

Sheila Ribeiro, PhD Student, Communication and Semiotics at PUC/SP (São Paulo)

Facing some facts

Bruce Springsteen was invited by the mayor of Naples to inaugurate a significant movie theatre in the city. So it was published in local newspapers as, for instance, Napoli Repubblica. Some citizens of Naples thought the idea rather absurd and complained frustratedly, feeling impotent with the fact. Is it Mr. Springsteen's fault? Is the mayor's choice untactful? How responsible is the movie theatre for that choice? Is it really happening in Naples?

Mleeta is a war theme amusement park. Run by the Hezbollah, it is both a touristic leisure option for local families and a questionable event for non-locals. Mleeta is understood as a normalized attraction in Lebanon. A sightseeing spot for war. Scary, right? How amazing is a park in which one might rebuild local identities and culture! Mleeta is located in South Lebanon. Mleeta is located alongside the Israel/Palestine conflict. Mleeta is 09/11, it is Osama Bin Laden's and Saddam Hussein's death and murder. Is Mleeta about amusement? Is Mleeta about war? Can war and amusement be related? Well, we know they can. We have seen it in games, on the news, and authors have extensively analyzed this connection. However, it had never been as explicit as in this theme park.

Then, we are introduced to INRI Cristo, a Jesus Christ aspirant, who re-elaborates musical video clips. His crew remakes Britney Spears, Rihanna and Amy Winehouse - to mention just a few divas. Is he delusional? YouTube has been a potent platform for designing glocal identities. But, how do all these Anglophone female pop singers end up in his remakes?

What do the three facts above have to do with one another? Well, they are and are not bizarre. They emerge as events of digital cultures (Badiou). Made with, coming from, as well as being glocal biopolitical tensions and communication, they become communication themselves and reveal new values and contemporary traces - the very same that shape them as mediabodies, i.e., each and every one of those events manifests a trans glocal matter.

Reverberating on crossed dimensions, in the Mediabody Theory the concept of "body" is a system of constant dialogues with environments in which human bodies take a part, but are not the central agents anymore (KATZ&GREINER,

2006). The absurd congruences above are mediabodies of an ongoing flux of changes.

Emerging communicational processes

The facts described above are communicational events and still have not been completely identified neither properly approached. They are phenomena of microtensions, coming from macrotensions. They are expressed in varied formats (people, ads, billboards, flyers, dresscodes, networks) as contamination spreads out and proliferates into several unequitable ways, which regulate the production of absurd congruencies. These sparkling and infiltrating ways of crossed contamination, a trans way, scratch bodies regulating the modus operandi and later camouflage into normality.

They are constituted more of contemporary political and cultural cognitive tensions and constructions than necessarily (and properly) their form-content specificity. They are both symptom and system.

It really does not matter if it manifests itself in fashion, architecture, performance, advertising, musical video-clips etc. because in the absurd congruence the media is no longer the most important parameter, but rather the way through which mediation has been passing (a system): "to the extent that the announcement does not refer to a text but to a vivid language event (...), its territory would never match a defined level of linguistic analysis (...) nevertheless it constitutes much more a function" (AGAMBEN, 2008: 141). Furthermore, once mediation has become its own subject (a symptom) and is a kind of mediation phenomena, then, in theory, to approach the absurd congruence - one has to switch "from media to mediation" (Martin-Barbero).

No "starting point". No development. No end. No distinct "object". No distinct "subject-object" (a system and a symptom). The absurd congruence, as mediation, as a mediabody of transcommunicational processes, carries traces of contemporary capitalism: it is a system-symptom. Thus, the absurd congruence emerges as contemporary glocal sensitivities while becoming a mediabody of ongoing glocal geopolitics. "... the glocal represents the way in which capital (...) falls promptly in each dome, in every workplace, in every locus private or public, so all transformed into functional support of an image-circularity informational absolute billionaire and ad infinitum." (Trivinho, A dromocracia cibercultural 261).

Communication phenomena have been permeating contemporary new desires

and sects while glocality elevates its more relevant cultural and communicational events: “The category of glocal sheds light on an infinite series of phenomena, events, practices, processes and current trends” (Trivinho, *A dromocracia cibercultural* 324). If “real time is a time-that-fades well done caricature”, the glocal mediabody is a self-rebuilt-symbolic-space-time sort of caricature. It is an imbrication of contrasting processes; obliteration; changing and preservation (Trivinho, *A dromocracia cibercultural*). Their expressions seem to be made from a mix of apparently distinct elements. However, those elements cannot really be considered distinct because the equality and distinction parameter depends on a very specific epistemology that does not fulfill contemporary realities anymore. They would be incongruent within their environment only if origin and land could be named, only if they were analog and societarian, only if one sole epistemology existed. But, instead they are bodies emerging from the digital culture of heterocontamination, i.e., communication embracing analogical traditions, costumes and habits. Their realm turns out to be concomitant consequences or incidental phenomena, so to speak. On treating the absurd congruencies, these supposedly lateral events manifest themselves in different formats, in a tangential way as a part of contemporary analog-digital glocal realities, whereas in glocal displacement signs have multiple, complex and upside-down literacy, as well as starting points other than its own, that is, mutable multiple starting points.

The absurd congruencies, as events, are metropolitan choreographies with their own aesthetic context, sometimes with costumes, performers, location, script, scenario, technique, time-space and language. Their authorship is no longer precise, and although it could be guessed, no one is specifically implied.

Let us now consider digital cultures taking Native, an organic food brand, as example. Its cookies are wrapped twice: they come in a big “Amazonian” green package (one) that contains three small aluminum bags (two). Could they ever be sustainable? It is a native, who comes from a factory, from a nutritionist’s recipebook, from officially “eco-certified” and environmentally conscious institutions, from designers and advertising campaigns. Where could it be native from? The only possible “native” today is the communicational mediabody.

Glocalism draws both from origin as well as from the global mediatic traces. Thus, on one hand, its signs refer to belonging. They reaffirm a clearly known, fixed identity: the will to reproduce a hint of “authenticity”, things, values and references that claim to be culturally incorrupted, as if the reproduction of signs could ever maintain their specific constitution intact. On the desire level at least,

belonging ensures a comfortable belief in a stable geographic territoriality: “roots” (rooted ones). Nevertheless, a genuine “non-alien-self” is rebuilt. On the other hand, the absurd congruence is a complete reinvention and, by being so, is part of a “global community”, not the analog, but the analog-digital one. This community transits among several displacements (loss and fear) while neocapitalism forces and imposes fluxes, transits, and multiple “métisse” selves. Thus, the identified phenomena could only be considered incongruent through a dichotomic epistemology and by being viewed as “glocal is obliteration” (Trivinho, *A dromocracia cibercultural* 273). It runs through, pierces and surpasses fetishistic complexities, facing rising communicational processes and becoming a new kind of “native” – no longer from an analogic composition. Thus, the mediabody of the analog-digital results from contemporary dynamics and communication.

Beyond any precise form of boundary, guide or landmark (no land and no mark), nothing else can distinguish itself because we are talking about samples of both complex interconnected realities except for the immaterial parameters of the absurd congruence of contemporary capitalism. Fathoming these samples of apparent incongruity can be a key to understand post-dichotomic cultures.

Analog-digital mediabodies as glocal communicational metropolis

Coming from the Mediabody Theory (KATZ & GREINER, 2006), the absurd congruence is a mediabody, i.e., a system. In this theory, each and every body is a collection of information in constant codependent dialogue with the environment, being both process and state:

The body is not a means by which information simply passes. Any new information enters into negotiation with those already there. The body is the result of these crossings and not a place where information is just housed. It is with this notion of the itself media that the Mediabody Theory deals, not with the idea of media designed as a vehicle of transmission. The media to which the Mediabody Theory refers relates to the evolutionary process of selecting information that will constitute the body. The information is transmitted in the process of contamination (Katz and Greiner, “*Por uma teoria do corpomídia*” 131).

Things are not centered in the body, but are latent in a mediabody which is porous, symptomatic, circumstantial. In this sense, it is something of an

amorphous mediabody. It is latency and organization of all kinds of movable materials. Because there is no central body acting, all objects have that function. What exists is a body in the gerund because of the continuous flow of processing.

As an “itself media”, the mediabody announces the environment-body in a flux of permanent porosities and all-vectorial mutations:

Some information of the world is selected to be organized in the form of the body – a process always conditioned by the understanding that the body is not a container, but what it is turning into at this co-evolutionary process of exchanges with the environment. And since the flow does not stagnate, the body lives in the state of an ever present, which prevents the notion of the body as a container. The body is not a place where the information coming from the world is processed for later returned to the world (Katz and Greiner, “Por uma teoria do corpomídia” 64).

The absurd congruence is post-dichotomy geopolitics. It is a trans matter analog-digital mediabody in a constant dialogue with what digital cultures have been producing and training as perceptual behavior of things, bodies, congruencies. It is a communicational metropolis (Canevacci, *Una stupita fatticità*) in an imbrication of contrasting processes; running through dimensions of glocal sensitivities. The absurd congruence is mainly tension coming from and living throughout the triad communication-culture-consumption:

The difference between the city and the modern industrial metropolis is increasingly characterized by the diffusion of the triptych communication-culture-consumption. Communication is increasingly determining the configuration and features of this kind of metropolis in which the concept of historical society loses strength with changes, innovations, conflicts and tensions. This metropolis is beyond any industrial dualism (Canevacci, *Una stupita fatticità* 120).

When we observe Canevacci’s concept of the communicational metropolis, we can immediately relate it to the mediabody theory, as location and bodyscape are both its mediabodies, mediabodying as and through the flux, signs, tensions, vectors, escapes...

Location: place-space, zone, interstices (Canevacci, *Una stupita fatticità* 32).

Bodyscape is the panoramic body that floats between the interstices of the

communicational metropolis. The suffix “scape” joins “body” in order to accentuate the floating concept of the body, which extends the itself and others observation - while being dense fetishistic codes’ visual panorama (Canevacci, *Una stupita fatticità* 30).

The absurd congruence is glocalization, and more than the body of a time and space dissolution, it is a remix of cognitive tensions, loitering on the intermediations of contemporary capitalism. These intermediations infiltrate the private or public locus, moving across land and territory (analog and dialectic), as well as floating and combusting the non-cartographic flux of the communicational metropolis, and finally establishing itself as communication. Pulsing this glocal multivocality (Canevacci, *Una stupita fatticità*) at the analog-digital, this phenomena is both extension and expansion.

Identifying an absurd congruence:

- It is a communicational event that is somehow both a cognitive combination and a consequence;
- It is visibly glocal, analog and digital, industrial and post-industrial;
- It astonishes for its apparent incongruence;
- It is normalized locally, but considered globally weird;
- In spite of its strangeness, it is not exotic. It is an accepted “locally-born stranger”. Thus, an absurd congruence is completely normalized, infiltrated, almost invisible as if it were not there. It is the bizarre unrealized and for being so it is accepted;
- It is not clear, but it is not ambiguous: neither dichotomy, nor non-dichotomy. It is not a dualist event. But, it turns out to make complete sense once it is seen through analog-digital glocal tensions and parameters;
- Its codes cannot be considered pure or impure. It has no precise origin, no clear destination, nor destiny.
- It is an ongoing mutation and preservation; it is the native and the other;
- Its authorship is undefined;
- It is a symptomatic cacophony. It is emblematic and imprecise signal constructions manifested within microphysics that reveal contemporary glocal sensitivities, new values and traces;
- It belongs to the contemporary power mutations and reveals new contemporary traces;
- It is nondefinitive and incomplete: even though it is an overwhelming

phenomenon, its partiality seems to bring an event that is both abundant and precarious;

- Although humans are a part of it, they are no longer its center, nor do they interfere with its cognitive decisions autonomously. The human body has been decentered. It is just one more thing, one more thinking-thing thing, as autonomous as any other non-thinking-thing;
- It is cognitive vectors and realities established by the mediabody (and disestablished?) and these are built throughout and “trans-upon” human awareness.

Starting trans

Perspicuity and certitude would not fulfill a research based on the states of itinerant contemporary capitalism, particularly, on how the communicational politics of capitalism manifest themselves in all the several communication mediations. Then, one must float while creating new methodologies in order to contribute to the rising of a needed roaming epistemology.

Without a pinpointed origin and dealing with partially accessible realities, contemporary glocal communicational power relations do not follow the intelligibility of totalitarian or authoritarian parameters. There is no visible torture, no visible killing, no visible retaliation. However, they rule untouchable and imprecise parameters and evolve into expanded and decentered perversions, i.e., “near tortures”, “in-between retaliations” and “possibly killing” modes. That is when, once again, we detect the impertinence of dialectics as the dialectical parameter deals with dichotomy, double, extremes and a cause-and-consequence equation, distinguished dimensions and uncrossed ones. In dialects we have confrontation and comparison, and the parameters mentioned above do not meet the needs of the trans. Contemporary glocal communicational power relations indicate circumstances, while a transresearch might be an indication, may those adverbs which now accompany contemporary dimension have to do with trans and for something trans that happens.

As we face analog-digital cognitive tensions, would it be possible to escape from the dialogic of the dual analog/digital and sit on the hyphen? And if so, could this hyphen, an orthographic tension of only two worlds, make links as a non-linear multidirectional and multidimensional vector partially tensing diverse realities would? The hyphen as interstitial data (Canevacci, Una stupita fatticitá), as the

main mediabody.

The absurd congruence is a trans event. It flickers from a maybe, to a yet, and then an almost. The absurd congruence still is at the while it never will be. There are no valuable actions, no verbs. It is totally unclear, like neocapitalism. This mediabody is also circumstantial. There is no able discipline neither is there an indiscipline available to research an “adverbial reality”.

Therefore, this might be how and when apparent dispersions bring ways of operating in the contemporary realities. What disciplines would deal with tensions and vectors? Would contemporary realities take new methods? New epistemologies? An adiscipline? Would new methods be possible within the current academic fields?

Dialectics cannot resolve trans realities because they lack the concrete oppositions which are crucial for the dialectical debate. There is no compass that could work for transrealities. Trans promotes impossible passages that pass things through. What would the methodology for impossible passages be? How approach the enhancement of intersections flyovers, broken upside-down equations? Is this methodology lockable from its bodies’ dialogics? Is there an inside in a partial, uncertain, confusing and imprecise event such as the absurd congruence? Would this decentered rhizomatic thinking inspire contemporary trans epistemologies to deal with trans at the same time it ensures to stay away from the logics of dialectics? How to face itinerant approaches, itinerant thinking (which first has to be acknowledged as legitimate)? How to avoid being trapped into dialectical epistemologies?

In order to approach complex interstitial events still partially identified, an epistemology has to disable pertinence or legitimacy, which predetermine whether something is “worth being looked at” as, for instance, old fashion pop-ups. They are not much fancied anymore, but although they have been blocked and regarded as illegitimate, they still exist in a hidden form.

An epistemological frame could not go backwards and decide whether an event exists. Thus, it has to identify apparent inconsistencies, mutations, sobbings, stumbling and deformations. The approach of incidental, invisible and interstitial contemporary events needs no grabbing, no comparison, but some description. It should instead highlight the crossings as it creates tools to realize its impossible crossings, focusing on cognitive tensions. In order to deal with these phenomena,

it has to consider apparent incongruity as legitimate. Therefore, a possible epistemology has to embrace fuzzy logics considering complex elements as research material, including writing, visual and sonic ones, and crossed mimetics multiple views. A risky epistemology for risky realities: getting lost, floating, navigating and displacing as a methodology.

It must have the ability to weave into the “in between”, the “still”, and to pass through the adverbial equations, geometries and indescribable actual configurations, without turning them away as if they were invisible and “not worth looking at”.

Astonishment might not be enough to approach symptom-system events anymore. A foreign mediabody epistemology might be established inside itself and discuss its own demonstrations, i.e, a foreign epistemology is foreigner as long as it belongs to transits and their cognitive tensions. Then, its parameters find themselves into other porous, mutable, crossed-over and unstable parameters – not central ones. A foreign epistemology is an adverbial mediabody. Therefore, it is an epistemology that samples as it becomes samples itself.

Works cited

Abrantes, P. org. Epistemologia e cognição. Editora UnB, 1993.

Appadurai, A. (ed). The social life of things: commodities in cultural perspective. Cambridge: University Press, 1986.

Badiou, A. L'être et l'événement, Éditions du Seuil, 1988.

Benjamin, W. L'opera d'arte nell'epoca della sua riproducibilità tecnica. Torino: Einaudi, 1966.

Bhabha, H. The Location of Culture. London: Routledge Classics, 1994.

Boyd, B. On the Origin of Stories. Evolution, Cognition, and Fiction. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009.

Campbell, H. “The rise and rise of EurepGAP: European (re) invention of colonial food relations”, International Journal of Sociology of Food and Agriculture 13 1-19, 2005.

_____. Liepins R. “Naming organics: understanding organic standards” in New

Zealand as a discursive field – *Sociologia Ruralis* 41 22-39, 2002.

Canclini, N. *La globalización imaginada*. Barcelona: Paidós, 1999.

Canevacci, M. *Fetichismos Visuais – corpos eróticos e metrópole comunicacional*. São Paulo: Atelier, 2008.

_____. *Comunicação visual*. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 2010.

_____. “Digital Auratic Reproducibility: Ubiquitous Ethnographies and Communicational Metropolis”, in: *An Ethnography of Global Landscapes and Corridors*. InTech Publisher, 2012.

_____. [Una stupita fatticità. Feticismi visuali tra corpi e metropoli](#), Costa & Nolan, 2007.

Chemero, A. *Radical Embodied Cognitive Science*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2009.

Churchland, P S. *Braintrust*. Princeton University Press, 2011.

Cosgrave, D. “Prospect, perspective and the evolution of the landscape idea”, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series* 10 45 ^ 62, 1985.

Dicks, B and Mason, B. “The digital ethnographer”, *Issue Six: Research Methodology Online*, www.cybersociology.com/files/6_1_virtualethnographer.html

Esposito, Roberto. *Bios. Biopolitics and Philosophy*, University of Minnesota Press, 2004.

Fanon, F. *A Dying Colonialism*. New York: Montly Reviews Press, 1965.

Freidberg, S. *Commentary. Perspective and power in the ethical foodscape – Environment and Planning A* 42 1868-1874, 2010.

Garcia, R. *Micropolíticas del Cuerpo*. Latitud Sur, 2000.

Gleick, J. *The Information. A History. A Theory. A Flood*. New York: Phanteon Books, 2011.

GlobalGAP, *What is GLOBALGAP?*”, GLOBALGAP, Cologne, <http://www.globalgap.org/>, 2008.

Greiner, C. *O corpo em crise: novas pistas e o curto-circuito das representações*. São Paulo: Annablume, 2010.

_____. O corpo: pistas para estudos indisciplinados. São Paulo: Annablume, 2005.

Haraway, D. *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. London: Free Association Books, 1991.

Hess, J. *Reconstituting the Body Politics. Enlightenment, Public Culture and the Invention of Aesthetic Autonomy*. Wayne State University Press, 1999.

INRI CRISTO. "Britney Spears Versão Mística de Toxic":

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X50ktNjppqY>. Web

Katz, H and Greiner, C. Corpo e Processo de Comunicação. *Revista Fronteiras – Estudos Midiáticos*, Vol. III, Nº 2, , pg. 65 – 75, em www.helenakatz.pro.br, 2001.

_____. Por uma teoria do corpomídia. In: GREINER, Christine. *O corpo: Pistas para estudos indisciplinados*. São Paulo: Annablume, 2005.

Lang, T. From value-for-money' to values-for-money'? Ethical food and policy in Europe, in *Environment and Planning A*, volume 42, 2010.

Martin-Barbero, J. *Dos meios às mediações: comunicação, cultura e hegemonia*. 2.ed. Rio de Janeiro: Ed. da UFRJ, 2003.

Martins, F. and Machado da Silva, J., orgs. *A Genealogia do Virtual. Comunicação, Cultura e Tecnologias do Imaginário*. Porto Alegre: Sulina, 2004.

McLuhan, E. (ed.). *Marshall McLuhan Unbound, Vol. I*. CA: Gingko Press, 2005.

McLuhan, M. *War and Peace in the Global Village*. New York: Bantam Books, 1968.

McLuhan, S. and Staines, D. (eds). *Understanding Me: Lectures & Interviews*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003.

Menary, R. *The Extended Mind*. The MIT Press, 2010.

Mleeta: www.mleeta.com/

Native: <http://www.nativealimentos.com.br/>. Web

Olinto, H. and Schollhammer, K.. *Novas Epistemologias. Desafios para a Universidade do Futuro*. Nau Editora, 1999.

Ranciére, J. *O Desentendimento. Política e Filosofia*. Editora 34, 1996.

Robins, K and Webster, F. *Times of the tecnoculture: from the information society*.

London; New York: Routledge, 1999.

Rose, Nikolas. *The Politics of Life Itself. Biomedicine, Power, and Objectivity in the Twenty-First Century.* Princeton university Press, 2007.

Said, E. *Orientalism.* New York: Vintage, 1979.

Santos, B. and Meneses, M. org. *Epistemologias do Sul.* São Paulo: Cortez Editora, 2010.

_____. org. [Another Knowledge is Possible. Beyond Northern Epistemologies,](#) Verso, 2007.

Sebeok, T. *Communication Measures to Bridge Ten Millennia.* Ohio: Battelle Memorial Institute, Office of Nuclear Waste Isolation, 1984.

Shapiro, L. *Embodied Cognition.* New York: Routledge, 2011.

Spears, Britney. "Toxic (Official Music Video)":

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoJln6oSjJE>. Web

Sunder Rajan, K. *Biocapital. The constitution of Postgenomic Life.* Duke University Press, 2006.

Tancredi, L. *Hardwired Behavior. What Neuroscience Reveals about Morality.* Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Trivinho, E. *O mal-estar da teoria: a condição da crítica na sociedade tecnológica atual.* Rio de Janeiro: Quartet, 2001.

_____. *A dromocracia cibercultural: lógica da vida humana na civilização mediática avançada.* São Paulo: Paulus, 2007.

_____. *Bunker glocal: configuração majoritária sutil do imaginário mediático contemporâneo e militarização imperceptível da vida cotidiana, em Comunicação, mídia e consumo.* São Paulo, vol. 5, n.1 2, p. 1 1 - 3 4, março, 2 0 0 8.