of virtual place-making – I hope to have shown that digital geographies provide places in their own right to explore, inhabit and sometimes change. But while creating worlds where text, graphics and sound are highly material and virtual ground is a place to stand, digital geographies constantly prove to be creations intimately tied to the locations of reading, socializing, playing bodies, rarely acknowledged in the field of cultural geography of cyberspace. A cyber-spatial upgrade of Rich's politics of location would need to be accountable for the locations of several kinds of bodies, in flesh as well as in code, along with the multiple points of reference between them. It would need to be able to speak about the ways in which the body of the reader/user/player is 'stretched out' towards the screen, but also multiplied in the interface. It would also encompass an awareness of the material conditions that constitute such 'stretched out' and 'doubled up' subject positions. Needless to say, a politics of virtual place-making would have to engage with issues of who gets to inhabit virtual worlds, on which terms, and under what constraints.

To make room for alternative modes of moving and becoming an (online) subject, it is necessary to make interventions on the level of virtual world creation. Because no matter how flexible and adaptive a digital landscape may be, it is the programmers and game designers who have the power to set limits for the type of locations – and subject positions – that can be created. Quite logically, this also implies possibilities for subversive digital landscape architecture, depending on the ways in which the code is (re)written.

At Hunter College in New York, new media artist Tim Portlock lets his students modify the multi-player engine *Unreal Tournament 2004* to make their own artwork (by adding content to existing structures or by minimizing the given structures to make something new).⁷ During the past decade, 'art mods' have become a prominent part of artists' use and development of computer games (Cannon 2004), which, potentially, creates a subversive platform from which to make games differently. On the other hand, dominating ways of building game spaces do not seem to give in easily. Most of Portlock's students (not many of them self-defined gamers) ended up with unmistakably game-like art works that relied on shooting as the primary means of spatial interaction. However, one used *Unreal* simply as a way of moving a camera, which resulted in a video sequence that involved neither shooting nor avatars. Another student created an eco-feminist warrior woman called *Gaya Girl*, who fought pollution. And had I been a game developer, I would already be deep into the 3D-modeling of a peculiarly familiar south Italian street-web, ragged dogs and black-clothed old Italian women included.

Notes

1. I wish to thank Peter Lang for granting permission to reprint the sections on WaterMOO and spatiality in text-based virtual worlds. This argument was previously published in Sundén, Jenny (2003) *Material Virtualities: Approaching Online Textual Embodiment*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
2. For close readings of *Patchwork Girl*, see Ferreira 2000, Hayles 2000, Joyce 1997, and Sundén forthcoming 2006.
3. Attempts to study actual reading practices of hypertext fiction have been made by, for example, Caplan and Moulthrop 1991, Douglas 2000 and Moulthrop 1991.
4. All real names of characters have been changed to protect the online identities of their typists. For an extensive discussion of ethics in creating the WaterMOO ethnography, see Sundén 2003.
5. For a collection of *Half-Life 2* reviews, see: <<http://www.gamerankings.com/htmlpages2/914642.asp?q=Half%20Life%202>>. Date accessed: September 25, 2005.
6. Cut scenes are non-interactive, non-playable passages of a game (over which the player has no control). These scenes are used primarily to clarify and develop the storyline, introduce characters, create an atmosphere and give background information and clues, etc.
7. The making of 'mods' or 'modifications' is an increasingly important factor in the world of computer gaming, which potentially turns gamers into co-producers of the games they are playing. Mods can add features such as characters, enemies, modes, storylines and levels (partial conversions), but can also be entirely new games in themselves (total conversions).

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Chapter 17

Postscript: Taking Place

Orvar Löfgren

In January 2006, Western Union announced that its telegram service would be discontinued. This death of a nearly 150-year-old institution went by almost totally unnoticed – telegrams, did they still exist? Of all the media technologies reorganising space and time, the telegraph was the pioneer. Later innovations like the telephone, radio, TV and Internet somehow built on a mode of understanding relations between space and media that was developed in the 1840s.

The innovator Samuel Morse was an artist obsessed with the ideas of massmedialization. He had one money-making idea after another: making miniature copies of Louvre paintings for export to the US, designing a machine for cutting marble to make replicas of classical sculptures. Later he became involved in electricity and constructed the first working electric telegraph in partnership with other engineers. This was first seen as a crazy idea and a hard sell, but in 1844 he was finally able to open the Washington-Baltimore line, and after 1845 the idea exploded. In the 1850s telegraphs were everywhere, and became a powerful tool and symbol in the new global economy that was rapidly emerging.

The novel communication systems of the 19th century promised to restructure time and space as Carolyn Marvin (1988), among others, has discussed. They could be heralded as global forces, but the rhetoric surrounding them was often very national. Just like the railway, the telegraph was seen as a way of tying the nation together. In 1852 the *New York Herald* pointed out that it was no longer necessary to consider relocating the federal government to the geographic centre of the country because the “telegraph entirely superseded the necessity for any such movement” (after Smulyan 1994:33). A pedagogy was quickly materialising about the ways in which telegraph poles or new tracks advanced into the wilderness, wiring the nation, uniting the world.

People searched for metaphors in order to grasp what the new communication technology entailed. The fantastic speed of information created an intimacy: “How sweet a telegram can be compared to a letter, because it

tells us about the thoughts of a friend just a few moments ago..." wrote a Swedish academic in 1869 (quoted in Olsén 2001:18). In his book *The Victorian Internet*, Tom Standage (1998) discusses the ways in which the telegraph not only changed perceptions of far and near as well as past and present, but also produced new emotionalities.

Western Union is still a global enterprise and makes its profits from money transfers, but the telegram survives in new forms. Its special language of abbreviations and shortcuts is found today on yellow Post-It notes as well as in SMS messages and Internet chat-room conversations.

Most media technologies enter the world full of promises but also with rather diffuse ideas about their actual potential and future use. New media, from the telegraph to the Internet, have always been surrounded by a rhetoric of dismantling barriers of communication and understanding. Novel forms of mobility and exchanges will erase old boundaries and create new communities, transgressing the local or national.

Many communication techniques have been launched as global media, but have instead become important elements in nation building and local integration. This was the case with radio, for example. During the pioneer era, much of the fascination focused on the strange international world discovered through the new skills of dial turning. Magic places like Hilversum, Bordeaux, Königsberg, London, Murmansk and Kalundborg were visited in the new soundscape. All of a sudden, one could have music from the Savoy Ballroom in London or an unintelligible lecture from Brno in the parlour. During these early years, we encounter a metaphor that has been recycled with the advent of all new mass media: "At last, the world has entered our living room." This feeling of having the world at your fingertips soon faded away, as national broadcasting established a firm pattern of daily listening that turned out to be an important part of modern nation building (see Löfgren 2000).

Remediating Space

The essays in this book share an interest in the ways media take place and claim space. This spatial turn in media studies must be understood against the background of earlier "turns" in the interdisciplinary terrain of cultural studies. During the 1980s and 1990s there was talk of "the textual turn", with an import of literary theory and the development of discourse analysis. Cultural expressions were analysed as "texts", culture was "inscribed" on bodies and commodities. Out of this interest also followed "a narrative turn", drawing on theatrical metaphors, looking at how cultural forms were staged, scripted, performed, scenographed and choreographed. The "spatial turn" discussed in this volume is found in many disciplines, but has been strong in recent media studies. New metaphors have appeared: cultural mapping, mental cartography, earth-writing, mediascapes and other geo-metaphors.

In the preceding chapters this spatial turn has been discussed and exemplified in many different ways. Why this interest? The papers in this collection explore some of the reasons. First of all, “the spatial turn” can be seen as a reaction to the idea that the media flows have dissolved spatial constraints on cultural production and consumption. In the debates about globalisation, cyberworlds and lives in constant transit there was a tendency to overdo some prefixes – too much “post-” as in post-national or post-local and too much “de-,” as in de-centred, de-territorialised, de-localised or displaced. There was a celebration of the new postmodern nomads, mainly middle class cosmopolitans constantly on the move, at home everywhere in the world. “Placelessness” became a popular concept, but as we are constantly reminded by the essays in this book, media use is always situated. We have to look closely at the complex microphysics of the ways in which media take place and claim space. There is a social and cultural elaboration, a sensuous massivity and redundancy in actually being there that demands a contextual ethnography. When the social anthropologist Anna Hasselström chose to study the highly cosmopolitan and globalised contemporary scene of financial markets (Hasselström 2003), she had to pay a great deal of attention to the media flows of information via the Internet, phone calls and faxes, but also found that she needed to perform ethnographies of the ways in which that global market was situated in specific, local contexts: small talk between desks, body language, or swapping of jokes and information at the pub or during evening entertaining of clients and colleagues (This contextualisation of high-tech media flows is also explored in Garsten & Wulff 2003 and Löfgren & Willim 2005).

Behind the new interest in spatial dimensions is a wish to bring space and place back into media analysis, but in new forms, as the editors point out in their introduction. The new interest in media taking place contains a critique of older usages of space and place, as fixed categories or given natural entities. It was the new cultural geography of the 1980s and 1990s that challenged some of these notions, as Rickard Ek discusses in his contribution. Scholars like Doreen Massey, Nigel Thrift, David Harvey, Allan Pred, Derek Gregory and Ed Soja developed new kinds of dialogues between cultural geography and cultural studies (see, for example, Benko & Strohmayr 1997). There was also a rethinking of the old phenomenological interest in place-taking and materiality (see for example Carey 1997, Frykman & Gilje 2003). On the whole, the ‘spatial turn’ has produced a new interest in cultural and social organisation of space, distance and proximity both generally in cultural studies and in media studies.

There is always a risk in imports of new sets of metaphors, as Inka Salovaara Moring points out in her paper. “Loose abstractions” may come to dominate. What does “mapping the subject” or a “sensuous geography” really mean? We sometimes get carried away by certain metaphors and then have to remember Gregory Bateson’s advice (1973) that it is important to know when to abandon them. Some statements about place and space have also turned into analytical mantras, used in a far more generalising way than

their developers could have guessed. I am thinking of the loose and too-frequent uses of Benedict Anderson's idea about "imagined communities", David Harvey's thesis of time/space compression and Paul Virilio's thoughts on acceleration and the annihilation of space, to name a few examples. This is why I like the ways the spatial perspectives in this book's chapters often take concrete ethnographical cases as their starting point.

Mediascapes

When Arjun Appadurai (1996) launched his concept of mediascapes, it signalled a reorientation for the disciplines, such as anthropology and European ethnology, that traditionally focused their analyses on local cultural production and everyday life. This meant that 'media' was mainly seen as something that entered local cultures from outside, an alien and often alienating flow of messages. Hence, media traditionally received a rather scant interest in these ethnographic traditions. The new media ethnography focused on media material as one among many other elements of local cultural production – media in context (see, for example, the discussions in Gemzöe 2004 and Ståhlberg 2002). This new interest also created new interdisciplinary dialogues in the field of media and culture studies, for example in the multidisciplinary project *Passages* that Johan Fornäs describes.

Mediascapes are often discussed as the grander terrain of media institutions and practices at a given time and place, but the concept could also be used to frame the ways individuals organise and personalise their media activities in their own private setting. Reading a set of very detailed documentations of Swedish households in the 1970s, I was reminded of the ways teenage rooms were turned into identity laboratories for playing virtual realities. Behind closed doors, teenagers could create new cultural spaces, pose to music in front of the mirror and try out new styles and self-representations with the aid of the cassette player, the telephone serving as an emotional lifeline to their best friend, the film posters on the wall, the teen magazines, and the scrapbook with mass media cuttings and images. Today other media combinations are used for similar identity games.¹

Mediascape also addresses how different media are mixed and distributed in time and space. When is the right time and place for certain kinds of media use? Why is it that media can be seen at one stage as being all over the place, and at another as being confined to certain time-space slots? The kinds of mixes and interactions we find between media in any given mediascape tell us about how changing divisions of labour are created, but also about bandwidth. The history of telephone use is a good case. In countries like Sweden and the US, the telephone was rapidly domesticated and transformed into an intimate medium. Jan Garnert (200x) has traced this development in his study of early Swedish telephone history. The paradox

was that the new medium, through its bridging of spatial distances, created a feeling of proximity. Speed played a role here, as it did earlier with the telegraph. In Sweden the telephone was rapidly described as a romantic medium, two voices meeting. Its emotional potential had to do with its limited bandwidth. To communicate only through sound created a specific kind of sensuality. Perhaps this explains why later experiments with “videophones”, which allowed you to actually see the person at the other end of the line, were long unsuccessful. It turned out that many users found this intimidating or superfluous. The reason was not only that the technology was clumsy; people had also grown accustomed to speaking without being seen. The intimacy, informality or casualness of telephone calls derives from not needing to show anything but our voices. It is a process similar to what we have seen in Internet communication and chat-rooms, where much is left to the imagination and anonymity is a cultural resource. I am reminded of the predecessor to the chat-room, the now forgotten “hotline arena” of open and anonymous telephone lines, which for a short period during the 1980s was so popular among Swedish teenagers.

It is in this same way that the developers behind the cell phone did not foresee that it was teenagers who would take this medium into new arenas and uses, or that the new media would eventually turn into a mobile multimedia lab, a task that had been reserved for the palmtop computer.

New technologies create new forms of division of labour and often entail reappraising old ways of communicating. Faced with a wider range of alternatives, we choose between different media for different tasks and different purposes. Does this message require an e-mail, a postcard, a telephone call, a proper letter, or perhaps a face-to-face meeting? New media can turn others into nostalgia or give them new status. Novel hierarchies of authenticity and intimacy are created.

As media takes place in our lives we personalise the spaces we move through and create new forms of daydreaming. In this process we also learn the art of multi-tasking, combining media consumption with other activities. When new technologies of media and mobility appeared during the 19th century there were worries about how many impressions human could handle at one time. Max Nordau ventured the idea that later generations might be better at handling the stress:

The end of the twentieth century, therefore, will probably see a generation to whom it will not be injurious to read a dozen square yards of newspapers daily, to be constantly called to the telephone, to be thinking simultaneously of the five continents of the world, to live half their time in a railway carriage or in a flying machine and...know how to find its ease in the midst of a city inhabited by millions.(Nordau 1892:541)

Multi-tasking is a competence that must be acquired, and once acquired is often invisible – ‘it just comes naturally’. A historical perspective may be

needed to unearth such learning processes. Drawing on material in which different generations narrate their lives with TV and radio, it is possible to see such competences gradually emerging. For the pioneer generations of radio and TV users, the intense concentration that was initially needed to view a TV program or listen to the radio was striking. No distractions could be allowed; to follow the voices in the speaker or the flickering figures on the screen you had to give the medium your full attention. An ad from the late 1920s recommends bananas as the perfect food for radio listening, easy to handle and, most importantly, soundless to eat. Step-by-step, people developed the skills of listening with half an ear, or just glancing at the TV.

If we move on to the media generations of the 1970s, new patterns appear. For a present day observer their media consumption may seem rather routinised and fixed in time and space. The family is gathered on the TV sofa, with a set space for everybody, but compared to earlier media generations they have acquired certain multi-tasking competences. The radio had already moved from its once sacred position in the living room; now there is a transistor in the kitchen and the first person up each morning turns the radio on for the rest of the day, allowing it to provide a soundscape for other kitchen activities. People have learned to listen to the news, leaf through the morning paper and eat breakfast at the same time. The wife puts her ironing board in the living room so that she can iron and watch television simultaneously, and there are special audiotapes produced for entertainment while driving the car. Common at this time are worries about teenagers who insist that they can do their homework while listening to music— the new cassette player in the teenage room is seen as the ultimate challenge to intellectual work.

It is thus possible to write a history of the birth and death of various multi-tasking media competences and the periods of naturalisations in-between that tend to make them invisible.

Media and Mobility

Examples like these illustrate how mobility and media interact, a theme the editors develop in the introduction. We also need to look at the ways people's lives, activities and ideas are changed by different kinds of mobility. Increased mobility does not have to mean increased rootlessness. Mobility can be a strategy for producing stability and continuity and preventing change. Place and space are constituted by movement, but the experience of movement can be very different. When Guilian Bruno discusses media and atlases of emotions, she talks of a geography as "a terrain of 'vessels': that is to say, its a place that both holds and moves" (Bruno 2002:207).

Again this seems to be a field in which a historical perspective can be helpful. How do media technologies become mobile or stationary; how are

people on the move developing competences and interests in using different media? In everyday life we may follow how certain times and spaces are found for media use and how such slots become routinised or ritualised, developed or dismantled. It is important to see such processes not only as a result of new technologies or new patterns of mobility. Combinations of media consumption and movement are always culturally organised. Let me give a few examples.

When railway travel was introduced, people complained that the speed of the train had a dizzying effect, as the landscape whizzed past at 30 miles per hour. Never read on a train, but instead keep your eyes steadily fixed on the distant horizon, was the advice. As travel became routine and an exact amount of time between two locations, you started to glance at your watch. The standardised journey created a new economy of time, but also a monotony with the thump of the rail joints.

The early warnings against reading on trains were soon dismissed by a new desire to read, as travellers tired of looking out the windows. Train riding was now meant for reading, as an antidote to the boredom of travel, and the concept of travel reading was created. In discussing what came to be called railway literature in England, a connection between easy reading and easy travel was established. People sped through this new popular literature, which was marketed at railway stations with the same speed as that with which the landscape passed. A shallow and stressful mode of reading was the result, the critics argued. 'Railway literature' became a derogatory term; "no small amount of literary rubbish travels by rail" was uttered already in 1857 (see the discussion in Löfgren 2000:45 ff).

There is also a long cultural tradition of trying to combine modernities of media and movement. When passenger air travel was introduced in the 1920s, there were early experiments with movie entertainment on board, with the help of a projector and screen in the cabin. These two ultra-modern moving media naturally had to be combined and movie viewing later developed into a standard ingredient on long flights.

The ways in which media are introduced into new situations and settings also result in new kinds of experiences. How did an urban landscape change when it was set to music by a Walkman? The ways in which media and movement are mixed also produce certain tempi and rhythms. Biking to school calls for an *iPod* and makes it possible to turn this boring morning commute into a hidden competition, as one student explained: "Every morning I choose a piece and set the rules – I have to reach school before the song is over..."

Some types of media travel easily, while others become anchored in certain cultural contexts. The same movie poster hangs on the walls of factory dormitories in Taiwan as in college rooms in the US, and when it is time to leave it is simply rolled up and carried along to the new lodgings. Mobile media can also turn into immobilised ones. The radio is a good example of this. As people turned car driving into a meditative experience, the cassette

deck and transistor radio became a natural part of the car ride, to such an extent that many people only listen to the radio while driving, making radio listening more stationary again. Reading is another example: At first it had its fixed times and places, but gradually became a more flexible form of media consumption. Reading material can be brought along to all kinds of situations, but the idea of “a good read” still calls for seclusion, a good novel, a comfortable armchair, a box of chocolates and some background music. Here, media consumption is restricted by all the staging props necessary to create a unique and multi-sensual experience.

The Pedagogics of Space and Movement

Every new media technology opens up spaces of hopes and anxieties for the rapidly approaching future and reorganises ideas of hereness and nearness. Some of these are seen as disruptive in their pioneer stage, threatening old orders and hierarchies. This dystopian outlook is matched by the utopian optimism of creating new (and better) forms of networks and alliances. In the optimist version, the new technology should be able to revolutionise and improve the whole world.

In their early stages, new media are often experienced as annihilating distances or speeding up information exchanges in ways that produce reactions of “over-speed” and stress. Stephen Kern’s (1983) discussion of the disruptive role of the efficient telegraph service at the outbreak of World War I is an example of this. For a diplomatic world accustomed to the exchange of memorandums, negotiations and ultimatums by slow and steady mail, the accelerated flow of telegrams created stress and eventually a mental meltdown. This same stress hit the Danish government as the controversy over the ‘Mohammed images’ published by a Danish newspaper developed into street politics in the Moslem world in the winter of 2006. News, accusations and rumours travelled instantaneously over SMS networks and sent angry young men out in the streets, waving their mobile phones. Official diplomatic channels worked too slowly, and again the reaction was “Now the world is moving too fast!”

Systems of communication not only produce new transnational popular movements and communities, they may also strengthen traditional ties. Who would have guessed that the telephone would become a crucial tool for increasing family togetherness, maintaining a feeling of proximity and intimacy in spite of the geographical dispersion of kin, or the ways virtual homelands are developed and strengthened through the media, linking Diaspora communities across the world with their respective old countries. There is a rich and expanding literature on Diaspora media. Not only does it play a crucial role in creating virtual homelands, helping exiles and migrants to keep close ties with their home communities, it is also a vital force in what has

been called the politics of long-distance nationalism. For example, Maja Provrzanic (2002) is carrying out a rich ethnography of Croats in Sweden, analysing the ways a number of media have become important tools as they reshape their notions of Croatian identity, as well as both their relations with and their images of the homeland. It is precisely this ethnographical approach that is lacking in many of the early and sweeping discussions of media and globalisation.

As Neil Smith once pointed out, we must make sure the use of spatial metaphors does not reproduce an earlier tradition of the “deadness” of space as an analytical category (Smith 1993:97ff.). The ways media take place or claim space help us develop a more dynamic approach to the spatial dimensions. Media open up our spatial experiences, for example in the ways they often become important tools for daydreaming, a chance to travel between different places and different times, while still having one’s feet safely grounded in a textured ‘here’.

Just think about life behind the wheel. On the road thoughts travel quickly and far away, and the soft vibrations of the tires help to create a trance-like feeling. Going for a drive might be a way to let off steam or get time to think things over: thus the slam of a car door is often the natural sequel to a domestic argument – at least in American mediascapes. It has sometimes taken the form of the male romance of “hitting the road”. It draws upon images of a constantly changing United States of America (some of which Amanda Lagerkvist explores in her paper). This version is about an America always on the move somewhere, and is composed of a specific iconography and aesthetic. It is a landscape one meets not only in endless numbers of road movies, but also in crime stories, Levi’s ads and television soaps. This is a world that has been transcribed, pictured and set to music over and over again, a mediascape in which different genres are in constant dialogue. The experienced media consumer need only shut his/her eyes and America is materialised: gliding convertibles with sun-scorched leather seats and music blasting, sleazy motel rooms watched over by jaded clerks dressed in worn T-shirts, the TV crackling in the background. The gas station “in the middle of nowhere”, the roadside cafe and the tired, motherly waitress. Driving your own Volvo through rural Sweden listening to Country and Western tunes can make you feel part of this great global brotherhood of American cowboys on the road (see discussions in Eyerman & Löfgren 1993 and O’Dell 1993).

The fast lane of the freeway has thus been transformed into a space for meditation and daydreaming. It seems to me that we need more ethnographies of this mixing of moving bodies, roving minds and media flows.

Note

1. The material on media generations consists of a number of questionnaires at the Folk Life Archives, University of Lund and a set of household documentations carried out by Swedish museums in the 1970s and 1980s as part of the so called SAMDOK project (“docu-

menting the contemporary"). I am currently using them in an ongoing project: "Home Made: The Cultural Production of the Inconspicuous" based at the Department of Ethnology, University of Lund

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Media Trends and Media Statistics in Sweden

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The relationship between space and communication is becoming more complex. Mediatization blurs the boundaries between different spaces, as well as between dimensions of space. It also leads to the re-articulation of geographical territories – often (re)producing socio-political values and power struggles. This book, *Geographies of Communication: The Spatial Turn in Media Studies*, departs from the assertion that the changing character of media society calls for a spatial turn in media studies. There are clear signs that such a turn is on its way. But no account has yet been formulated for the full potential of this. Gathering new analyses from leading Nordic media scholars, geographers and ethnologists, this book provides a broad view of the perspectives that emerge from the spatial turn. The chapters explore issues such as (trans)nationality, tourism, urban culture, interactive media, and the networking of domestic space. Together, they map out what might become a new sub-field within media and cultural studies: the geography of communication.

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