

Call for Papers

ACOUSTIC OBJECT^{IVES} Assembling A Methodological Toolbox

Workshop, 05.–06.11.2020

Department for Media Studies, University of Regensburg, Germany

Deadline: 28.02.2020

A violin in a concert hall, a sonar in the wide, open sea, a television set in a living room or an ambulance siren in a busy city: when (media) objects are placed in a location, many of them resonate sonically within a given space. Their signals can be measured, documented and discussed as cultural signifiers. And while the nature of acoustic objects, spaces and signals has a broad variety, they are connected through a question of purpose. When acoustic objects emanate sound, this sound is most often designed to go *somewhere*, in many cases even somewhere specific. How to approach this directionality within a broader framework of media objects is the central theme of the workshop **ACOUSTIC OBJECT^{IVES}**.

The workshop is a contribution to the most recent debate in German – and in part international – Media Studies about their methodological groundwork (cf. Engemann/Sprenger/Heilmann 2019, Niebling/Rackowski/Reinerth/Stollfuß 2019). The aim is to draw on interdisciplinary approaches to suggest a first toolbox for the research of Sound (precisely Acoustics), Objects and Spaces, which we broadly define as such: 1. “Acoustic” refers to the nature and related problems of the transmission and propagation of information via signals (cf. Kinsler/Frey 1967: vf.). These signals can have a sound nature, and often do, but also depend on information technology as a basis of their form. 2. “Object^{ives}” refers to any and all media objects, which are located in spaces and/or also (in)form them through sound.

The questions of acoustics, objects and space are central to the history of media studies, particularly the Toronto school’s discussion of acoustic and visual space (cf. Williams 1955, Carpenter/McLuhan 1967, McLuhan/McLuhan 1988). Marshall McLuhan argued that the “eclipse of the machine” (Winner 1977: 193) in the 20th century had brought back the acoustic space defined by a “complicated tissue of events in which connections of different kinds alternate or overlap or combine” (McLuhan/McLuhan 1988: 40). But what tools can be used to methodologically frame objects, spaces and acoustic movements in order to understand aspects of this ‘complicated tissue’ and the nature of an ‘acoustic space’? It is with regard to these questions, that a methodological framework in and beyond media studies will be developed.

Proposals for the workshop **ACOUSTIC OBJECT^{IVES}** should showcase an approach to the status, history and role of media objects and the objective of their acoustic output with regards to the ontologies and epistemologies surrounding them. What are the parameters of their emergence, what are the changes? What and how do they measure and how can they themselves be measured, regulated, documented and narrated? And, as an overall question: What are, and how can acoustically motivated explorations of media give a better insight into the understanding, the objectives and the nature of both analogue and digital media? We invite proposals from scholars working in any discipline to participate and particularly encourage scholars in the Sciences and the Digital Humanities to contribute.

The workshop language is English. Presentations should be 20 minutes in length, following a 10-minute discussion. Proposals for panels of two regular or three short presentations (60 min) on a special topic are possible. We also invite panel proposals focusing on more experimental approaches. All papers and presentations are considered for an edited volume. To enable fast production of this workshop publication, we kindly ask for fully written papers to be handed in prior to the workshop, with the final versions being collected in December 2020.

We are currently trying to procure funding to cover the costs of accommodation and travel. Please submit proposals (250-300 words with title, also affiliation, short biographical note & contact info, technical requirements) to solveig.ottmann@ur.de by the deadline **February 28, 2020**. You will be informed about the selection by mid-March. The program will be announced in early May.

Organizers and Contact:

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Literature

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