International Symposium

Imagining and Communicating Space/Place: Critical Reflections and Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Convenors: Åsa Jernudd and Helen Andersson

Venue: Östra Mark (Ö201), Örebro University

Date: Thursday 09 June 2016

There is a long academic history of reflecting on and imagining individual and collective human nature as situated in space. Indeed, the core issue in the history of human-environment relations has seen the development of competing definitions of place as either an abstract, geometric conception of space or as a more holistic and phenomenological understanding of place as a process of “distinct coming together” in space. Four major theoretical perspectives can be discerned in attempts that have been made to merge geographical/static and processual/dynamic description of space to date. Neo-Marxist thinkers, best represented by Henri Lefebvre, focus on the social production of the spaces within which social life is lived. Agency-oriented scholars such as Robert Sack emphasize how places are inherently dependent on human experience and how network ties that produce places as changing constellations of human commitments, capacities and strategies are woven together through space by movement. Feminist thinkers such as Doreen Massey embrace pluralism and emphasize places as sites in the flow of social relations. Finally, drawing on the post-humanist ‘actor-network theory’, scholars such as, inter alia, Nigel Thrift advocate the performative perspective on place, claiming that the latter is associational and emphasizing the materiality of places as open spaces created through fleeting practice.

Building on the aforementioned variety of perspectives on space/place in contemporary societies, the present international symposium looks at the variety of ways in which various communication-oriented social science and humanities disciplines approach space as the object of critical inquiry. During the symposium, scholars present ongoing work on diverse cases, historical as well as contemporary, that in different ways discuss the social imaginaries and meanings and/or material power of place, and question the binary distinction described above. As the spatial turn in the humanities and social sciences has inspired scholars to rethink social practice as well as dynamic ways in which it is represented and communicated, we look at a variety of modes in which space is constructed as well as mediated as the key subject/object of social action. We cover topics as diverse as private property, commemoration and counter-monuments, place-making, workplaces as participatory in shaping educational practices, and the space of cinema in multipurpose community venues or use of space in neoliberal economy. The symposium forges a dialogue on place between scholars of media- and communication studies, film studies, gender studies, educational sciences and linguistics and aims at creating new, interdisciplinary avenues for thinking about place/space in the context of communication and social practice.
PROGRAMME

09.30 – 10.00 Coffee and welcome

10.00 – 12.00 Session I. Chair: Åsa Jernudd

10.00 – 10.40 “In-Between Remembering and Forgetting: Counter-Monuments, Memory and Identity in the Urban Space” - Natalia Krzyżanowska, Senior Research Fellow in Gender Studies and Feminist Social Research, Örebro University

10.40 – 11.20 ”The Importance of the Workplace - Student’s Writing Processes through the Lens of Material Embodied Theory” - Sofia Hort, Phd. Student in Educational Science and Language Studies

11.20 – 12.00 “The Natural Goodness of Milk – a Social Semiotic Analysis of a Dairy Cooperative’s Use of Place as Brand Communication” - Helen Andersson, Sr. Lecturer in Media- and Communication Studies, Örebro University

12.00 – 13.00 Lunch

13.00 – 16.00 Session II. Chair: Helen Andersson

13.00 – 13.40 “Dynamic Transformation of Urban Landscapes – A Case of Jewish Cemetery in Poznań” - Malgorzata Fabiszak, Professor in Linguistics, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań


14.20 – 14.40 Coffee

14.40 – 16.15 Session III. Chair: Mats Lundmark


15.20 – 16.00 “What is Cinema? Film Exhibition in Multipurpose Community Venues” - Åsa Jernudd, Sr. Lecturer in Media- and Communication Studies/Film, Örebro University

16.00 – 16.30 Remarks and Closing Discussion - Mats Lundmark, Professor in Human Geography, Örebro University

18.00 Dinner for symposium speakers at East-West Sushi Grill Lounge, Engelbrektsgatan 8