COMMUNICATION, SOCIAL SPACE AND INTERCULTURAL DYNAMICS

18-19 September 2008
CIDOB Foundation, Barcelona

Technological innovations and globalisation have helped to transform cultural practices, and as a result, the borders between the field of the cultural (an area that is extensive, controversial and ambiguous) and that of other sectors of human activity (work, politics, art) are being moved. And the multiple forms of communication, interaction and mediation that coexist in our societies now structure an expanding public space that is made up of diverse cultural practices which are sometimes unknown but which is still a space of people who have been socialised by their experiences. For some of them, this public space unifies and banalises personal behaviour; for others, in contrast, its expansion as a consequence of trans-cultural phenomena presents new challenges, new possibilities of fullness and exchanges.

Even so, discourses on cultural diversity also carry paradoxes. In spite of the desire for social cohesion that accompanies the demand for cultural diversity, in practice, the effects often result in greater segregation and differentiation. These unexpected effects are combined with the dimension of antagonism in the “Us and Them” relationship that is necessary for people to identify with certain groups and to categorise others that exist in the same social fabric. Denying this dimension of antagonism does not make it disappear. Nevertheless, one of the functions of culture, in its widest sense — as a way of being, doing, feeling and saying — is to shape the relationships between individuals and groups, in order to build common sense.

We plan to examine communication as a phenomenon of relation — relations that can be effected both at a distance and in proximity, in real time or pre-recorded. The pragmatic viewpoint of communication, which considers the different modalities of relations between people in a context, and in accordance with supports and codes, tends to consider that “culture is communication”. Thus, the convergence between culture and communication produces a generalised phenomenon of hybridisation and miscegenation. To what extent can these phenomena generate new cultural practices?

We plan to question the processes of communication in their function of mediation and their capacity to generate a common imaginary and a feeling of belonging. How can we achieve perspectives that provide cultural practices — in all their diversity and involving everyone — with the means to participate in a project of society, to build social links and strengthen intercultural dynamics?

Contributions should be oriented toward the following issues:

1- The division and fragmentation of groups in an open world, disparity subjected to multiple movements and forced into perpetual exchange in an increasingly shorter time, and a space without distance.
2- A world that isolates people in their personal bubbles but which, at the same time, places them in an infinite network of virtual transactions. Culture is also the object of a lived experience and a shared experience.
3- A demand for diversity that bears differences in mind; these are only valid if they lead to exchange, encounters, sharing...
4- The plurality of cultures, expressions and languages. This plurality necessarily presents these elements in a world of tensions, competition and even confrontations.
5- The tension between connection and separation; between the individual and a group; between distance and proximity; between permanence and the ephemeral, etc.

Seminar directors:
Jean Caune
Laboratoire sur les enjeux de la communication Université de Grenoble
Yolanda Onghena
Intercultural Dynamics Programme, CIDOB Foundation
Programme

Thursday 18 September

10.00 h Presentation of the seminar
Josep Ribera, Director of the CIDOB Foundation
Yolanda Onghena, Intercultural Dynamics Programme

PANEL I
Moderator: Manuel Cruz, Professor of Philosophy. University of Barcelona.

10.30 h Cultural practices and forms of communication: constructing a common world and the conditions of coexistence (or “living together”)
Jean Caune, Communication
GRESEC, Research group on communication issues
Stendhal University Grenoble III, (Grenoble, France)

10.50 h Debate

11.10 h Coffee Break

11.30 h From difference to diversity: skidding and regulation
Noureddine Affaya, Philosophy
Member of HACA (Haute Autorité de la Communication Audiovisuelle)
Mohammed V University (Rabat, Morocco)

11.50 h Intercultural communication spaces
Rico Lie, Communication
Wageningen University (Wageningen, Holland)

12.10 h Panelists’ discussion

12.50 h Final debate

14.00 h Lunch

PANEL II
Moderator: Miguel Rodrigo, Professor of Communication. Pompeu Fabra University.

16.30 h Community and impossibility
Antonio Mendez, Audiovisual communication
University of Valencia (Valencia)

16.50 h Media, technological and cultural convergence: cultural mediations in the context of worldisation.
Laan Mendes de Barros, Communication
Casper Libero Faculty (São Paolo, Brazil)

17.10 h Coffee break

17.20 h North/South relations in contemporary cinema: what kind of relationship with the “other” in the construction of transnational networks?
Amanda Rueda, Communication
Stendhal University Grenoble III, University of Caldas (Manizales, Colombia)

17.40 h Panelists’ discussion

18.20 h Final debate
Friday 19 September

PANEL III
Moderator: Rosa Massagué, Journalist (specialist in International Relations). With El Periódico.

10.00 h  Intercultural interactions: negotiating perception and identity. Multimodal analysis using a cultural approach to the discourse.
Michelangelo Conoscenti, Communication University of Turin (Turin, Italy)

10.30 h  The role of cultural diplomacy in international relations
Said Saddiki, International Relations University of Fez (Fez, Morocco)

10.50 h  Coffee Break

11.10h  Cosmopolitanism as post-colonial, integral humanism.
Rik Pinxten, Anthropology Ghent University (Ghent, Belgium)

11.30 h  Panelists' discussion
12.10 h  Final debate
13.30 h  Closing remarks

Simultaneous translation into French, English and Spanish available

Jean Caune is Emeritus Professor at the Stendhal University of Grenoble III. He created the “centre d’action culturelle” of Villeneuve de Grenoble and has directed the Maison de la Culture de Chambéry (1982-1988). As a researcher, his works cover fields of aesthetic practices considered as processes of cultural mediation. He has published several books, including: Pour une éthique de la médiation: le sens des pratiques culturelles (1999); La démocratisation culturelle: une médiation à bout de souffle (2006) and Culture et communication: convergences théoriques et lieux de médiation (2006).

Noureddine Affaya is professor of Philosophy at Mohammed V University at Rabat-Agdal, a member of the Conseil Supérieur de l’Audiovisuel de Marruecos (HACA) and President of the Association de Recherche en Communication Interculturelle. He has published several books, mainly in Arabic, which have been translated into other languages: Occident en el pensament àrab modern (1994), L’occident dans l’imaginaire arabe (1997), La imagen de España en Maruecos (2005) and Il Mediterraneo: figure e incontri (2005).

Rico Lie is a social anthropologist in the Department of Communication Science of Wageningen University. Previously, he worked at the universities of Brussels, Nijmegen and Leiden. At Wageningen he is an Assistant Lecturer in International Communication, focusing particularly on the areas of communication and development and intercultural communication. His published works include: Spaces of Intercultural Communication. An Interdisciplinary Introduction to Communication, Culture and Globalizing/Localizing Identities (2003).

Antonio Mendez Rubio is lecturer at the University of Valencia and is involved in the coordination of different groups and cultural and socio-political spaces in the city of Valencia, such as the Foro Social de las Artes. His poetic work has been praised for the way in which he presents commitment and social criticism. He has published the essays Encrucijadas: Elementos de crítica de la cultura (1997), Poesía y utopia (1999), La apuesta invisible: cultura, globalización y crítica social (2003), Poesía sin mundo (en prensa) and the volume of interviews Poesía 68 (2003).
Laan Mendes de Barros is Doctor of Communication Science for the ECA-USP. A journalist and editor, with experience in Business Communication, he has given classes at the UNISA, Anhembi Morumbi University, ECA-USP and at the Universidade de Sofocaba. He is a Permanent Lecturer at the Faculdade Casper Libero, where he coordinates the Postgraduate Programme. He helped to set up the research centre the Centro Interdisciplinar de Pesquisa.

Amanda Rueda is a Lecturer in Communication Sciences at the Université Stendhal and head of the Masters course in “Documentaire de création” at the University of Toulouse II. She has worked as a Lecturer in Arts and Human Science at the Universidad de Caldas (Manizales - Colombia) and in Integrated Arts at the School of Social Communication at the Universidad del Valle in Cali (Colombia).

Michelangelo Conoscenti teaches English Language and Translation at the University of Turin. His research is mainly focused on the theoretical and practical integration of processes of intercultural negotiation. He is co-director of the international project “Microdiplomacia”. His most recent publications have been Language Engineering and Media Management Strategies in Recent Wars (2004), Virtual Diplomacy: a case study of conversational practices in an intercultural setting (2004) and Diplomat talk as intercultural communication (2001).

Said Saddiki is a Lecturer in International Law and International Relations at the Faculty of Law (Sidi Mohammed ben Abdellah of the University of Fez, Morocco). His publications include: State in a Changing World; Management of Moroccan Foreign Policy; New Political Forces: Study of Non-governmental Actors in National and Transnational Scenes and Study of the New Diplomatic Dimensions.

Rik Pinxten is Professor of Anthropology and Comparative Cultural Studies at the University of Ghent. He is also President of the Center for Intercultural Communication and Interaction (CICI) at the same university Since 2003 he has been president of the Humanistisch-Vrijzinnige Vereniging (HVV). He has published numerous books, including: Culturen sterven langzaam (1999), De Artistieke Samenleving (2003) and De Culturele Eeuw (2006).