



Three-D

Issue 4 (December 2004)

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Women's network

This fourth issue of *Three-D* covers a wide range of activity related to the media, culture and communications subject area. Heather Nunn reports on developments in the women's network. Paul Cobley writes about a new journal, *Subject Matters*. Tony Downumt and Rosie Thomas report on an interesting seminar on practice PhDs. Karen Ross provides a frank assessment of the IAMCR Conference in Brazil this summer. Sheila Whiteley writes about interventions by music academics in attempts to clarify copyright law and practice. And Georgina Born reflects on her recently-published study of the BBC under Birt and Dyke.

I think that such a sense of diverse activity around MeCCSA and the subject area would have pleased Tessa Perkins who, as many

colleagues will be aware, died in September. As Paul Marris, Rosalind Brunt and Christine Geraghty make clear in their appreciations in this issue, Tessa played a fundamental part in setting up a subject association for cultural studies, and later in setting up MeCCSA as a subject association for the wider field. Indeed, as Ros recounts, Tessa invented the very acronym MeCCSA. I hope readers will agree that Paul, Ros and Christine's moving appreciations provide a fitting tribute to a highly accomplished media scholar, and a terrific person.

Dave Hesmondhalgh
The Open University

News

Annual Conference

MeCCSA's annual conference is now establishing itself as the key event in the subject area in Britain. The 2004–5 annual conference takes place in Lincoln, from the 5th to the 7th of January. Details of how to register, of over 100 accepted papers, and of panels and screenings, can be found on the MeCCSA website (www.meccsa.org.uk).

The 2005–6 conference is provisionally slated to take place in Leeds, from the 13th to the 15th of January 2006, organised by Leeds Metropolitan University.

If your institution would like to host the 2006–7 conference in January 2007, then please contact Christine Geraghty, MeCCSA Chair as soon as possible on c.geraghty@tfts.arts.gla.ac.uk

HEFCE Funding

Colleagues will recall that, following representations from MeCCSA, HEFCE agreed to review the allocation of student FTEs across fee bands in media studies (and also sports studies).

To support that exercise they have circulated all HEIs in October to ask for details of their provision in order to inform the review. This request will have gone to whoever in your institution

normally deals with HEFCE data, HESA returns, and the like, and as we are aware departments may sometimes not be as fully involved as they might in such exercises, we thought it would be helpful to make you aware of the process.

HEFCE have appointed an advisory group (comprising people from both fields) to assist them in this exercise, which is chaired by Peter Golding (Professor of Sociology at Loughborough University). The other media studies members are Sue Thornham (Sussex), Brian Winston (Lincoln), John Ellis (Royal Holloway) and Jim Rowland (Goldsmiths).

MeCCSA Website

The MeCCSA website contains up-to-date news, copies of responses to consultations and initiatives (including MeCCSA's response to the Ofcom initiative on media literacy), past copies of this newsletter, details of how to join the MeCCSA e-mail list (via jiscmail), details of the present Executive Committee, a list of members, and much else besides.

Visit <http://www.meccsa.org.uk>
or just google MeCCSA.

Executive Committee Elections

The MeCCSA AGM will be held during the conference at Lincoln, on Jan 6th 2005. The ballot papers will be sent out 28 days ahead of the AGM.

The Committee for 2004 comprises the following people. As of this year, only half the Committee seeks re-election in any one year. Those members of the committee selected (by lot) to stand this year are indicated by an asterisk.

Helen Baehr* (Sunderland)
Anita Biressi (Roehampton)
Barbara Cairns (Lincoln)
Gillian Doyle (Stirling)
Natalie Fenton* (Loughborough)
Christine Geraghty (Glasgow)
Peter Golding* (Loughborough)
David Hesmondhalgh (Open)
Annette Hill* (Westminster)
Máire Messenger Davies* (Ulster)
Sally Munt (Sussex)
Heather Nunn* (Roehampton)
Tim O'Sullivan* (De Montfort)
Karen Ross (Coventry)
Sue Thornham* (Sussex)

RAE Nominations Christine Geraghty

The following letter was sent to HEFCE in September in relation to the request for nominations for the next RAE exercise 'As Chair of the Media, Communication and Cultural Studies Association I am submitting a set of nominations for the 2008 RAE for UoA 66. They are for:

Peter Golding, University of Loughborough, as Chair
Martin Barker, University of Aberystwyth
John Corner, University of Liverpool
Robert Franklin, University of Sheffield
Justin Lewis, University of Cardiff
Mica Nava, University of East London
Farrell Corcoran, Dublin City University, as an International representation

These nominations follow an open invitation to all our members for submissions to the Association's executive, which then

considered these at its meeting of 10 September. These nominations are thus an agreed list from the Association, which is, of course, the main subject association in this field in the UK. I should stress we are submitting the names of individuals on their personal merits, and not a set of names considered as a package to meet the needs of diverse representation and panel composition. For comment on the implications of this see below.

You will note that the nominations include a member of our executive. The individual concerned left the room when his nomination was considered.

At the Executive Committee meeting one or two points were made which I was asked to draw to the attention of the Council in considering RAE nominations.

We were struck by the relatively small number of nominations coming forward, and particularly by the fact that past panel members have not been willing to be nominated. It is very apparent that the very high workload, and thus diversion from other work, especially research, associated with RAE panel membership, is causing great concern among potential panel members. I am sure this is not unique to our field but may be something on which RAE managers might wish to reflect between now and 2008.

We are concerned that the panel should properly reflect "the diversity of the research community" in our field, as required in RAE 03/2004. The names that we put forward clearly could not constitute a legitimate panel on the grounds of gender imbalance. In addition, we have identified some areas of the field which we feel are not adequately represented among the names we are putting forward. These include, among others, film studies, textual and aesthetic work on media fictions, social sciences generally, social psychology, and media practice which are not sufficiently present among our nominations.

While we accept that panel members have a broader interest than their own areas of research (and are confident that our nominees do have that) nevertheless we feel that these gaps will cause considerable anxiety in the field.

For this reason among others, we would welcome a further opportunity to discuss with the appointed chair of the sub panel, and the RAE managers, the final composition of the panel when provisional decisions are made. It is of course vital that the panel commands the confidence of its constituency and we feel this would help enormously in that regard.

One final point is that we are aware that research into the media, particularly film studies, may well come under other panels including Panel M and UoA 63 and 65. We do believe it is important that membership of those panels properly includes the appropriate expertise in film and television research, particularly given that there will be no sub-sub-panels.

I hope these nominations and observations are helpful and look forward to our continued involvement in this important assessment process'.

After the Executive Committee meeting which took these decisions on 10th September, Professor Angela McRobbie indicated her

interest in being nominated. Given our comments about previous members of the panel and the gender imbalance, her name was forwarded to HEFCE for consideration.

Other nominations have been made by AMPE and the SCMA.

The chair of the RAE "Main Panel" of the group of "sub-panels" including communications, culture and media studies has recently been appointed. This Panel (embracing also Music, Art and Design, History of Art, Architecture and Design, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts) will be chaired by Prof. Bruce Brown (Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Architecture at the University of Brighton).

Subject Matters

Paul Cobley *reports on the setting up of a new publication*

Subject Matters: *A Journal of Communications and the Self* is a new bi-annual publication launched this year by members of the Communications and Subjectivity research group at London Metropolitan University. It seeks to explore current thinking about subjectivity, to cross disciplinary boundaries and to challenge critical orthodoxy in the process. It is dedicated to debate on the nature of the subject and its various characterisations, especially in modernity. The journal seeks to go beyond the restrictions of poststructuralist/postmodernist paradigms and to avoid the cliques and the clichés that poststructuralism has naturalized. As such, it seeks to invite papers from researchers in different disciplines, particularly where the relationships between 'communications' and 'subjectivity' are seen to exceed the boundaries that current critical predilections have set for them.

The editors are especially interested in contributions concerned with the ways in which the concept of the subject as it has been defined in recent years can be put into question and even decentred. Although the editors hail mainly from communications, media and cultural studies, the impetus of the journal is to question the dominant discourse on the subject in the Anglo-American paradigm of these disciplines.

The spirit of auto-criticism in this journal problematizes the enforcement by communications, media and cultural studies of its own regime of knowledge and its own constructed canon of authorised texts, in which there are gaps, silences and marginalization of voices with important contributions to make to the subjectivity debate.

The first issue contains articles about subjectivity in relation to German idealism, the gift, semiotics and personal freedom. Issue 2, due in autumn 2004, will be a special edition devoted to the work of Alain Badiou, the philosopher feted for his investigations into the nature of evil and how ethics and 'truth' can still have credibility in a postmodern world. Badiou's work has been widely celebrated, as well as challenged, in the Anglophone world, as was evident in the *Subject Matters* conference, 'Badiou's Ethics', staged by the Communications and Subjectivity research group in December 2003.

The editors of *Subject Matters* are interested in receiving subscriptions, relevant comments and contributions. Contributions which engage with the legacy of high theory but bring theory into contact with everyday life will also be welcome. Papers which impinge on communications and cultural theory but which are not necessarily describable as emanating from that tradition – from the sciences or elsewhere in the humanities – will be considered. Papers dealing with historical formations of subjectivity will also be welcome if they contribute to contemporary debates.

As the subject and the self are sites of intense post-millennium interest, *Subject Matters* will make a valuable contribution to current debates.

Paul Cobley is Reader in Communications at London Metropolitan University. For further information about the journal, please email subjectmatters@londonmet.ac.uk

Appreciations of Tessa Perkins (1942-2004)

With great sadness, I report that Tessa Perkins, one of the founders of our association, died of lung cancer on 26 September 2004.

Born Teresa Elizabeth Pudney on 8 February 1942, Tessa was the daughter of John Pudney and Crystal Herbert. Pudney (1909–77) was a poet, broadcaster and man-of-letters, perhaps best remembered by British cinema aficionados as the author of 'For Johnny', the poem that features so prominently in Anthony Asquith's *Way to the Stars* (1945). Herbert was the daughter of the writer, humourist and Oxford University MP A.P Herbert, and herself a fiery feminist.

Tessa's earliest ambitions were for a career in the theatre. But, though qualifying at RADA in stage management in 1960, she was unable to pursue the profession following a back injury in 1961, and was compelled to spend some years working as a secretary.

Tessa then went as a mature student to the University of Essex, graduating with a first class BA (Hons) in Sociology in 1969. Essex in the late sixties was pre-eminent in sociology, and a hotbed of the student movement of the period, burning with the new artistic and social ideas ignited by the counterculture and the New Left. Allied to the vigorous political culture was a lively film culture, from which came the seeds of the independent film journal *Afterimage*. Tessa's thinking was irrevocably formed by her Essex experiences.

Tessa's love and knowledge of film was deepened during her courtship and marriage to Victor Perkins, author of the Pelican classic *Film as Film* (1972), in what sometimes seemed a menage-a-trois with the cinema as the third party.

In 1971 Tessa began fourteen years as an itinerant researcher and teacher in sociology, working variously at North London Poly, Reading University, the Open University, the LSE and the University of Warwick. During this period she attained her MA in Sociological Theory at the University of Reading, 1973.

Partly reacting against her experiences as a secretary, Tessa worked on the sociology of women's labour in a variety of aspects (part-time; childcare) and a variety of sectors (machine tool, baking, the car industry, social services, the health service). This was to culminate academically, in the publication of the book, co-written with Veronica Beechey, *A Matter of Hours: Women, Part-time*

Work and the Labour Market (1987). But as a feminist and a socialist, 'academically' was not enough to Tessa, and she worked too with bodies such as Reading Trades Council and the Birmingham Trade Union Resource Centre on issues of women's labour.

Increasingly Tessa came to consider directly questions of the media. She carried out a content analysis of student newspapers; she published on Doris Day. In 1978 she gave her landmark paper on 'Rethinking Stereotypes' at the British Sociological Association conference, alongside Richard Dyer's work on the same topic. Both pieces are still referenced and anthologised today. In the mid-eighties she had moved into teaching Cultural Studies at Wolverhampton Polytechnic and in the Film Department at the University of Warwick.

Then in 1987 she was appointed as a Senior Lecturer in Communication Studies at Sheffield City Polytechnic (since 1992 Sheffield Hallam University), a city and a university where she was to remain for the rest of her life. Although it was more employment accident than life design that Sheffield was where she eventually settled, it was no surprise that Tessa found congenial a city with a proud trade union and peace movement history, the place which Edward Carpenter (1844–1928), the pioneering writer on homosexuality and socialism, had long before selected as his home. Above all, it was in Sheffield that she met and fell in love with Jill McKenna, and with their two children apiece, they set up home together.

From her academic roots in Sociology, combined with a commitment to creative expression, Film Studies, and socialist, feminist and gay politics — arguably, the four main tributaries of our field — Tessa came to teach and research in Film Studies, Women's Studies, Cultural Studies, Communication Studies and Media Studies. In the early nineties Tessa became the founding academic in a distinct new subject group in Media Studies at Sheffield Hallam, with its own undergraduate programme embracing both critical and creative study of the media. This was where I joined her in 1995, and in the years since the subject has grown in size and student numbers. Under Tessa's leadership an MA course in Media Studies was added to the course portfolio in 2000.

Although when I came to Hallam I knew socially and admired professionally many of the colleagues I was to join — Ros Brunt,

Chris Pawling, Tom Ryall, Sylvia Harvey — I had not known Tessa. But in our shared endeavour to develop the Media Studies provision, she became my closest colleague, collaborator on modules and courses, professional mentor and personal friend. Tessa was a generous teacher and colleague. She burned the midnight oil to prepare her classes, an index of her intellectual and pedagogic integrity which meant she fought to say it both comprehensively and comprehensibly. She was a sound source of counsel and leadership for colleagues in the department.

Tessa was also deeply committed to the wider self-organisation of our academic sector, to ensure its due prominence within the academy, but through a peer-controlled network. In 1994 she became an executive member of the Association of Media, Communication and Cultural Studies, and from 1996 took the chair of the association. She undertook a major role in organising the first two AMCCS annual conferences, held in Sheffield in 1996 and 1997, which she was determined would find a place for all in our field, the shy postgraduate tyro as well as the published authority. As a committee member of the Standing Conference for Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, she then contributed to brokering the birth of MeCCSA in 1999, which she was to serve as an executive member and treasurer until 2002.

The publication that year of the QAA benchmark statement for Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies, to which many of our members contributed, has marked something of a coming of age for our field. It constitutes an acknowledgement and definition of the area as a recognised subject field within British higher education. Tessa was amongst the leading edge generation who have pioneered the field in the contemporary academy, successfully fighting off the social condescension and cultural disdain that initially attached to both the subject and its objects, and establishing it as a legitimate and necessary field of scholarly enquiry and education.

More recent research by Tessa, often in collaboration with Jill McKenna, focussed especially on public responses — press and audience — to the evolving representation of gays and lesbians in film and television drama: *Portrait of a Marriage*, the 'lipstick lesbian' moment, *Queer as Folk*. But her early death has robbed us of what should have been her intellectual monument, her full, considered, mature statement on media stereotypes, so long in gestation. As a theme, stereotypes brought together all the key strands of her intellectual work: film and media; the new social

movements; identity and representation; the struggle against the cultural reproduction of the conditions of material oppression. Tessa had some ambivalence about the professionalisation and institutionalisation of our field. On the one hand, she knew it was deserving of its full place in education and scholarship. On the other hand, her media studies was always first and foremost an activist media studies. Tellingly, her contribution to *Reinventing Film Studies* (edited by Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams, and published by Arnold in 2000) is entitled 'Who (and what) is it for?'

Her final piece of work, which she successfully struggled to complete during the early months following the diagnosis of her cancer, was an EU-funded project to create teaching materials for use amongst the youth of Europe in countering the media stereotyping of Arabs and Muslims in the wake of 9/11, developed with amongst others young people from Sheffield's Somali community.

Tessa's death leaves a gap both at Sheffield Hallam University and in the national subject community, but as an emblem of an intellectually rigorous and politically engaged media studies, she lives on.

Paul Marris

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My clearest memory of Tessa in her MeCCSA persona is of arriving at the rather bleak Reading campus late on a dark, cold Friday night. The taxi driver couldn't find the venue and I wandered around a bit, feeling lost. But then there were lights and, among the voices, the sound of a deep, warm laugh. I'd found the bar and Tessa was at work, bringing the conference delegates together, ensuring that people weren't left out, making introductions. I have always thought of the Reading conference as Tessa's conference. The Committee had been undecided about a residential conference that year, we had no offers of a venue and there were some thoughts that perhaps an annual conference was a bit too much. Tessa grabbed us by the scruff of our collective necks, found Reading, organised everything down to the toothbrushes in the welcome bag, sorted out excellent speakers and ran the weekend with the enthusiastic enjoyment that marked everything she did for us.

Tessa put so much effort into MeCCSA (and in to other organisations before us) because of a commitment to the subject

and the profession which was entirely without thought for herself. She was willing to do the thankless jobs for which you get no public recognition – treasurer, membership secretary. She was a fabulous committee member – direct, forthright and clear but willing to listen to others and to change her mind if she was convinced by the arguments. She didn't pretend to be certain when she wasn't but she had clear principles and worked with the grain of them. She was one of the main instigators of the successful Women's Network and a strong supporter of postgraduates and new staff coming into the field.

After Tessa's death, I began to read a PhD which, Harvard-style, referred to (Perkins, 1996). That made me think of all the people who will still know of Tessa's work on stereotypes, on film study, on British cinema. But also of all the people whose lives she touched at conferences, committees and events, people who may not even remember her name but were perhaps made to feel welcomed into the subject area at a crucial moment. On the Executive Committee, we missed her enormously when she decided not to stand a couple of years ago; we miss her even more now.

Christine Geraghty

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I first met Tessa in a Brighton teashop in 1978. It was during the British Sociological Association conference on 'Culture' at Sussex University. She had just presented the first version of her pioneering paper, 'Rethinking Stereotypes' and was feeling very shaky, unconfident and extremely anxious about how it had gone down. I'd missed the paper but later heard from colleagues about a supremely assured and polished performance from this striking woman who'd started the session by kicking off her shoes and then given a refreshingly jargon-free presentation that had gone quite against the grain of the current theoreticist vogue and was offering bright and valuable new insights into media studies.

These first impressions of Tessa revealed opposing aspects that I was always struck by: on the one hand this commanding poise and adventurous intellectual clarity; on the other, an abiding sense of a lack of 'entitlement', what she described as 'always expecting to be found out', a fear of somehow being discovered to be not the genuine academic article. She related this attitude to her strongly feminist views about women's status generally in higher education. But it also derived from what she felt about her own experience of

an unconventional artistic upbringing and her education, first at a progressive school and then at RADA, before she became a mature sociology student at Essex.

But over the next ten years, as I continued to bump into Tessa at conferences or BFI summer schools, how I remember her best is as a great laugh. I got to know her as someone who loved to laugh and loved encouraging others to laugh — and particularly where pomposity and pretentiousness might be in need of deflating.

By the time Tessa joined the Communication Studies Department of what's now Sheffield Hallam University in 1987 she brought to her post in media studies an unusual and exciting cv that combined research and teaching interests in occupational sociology, film theory, cultural studies and feminist theory. Pretty soon she was chairing the planning group for what eventually became a BA in Media Studies. At the same time, she started to become involved in the professional and institutional side of media studies.

In the nineties Tessa became a committee member of the Association of Media, Communication and Cultural Studies (AMCCS) and in 1996 was elected its chair. The following year she became the AMCCS delegate on the Standing Conference for Communication, Cultural and Media Studies (SCCCMS). This was because the two professional associations were just then embarking on discussions about joining together.

These discussions went back and forth via AGMs, committee meetings and a joint 'constitutional' committee. The emphasis of AMCCS was very much on teaching and research and the encouragement of new postgraduate work in the field. Throughout all the negotiations Tessa fought tenaciously to preserve these interests within the new association. When the agreement of both memberships was finally assured there was then the question of what on earth was to be the name of the organisation. We were forever trying out different orders of initial letters and getting thoroughly bogged down in alphabet soup when Tessa suggested during a meeting in Peter Golding's office that we approach the problem afresh. She promptly came up with our first acronym — MeCCSA — and how it should be spelt henceforth.

As MeCCSA's first treasurer and membership secretary, Tessa was also an invaluable support in setting up the association's first subgroup, the Women's Media Studies Network. Tessa worked on the Network's planning committee and did everything on the

MeCCSA executive to ensure the Network had a powerful voice and adequate start-up money.

After Tessa retired from the MeCCSA committee, the last major project she was involved in combined both her organisational energy and some of her most immediate political and theoretical interests. She became a major contributor to a European-wide media literacy study organised by the European Social Action Network (ESAN) and funded by the EU's anti-discrimination programme. Its aim was to combat media stereotyping, particularly that of Arabs and Muslims, and to produce a media toolkit to be used by young people, teachers and community leaders. Projects like this are fraught with problems: in this case, particularly language difficulties and differences between academics, media practitioners and youth leaders. Tessa worked heroically to hold things together. To such powerful effect that after the original coordinator suddenly resigned, Tessa was unanimously chosen last autumn by all the European partners to take over the direction of the whole project as it entered its final phase of putting together the whole toolkit.

Tessa's lung cancer was diagnosed in the following January. But throughout the spring and into the early summer of this year, although she had to delegate some of the work, Tessa pushed on with the completion of this project which, in combining her original interests in both the processes of stereotyping and action research, meant so much to her that she was carrying on coordinating pretty much in between chemo and sleeping.

She lived to see the project come to fruition with the publication of *Watching the Media*, but was too ill to attend its launch at a conference in Brussels this summer. However she was looking forward to the next MeCCSA conference when we were going to give a joint paper about different aspects of media literacy. The last e-mail I got from her in September shortly before she died was replying to a query I'd raised about this paper. She then went on to write, not about her own illness, but about the fact that her partner Jill had now gone down with a bad bout of neuralgia. She ended, 'At the moment neither of us can drive so we're a genuine couple of old crocks trying to compensate for each other's weaknesses... you have to laugh or you'd cry too much!'

Rosalind Brunt

Cultural Revolutions & Social Change: the Long Revolution Revisted

12 January 2005

Official launch to be introduced by

Rt Hon Tessa Jowell MP

*Secretary of State, Department for Culture,
Media & Sport*

Hosted by

**ESRC Centre for Research on
Socio-Cultural Change (CRESC)**

to be held at

**Cordingley Theatre,
Humanities Tuer Street Building
(formerly known as the Architecture
& Planning Building)**

The University of Manchester, UK

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Professor Stuart Hall
Emeritus, Open University

Professor Sheila Rowbotham
Sociology, University of Manchester

Professor Huw Beynon
Social Sciences, Cardiff University

It is a familiar argument that we are witnessing a period of major cultural upheaval, yet this recognition is rarely related to a recognition of the long history of critical reflection on the nature of cultural and social change. The aim of this conference is to return to the seminal arguments of Raymond Williams, probably the first writer to introduce the idea of the cultural revolution, and to evaluate its ideas and pre-occupations fifty years later.

In introducing *The Long Revolution*, Raymond Williams indicated that the long revolution he was concerned with could be broken down into three main components: the democratic revolution; the industrial revolution; and the cultural revolution. His interpretation of each of these was, by and large, optimistic. The determination of people to govern themselves was, he argued, everywhere apparent and seemed to go hand-in-hand with the development of new forms of industrial organisation. The cultural revolution – more difficult to interpret, Williams argued – consisted in the aspiration to extend active learning and cultural participation to all people rather than to limited groups. Yet Williams also saw tensions between each of these three revolutions, and recognised that there was a range of conservative and reactionary forces ranged against them. He was also clear that these three revolutions could be properly understood only if considered in its relations to the others. Williams's arguments have been

influential in numerous ways. His work contributed to the nascent agenda of cultural studies. Whilst he saw the study of cultural change as intersecting with social and political change, it is less certain now how we understand the relationships between these spheres. What role is there now for the optimism of Williams's formulations? In this symposium the enduring legacy of Williams's thinking will be explored as a means of discussing the best framework for the analysis of socio-cultural change.

These questions will be debated in a symposium to launch the new ESRC Centre for Research on Socio-cultural Change located at The University of Manchester and jointly managed by The Open University.

If you would like to attend this event please contact:
CRESC, 178 Waterloo Place,
The University of Manchester,
Oxford Road,
Manchester M13 9PL.
tel: +44 (0)161 275 8985
fax: +44 (0)161 275 8986
email: cresc@manchester.ac.uk

Uncertain Vision: an intervention?

Georgina Born

In late 1994 I dreamed up the idea, in response to an ESRC call for proposals for its Media Economics and Media Research programme, the first ever major ESRC initiative focused on media research, of undertaking an ethnography of the BBC. A long time had elapsed since Philip Schlesinger's work on BBC news in the 1970s, and the mid-1990s seemed a good time to study the BBC. At the time, the corporation was constantly in the spotlight for its managerial revolutions; and some academics had entered the media policy fray, taking a formative part in the development of broadcasting policies in a period in which economic neo-liberalism had coalesced into the new common sense. Theoretically, there were increasing concerns with the need to rework Habermasian public sphere theory to do justice to the realities and the normative potential of television. Empirically, while ethnography was much talked about in media and cultural studies, it had become associated almost exclusively with audience studies. I had a track record in bringing organisational ethnography to bear on larger cultural historical and theoretical problems. My first book, *Rationalizing Culture* (1995), gives an analysis of the crisis of the musical avant-garde in the post-WW2 period centred on an ethnography of a leading institution, IRCAM in Paris – the music part of the Pompidou Centre.

Ten years later, this project came to fruition in my book *Uncertain Vision* (Secker and Warburg, 2004): an analysis of the BBC under Birt based on fieldwork of two years in total, with updates – based on interviews and secondary material – on Dyke's period as director general, the BBC's digital strategies, and the recent crises around the Iraq War and the Hutton Enquiry. Two linked dimensions of the book, unforeseen when I began, emerged during the project. I was perhaps naïve at the outset in not perceiving the extent to which I would inexorably be drawn into taking positions in the clamorous public debates over the BBC. As the research progressed it seemed to me that my book must make an intervention, that I must adopt the stance of the 'public intellectual'. To put it negatively: had I not done so, an extraordinary opportunity would have been missed. I had public funds to undertake the most extensive inside analysis of the BBC for decades; it would, in my judgement, have been negligent not to use it both to produce an academically-inclined study, and to refract my findings back into the BBC itself and into the main policy bodies. This proved both an exhilarating and a demanding and discouraging aspect of the experience. The broadcasting policy scene is fun to observe, but it is also acutely self-obsessed, closed and gendered, and it did not readily find room for an unknown woman academic who deigned to think the debate was one that should be open to those with some claim to expertise. The book is dotted with stories that attest to the condescension and barriers I

met. And the project necessarily also became an ethnography of policy, within and outside the BBC.

Secondly, and following on, I decided that I should make the book open to non-academics: that it should be readable, and even humorous – thereby practising what it preached (information, education and – yes – entertainment). This became an interesting challenge, not only informing tone and style but embodying epistemology. It freed me to use the wonderful and sometimes bizarre material I'd gained from observations and interviews across the BBC to illustrate and comment on the analysis. In turn, the use of reportage and interviews opened up a new relationship between analysis and 'mere' illustration: in line with my own position on qualitative social research – as interpretive and historically located, an exercise in critical hermeneutics – I used the stories on occasion to create a tension in the text, subtly querying or adding a dimension to the analysis. The aim was to allow some air into the mix – to reveal my interpretive work, and to allow the text to remain a little open. If there appears to be a contradiction in asking a work both to demonstrate the rigour required to support the normative assertions entailed by 'evidence-based' policy and to exemplify interpretive openness, my answer is that even in the policy domain it is crucial to resist the temptation to ape the trappings of positivistic invulnerability. To give in is to concede the very grounds of critical engagement. Economists might not be impressed; I can only hope that the subtlety in what I've tried to do escapes their reading of the book. Indeed I am braced for accusations that I have missed my own intended contradictions, as I am for that other standard jibe at ethnographers: that I have 'gone native', which would be a misreading of a book shot through with criticisms of the BBC's functioning. At the least, I hope this combined epistemological-political-literary experiment will stand as an honourable example in the annals of cultural and media research.

Experimenting

One of the core 'cultural' arguments of the book is that the quality and vitality of our broadcast culture depends on programme genres evolving via risk, experimentation and formal innovation. In this light, *Uncertain Vision* tries to perform what it advocates; it too experiments with standard monographic form. I argue for the inescapability of interpretation and the necessity of judgement – for a lively critical culture around television, beyond the relativist impasses in the debates over 'quality' of the 90s. To this end I dare to offer readings and judgements of programmes, and sketch out the grounds for these. The chapters contain quotations taken from engaging television criticism and from the producers themselves, quotes that exemplify the thinking behind judgements, as well as

my own close analyses of programmes and of the production processes behind them. The intention is not to close down discussion, but to revivify it: to invite critical rejoinders and remind the wider debate that judgements are there to be argued with. In this way, again, I consider my text to embody the kind of risk-taking that it calls for in television production.

The thematic substance of the book takes a number of directions. It starts with an overview of the BBC's place in broadcasting history. This is followed by several chapters that chart the key transformations made by Birtist management: from marketisation and the contortions attendant on the BBC's operations as a mixed economy, to auditing, the discovery of 'accountability' and the saturation use of management consultancy, to the turn to audience research as a panacea for the BBC's 'democratic deficit'. In these chapters I intend the BBC analysis to offer, by analogy, insights into the broader transformations wrought by neo-liberalism across Britain's public sector.

Methodologically, the book returns repeatedly to first principles, arguing, against the prevailing doctrine of consumer sovereignty, that audience tastes do not exist in some pristine state, but are cumulatively and historically conditioned by what is available to be consumed. The critique of consumer sovereignty therefore necessarily entails an acknowledgment of the primacy of production and the need to attend to the conditions that enhance or inhibit creativity.

Birtist devastation

Two chapters then zero in to exemplify the devastating effects of Birtism on programme-making. The first, on the BBC's drama departments, outlines the centralisation of commissioning and the impact of formulae intended to deliver 'value for money', for which read maximum share per schedule slot for the lowest cost, which in turn amounts to a logic indistinguishable from commercial channels. However, I argue that signs of creative vitality in the drama output remained, and tell the salutary story of the BBC's ultimately unsuccessful attempt to adapt Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*.

The penultimate chapter examines the spectrum of the BBC's news and factual output, including current affairs, factual entertainment and documentaries, identifying a slew of forces acting in concert to centralise and commodify news; while documentaries saw increasing bifurcation in the later 90s between escalating populism and 'high end' films, the two streams evidencing both increased genericism and innovation.

The last chapter diagnoses Dyke's energetic attempts to reverse some of the damage of the former regime, as well as his limits; it points to the forces behind the clash with government over Iraq and the Kelly affair. It analyses the BBC's digital adventures and

their critical place in spearheading the government's push towards digital switch-over. Finally, it charts the gaping paradoxes in the government's hectoring interventions in relation to the BBC, and offers a model for reinventing the BBC's governance. An epilogue addresses the outlook for the future of PSB in Britain, arguing that in the face of an increasingly complex transnational and new media environment, it is the PSBs alone that can be charged by government with intervening, under no other imperative than the public interest, so as to attempt to orchestrate a benign national media space.

If even this book – published by a trade press, and offering potentially sizzling bylines like 'Behind the scenes with Paxman' or 'Cosying up to Salman' – failed to overturn the lack of interest on the part of the press and mainstream media towards sociology and media studies, then this has been disappointing. My intuition – coloured not too much, I hope, by sour grapes – is that my experience is part of a wider change in which academics no longer carry the authority they once did.

Think tanks and columnists are now thought to be the source of acute social analysis and new ideas. Academics are seen as irrelevant, slow-footed, unexciting. If true, it is a worrying turn, one that suggests that plummeting academic salaries have been paralleled by a sweeping declassament. Does my book amount, then, to an intervention? In one sense, it seems it may have failed to hit its mark. However I take heart from the number of my informants who have contacted me to say that I 'got it right' (BBC drama head), and to write of the 'shock of recognition' (BBC governor). For an ethnographer, to find that one's analysis makes sense to those whose work and lives are being probed, and to 'write back' to the institution studied with the expectation of having some effect, is immensely rewarding. It happened in relation to IRCAM with my former book, and it seems possible that it will happen in relation to the BBC.

Yet at times I wonder if I am also the target of a campaign of incorporation. Earlier this year Mark Thompson offered, when he had just become the new director general, and when I was sure he would not, a disarming blurb for the book's cover. And weeks ago the book was reviewed in the BBC's in-house rag, *Ariel*. Roger Mosey, head of television news, ended his piece: 'There are many important lessons in this book; and one of them is not to let Georgina Born into your organization if you have something to hide. She's too darned good at what she does'. A tad too flattering, perhaps?

Georgina Born lectures on the sociology of culture at University of Cambridge, and is a Fellow of Emmanuel College. *Uncertain Vision: Birt, Dyke and the Reinvention of the BBC* is published by Secker & Warburg.

Conference diary

Karen Ross reports on the IAMCR conference, held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in July

I'm on my third espresso and I still can't make time move less slowly. The big hand makes the inexorable journey to meet up with its chum the little hand and it really is 7.45pm. The flight from Birmingham was supposed to leave at 7.40pm and the indicator board still says 'wait in lounge'. At least the passengers for the 7pm to Belfast have been told they have a further 2-hour wait and sent away clutching the standard consolation prize of meal vouchers for a curly-round-the-edges sarnie and a glass of plonk. For those of us bound for Paris, the frustration is in the unknowingness and for me, the almost certain knowledge that I will miss my connection, given the scant 60 minutes my travel agent has seen fit to allow between arrival and departure. And I can't even rant at anyone because the one telephone available at the information point is already clamped furiously to the ear of another irate passenger. Eventually the inevitable happens and 'delayed' replaces 'wait in lounge' – well, it's progress of sorts.

Fast forward two days. After kicking my heels in Paris (yeah, OK, I could have been stranded in worse places and at least I didn't have to worry about a visa) for 24 hours, I was rebooked on the next flight to Sao Paulo and then to Porto Alegre to attend IAMCR's annual bash, er, conference. Arrived at the conference hotel – the Sheraton – at lunchtime having been en route for nearly 48 hours and still wearing more or less the same clothes throughout, although the toilet bag which the airline thoughtfully provides for stranded passengers did include a white cotton T-shirt (XXL), a disposable razor, shaving cream and a solitary, foil-wrapped condom. I guess their idea of fun things to do while stranded in a strange city without your luggage is a bit different to mine but perhaps I was simply given the 'his' rather than the 'hers' pack by mistake and some hapless guy was simultaneously musing over the eyelash curlers and the tampon.

Back at the Sheraton, after a shower and nap, I descend a few hundred floors to the conference level and take up an empty seat to attend the pre-conference International Council meeting. I come in at the tail end of a heated discussion about the Association's review of the academic sections and am pleased to see my successor as co-chair of the Gender Section fully engaged in the debate between keystrokes on his luxury-end laptop (well, he is American) and swigs of water as we gently sweat in what must be the only room in the whole building which is set at more than 40F. We finally call it a day at 6.30pm and drift off to our various rooms and other accommodations, in readiness for a return

at 7.30pm for the official conference opening. Unusually for IAMCR the ceremony kicks off with a series of speeches and I am not alone in raising an eyebrow as one suit after another is introduced to take his place on the stage. The final count is five men serviced by one woman who provides asynchronous translation which of course makes the whole process twice as long and three times as turgid. I am told later by a Brazilian colleague that the interpreter did a 'very bad' job of the translation but I like to think she did a good job of subversion; I'm just an old radical.

Breakfast at the Sheraton is totally divine apart from the coffee which is puny and made considerably worse by the addition of warm milk, but I only make that mistake on the first morning. And of course, the real fun is watching the politics at play over the guava and waffles, who sits next to whom, who keeps her head down as someone passes by, whose conversation is so sotto voce that even a practised eavesdropper can't hear a word. And who keeps getting up for just one more croissant and cheese wedge, even as their expanding waistline threatens gravity at every turn. And then the mass excursion over to the conference venue itself. For folks cosseted by the ICA experience where staying in the conference hotel also means being in the same building as the conference itself, IAMCR's more egalitarian approach – of which I totally approve – of using local universities to keep the prices down, means that delegates often have to navigate across town from hotel to conference venue. And so it was with Porto Alegre and even though taxis are not expensive by Western standards and I was on expenses, the puritan in me longed for company to justify the fare, so I approached complete strangers at the entrance to the hotel to ask if they were going to 'poo-kee'? If they were, we happily shared a cab: if not, they gave me the standard – you're a weirdo, leave me alone – stare and turned pointedly in the opposite direction as I waited for the next victim.

OK, enough of this small-talk, what about the conference itself? Having planned the programme for the Gender and Communication Section for several years, I know that it is prudent to over-populate every session when constructing panels since at least 20 per cent of folks never make it to the conference and a proportion of that number don't let you know ahead of time. However, I can't bring myself to schedule more than five speakers – and mostly schedule three – for any single 1.5hr session and luckily for me, most of my no-shows did let me know and I was able to revise the programme and have it posted at the conference

itself. A few other sections did the same but a number did not, so I attended sessions where only one speaker showed up which is annoying and disrespectful, not to mention a little awkward for the chair, discussant and the remaining stalwart speaker. However, notwithstanding the human problems of non-appearance, the technical side worked wonderfully well with PowerPoint showing no sign of falling from favour as the presentation mode of choice. And although I have tried to impress upon folks year after year, not to simply read their papers because it is both boring and non-productive – I saw several delegates texting under the table – people still insist on doing this. And, for a conference of media and communication researchers, why do so few of us provide actual examples of the media we are critiquing? OK, I know that we can't always rely on the AV to work, but we could at least bring some clips or slides just in case, couldn't we? And why are so many of the plenary sessions stuffed with blokes who talk earnestly about WSIS or democracy or power as if we, women and men, experience the world in the same way, have the same access to technology, even have the same access to speak? We do not, and that's not even considering the global issues of north-south, east-west.

What happens, then, is that I look at the plenary programme, see the list of speakers and invariably decide I'd rather go shopping. Judging by the number of folks milling around the hotel lobby with fancy carrier bags, or waiting for a cab to take them downtown (presumably to the posh shopping mall), I'm pretty confident that other people – and not just us girlies – have the same thought. Of course, the sociable, sight-seeing, consuming-another-culture kind of thing, is all part of the international conference experience, but

in Porto Alegre I found myself attending the Gender Section sessions and some of the other Sections' offerings but avoiding pretty much everything else. Yes, it's always a joy to meet up with chums and colleagues and talk to publishers about exciting new book projects which may or not materialise and yes, it is always great to hear a really interesting paper or meet a new colleague who might become a research collaborator. And I really enjoyed having breakfast with a Dutch colleague with whom I have nodded at numerous conferences but never spent more than 2 minutes talking to. But is it really worth travelling round the world to do that? I'm not much of an eco-warrior but I did catch myself thinking about the amount of pollution my flights were adding, not to mention the amount of (mostly) tax-payers' money I was giving over to global capitalist corporations.

Maybe I'm just tired of the same old dog food but I must say I'm happy that my term of office has come to an end although I am conscious that I am standing down at what could be a real turning point for the Association; we have elected our first ever female president in Robin Mansell (huge congratulations again, Robin), both new vice-presidents are women (Annabelle Sreberny and Divina Frau-Meggs) and, a little less significantly but still importantly, the Gender Section has just elected its first ever male (co) Chair – Todd Holden. Everything is possible. Rock on.

Karen Ross is Reader in Mass Communication at Coventry University and was formerly Chair of the Gender and Communication Section of the IAMCR (the International Association for Mass Communication Research).

MeCCSA Postgraduate Conference

Stephen Cushion and Vicky Ball *report on the successful event held in September at Birmingham Institute of Art and Design*

The first conference organised by the recently formed MeCCSA Postgraduate Network was considered a great success, and one that should be repeated annually. Forty-nine postgraduates attended the conference at Birmingham's Institute of Art and Design (BIAD), with representations from Canterbury, Cardiff, Coventry, De Montfort, Nottingham, Sheffield Hallam, Stirling, Sussex, Ulster, Warwick and Westminster. The majority of those attending were at the early stages of their Doctorate programme, with some Masters students also present. The event provided the opportunity – in some cases for the first time – for postgraduates to present papers and to engage with colleagues about past and present research in their field. The morning session included fourteen papers, in four strands that reflected the diversity as well as the commonality of interests,

ranging from film and television studies to more specific subjects in media and cultural studies.

The first strand, 'Citizenship and media literacy', primarily focused on the pedagogical role of the media, by looking at the multiple ways it can enhance – or impede – our understanding of, and participation in, democracy and secondary education, especially as audiences change the way they interact and engage with new media. Stephen Cushion (Cardiff University), for example, examined news media coverage of the 2003 anti-war protests involving young people and found that, broadly speaking, they were discouraged from playing a role in the political public sphere, and were dismissed for being 'opportunistic truants'. Ching-Fen Pai (Cardiff University), more optimistically, looked at

the emerging field of cyber democracy, and cautiously argued that there are signs, particularly among young people, that the Internet is beginning to politically enfranchise citizens in Taiwan. Seon-Jeong Ki (University of London), changing tack, discussed the value of GCSE Media Studies and media education more generally, questioning the assumptions that inform how we conventionally view this multidisciplinary field, and how we evaluate 'quality' media products, produced by students. James Bennett (University of Warwick) concluded the strand by re-examining – in light of increasing digitalization – television studies literature. He suggested that textual models, such as flows and segments – established concepts in this relatively new field – might already be in a state of flux because emerging technologies are changing the way audiences interact with their television sets.

In the second strand, 'Constructing gender', speakers looked in diverse ways at discourses of femininity in Western media texts. Vicky Ball (Queen Margaret University College) looked at the contemporary British television ensemble drama and argued that this emerging sub-genre had been the subject of critical neglect because it was aligned with both the popular and with the feminine. Conversely, Jen-Yi Chen (Cardiff University) argued that recent skin care advertising campaigns that were aimed at women not only naturalised but also essentialised dominant western versions of femininity. Jen-Yi Chen concluded, rather ironically, that such campaigns promised women the opportunity to acquire such 'natural' beauty through the consumption of their products.

Presenters in the third strand, 'Representing the nation', grappled with the concept of national identity in various mediated contexts. They broadly agreed that when – consciously or not – this notion was invoked, the effect often led to the misunderstanding of marginalised social groups and public policy issues. Michael Skey (University of Southampton) looked at media coverage of the golden jubilee and the England world cup campaign, while Angela Smith (University of Sunderland) looked at recurrent images of war over the course of a century. Both found discourses of nationalism lurking within and behind our everyday culture and that these carried, in many ways, profound ideological consequences. Emma Hughes (Cardiff University) found such consequences in coverage of GM food because, she argued, crops were considered a threat to "the purity of the nation", despite the UK already growing GM crops. Finally, Inga Scharf (Nottingham Trent University) outlined her PhD on representations of Germanness in films from 1962 to 1989, with a view to critically intervene in debates about the "so-called New German Cinema".

Speakers in the fourth strand, 'Repackaging the past', all, in some way, engaged with issues of authenticity. Andrew Boyce

(University of Ulster) argued that a memorial which incorporated a sound element could best articulate the collective suffering of those affected by the Omagh bombing. Ciaran Chambers (University of Ulster) explored the differing news and newsreel images Irish audiences received compared to the rest of Britain during World War II. Benjamin Earl's (Cardiff University) presentation looked at the village of Tintagel and how it relies on Arthurian myth for its tourism. Finally Matt Brennan's (University of Stirling) paper returned the strand back to the subject of sound, and how in particular the popular music press have historically handled the tension between music as art and commerce.

After lunch, three eminent speakers gave presentations. Darren Newbury (BIAD) gave details about the 'Research Training Initiative' project (<http://www.biad.uce.ac.uk/research/rti>). Professor Peter Golding (University of Loughborough) advised postgraduates where – and where not – to publish articles and books. Professor Sue Thornham (University of Sussex), in a lively session, discussed approaches to teaching seminars and lectures.

The final event of the day, an interactive feedback session, was extremely positive: delegates enjoyed the informal atmosphere and the opportunity to network and share experiences with other postgraduates. The session on teaching, for instance, highlighted the lack of training that is currently provided to postgraduates who are expected to teach as part of their postgraduate programmes. At the end of the conference it was suggested that the themes and issues emerging from this conference would feed into future events. This will, in some form, take shape at the 2005 MeCCSA conference in Lincoln. While the network's immediate concern is to launch its own unique web presence, we are already planning the next conference, provisionally booked at Cardiff's School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies in May/June 2005.

Looking beyond these events, however, the hope is that this network will grow beyond our own PhD experience into something that can reach out and make a difference to the wider postgraduate community. We have bright, valuable and innovative young scholars, who – too often – go unnoticed and need celebrating. This conference, we believe, began to harness such talent and produce a road map for future media, culture and communication students to build on and benefit from.

Stephen Cushion is at the Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies; and Vicky Ball at Queen Margaret University College, Edinburgh.

For more information about the network, contact Vicky at vball@qmuc.ac.uk

Heather Nunn

The WMSN has been busy this year and there is much to report. Women in media studies and related areas are taking advantage of the space that WMSN provides to exchange ideas and network. We hope that these successes will encourage others to join in the conversations that are taking place in seminars and via email.

WMSN Seminar Report

On the 2nd June 2004 the University of Manchester hosted a half-day event entitled 'Gender and Reality TV: New Ways of Saying Old Things'. This included two paper sessions with Helen Wood and Beverley Skeggs (both University of Manchester) speaking on 'Notes on Ethical Scenarios of Self on British Reality TV' and Kirsty Fairclough (University of Salford) addressing 'Women's Work? — *Wife Swap* and the Reality Problem'. This was followed by a participative roundtable on developments in researching Reality TV.

Organiser Karen Ross reports: "The seminar was an intimate gathering but those of us who were able to attend had an afternoon of fascinating insights and an enjoyable discussion about the broad topic of the multiple ways in which gender is inflected in shows as diverse as *What Not to Wear* and *Wife Swap*. The two formal presentations by firstly Helen Wood and Bev Skeggs, and then Kirsty Fairclough, teased out some of the subtle ways in which notions of femininity are performed in these kinds of reality-based shows. Their analyses revealed the existence of both socially acceptable (normative) as well as transgressive renditions of femininity and the mechanisms through which the audience is encouraged to reward the former and punish the latter. Importantly, both analyses showed the ways in which class as well as gender (stereotypes) are crucial components of RTV shows.

The discussion afterwards was lively and informed, generating a number of ideas about future directions which research might take, especially in relation to audience reception and production processes. Both presenters have short articles about their work in this area in *Feminist Media Studies*, Helen and Bev in FMS 4(2) (July 2004) and Kirsty in 4(3) (November 2004).

Future WMSN Seminars

We hope to be able to announce shortly the next seminar event which will be held at Goldsmiths College London in early 2005 and which will be organised by Natalie Fenton. Please see the MeCCSA WMSN email listing for further details as they become available.

Panel at MeCCSA conference on new approaches in feminist cultural studies

We are pleased to announce that the following WMSN panel will take place at the MeCCSA/AMPE Lincoln conference which is running from 5th–7th January 2005.

This panel is convened by members of the Gender and Culture Research Group at the University of the West of England who work across the related fields of film, media and cultural studies. We are interested in stimulating debate and discussion about a particular moment in higher education and in popular culture where second-wave feminist paradigms have either become incorporated as common sense or rejected as outmoded. We want to question these orthodoxies and negations by returning to those ideas and bodies of knowledge with a view to revitalising feminist debate. How can we challenge the orthodoxies with new thinking? What neglected approaches should be revived to help us critically respond to the present moment? Papers from several members of the group will open the discussion:

Suzy Gordon on *Regenerating cine-psychoanalytic feminism*

Jane Arthurs on *Sexual citizenship in the digital era*

Josie Dolan on *Calendar Girls: the feminist bypass*

Network meeting at Lincoln MeCCSA Conference

Last year the network meeting was scheduled for the very last hour of the two-day conference at a point when most delegates were concerned with arrangements for their homeward journey. We are pleased to report that this year the network meeting will take place during the course of the conference – please refer to the conference schedule as it becomes available.

Showcasing Women as a space to promote women's practice and scholarship for the Lincoln Conference

We are pleased to report that that Showcasing Women, a forum for promoting women's practice and scholarship, has returned for the Lincoln conference. There are now two Showcasing Women slots at the conference, involving the following screenings.

From Mother Ireland to Limbo

Anne Crilly

University of Ulster Coleraine

Anne Crilly has been working in video production in the North of Ireland for 20 years. She was a founder member of the C4 workshop, Derry Film and Video and directed the acclaimed documentary 'Mother Ireland' for C4. Most of her work has focused on issues relating to women and Nationalism and she worked mainly in the documentary genre. After a break from production, and during which the Good Friday Agreement was signed, she returned to production exploring issues relating to women — this time through fiction. In 2001, she wrote and directed the award-winning short film *Limbo*. This post-conflict drama explores issues around private grief in a political world, and is suggestive of how the genre/form a filmmaker uses parallels the political context in which it is produced.

On the road with the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition - Election 2003

Karen Ross

Coventry University

This film represents a collaboration between Karen Ross and members of the NIWC, to produce a short film which maps some of the contours of the General Assembly campaign in Northern Ireland in late 2003 and which could be used in subsequent training for party activists and potential candidates as well as provide documentary 'evidence' of the campaign for archiving purposes.

For the filmmaker, it represents a piece of feminist media research-in-action which uses the medium of film to capture a particular journey (in this case as both amateur filmmaker and party archivist) and to fulfil a personal commitment to the NIWC to 'do' something during the campaign. It tracks three party candidates as they campaign in their constituencies during November 2003, including to-camera interviews by candidates and members of the public. It concludes after the NIWC AGM held in May in Belfast, six months after the election results which saw both the party's sitting MEPs lose their seats, and none of the five other candidates being elected. Nonetheless, despite this currently very gloomy period in the party's history, the final frames show a positive mood for the future.

Bluebell

Charlotte Crofts

London South Bank University

This disquieting short film (6 minutes) uses a non-linear narrative structure and dialectical montage techniques to experiment with the relationship between time, landscape and memory. Shot on

Super 16mm film, the film was edited digitally using the latest Final Cut Pro editing software and images were colour graded in postproduction to enhance the contrasting moods of the different time periods. This, together with a subtly non-naturalistic soundtrack and elements of magical realism add to the disturbing quality of the film.

Bluebell is very much influenced by Crofts' research into Carter's reappropriation of *Red Riding Hood in The Company of Wolves* and other short stories and the critical reception of the film adaptation directed by Neil Jordan (1984). There has been much disagreement amongst feminist critics as to whether Carter is able to escape the patriarchal 'rape narrative' of the original fairy tale and, in particular, whether Carter's claimed feminist politics makes the transition from short story to screen. In the process of having to 'realise' a rape scene on screen, Crofts has been able to explore issues surrounding gender, sexuality and representation in practice, which she discusses extensively in her more 'traditional' academic research (see article in Cartmel *et al.* (eds), 1998, *Sisterhoods Across the Literature/Media Divide*, Pluto Press).

Bluebell has been officially selected at the Women in Independent Film Showcase (July 2004), Rushes Soho Short Film Festival (Aug 2004), Palm Springs International Festival of Short Film (Sept 2004), Los Angeles International Short Film Festival (Sept 2004), BBC / CSV Media Night of Many Stars (Oct 2004).

Well I Never

Inga Burrows

University of Glamorgan

Well I never is a pilot project which invites residents of Pontypridd, Wales to collaborate on an emotional orienteering exercise. The aim is to locate sites in and around the town that have a particular emotional resonance for Pontypridd's inhabitants.

Incidents recalled might touch a range of themes such as hostility, bravery, loss, joy, insight, fear etc. Each incident chosen will be realised as a digital audio video sequence. The sequences could take the form of dramatic re-enactment, poetic documentary, photo storyboard or animation etc... A giant size street map of Pontypridd will cover the floor of the installation site; the map will be marked with red crosses indicating the various incident spots. Light sensors will be placed beneath each red cross activating the video sequences that relate to the marked locations.

For the pilot project a small scale version of the project will be installed which will include the installation material, sensor technology, floor map and four short films.

Cocktails & Appetizers, Mixed Greens and As American As Apple Pie

Michelle Citron

Northwestern University

These are the first three pieces of *Queer Feast*, a series of five non-linear, interactive narratives. Each interactive narrative is a distinct work; together they create a five-course meal of lesbian life and identity viewed through contradictions of class, race, desire, and the minutia of daily life.

Cocktails & Appetizers explores the pleasures of voyeurism, the performance of gender, and falling in love. *As American As Apple Pie* is about life after the first kiss is over. *Mixed Greens* is a do-it-yourself story about identity, belonging, and what we desire. *Mixed Greens* has two narratives: four generations of my Irish Jewish heritage played against four decades of lesbian life. Forty-eight scenes are mixed and matched to interrogate identity

vs. assimilation, social vs. personal history, and discrimination vs. accommodation. *Mixed Greens* explores articulations of identity being negated and constructed, across sexual and ethnic lines.

The interactive courses of *Queer Feast* interrogate narrative: How is narrative coherence created from fragments? Can we be sensitized to narrative's constructed nature? Can stories be structured to respect contradiction? The stories in *Queer Feast*, created at the intersection of new media and film, explore the contradictions of identity and the paradoxes of narrative itself.

For further information on the Women's Network, see the MeCCSA website or contact Heather Nunn at h.nunn@roehampton.ac.uk.

If you would like to propose an event to be hosted by your institution please email Heather to discuss your ideas.

Copyright Blues

Sheila Whiteley reports on the particular problems facing music scholars when it comes to copyright

The problems surrounding academic media research and copyright are nothing new, but for academics in the fields of popular musicology, ethnomusicology and cultural studies they have taken on a particular significance.

Copyright effectively means the censorship of popular music, as publishers become increasingly reluctant to take the risk of including transcriptions (clearly interpretative and generally only a few bars) and lyrics (most often 4 lines from a song) in authored books. I know from personal experience that this situation has become increasingly problematic over the last ten years.

My first book, *The Space Between the Notes: the Counter Culture and Progressive Rock* (Routledge, 1992) included transcriptions from Jimi Hendrix's 'Purple Haze' and 'Love and Confusion' and copyright was given without undue problems. In 2004, I was refused permission outright by the Hendrix family for short transcriptions and lyric quotes. Indeed, my book had already been printed (July 2003) and was pulled back to ensure that all the lyrics and transcriptions had copyright permission. Many were refused – with the holders of copyright offering no explanation.

Too Much Too Young: Popular Music, Age and Gender is now back with the printers, over a year later and minus many key examples. Publishers, it seems, are reluctant to take on the big boys of the music industry for fear of litigation and we, the authors, are on the losing side.

It was evident that something needed to be done to clarify fair dealing and fair usage in relation to popular music. Being aware that consensus is always important in law, I started a campaign to get our professional associations on board, to find guidance on copyright and music, and to engage with the publishing houses in an attempt to establish guidelines for authors with regard to permissions.

Noting that the advice given by Society of Authors is included in the Routledge Instructions for Authors, and that 'permission need not be sought for short extracts provided that the content is quoted in the context of 'criticism or review' and not just to embellish the text' (p.39) it seemed appropriate to have a similar acceptance of guidelines for popular music.

I was not alone with my concerns. Professors Derek Scott, Nick Cook and Simon Frith added their weight to the campaign and letters were sent out to the professional associations, with a suggested Copyright Guidance for Musicologists. Our model here was the guidance agreed by the editors and the publisher, Oxford University Press, for articles in the *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*. In particular, the section headed 'It's in copyright, but do I need permission?' explains the legality of quoting brief extracts from books, articles, or musical works for purposes of review or criticism, provided that the source is acknowledged. In this, the *JRMA* guidelines are comparable to the advice provided by the Society of Authors on fair use, quoted in Routledge's guide for authors.

The 'Copyright Guidance for Musicologists' is now being sent to publishing houses along with a letter which explains the problem to publishers in the following way.

"We have sent a copy of the guidelines to professional associations associated with music/popular music to ask whether they would support our campaign to clarify the issues surrounding copyright and whether they would endorse the *JRMA* guidelines. Letters of support have been received from

- n The Music and Performing Arts Research Panel of the Arts and Humanities Research Board
- n The National Association for Music in Higher Education
- n The Royal Musical Association Publications Committee
- n The International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres
- n Media Communication and Cultural Studies Association
- n Performing Arts Centre at Lancaster University (PALATINE)
- n International Association for the Study of Popular Music
- n International Association of Music Librarians
- n International Musicological Society
- n The Critical Musicology Group

From our discussions with lawyers and experts in copyright law, it is clear that consensus is a critical issue and that the unanimous

agreement by the Associations that the copyright guidelines are equitable and fair provides a credible consensus.

In addition to professional support, we have also received individual letters from academics who are concerned to endorse the need for clear guidance from publishers and these have resulted largely from either newsletters from the Associations cited above, from discussion groups at seminars and conferences or as a response to articles/letters in music journals such as *Popular Music* or newsletters including the IASPM international publication, *RPM*, or from discursive articles in the *Times Higher Education Supplement*.

Given the need for guidance, and the support and endorsement of the guidelines by the Associations cited above, we are now asking publishers to accept the need to produce clear advice on copyright and texts on music/popular music."

We were delighted to have the full support of the professional associations – as I mentioned earlier, consensus is important in law. Even so, we are not yet in a position to say with any certainty that our campaign has achieved its objectives. We have yet to hear from publishers about their response to our Guidance for Musicologists and I will let you know the outcomes.

A final thought... Academic texts are there to provide insights into popular music and other cultural forms, to stimulate discussion and debate and, as a musicologist, I feel that the problems concerning copyright are effectively silencing and censoring the circulation of ideas.

There is also the issue of doctoral students whom we advise to publish their work only to find that their subject matter involves copyright issues, and the undoubted fact that our own publications will suffer and that this, in turn, will impact on the returns to the next Research Assessment Exercise.

Sheila Whiteley is Professor of Popular Music at the University of Salford.

***Three-D* would welcome articles concerning problems of copyright surrounding academic research in media, communications and cultural studies.**

A copy of 'The Copyright Guidance for Musicologists' guidelines, and the letter to publishers referred to in this piece are available on request from Sheila on s.whiteley@salford.ac.uk

Supervising and Examining Practice-Based PhDs in the Moving Image

A report by Tony Dowmunt and Rosie Thomas, the organisers of a one day symposium in October 2004 at the University of Westminster

Increasing numbers of students are enrolling for PhDs in the moving image field and submitting practice-based outcomes of their research for examination. However, discussions with colleagues around the country suggested that media departments are working with a number of different models of the relation between theory and practice, and with somewhat differing expectations about what is submissable at PhD level. This symposium was designed to offer a forum in which academic staff could share information and debate ideas about supervising and examining PhDs in the moving image practice area. It was well attended (by more than 60 people from around the country and from abroad) suggesting that there was a pressing need for discussion in this area.

Perspectives

The day began with a panel, chaired by Rosie Thomas, University of Westminster, which presented the issue of practice-based PhDs from three perspectives: fine art, the film and television industry and visual anthropology.

Professor Malcolm Le Grice, artist, film maker, writer and formerly Head of Research at St Martin's School of Art, London Institute, spoke first, suggesting that the notion that Practice Research (PR) meant 'academia interfering in the creative arts' was now a dead issue'. He presented a five part model for PR PhDs:

1. The hypothesis: the issue, a key starting point are the research question(s): 'if we do such & such, we can expect these outcomes. The hypothesis can come in retrospect. It should not squeeze out subjectivity'.
2. The approach: what methods do you use, what process do you go through to reach a conclusion? How do you keep track of where

you have been in a way that will/should be available to other researchers? (The record of the latter often NOT being the same as the work/artefact produced).

3. Theory: in the early days of PR this was often borrowed: e.g. from 'high flown' French theory or psychology. Now 'film theory' is more likely to be used and relevant.
4. Context: provided by the historical and/or contemporary work that the PhD relates to.
5. Outcomes: Malcolm could not see a possibility that a PR PhD would 'have no written component'. As an 'academic activity' it

has to 'leave something behind that includes the visuals but goes on a shelf and is available to the next generation of researchers'. The exhibition of practice work is more like the viva than the thesis.

Professor John Ellis, Head of Media Arts, Royal Holloway, University of London endorsed much of what Malcolm had said, adding that he often discourages applicants from doing PR PhDs because of the '2 PhD syndrome': a PR PhD is not an 'easy route to make a film', or only an 'extension of creative education' –

but a reflection on those processes that involves having to show 'fluency in not one but two discourses': the creative and the academic. He supported Malcolm's insistence on a 'written component' as he believes the current level of audio-visual literacy is not high enough to support research outcomes being presented audiovisually (but thought this was changing because of 'new technology': he could see the possibility of a DVD that 'contains reflection upon itself').

John went on to explore the industrial context of moving image PR

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PhDs, in which what people make is constrained because of their audience(s), and the 'normative viewing situations' (TV/cinema) of moving image work. However, those working within industrial practice are themselves becoming more and more reflexive and sophisticated, so a potential applicant market for PR PhDs is opening up in the industry.

Dr Stephen Nugent, Reader in Anthropology, Goldsmiths College, also signed up to Malcolm's hypothesis-based approach, remarking how he often diverted PR PhD applicants to film schools because they were more interested in making a film than in doing research. He then outlined the current position of the discipline of Visual Anthropology, which he sees as being in decline – Goldsmiths and the Granada Centre in Manchester hosting the only PR PhDs (or 'PhDs in Anthropology with Visual Content' as they are known) – 6 and 2 students respectively, although there is an upsurge of interest at MA level.

The audience for Ethnographic Films has shrunk as a consequence of the declining commitment from TV to showing this kind of material, leaving only a small 'self appreciation circuit' for 'deeply observational films'. (His own view is that, for instance, the recent Inuit feature *Atanjurat* represented 'better anthropology' than this conservative tradition.)

Steve also raised the issue of the 'subjects' of Visual Anthropology, and the problems of confidentiality, identity, representation and intellectual property rights that visual culture brings to the discipline.

The discussion following the presentations centred on the notion of the self-sufficient (or not) artefact. Clive Myer proposed Godard's *2 or 3 Things* as PR in its own right, others endorsed DVD as a mechanism both for doing 'footnotes', but more broadly as a potential 'metalanguage' enabling the artefact to 'interrogate itself'. (The RAE Art & Design Panel states: It is the Panel's view that professional practice in art and design qualifies as research when it can be shown to be firmly located within a research context, to be subject to interrogation and critical review and to impact on or influence the work of peers, policy and practice, thereby meeting the definition of research as defined for the

purposes of the RAE. And the Communications and Cultural Studies Panel states 'it is the Panel's view that, provided it meets the definition of research applied in the RAE, any practice in Communication, Cultural and Media Studies may qualify as research when it can be shown to interrogate itself, to be located within a research context and/or to give rise to a critical appraisal.(RAE 2001).

There was discussion of how a PhD is necessarily dependent on 'language', so an artefact's self sufficiency depends on the degree in which it 'incorporates language'.

The audience for ethnographic films has shrunk as a consequence of the declining commitment from TV to showing this kind of material

John Ellis thought the widespread nature of 'linearity and performativity' in audio-visual media militated against self sufficiency, and that linearity inhibits reflexivity. In contrast a book is not a linear medium — in the way it can be read, with footnotes, index etc. Steve Nugent countered that there are 'some things you can't do with text', and proposed the use of film as highlighting the contrast between documentation and representation, and the issue of 'auteurship' in anthropology.

We also considered the potential of DArts/Dfilm awards to deal with some of these problems: Malcolm Le Grice pointed out that DArts is judged purely on aesthetic quality, where a PhD has to function as (a training in) research, and, unlike a DArts, doesn't necessarily have to end up as a 'good piece of art'.

The rest of the day

After coffee four examples of ongoing or completed PhDs in moving image practice were presented by Electra Bada (who has just finished an ethnographic film on Greek Roma as part of a PhD with the Department of Media & Design, Napier University), Amy Hardie (Head of Research at the Scottish Documentary Institute, Edinburgh College of Art), Cahal McLaughlin (Royal Holloway, University of London) and Dr Joram ten Brink (Reader in Film, University of Westminster).

PhDs in Practice: Discussion

After lunch issues raised by the speakers in the morning session were opened up for a discussion chaired by Tony Downmunt, Goldsmith's College. The final session, chaired by Jon Dovey,

Reader in Screen Media, Department of Drama: Theatre, Film, Television, University of Bristol, began with four short 'provocations' by John Adams (Senior Lecturer in Film and Television Studies, University of Bristol), Des Bell (film maker and Head of Film Studies, Queens University, Belfast), Dr Amanda Ravetz, (AHRB Fellow, University of Manchester) and Lizzie Thynne (Senior Lecturer in Media and Cultural Studies, University of Sussex).

We concluded by making a few concrete recommendations for the future development of practice-based PhDs in the moving image:

- n Jon Dovey announced he was starting to formulate a peer review screen circuit
- n Liz Wells proposed we make a list of self-reflexive practitioners (eg Tacita Dean, Sally Potter, Ross McElwee)
- n Des Bell called for a public archive of research-based moving image work
- n Tony Dowmunt suggested that PARIP 2005 provided an opportunity for another meeting along these lines
- n Rosie Thomas suggested people let us know if they wish to be involved in further discussions or workshops on this
- n ^{topic} Dave Harte from the Art, Design & Communication –

You what Guv?

Contributions highlighting overblown, dreary or just plain bad writing from the fields of media, communication and cultural studies are always welcome (see closing credits for contact e-mail)

As part of a recent Griffith University-funded research project, we noticed particular growth in the number of commercial art galleries on the Gold Coast – there are now 98 (or one for every 5000 residents) – which have been opening at a remarkable rate over the past five years. This phenomenon can be explained by a range of interactions we have identified between property developers, architects, designers, commercial galleries, printers, model makers, photographers, multimedia and web-developers, display/exhibition companies, and the pre-selling of new developments, which can be understood to constitute a rhizomic assemblage (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 3–25). Rhizomes are characterised as much by temporary affinities, discontinuities, breaks, emergences and re-emergences as they are by connections and interactions.

Learning & Teaching Support Network said he was open to funding bids for future events.

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It was financially supported by the Art, Design & Communication – Learning & Teaching Support Network, now part of the Higher Education Academy.

To be included on the post-symposium mailing list contact Erica Spindler at the School of Media, Arts and Design, University of Westminster, on spindle@wmin.ac.uk

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Closing Credits

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Three-D is a publication of **MeCCSA, the UK national subject association for its field in higher education. The Association exists to represent the field of Media, Communication and Cultural Studies.**

Except where stated, contributions do not necessarily reflect the views of the Association, or its Executive Committee.

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Full details of the Association, including how to join, along with a full list of the Executive Committee for 2004 can be found on the MeCCSA web-site at www.meccsa.org.uk