Z. Krajina, S. Moores, D. Morley

Non-media-centric media studies: A cross- generational conversation

This article arises out of an academic panel discussion held at the University of Zagreb in May 2013, which was attended by staff and students in the Faculty of Political Science. The invited participants were David Morley (D.M.) and Shaun Moores (S.M.), and the discussion was led by the event's organiser, Zlatan Krajina (Z.K.). Their conversation across three academic generations was lengthy and wide ranging, and what appears here is an edited and reworked version of the transcript of the discussion, which revolves around the notion of 'non-media-centric media studies'.

Ways in and through

Z.K.: I'd like to begin by inviting David and Shaun to reflect on their respective ways into the field of media studies, and by asking them to say just a little at this stage about how they came to argue explicitly for a 'non-media-centric' approach (see Moores, 2012; Morley, 2009). First, David, could you tell us what helped to shape your initial interest in media and also explain something about the development of your research over the years, which has led you to state that 'we need to "de-centre" the media in our analytical framework, so as to understand better the ways in which media processes and everyday life are interwoven with each other' (Morley, 2007: 200)?

D.M.: Well, I was very much a child of the television generation. Media, and television in particular, were initially important to me in that everyday sense. It had to do with what my family did in the evenings as I was growing up. My father sat in the same armchair every evening and watched television, while my mother came in and out of the room bringing sandwiches and tea. That was a crucial part of how my home life was organised. Also, when I was going to university to study economics, while I was hanging about waiting to start doing that at the London School of

Economics in the mid-1960s, I met some people who were doing a subject called sociology. Among other things, they were studying the ideas of a guy called Marshall McLuhan (1964). I'd never heard of him before, but at the time he sounded very funky to me. I thought to myself, you know, this is much more interesting than demand and supply curves! So I thought I'd try to study this stuff about media, which I found very engaging. Of course, later on I lost interest in McLuhan because of his techno- logical determinism, though it's interesting that all these years later we've now got a kind of 'born-again McLuhanism', with which, as it happens, I'm not much enchanted.

Anyway, when I got into researching these matters more seriously, and after I'd found my way to the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at Birmingham University in the 1970s, something very odd happened. I became known internationally in media studies for having researched audience reactions to a television programme which was deliberately chosen for its ordinary, everyday triviality, a programme called Nationwide that nobody outside of Britain had seen (Morley, 1980; see also Morley and Brunsdon, 1999). It's a weird thing to be known for. What I was interested in there, though, was the role of media in the maintenance of social order and particularly the role of 'everyday television' in the construction of 'common sense', in relation to questions of ideology and hegemony. I wasn't centrally interested in the media as such. When I applied to Goldsmiths, where I've been working for a long time now, I applied for a job in what was described as television studies. When asked in the interview why I wanted to lecture about television, I said that, actually, I thought the idea that you might study television in isolation was a bit strange. At CCCS, I was interested in television and its audiences as a way of focusing, empirically, the question of cultural power and its limits, as a way of working with Stuart Hall's (1973) encoding/decoding model, allowing us to explore, from a Gramscian perspective, the contours of hegemony within Britain in that period. The media stuff was of interest to me primarily as a way of focusing and exemplifying that debate.

What happened to me then was that, having begun with the matter of which types of people accept or reject the ideological messages relayed to them by the television set, I realised I was doing this in an inappropriate way. I used to go to schools and colleges where my friends and contacts could get me a group of students who'd

discuss a video of a television programme with me, but I'd be asking them to interpret the things they'd watched in a rather formal setting. That's not how people usually watch television. So what I had to do next was to go and study television watching in the places where televi- sion is typically watched, in people's homes, and I did that in some households in London (Morley, 1986). I carefully chose the households for my sample. I had families from dif- ferent class backgrounds and I thought I'd be doing a study of class patterns of watching television, but it didn't quite work out like that. What the data showed me is that I had to pay much more attention to questions of gender. The differences in gendered practices of domestic television viewing ended up being far more important in that research than the divisions between social classes. So although I set off to do one thing, I ended up doing quite another, and in the process, I also came to realise that the wider context of domestic consumption was a key issue for me.[i]

Having realised that, I then had to start thinking more broadly about the domestic envi- ronment itself and the ways in which the social relations of the household are bound up with the uses of a range of technologies (see, for example, Morley and Silverstone, 1990; Silverstone and Morley, 1990). Partly, this took me back to Raymond Williams' (1974) concept of 'mobile privatisation' (p. 26), and to his account of a lifestyle that's got to do with precisely the sort of suburban television-viewing practices I'd known as a child.[ii]

Around that time, too, I came across the work of writers like Mary Beth Haralovich (1988) and Lynn Spigel (1992) from the United States. They were arguing that if you're going to understand post-war American culture, what you have to understand it as is precisely a combination of particular forms of television and particular forms of subur- ban living. It's both of these things together, what we might call the virtual and the mate- rial dimensions, and that's partly where my interest in broader questions of cultural geography, and in the material settings of television viewing and of other uses of technol- ogy, comes from (see, for example, Morley, 1991, 1992, 2000, 2003, 2007, 2010, 2011; see also Morley and Robins, 1995). Media questions are important, then, but they only seem to me to be really significant if they're set in a far wider frame, rather than focusing just on media technologies themselves.

Z.K.:   Thanks David. Now, Shaun, you were among the first generation of students in Britain to be enrolled on a degree programme in media studies, and you went on to become a lecturer in this field soon after you graduated. Can you tell us some bits of your own story of coming into media studies, saying a few things, too, about the continuities and shifts in your work through the years?

S.M.: Yes, I was part of the academic generation that followed Dave's. As you've just mentioned, I was among the first students to take a degree course in media studies, when I started out as an undergraduate at the Polytechnic of Central London (PCL), now the University of Westminster, back in the early 1980s. During the 1970s, the School of Communication at PCL had set up the only degree in Britain with that specific title, although it's important to remember that there were also a few degree courses in communication studies, which contained elements of media studies, and which emerged around the same time in other polytechnics, including what's now the University of Sunderland, where I work these days. The lecturers who taught me at PCL were mostly the editors of what was then a new academic journal, Media, Culture & Society. One of them was Paddy Scannell, a social historian and theorist of broadcasting (for his later key publications, see Scannell, 1996; Scannell and Cardiff, 1991), whose classes I found inspiring, and it was Paddy who supervised my final-year dissertation, a study of broad- casting's entry into household life in the 1920s and 1930s, which was subsequently published as an article (Moores, 1988). This was a study based on some oral history interviews that I'd recorded in my home town in the North of England, with elderly people who recalled their experiences of radio's arrival.

What I looked at there was a process through which the medium gradually got 'domesticated' as the domestic sphere was 'mediated' by broadcasting, the shift from radio being a new technology through to its becoming a taken-for-granted part of the furniture. What I found, though, was that in order to understand radio's entry into the house- hold, it was necessary to consider all sorts of other things as well, like patterns of working-class labour and leisure, gendered practices and relationships in families and the organisation of people's time–space routines. So, without realising it and without having the words to express it, I think I was already,

back in the mid-1980s, starting to do a kind of non-media-centric media studies, because the historical research that I did was centrally about everyday practices and experiences. It ended up as a study of everyday social relations and of how these were being played out around and through a new media technology.

Similarly, in the qualitative research that I did in the early 1990s, on the consumption of satellite TV in a South Wales city, what interested me were social relationships of class, gender and generation, in and across particular households and urban or suburban neighbourhoods, along with the identifications that my interviewees were making with 'image spaces' at national and transnational levels (Moores, 1996). By the way, it was Dave who suggested to me that I might want to look at the arrival of satellite TV as a new technology in everyday life, and of course he'd been involved in the groundbreaking non-media- centric work that he's just spoken about, investigating practices of family TV viewing and, with Roger Silverstone and others at Brunel University, doing ethnographic research on the household uses of various information and communication technologies.

Now, there's another part of the story here, because, as well as trying to develop my empirical research on media in everyday life, I was also trying to figure out how to teach media studies as a young lecturer. After my degree course, and this is probably because the field itself was still so young in Britain, I quickly found myself lecturing, initially on the communication studies programme at what in those days was the Polytechnic of Wales, and then later at Queen Margaret College, Edinburgh. In fact, I was never a full-time postgraduate student, and I only got a PhD years later for a collection of my published work (Moores, 2000). Anyhow, in the 1980s, to inform my teaching, I spent a lot of time reading the theoretical literature of the day in my field. This was predominantly a mix of Western Marxist perspectives on ideology and hegemony with approaches to representation and interpretation that had their roots in structuralism and semiotics, along with certain psychoanalytical conceptions of subjectivity and the symbolic order. I taught about all this stuff and I referred to it in my writing, for example, in the first book that I wrote (Moores, 1993a). I never felt wholly comfortable with it, though, and in retrospect, I can see that this is because most of it, maybe with the exception of some of Antonio Gramsci's (1971) work, doesn't actually help much in coming to terms with the

practical and experiential dimensions of the every- day, which is where my research interests have always been.

Of course, it's true that there was also, alongside the European, 20th-century Marxist and structuralist traditions, a more British, 'culturalist' tradition that fed into media and cultural studies. Like Dave, I was interested in Williams' writings, including his notes on mobile privatisation (see Moores, 1993b), which I felt allowed more room for an exploration of the practical, the everyday and the ordinary. I developed an interest, too, in engaging with Anthony Giddens' social theories of 'structuration' and modernity (Giddens, 1984, 1990; Moores, 1995, 2005), and Erving Goffman's work on what he came to call the 'interaction order' (Goffman, 1983; Moores, 1999). Still, it's only in recent years, since I've been engaging with a range of phenomenological perspectives in the humanities and social sci- ences, that I feel as though I've eventually come across a literature which is enabling me to get to grips with everyday practices and experiences (see, for example, Moores, 2006,

2009, 2012, 2013, in press; see also Moores and Metykova, 2009, 2010). I could say a bit, later in our discussion, about my current interest in phenomenology, but what about your story, Zlatan? Your more recent way into media studies was via the MA in media and com- munications at Goldsmiths, wasn't it, and then as a PhD student working with Dave? I first met you at your viva, where I was the external examiner!

Z.K.: Actually, it's probably best to start the story a bit further back. Before my postgraduate studies, I'd worked in Croatian public broadcasting as a producer and presenter of news and documentary programmes, and I'd also been an undergraduate student here, in the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Zagreb, where I've now returned to work as a lecturer in the Department of Media and Journalism. The classes that I took on media, though, when I was an undergraduate, had to do mainly with issues of freedom of the press, on the one hand, and with abstract communication science models, on the other. Many of the concepts and approaches that are quite commonplace in media and cultural studies elsewhere were largely unknown in this part of Europe, and there was little access to key books in those fields.

In the mid-2000s, I received a scholarship that took me to London to study, as you said, on the MA in media and communications at Goldsmiths, and things felt very

new there at first, like there were these two different academic worlds on either side of the same continent. I was reading a lot of media and cultural studies literature, to try to bring myself up to speed on the course. Among the many interesting things that were being taught by the staff in the Department of Media and Communications, I attended David's classes on media audiences and media geographies, and I was encouraged to take classes in other departments too. For example, I came across some work in urban studies that was also highly relevant to the media issues I was concerned with.

Looking back on my 4 years at Goldsmiths, having done my PhD there as well, I can make sense of it now as a sort of training in non-media-centric media studies. My thesis, which is being published in revised form as a monograph, was based on some qualitative empirical research that I did, both in the United Kingdom and in Croatia, on people's encounters with public screens in everyday urban living (Krajina, 2014; and see Krajina, 2013). The book includes four specific case studies that came out of my research. One is concerned with relations to street advertising, another considers screen advertisements in an underground train system, and two further case studies look at encounters with installation art and with media facade architecture. This research, which was methodologically quite challenging to design and carry out, involved investigating passing interactions with these various types of screen, in ordinary situations like taking a stroll, rushing to work or waiting for public transport, and it involved considering them as particular social and spatial practices. For example, there was the practice of looking at a screen as a way of avoiding eye contact with a stranger coming the other way or the practice of someone routinely glancing at a screen image in order to imagine themselves being in a 'nicer place', and I was even fascinated by some people's not noticing screens as a feature of their routine, habitual activity. So public screens are technologies that form an increas- ingly important part of contemporary urban environments. They've become pieces of street furniture in a way, but what's central for me is everyday practice, everyday move- ment and the ways in which people are actually 'negotiating the mediated city'. Since returning to Zagreb, part of my teaching, at the university here, has been on issues of media in urban settings.

Geographies, mobilities and experiences

Z.K.:   Let's hear some more from both of you now, about this non-media-centric approach and how it might look in action. David, you've been insisting recently, and you hinted at this earlier in our discussion, that it's crucial for us to pay attention to the mate- rial as well as the virtual dimensions of communication. Maybe it'd be helpful if you could begin by explaining that point in greater detail.

D.M.:   Okay, well to explain it backwards in a way, in the 1990s Kevin Robins and I were talking about the emergence of 'electronic landscapes' (Morley and Robins, 1995), and we were making the case that media researchers and cultural geographers had to pay more attention to such issues. For me, though, the problem is that nowadays people working in media studies and communication studies too often focus exclusively on the virtual dimension. That's why I've been suggesting a return to the more 'classical' notion of communications that was developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the 19th century, which involves a broader understanding of communications as the movement of information, people and commodities (see Morley, 2009, 2011). This definition is very rich as a starting point for investigations in our field. What I'm interested in doing is not replacing the study of material geographies with the study of electronic landscapes or virtual geographies. Rather, it's the changing relations between them that's significant, and the ways in which the one is now overlaid on the other. To pick out just the virtual and to focus only on that doesn't make any sense to me.

A little while back, we were being told that the recent political transformations in Egypt, and throughout the Arab world, could be understood as a 'Facebook Revolution'. When you get to Cairo, though, and you ask people what actually happened, it turns out that the use of social media played a relatively small part in the events, and then only for a small proportion of the people taking part. Other more banal, face-to-face modes of communication, such as the gossip networks of the taxi drivers based in Tahrir Square, played a more important role. So this is the kind of thing that interests me when we're thinking about how material and virtual geographies get articulated.

Let's take some other examples. Cyber industries are actually one of the most geographically concentrated industries in the world, in terms of physical location. If you're setting up an Internet company in London, say, you've really got to be in Shoreditch if you're going to be 'on the ball', and you've even got to be in a particular part of Shoreditch, in Tech City. It's very concentrated. Cyberspace has its own geography too. The densities of Internet connections per square kilometre, across the world, vary dramatically. Where you are in social and material space makes a huge difference to your degree of access to these new virtual geographies. In a way, this goes back to what Arjun Appadurai (1996) was getting at when he wrote about the relations between ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes and so on.[iii] Still, what we need to be thinking carefully about is precisely who is how mobile in relation to which material and virtual geographies. The question is who has access to what, how that access is patterned and what consequences that access has for everyday experiences of movement. What we need to avoid, then, is any kind of generalised, romanticised 'nomadology', like the idea that we're all mobile now, and in much the same way. We have to attend to the distinctions and connections between different types of mobility and also different types of immobility, in both the material and the virtual realms (see Hannam et al., 2006).

Another thing is that here we are in the so-called digital world, talking about convergence, about multi-platform systems of delivery, but if you look at the much neglected field of transport studies, you'll see that in that area there's been a multi-platform delivery system since the invention of the container box in the 1950s (Morley, 2010, 2011). If anything is the emblem of our era, it is this container box. It's the basis of globalisation, and you don't even see that because it's so ordinary, so absorbed into the everyday. Years ago, back in the 1930s, psychologist Rudolf Arnheim (quoted in Rath, 1985: 199) talked about how we should understand TV 'as a means of transport for the mind'. Evidently, he was speaking metaphorically, but his idea helps to make the connection between electronically mediated communications and transportation systems. Bruno Latour (1996) points out that, in Greece, on the sides of the vans that move people's furniture around, it says metaforos. What's a metaphor? It's a way of moving something from place to place, whether that's moving an object or a meaning. So, yes, my current interest is in how we might conceivably put together a non-media-centric approach to communications, which

can do justice both to its material and its virtual dimensions, and I think we badly need to restore the broken link between media studies and transport studies (see also Carey, 1989; Packer and Robertson, 2006).

S.M.:   I'm with you on the need for research that addresses different kinds of mobility and that links media studies into a wider consideration of movement, of patterned mobilities. Directly in response to what Zlatan was saying, about how a non-media-centric approach looks in action, I'd like to explain just a bit about a research project that I was involved in not so long ago, working with Monika Metykova (Moores and Metykova, 2009, 2010). Monika and I were investigating what we called the environmental experiences of trans- European migrants, and, by the way, that notion of 'environmental experience' is one that we borrowed from the literature of phenomenological geography, where it comes up in the writings of Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) and David Seamon (1979). Those migrants were young people from Eastern Europe who'd moved to live and work in Britain fol- lowing the expansion of the European Union in the mid-2000s, and Monika conducted lengthy conversational interviews with 20 of these young people, who were living, at that time, in the cities of London, Newcastle and Edinburgh. We were interested, of course, in their everyday practices of media use, including what John Urry (2007) would call their imaginative, virtual and mobile communicative travellings, because this media use, through which they maintained contact with the countries that they'd left, helped to give their migrant experiences a historical and cultural specificity. At the same time, though, we were interested in their various physical mobilities, their routine urban practices of walking, driving, cycling and travelling by bus or train, as well as their more occasional use of budget airline routes to visit friends and family members back in Eastern Europe. Our research threw up some data, too, on the transnational mobilities of various material goods, such as packs of biscuits and sausages or bottles of whisky! In Dave's terms, we were concerned with the interwoven movements of information, people and commodities.

I think of that project as a concrete example of a non-media-centric approach, because the main focus for us was on matters of migration, and, even more centrally,

on senses of place. When people move across a continent, there's often a profound disturbance of their everyday routines, and we found that this can enable them to reflect on previously taken-for-granted, unreflective senses of place, but we were also trying to find out how, in the period immediately following these young people's physical migrations, they were gradually forming new senses of place in initially unfamiliar surroundings. Our phenomenological perspective involved seeing place as a practical, experiential accomplishment, as something more than just location. So, we were looking at their everyday activities of getting around as place-making practices, whether that was finding ways about on foot in a local urban neighbourhood, or on the roads of a city in a car, or on public transport systems or else on the Internet. The non- media-centric approach that we took was important, I believe, because it helped to highlight significant interconnections between some very different mobilities, and in a way that a more 'media-centred' study would, quite frankly, be likely to miss.

There's a common misconception that media studies are simply about studying media, but I've been arguing that media studies are, or certainly should be, about much more than this, that it's always necessary to situate media and their uses in relation to a range of other technologies and practices (Moores, 2005, 2012). When I came across Dave's notion of non-media-centric media studies (Morley, 2007, 2009), it seemed to me to crystallise this kind of view very well. It seemed to be a helpful name for the sort of things that some of us in media and cultural studies have been up to for a while now. For instance, back in the late 1980s, Janice Radway (1988), who's best known for her pio- neering work on readers of romantic fiction (Radway, 1987), wrote an interesting piece in which she advocated a move beyond audience or reception research, to explore what she called 'the habits and practices of everyday life' (Radway, 1988: 366) in a full- blown community ethnography. Although her proposal for an extended collaborative investigation of the everyday was overambitious, I do think that Radway was absolutely right to call for things to be broadened out so as not to isolate the media-user link.[iv] It also strikes me that Joke Hermes' innovative research in the 1990s, on the everyday contexts of magazine reading, could be made sense of retrospectively as part of this non-media-centric strand of work, and it was an early example of phenomenologically informed research in our field (Hermes, 1995). More recently, Nick Couldry (2010, 2012),

who's another of Dave's former PhD students from Goldsmiths, has argued against media-centrism and has been advocating a focus on practices. Anyhow, Dave rightly stresses that we need to understand the particularities of media, their distinctive characteristics and affordances, but crucially he's made the argument that Zlatan quoted at the start of our conversation, that we have to 'de-centre' media in our investigations and explanations of social life, and of course he's currently interested in re-broadening the definition of communications.

D.M.: Non-media-centric media studies is a form of words that Shaun and I, among others, have adopted, and I think it usefully indicates where our work came from, but, like Shaun, I didn't always think of it like that. I can now trace that thread back a long way in my own work, but I couldn't have said years ago that that's what I was doing. It's only now, looking back, that I can see more clearly what I was doing and am then able to say, programmatically, what it is that I think we should be doing and how to take this approach forward.

S.M.: Talking about how we might move things forward, I'm also with you on what you've written recently about the field of media studies needing to take more seriously its 'interdisciplinary roots' (Morley, 2009: 115). When I was an undergraduate in media studies, my lecturers came from different backgrounds in the humanities and social sciences, and when you were sent to the library, you were sent to the four corners of it. Back in the early 1980s, there wasn't really an established canon of media studies texts that you were required to read. I don't want to get too nostalgic about this, but I wonder if one of the things that our students miss out on nowadays is the spirit of interdisciplinary adventure that I felt all those years ago at PCL, even though I try to get my own post- graduate students at Sunderland to read well beyond what are usually considered to be the boundaries of media studies. I'd suggest that in general our field feels more insular now, and of course that's partly a consequence of the success of media studies in estab- lishing a new discipline with its own specialist literature. For me, though, media studies are at their strongest when they're outward looking, when we're in dialogue with work

that's going on in other disciplines, in geography, philosophy, sociology, anthropology and so on.

D.M.: Just to try to put something together here, going back to what Shaun's been saying about the everyday, and what I've said about the material and the virtual, I think one of the best things that's happening at the moment is the way in which sociologists and anthropologists are increasingly contributing to our understanding of media use, and technology use more generally, in quite varied social settings. Don Slater (2013) gives a marvellous example from West Africa. It's an example concerning technology in the different conditions of two villages. One got a lot of funding for a purpose-built, humidity controlled computer centre, but it was built in a place where it just didn't fit in with where people tended to go. In another village, though, there was an aid worker who'd left behind, when he went home, an almost clapped out laptop. Its connection was dodgy, but it worked a bit. He gave it to a friend of his who ran a cafe, and the cafe happened to be next to a bus stop where lots of people waited and passed through. Guess what? The old laptop, because it connected with people's everyday practices, their everyday paths of movement, literally where they walked, where they were accustomed to standing and having a chat, made much more difference to people's lives than the shiny new computer centre, which didn't fit into the everyday. So this is just to say something more about the importance of the everyday.

Of course, we have to remember, too, how difficult it can be to study everyday cultures, that which we take for granted, that which often doesn't need to be said. Georges Perec (1999) once wrote that the difficulty with studying the everyday is you can't see it. He says that you have to force yourself to see 'almost stupidly', to force yourself to take notice of things you'd ordinarily find to be invisible, such as the ubiquitous but largely 'invisible' container boxes that I mentioned earlier. That might also be one way we'll be better able to understand media and their uses in context.

Z.K.:   On the basis of my own work on encounters with public screens, I can certainly confirm that point about the difficulty of studying everyday cultures. Initially, when I went out to observe what people were doing as they pass beside screens in a city con- text, I was struck by just how little overtly researchable activity there was. I

nearly gave up at that early stage! Next, I asked selected people to carry a small voice recorder with them, so that they could speak into it about what they noticed as they moved around. One of my research participants, who was a professional working in London, took a trip on the underground, which is thought of by advertisers to be a captive space, covered with various screens and messages, and he actually returned a silent tape. In a subsequent interview, he stated that he didn't usually pay much attention to public screens. This is precisely the problem of investigating the 'invisibility' of the ordinary, and yet, the silent tape itself told me something interesting about what wasn't consciously noticed, or, at least, what wasn't discursively noted. A related thing that interested me, though, in my London Underground case study, was a reported feeling of discomfort on walking through a pedestrian tunnel where all the advertising screens had been removed while renovations were being carried out. So what's sometimes unnoticed in everyday life isn't necessarily an insignificant part of the environment. When it's not there for some reason, the absence can become highly visible.

These empirical examples led me to question arguments made by another researcher who's written about media in urban settings, Todd Gitlin (2002). He suggests that con- temporary cityscapes are a flashing spectacle to which people surrender, and the assumption there is that the provision of more and newer technologies will necessarily bring people into more communication with media. On the contrary, what I found is that people can develop various creative skills of using screens as a background to their movement. For instance, some of the women who participated in my study reported feeling unsafe in a particular part of London, and so, they chose to walk a route where screens light up the space and make it feel more 'lively'. They were certainly looking around, but they weren't 'seeing' any particular poster or were noticing only those that changed. Therefore, assuming that mediated urban environments are simply about media communications seems to me to be wide of the mark. There's much else going on too, and we need a non-media-centric approach to appreciate this.

Anyway, I feel fortunate now that I didn't give up on my research, and I'd like to think that I eventually managed to overcome those initial difficulties that I faced when doing the empirical work. Of course, the readers of my book will have to make a judgement about that (see Krajina, 2014).

Representation, power and embodiment

Z.K.: Moving into the final part of our discussion now, having talked about these issues of the everyday and the ordinary, and about various mobilities and geographies, I'm wondering if you could say something, quite explicitly, about how this non-media-centric approach relates to what might be thought of as the more 'traditional' questions in media studies, to matters of representation and power, for example.

S.M.: Perhaps I'd better start with representation, because the phenomenological perspectives that I favour these days do involve shifting the emphasis away from those theories of representation that have helped to shape our field. Recently, adapting a term from Nigel Thrift's writings (see especially Thrift, 1996, 2007), I've become interested in the possibility of developing a type of media studies that's 'non-representational' as well as non-media-centric. This would require us to pay more attention than we've done in the past to matters of embodiment and to related issues of orientation and habitation.[v] It'd call for a greater emphasis on our bodily, pre-reflective knowledges and dispositions, on our knowing how to find ways about and our inhabiting of everyday environments. Let me try to explain, as briefly and straightforwardly as I can.

For me, one of the main difficulties facing media studies today is the field's inability to leave behind entirely some of its early structuralist influences. There are probably very few academics in media studies who'd still identify themselves directly with the tradition of structuralism and semiotics, but I suspect that many would still subscribe to the view that it's only through language or symbolic representation that the world can be 'made to mean'. This remains one of the key principles in our field, certainly in terms of how the subject of media studies has been taught, and I'd like to take issue with it.

In particular, there are two problems with this sort of view, and here I'm drawing espe- cially on Tim Ingold's 'dwelling perspective' in anthropology (see Ingold, 2000). First, it tends to assume that people are necessarily living out their relationships to an external world through systems of symbols, and, second, it tends to assume that these relation- ships depend primarily on cognitive processes, on mental representations, which guide practical action and give shape to experience. Instead, I'd want to suggest that it's pos- sible for our being in the world to be meaningful 'in the absence of symbolic representa- tion', as Ingold (2011: 77) puts it, and also that it's important to see how meanings can emerge from routine practices, through our practical, embodied and sensuous engage- ments with lived-in environments. Actually, these days Ingold (2013: 94–96) prefers to speak of 'animacy' and 'animate life' rather than of 'embodiment' or 'embodied agency', yet his initial critique holds good and it serves to support my identification of an old dif- ficulty that's still troubling media studies.

Now, I realise that this might all sound rather abstract, but what I'm getting at is the need for media studies to take more seriously the significance of everyday doings. For exam- ple, in some of my most recent work, I've been interested in movements of the hands and fingers in our dealings with media and with other routinely used equipment (Moores, in press). I'm thinking here of manual activities such as the deft sliding and tapping of fin- gers or 'digits' on various touch-sensitive devices, their pressing on keyboards and key- pads and so on. I've also been considering these things alongside skilled practices like the playing of musical instruments. What interests me is how media users come to acquire habits of the hand or what David Sudnow (2001), with reference to piano play- ing, once called 'ways of the hand', allowing them to get around routinely used 'media settings', like online environments, with ease. I'm fascinated by the formation, through practice or through movement, of hands that are at home with media and other technolo- gies. The philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2002 [1962]) called this kind of practical know-how a 'knowledge in the hands' (p. 166), and he saw how our wider bodily under- standing is bound up with a meaningfulness that's crucial for experiences of everyday life. This bodily understanding has to do with knowing where we are and where we're

going in environments that are thoroughly familiar to us. Of course, there's a methodo- logical challenge involved in researching that sort of meaningfulness, which relates to what Dave and Zlatan were just saying about the problem of studying everyday cultures.

There's one further thing to add at this stage, coming back to what I was saying about representation. I want to stress that I'm absolutely not against the study of images, speech, writing and performances, although, in the words of a contemporary geographer, John Wylie (2007), I would want us to approach them as very much 'in and of the world of embodied practice' (p. 164).[vi]

D.M.: What Shaun was just arguing there, about our embodied relations to technologies and our knowing where we are in everyday contexts, makes me think about what I do when I first get up in the morning. Until I can orient myself in space by putting on my glasses, and orient myself in time by putting on my wristwatch, I'm not quite the person I normally consider myself to be. For many people, it might now be a question of putting in their contact lenses and picking up their smartphone off the bedside table, but the general point here is that the boundaries between us and these technologies are not as clear as you might imagine. Some people take Donna Haraway's idea of 'the cyborg' (see Haraway, 1991) as a 'futuristic' figure, but actually we've been cyborgs for quite a long while now.

Z.K.: So, do these ideas about embodiment mean that we no longer need to study representations, at least in the conventional ways that we've done in the past? Are we now shifting focus?

D.M.: I'm not so sure that a complete switch of focus, based on the notion that one approach should replace another, is actually helpful in this respect. Shaun mentioned non-representational theory, but there's a slightly different term that he's used in his writing too. It's the idea of the 'more-than-representational', to which I feel more sympathetic.

S.M.: It's Hayden Lorimer's (2005) term. He talks of more-than-representational cultural geographies.

D.M.: I think that this idea of the more-than-representational or the not-only-representational probably offers a better way of going beyond matters of representation, to these other issues that Shaun's raising, without suggesting that we're entirely leaving those old questions behind. I don't think it's either possible or desirable to leave those matters behind. From my point of view, questions to do with symbolic representation and cognitive processes remain important, even if they're not the whole story.

S.M.: Well, I agree with you to an extent. I agree that what you're calling 'matters of representation', matters of cognition too, can't simply be left behind, and, as I've tried to make clear, I'm not opposed to the study of images, utterances and so on. What I'm arguing, though, is that the concept of representation has been too central in media studies, and that we do have to leave behind some of the established assumptions that get made in our field when we're thinking about language, world and meaning. It's about how we theorise those things.

Z.K.: Okay, we've spoken about representation, but what about matters of power?

S.M.: I'm well aware, when I start speaking about movements of the hands and fingers in media use, that there'll be colleagues in our field who'd despair, who'd see all this stuff about bodily knowledge as highly trivial, and as a retreat from important questions of power and the political. Still, the phenomenological perspectives that I'm working with these days don't necessarily, and shouldn't, lead us away from issues of social difference and power, or from a politics of everyday life.

On this point about difference and power, I'll say just a bit about Pierre Bourdieu's (1990, 2000) social theory of practice, because I find it interesting that long before he became a sociologist, Bourdieu began his academic life as a philosophy student,

and he'd have been reading, among other things, Merleau-Ponty's writings. In fact, Bourdieu was described by one of his collaborators as Merleau-Ponty's 'sociological heir' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 20). Like Merleau-Ponty (2002 [1962]), Bourdieu is fascinated by a bodily involvement or immersion in the world that presupposes no representation. He writes about a 'practical comprehension' of the world, and about how the agent engaged in practice inhabits the everyday like a familiar habitat and feels at home there (Bourdieu, 2000). These statements clearly have a phenomenological or non-representational ring to them.

Where Bourdieu's work differs from Merleau-Ponty's, though, is in its attempt to relate bodily dispositions to social inequalities. Bourdieu (2000) considers what he terms the 'coincidence between habitus and habitat' (p. 147) in particular social and historical circumstances. For example, he's concerned with particular forms of class habitus, and, by the way, you can find a similar engagement with phenomenology in the work of Iris Marion Young (2005), a feminist philosopher and political theorist who's written some important stuff about gendered bodily movements and inhibitions. Anyway, this raises what are, for me, crucial questions about the politics of bodies and worlds, including issues to do with who feels at home, and who feels uncomfortable or out of place, in which specific social situations.

D.M.: I agree with you that attending to those matters of inclusion and exclusion is terribly important. My work has always been concerned in one way or another with cultural power, and the power dimension that I'm still most interested in has to do with how common sense can present itself as natural, although, of course, it is continually changing. Identifying the way in which any particular form of common sense sets limits to our perception, excludes certain perceptions or certain possibilities, that's a matter of enormous importance, so I think this continues to be a very rich terrain of investigation (see, for example, Hall and O'Shea, 2013, for a recent contribution to debates about the politics of common sense).

Z.K.: Speaking of politics, I'd like to ask a slightly different but related question. In these times of economic crisis, how would you defend your brand of critical, non-

media-centric media studies when the current pressure in higher education is increasingly for courses that have some immediate utility or vocational focus?

D.M.: I can remember a particular occasion, not so long ago, when exactly this issue came up, in the context of my teaching on media audiences. I had an MA student who, after about 8 weeks of attending my lectures, I could see, was getting very, very frustrated, and finally, she exploded. She said to me, 'But Professor Morley, what's the utility of all this?' I said to her, 'It's not designed to have utility in the sense that you're talking about. It's not training, it's education.' Of course, the difficulty is that precisely because students at British universities now have to go into such incredible levels of debt in order to get an education, they're much more likely to pose the kind of question that I got from this MA student. They're increasingly pushed towards looking for a utilitarian outcome.

What I'm trying to encourage, in my teaching, is the ability to do a certain kind of thinking. I don't mind if the students agree or disagree with my conclusions, with where I stand on particular topics. I've always attempted to foster a critical engagement through my teaching, and in terms of the current economic situation and current educational politics that remains my position.

A few years back, I had the opportunity to talk a bit with Hermann Bausinger, the eminent German professor of ethnology (see especially Bausinger, 1990), and he told me an interesting story about his own teaching. He said that at the end of his courses, some of his students, including some of the very good ones, would come up to him and say that they'd worked hard and read all the books he'd told them to read, but that they were still confused. His response was to say, yes, but now you're confused at a higher level! I think that's really the best we can hope for, and I certainly don't think we should be in the business of teaching students ready-made answers to questions.

References

Ang I (1996) 'Ethnography and radical contextualism in audience studies'. In: Hay J, Grossberg L and Wartella E (eds) *The Audience and Its Landscape*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pp.247–262.

Appadurai A (1996) *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Appadurai A and Morley D (2011) 'Decoding diaspora and disjuncture'. *New Formations* 73: 39–51.

Bausinger H (1990) *Folk Culture in a World of Technology*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Bourdieu P (1990) *The Logic of Practice*. Cambridge: Polity Press. Bourdieu P (2000) Pascalian Meditations. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu P and Wacquant L (1992) *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Carey J (1989) *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*. Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman Ltd.

Couldry N (2010) 'Theorising media as practice'. In: Bräuchler B and Postill J (eds) *Theorising Media and Practice*. Oxford: Berghahn Books, pp.35–54.

Couldry N (2012) *Media, Society, World: Social Theory and Digital Media Practice*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Giddens A (1984) *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Giddens A (1990) *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Gitlin T (2002) *Media Unlimited: How the Torrent of Images and Sounds Overwhelms Our Lives.* New York: Metropolitan Books.

Goffman E (1983) 'The interaction order.' *American Sociological Review* 48(1): 1–17.

Gramsci A (1971) *Selections from Prison Notebooks*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Gray A (1987) 'Behind closed doors: Video recorders in the home'. In: Baehr H and Dyer G (eds) *Boxed In: Women and Television*. London: Pandora, pp.38–54.

Gray A (1992) *Video Playtime: The Gendering of a Leisure Technology*. London: Routledge.

Hall S (1973) *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse* (CCCS stencilled paper 7). Birmingham: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham.

Hall S and O'Shea A (2013) 'Common-sense neoliberalism'. In: Hall S, Massey D and Rustin M (eds) *After Neoliberalism? The Kilburn Manifesto*. London: Lawrence & Wishart. Available at: www.lwbooks.co.uk/journals/soundings/pdfs/Manifesto_commonsense_neoliberalism. pdf

Hannam K, Sheller M and Urry J (2006) 'Editorial: Mobilities, immobilities and moorings'. *Mobilities* 1(1): 1–22.

Haralovich MB (1988) 'Suburban family sitcoms and consumer product design: Addressing the social subjectivity of homemakers in the 1950s'. In: Drummond P and Paterson R (eds) *Television and Its Audience: International Research Perspectives*. London: British Film Institute, pp.38–60.

Haraway D (1991) *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge.

Hermes J (1995) *Reading Women's Magazines: An Analysis of Everyday Media Use*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hobson D (1980) 'Housewives and the mass media'. In: Hall S, Hobson D, Lowe A, et al. (eds) *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies* 1972–79. London: Hutchinson, pp.105–114.

Hobson D (1982) *Crossroads: The Drama of a Soap Opera*. London: Methuen.

Ihde D (2002) *Bodies in Technology*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Ingold T (2000) *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. London: Routledge.

Ingold T (2011) *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*. London: Routledge.

Ingold T (2013) *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*. London: Routledge.

Krajina Z (2013) 'Domesticating the screen-scenography: Situational uses of screen images and technologies in the London Underground'. In: Berry C, Harbord J and Moore R (eds) *Public Space, Media Space*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.220–247.

Krajina Z (2014) *Negotiating the Mediated City: Everyday Encounters with Public Screens*. London: Routledge.

Latour B (1996) *Aramis, or the Love of Technology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Lorimer H (2005) 'Cultural geography: The busyness of being 'more-than-representational''. *Progress in Human Geography* 29(1): 83–94.

McLuhan M (1964) *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Merleau-Ponty M (2002 [1962]) *Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge.

Moores S (1988) 'The box on the dresser': Memories of early radio and everyday life. *Media, Culture & Society* 10(1): 23–40.

Moores S (1993a) *Interpreting Audiences: The Ethnography of Media Consumption*. London: Sage.

Moores S (1993b) Television, geography and 'mobile privatization'. *European Journal of Communication* 8(3): 365–379.

Moores S (1995) 'Media, modernity and lived experience'. *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 19(1): 5–19.

Moores S (1996) *Satellite Television and Everyday Life: Articulating Technology* (Acamedia Research Monograph 18). Luton: John Libbey Media.

Moores S (1999) The mediated 'interaction order'. In: Hearn J and Roseneil S (eds) *Consuming Cultures: Power and Resistance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.221–240.

Moores S (2000) *Media and Everyday Life in Modern Society*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Moores S (2005) *Media/Theory: Thinking about Media and Communications*. London: Routledge.

Moores S (2006) 'Media uses and everyday environmental experiences: A positive critique of phenomenological geography'. *Participations: Journal of Audience & Reception Studies* 3(2). Available at: www.participations.org/volume%203/issue%202%20-%20special/3_02_moores.htm

Moores S (2009) 'That familiarity with the world born of habit: A phenomenological approach to the study of media uses in daily living'. *Interactions: Studies in Communication & Culture*1(3): 301–312.

Moores S (2012) *Media, Place and Mobility*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Moores S (2013) 'We find our way about: Everyday media use and 'inhabitant knowledge''. *Mobilities*. Epub ahead of print 27 August. DOI: 10.1080/17450101.2013.819624.

Moores S (in press) 'Digital orientations: 'Ways of the hand' and practical knowing in media uses and other manual activities'. Mobile Media & Communication.

Moores S and Metykova M (2009) 'Knowing how to get around: Place, migration and communication'. *The Communication Review* 12(4): 313–326.

Moores S and Metykova M (2010) "I didn't realize how attached I am': On the environmental experiences of trans-European migrants'. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 13(2): 171–189.

Morley D (1980) *The Nationwide Audience: Structure and Decoding* (BFI Television Monograph 11). London: British Film Institute.

Morley D (1986) *Family Television: Cultural Power and Domestic Leisure*. London: Comedia.

Morley D (1991) 'Where the global meets the local: Notes from the sitting room'. *Screen* 32(1): 1–15.

Morley D (1992) *Television, Audiences and Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge.

Morley D (2000) *Home Territories: Media, Mobility and Identity*. London: Routledge.

Morley D (2003) 'What's 'home' got to do with it? Contradictory dynamics in the domestication of technology and the dislocation of domesticity'. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 6(4): 435–458.

Morley D (2007) *Media, Modernity and Technology: The Geography of the New*. London: Routledge.

Morley D (2009) 'For a materialist, non-media-centric media studies'. *Television & New Media* 10(1): 114–116.

Morley D (2010) 'Television as a means of transport: Digital teletechnologies and transmodal systems'. In: Gripsrud J (ed.) *Relocating Television: Television in the Digital Context*. London: Routledge, pp.257–270.

Morley D (2011) 'Communications and transport: The mobility of information, people and commodities'. *Media, Culture & Society* 33(5): 743–759.

Morley D and Brunsdon C (1999) *The Nationwide Television Studies*. London: Routledge.

Morley D and Robins K (1995) *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes and Cultural Boundaries*. London: Routledge.

Morley D and Silverstone R (1990) 'Domestic communication: Technologies and meanings'. *Media, Culture & Society* 12(1): 31–55.

Packer J and Robertson C (eds) (2006) *Thinking with James Carey: Essays on Communications, Transportation, History*. New York: Peter Lang.

Perec G (1999) *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*. London: Penguin Books.

Radway J (1987) *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature*. London: Verso.

Radway J (1988) 'Reception study: Ethnography and the problems of dispersed audiences and nomadic subjects'. *Cultural Studies* 2(3): 359–376.

Rath C-D (1985) 'The invisible network: Television as an institution in everyday life'. In: Drummond P and Paterson R (eds) *Television in Transition*. London: British Film Institute, pp.199–204. Richardson I (2008) Pocket technospaces: The bodily incorporation of mobile media. In: Goggin

G (ed.) *Mobile Phone Cultures*. London: Routledge, pp.66–76.

Scannell P (1996) *Radio, Television and Modern Life: A Phenomenological Approach*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Scannell P and Cardiff D (1991) *A Social History of British Broadcasting, 1922–1939: Serving the Nation*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Seamon D (1979) *A Geography of the Lifeworld: Movement, Rest and Encounter*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Silverstone R and Morley D (1990) 'Families and their technologies: Two ethnographic portraits'. In: Putnam T and Newton C (eds) *Household Choices*. London: Futures Publications, pp.74–83.

Slater D (2013) *New Media, Development and Globalization: Making Connections in the Global South*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Spigel L (1992) *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Post-War America*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Sudnow D (2001) *Ways of the Hand: A Rewritten Account*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Thrift N (1996) *Spatial Formations*. London: Sage.

Thrift N (2007) *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect.* London: Routledge.

Tuan Y-F (1977) *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Urry J (2007) *Mobilities*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Williams R (1974) *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*. London: Fontana Press.

Williams R (1989) *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism*. London: Verso.
Wylie J (2007) Landscape. London: Routledge.

Young IM (2005) *On Female Body Experience: 'Throwing Like a Girl' and Other Essays*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Notes

[i] This was a key issue for others, too, including Dorothy Hobson (1980, 1982)
[ii] Williams (1974) was interested in broadcasting as 'a social product of … two apparently paradoxical yet deeply connected tendencies of modern … living' (p. 26). As he put it elsewhere, the condition of mobile privatisation 'is private … centred on the home' (Williams, 1989:171), and yet, at the same time, 'it … confers … an unexampled mobility … it is not living in a cut-off way'. He also regarded the car as a key technological component of this lifestyle, and so, his concept brings together matters of communication and transportation.

[iii] For example, Appadurai (1996: 33–35) explored relations between physical migration and electronic media of communication, proposing an analysis of how, on a transnational scale, 'moving groups and individuals' encounter moving images and sounds (for further discussion, see Appadurai and Morley, 2011).

[iv] Ien Ang (1996) referred to Radway's perspective as an instance of 'radical contextualism'. Although Ang (1996) had sympathy for this move towards an ethnography of the everyday, she warned that 'the will "to do justice" to … contextualization could easily lead to a sense of paralysis' (p. 257). The same warning might apply to our call in this article for non- media-centric media studies, but we agree with Ang (1996) that there are always pragmatic methodological decisions to be made about 'which contextual frameworks to take on board' (p. 257) in any specific empirical research project. Indeed, one of us (Morley, 1992) has written directly of the need to establish 'which elements of the potentially infinite realm of … "context" are going to be relevant to the particular research in hand' (p. 187).

[v] Of course, there are already several examples of phenomenological work on bodies, media and technology (for two of the most interesting, see Ihde, 2002; Richardson, 2008).

[vi] Such an understanding of pictures, talk and written texts as part of a 'world of embodied practice' (Wylie, 2007: 164) serves to challenge all lingering notions of sign systems that are 'anterior to, and determinative of' the practices of everyday life.