1. INTRODUCTION: PLACE PLURALIZED, NOT MARGINALIZED

The title of this paper is a phrase borrowed from the work of a theorist and historian of broadcasting, Paddy Scannell (1996). For Scannell (1996, p. 172), one of the remarkable (‘magical’) yet now largely taken-for-granted consequences of radio and television use is what he calls the «doubling of place». His idea that these media serve to «double» reality is developed in an analysis of the distinctive character of public events (and of «being-in-public») in late modern life: «Public events now occur, simultaneously, in two different places: the place of the event itself and that in which it is watched and heard. Broadcasting mediates between these two sites» (Scannell, 1996, p. 76). In proposing a «phenomenological approach» to the study of radio and television (see also Scannell, 1995), which is concerned in part with the «ways of being in the world» (Scannell 1996, p. 173) that have been created for viewers and listeners, he goes on to argue that, for audience members in their multiple, dispersed local settings, there are transformed «possibilities of being: of being in two places at once» (Scannell, 1996, p. 91). Of course, it is only ever possible for any individual to be in one place at a time physically, but broadcasting nevertheless permits a «live» witnessing of remote happenings that can bring these happenings experientially «close» or «within range», thereby removing the «farness» (Scannell, 1996, p. 167).

I want to suggest in this paper that Scannell’s concept of the doubling of place and his reflections on the altered «possibilities of being» for media users, while they appear in a book devoted to the study of broadcasting, might also be applied more generally in the analysis of those electronic media, such as the Internet and telephone, which share with radio and television a capacity for the virtually instantaneous transmission of information across sometimes vast spatial distances. Broadcasting, as Scannell has

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2 A key point of reference there, for Scannell, is the concept of «de-severance» employed by Heidegger (1962, p. 138) in his discussion of the «spatiality» of «Being-in-the-world». Indeed, Heidegger (1962, p. 140) briefly mentioned the medium of radio himself, pointing to its potential role in «the conquest of remoteness» and a «de-severance of the “world”». 
shown, has its own characteristic communicative features, which serve to distinguish it in various ways from computer-mediated or telephone communication (allowing for the fact that presenters of programmes are increasingly encouraging their viewers and listeners to email or phone-in). However, radio and television can be considered alongside the Internet and telephone precisely because of the common potential that all these media have for constructing experiences of simultaneity, liveness and «immediacy» in what have been termed «non-localized» (Thompson, 1995, p. 246) (I would prefer ‘trans-localized’) spaces and encounters.

In my view, there are a number of advantages to be gained from grouping these electronic media together in a single field of investigation. Such a field could be a valuable site of connection between studies of so-called «new media», always «a historically relative term» (Marvin 1988, p. 3), and of more established modes of electronically mediated communication, including the use of an ‘old technology’ like the (static) telephone. Additionally, it could help to bridge a problematic gap between the existing academic areas of «mass» and «interpersonal» communications, and to raise questions about the limits of a «circuit» model of culture that relies on distinguishing institutional moments of production and consumption. While this model has been employed in the analysis of broadcasting (for example, see Moores, 1997), it turns out to be far less helpful when attempting to understand what is going on between the participants in Internet «chat» or in telephone conversations, where the positions of ‘performers’ and ‘audiences’ may be constantly shifting as they typically do in local face-to-face interactions.

The work of Joshua Meyrowitz (1985) would have to be a foundational text in the field of investigation I am outlining here. His pioneering book on electronic media makes a seemingly improbable link between Erving Goffman’s sociology, which was concerned amongst other things with the «definition of the situation» in instances of social interaction (see especially Goffman, 1959), and the «medium theory» of Marshall McLuhan (see especially McLuhan, 1964), which related the development of media technologies to time-space transformations. Bringing together their rather different perspectives, Meyrowitz (1985, p. 6) asserts that: «Electronic media affect us […] not primarily through their content, but by changing the “situational geography” of social life». He advances a theory of «situations as information-systems» (see also Meyrowitz, 1994), in which the emphasis is on how «patterns of information flow» serve to define the situation. This argument does not invalidate the work done by Goffman and others on co-present interaction in physical settings, rather it «extends the study of situations» to include a range of encounters in and with «media “settings”» (Meyrowitz, 1985, pp. 37-38).

It should be remembered that there are instances of «asynchronous» electronically mediated communication, say when a programme is broadcast weeks after it was recorded (although it may still have the feeling of a live transmission), when an email is opened the day after it was sent, or when a message left on a telephone answering service is played back hours later. It should also be remembered that other media, including film and print media, might be seen to offer a doubling of place for their users, yet these media do not have the potential for instantaneous communication across large distances (and therefore cannot create the same sense of simultaneity and immediacy available from radio, television, the Internet and telephone).

As will become clear later in the paper, it is even possible to conceive of broadcasting as involving «para-social interaction» (Horton - Wohl, 1956) (more precisely, «social para-interaction», see Jensen, 1999, p. 182) or else «mediated quasi-interaction» (Thompson, 1995, pp. 84-85), in which co-presence is simulated. Whilst I find these concepts helpful, there is a danger that the «para-» or «quasi-» prefix might be taken to indicate that the type of communication found here is somehow less «authentic» than communication in local face-to-face interactions.
Clearly, Meyrowitz’s reflections on the altered «situational geography» of social life correspond in some respects with what Scannell has to say about the time-space arrangements of broadcasting, but whereas Scannell points to the doubling of place, Meyrowitz suggests that cultures in our «electronic society» are «relatively placeless» in comparison with those of previous social orders (the phrase in the title of his book is «no sense of place»). As he explains, this title is intended as a «serious pun» in which place can be understood to mean «both social position and physical location» (Meyrowitz, 1985, p. 308). His main thesis is that social roles and hierarchies, through which people have traditionally come to «know their place», are being transformed as electronically mediated communication transcends the boundaries of physical settings, making these boundaries more «permeable». To take a dramatic example used to illustrate the general thesis, he states that: «A telephone or computer in a ghetto tenement or in a suburban teenager’s bedroom is potentially as effective as a telephone or computer in a corporate suite» (Meyrowitz, 1985, pp. 169-170).

Whether or not we accept Meyrowitz’s perspective on the transformation of place as «social position» (quite frankly, I feel this particular aspect of his theory tends to overestimate the degree of change, see also Leyshon, 1995, pp. 33-34), there is still a problem with the suggestion that place as «physical location» is of little or no consequence today, and that it is therefore necessary for us to move «beyond place» in theorizing communication and culture. The boundaries of place, in the second sense of the word here, are certainly more permeable or «open» (Massey, 1995) than they were in the past, and it is also the case that, as Anthony Giddens (1990, pp. 17-21) explains, the social organization of time and space has been abstracted or «pulled away» from locales in conditions of modernity, yet this does not necessarily lead to the loss of a sense of place. Indeed, Scannell (1996, p. 141) accuses Meyrowitz of not putting enough emphasis on the locales of broadcasting, «above all the studio», from which distant viewers and listeners in numerous other places are addressed. Furthermore, via the Internet, there is the creation of what have been called «virtual places» in «cyberspace» (for example, Mitchell, 1995, pp. 21-22) or «text-based virtual realities» (Turkle, 1996a, p. 15), media settings for social interaction that might best be seen as ‘overlaying’ the physical locations of those computer users who access them.

My preference, then, is for a conception of place as pluralized (not marginalized, as Meyrowitz would have it) by electronic media use. As Nick Couldry (2000, p. 30) asks, «Why not argue that media coverage massively multiplies the interconnections between places, rather than weakening our sense of place?» In turn, once we recognize the «hitherto impossible possibility of being in two places [...] at once» (Scannell, 1996, p. 172), it is necessary for us to recognize that social relationships can be pluralized too. There are opportunities in late modern life, at least for those with the economic and cultural resources to access relevant technologies of electronically mediated communication, for relating instantaneously to a wide range of spatially remote others, as well as to any proximate others in the physical settings of media use. Both these sorts of «relating to others» (Duck, 1999) merit serious consideration, as does the complex interplay between them. This potential pluralizing of relationships also raises some further issues to do with the «presentation of self» (Goffman, 1959) or with «performing identity» (Cameron, 1997) in and across multiple social realities (see Schutz, 1962).

With a view to illustrating and extending the introductory comments made here, concerning electronic media, time-space arrangements and social relationships, I want to devote the rest of this paper to a discussion of three brief accounts of media use (drawn from recently published research). Each of the selected accounts features a dif-
ferent electronic medium, but all offer examples of what, following Scannell, could be termed a doubling of place.

2. PUBLIC EVENTS AND THE INTERRUPTION OF ROUTINE

The first of these accounts is a quotation found in Robert Turnock’s study of British television viewers’ responses to news of the death and coverage of the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales, in 1997:

My family and I watched the entire funeral. My husband has his own business, but he was shut for the day as a mark of respect [...] we just felt it was the appropriate thing to do. At times it was difficult because we have a thirteen-month-old baby and sometimes he got bored, so we took it in turns to entertain him. We watched BBC1 until she reached her final resting place around 2.15 p.m. We stayed at home in our breakfast room, drinking tea and crying. It did not feel right to go out on such a sad day.

(Turnock, 2000, p. 99)

Perhaps the main theme in this written account is the suspension or interruption of routine. Its author tells of her husband’s business being «shut for the day as a mark of respect», of watching one television channel for hours on end, of remaining in their «breakfast room» until the afternoon and of staying indoors because it «did not feel right to go out on such a sad day». I will come shortly to a discussion of why she and her family (with the exception of the 13-month-old baby) might have felt that way about the death of a public figure they had never met face-to-face, «in person», but to begin with it is necessary to say something about how the «eventfulness» of public events is intimately bound up with the «dailiness» that it disturbs, if only temporarily.

Scannell (1996, p. 149) asserts that dailiness is the key «organizing principle» of broadcasting, and that the principal challenge for broadcasters is to provide «a daily service that fills each day, that runs right through the day, that appears as a continuous [...] never-ending flow — through all the hours of the day, today, tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow», in such a way that viewers and listeners can come to feel «entitled» to expect it as a reliable, familiar and predictable aspect of their days (as «ready-to-hand» and «available», in phenomenological terms). In contrast, eventful happenings like the death of Diana, who was a relatively young member of the British royal family, or to take a more recent example, like the «September 11» attacks on New York’s World Trade Centre in 2001, are unexpected, «occasional things» that «show up» as eventful «against a background of uneventful everyday existence» (having said that, some eventful occasions are planned and anticipated well in advance, forming part of a national or global calendar of events, and it is precisely the role of news to try to «routinize eventfulness» as an «everyday phenomenon») (Scannell, 1996, p. 160). Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz (1992, p. 5), introducing a study of what they refer to as «media events», one case of which was Diana’s wedding ceremony years before, make an argument that is similar to Scannell’s: «The most obvious difference between media events and other [...] genres of broadcasting is that they are, by definition, not routine. In fact, they are interruptions of routine; they intervene in the normal flow of broadcasting and our lives».

The «normal flow» of broadcasting, as Dayan and Katz refer to it, has its source in the seriality of programming (soap opera is perhaps the best example of this serial form), and in the cyclical or recursive organization of the schedules (Scannell, 1995, p. 7).
In turn, television scheduling is typically designed to match a channel’s «mixed» programme output with the projected flow of day-to-day lives, the routinized «time-space paths» (see Giddens, 1984, p. 113) along which potential viewers in different social positions are assumed to be moving⁵. Television viewing is usually, though not exclusively (see McCarthy, 2001), carried out in household contexts, where attention to particular programmes has often been divided and contested (a classic qualitative study of television’s uses in the home is Morley, 1986). It is in such a setting that the family in the first account is watching television, and the problem of having to «entertain» a bored baby is typical of the kind of mundane distractions that viewers face in their routine domestic circumstances. Indeed, some television programmes, especially those shown at times of the day, like breakfast time, when people’s physical presence in front of the screen is unpredictable, assume a distracted viewer who will drop in and out of the highly fragmented broadcast.

Let me return now to a question raised earlier, which is asked by Turnock (2000, p. 35) himself: «How is it possible to grieve over someone that you have never met?»⁶. I should make it clear at this point that many of the respondents featured in Turnock’s research data did not report feelings of grief, but others (including the author of this account) do seem to have experienced great upset over Diana’s death. Answering Turnock’s question requires an understanding of the role of electronic media, and broadcasting in particular, in the construction of «celebrity». It also invites reflection on the ways in which relations of familiarity and estrangement today are «mapped» onto the changing situational geography of social life. For instance, Giddens (1999, pp. 11-12), commenting on the significance of Nelson Mandela as a «global celebrity», notes that when Mandela’s image «may be more familiar to us than the face of our next-door neighbour, something has changed in the nature of our everyday experience». Similarly, although she was a member (by marriage) of the British royal family rather than a political leader, Diana was «known» to millions around the world through her frequent media appearances. Her «performance of “ordinariness”» (Couldry, 2001, p. 231) in media settings, despite the fact that she occupied a quite extraordinary social position, may help, in part, to explain the sense of loss felt by some people following her death (see also Kear - Steinberg, 1999).

Writing several years ago, John Langer (1981, p. 355) remarked that most television personalities have a «“will to ordinariness”, to be accepted, normalized, experienced as familiar». This includes not just show hosts, news readers and soap opera actors, but also politicians and other public figures who (often on the advice of «public relations» consultants) present themselves on screen in ways that are intended to project «intimacy» and immediacy, despite their positions of power and status. Although Diana was undoubtedly a sign of «glamour», which might be thought to place her in the same bracket as a film «star», she clearly possessed the «will to ordinariness» described by Langer, and her performed sincerity in the famous Panorama interview broadcast on BBC1 was probably the classic example of that will at work. Not all viewers will have interpreted her self-presentation on that occasion as «a case of the real thing» (Scannell,

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⁵ Exceptions to this general rule are the «themed» channels now available from cable, satellite and digital broadcasters, such as the 24-hour «rolling news» stations that foreground «hourly cycles of repetition» in offering a sort of continuous «news-on-demand» (RICHARDSON - MEINHOF, 1999, pp. 8-9).

⁶ Interestingly, his explanation of how this is possible revolves around a reading of Diana as a soap opera heroine, whose «character» went through emotional «ups and downs», making available «melodramatic identifications» to audience members (see also ANG, 1990).
1996, p. 74), yet she offered audiences the possibility of what John B. Thompson (1995, p. 219) terms «non-reciprocal intimacy at a distance» in a «mediated quasi-interaction». As Meyrowitz (1985, p. 120) puts it, if audience members take up such offers then mediated relationships of this type can, over time, «lead to a “new genre of human grief”» when familiar media figures die, and on a personal note he reveals that the murder of John Lennon in 1980 «was strangely painful to me and my university colleagues who had “known” him and grown up “with” him».

Before moving on to a discussion of the next account, I want to conclude the current section of the paper by making it explicit how the first account serves as an illustration of the doubling of place. On the one hand, then, television seems to have constructed for these viewers, who were «drinking tea and crying» in their private domestic setting, something of the experience of being at «the event itself». «The liveness of broadcast coverage», writes Scannell (1996, p. 84), «offers the real sense of access [...] This presencing [...] of a present occasion to an absent audience [...] can powerfully produce the effect of being-there, of being involved (caught up) in [...] the occasion». This funeral service and its associated rituals, with the exception of the burial to which public access was denied, were made available to them (in a re-presented form) by broadcasting, but on the other hand, as Scannell has noted, such a televised public event might also be said to «occur» in the place of viewing (since its occurrence is «doubled» by broadcasting). Dayan and Katz (1992) ask whether it is still appropriate to speak of a «public» event when it «takes place» and is ritually performed, at least partly, «at home» and «in private». They believe that it is, justifying their assertion by employing the concept of the «diasporic ceremony»: «Attendance takes place in small groups congregated around the television set, concentrating on the symbolic center, keenly aware that myriad other groups are doing likewise [...] a ceremony is created to encapsulate the experience of “not being there”» (Dayan - Katz, 1992, p. 146)

3. THE INTERNET AS PART OF EVERYDAY LIFE

The second account is a personal reflection by Lori Kendall (2002, p. 7), an ethnographer who has investigated participation in an Internet forum or «mud» (a «multi-user domain») that she names BlueSky:

Online interactions can at times become intensely engrossing [...] However, [...] when mud-ding for long periods of time, I frequently leave the computer to get food, go to the bathroom, or respond to someone in the physical room in which I’m sitting. If the text appearing on my screen slows to a crawl or the conversation ceases to interest me, I may cast about for something else offline to engage me, picking up the day’s mail or flipping through a magazine.

7 So the promise and possibility of «being-there» electronically (in the words of BBC Radio Five Live’s soccer World Cup trailer, «we’ll take you there») are combined with the «not being there», or «being-here», that is equally fundamental to audience participation in mediated state or sports events, but is not necessarily detrimental to a sense of public occasion. Speaking from personal experience, as I watched live television coverage of my own national soccer team playing in the 2002 World Cup finals on the other side of the globe («interpellated», no doubt, by the ideology of patriotism), I was ‘keenly aware’ that others were simultaneously «doing likewise», either in private households or in public bars. Indeed, coverage of the matches was interspersed with the images and sounds of public gatherings «back home», while commentators made frequent reference to the «local» times and places of viewing, since the global division of «time zones» meant that afternoon or evening games in Japan were broadcast at breakfast or lunchtime in England, disturbing the daily routines of many viewers.
If the last account was about an «eventful» interruption of routine, then this one is of interest to me precisely because it places Internet use in the context of ordinary, day-to-day life. Kendall’s description of her own mundane domestic practices (combining «online interactions» with various «offline» activities such as eating, chatting to somebody in the same «physical room» and «flipping through a magazine») could easily be an account of routine, distracted television viewing in the home, if we were to substitute her references to «mudding» on the computer with ones to glancing at a television screen. As she acknowledges, being online «can at times become intensely engrossing», just as the television viewers in the previous account were engrossed by the unfolding occasion that they witnessed from their private domain, but at other times, when the text on her computer screen «slows to a crawl» or when she ceases to be interested in the ongoing «conversation» between participants (in what are known to their users as «rooms») in the mud, part of her engagement is with people and objects in the immediate physical environment.

So this second account is, once again, about a pluralizing of place and relationships. Indeed, Kendall (2002, pp. 7-8) notes that «although the mud provides for me a feeling of being in a place, that place in some sense overlays the physical place in which my body resides». While «hanging out» with regulars in the «virtual pub» (that is, with fellow participants on BlueSky), she is, like each of them, simultaneously located in a physical setting. This is a simple yet crucial point for us to take on board when studying the Internet, because as Daniel Miller and Don Slater (2000, pp. 4-7) argue, much of the early academic literature on computer-mediated communication (for a valuable review of that body of literature, see Kitchin 1998) has tended to focus on the constitution of «places apart from the rest of social life», rather than seeing the Internet «as continuous with [...] other social spaces» and «as part of everyday life».

As in the analysis of television cultures, our attention needs to be given both to the «presencing» of places on the screen and to those places in which the screen is viewed and interacted with, including public locales such as «Internet cafés» (see Wakeford 1999). The work of Sherry Turkle (1996a) is in certain respects an instance of that «earlier generation of Internet writing» which Miller and Slater are so critical of, since its emphasis is on the «apartness» of cyberspace, a parallel «life on the screen» in which it is possible for participants to break free of the limitations of their physical existence to create alternative and experimental «modes of being» (see also Turkle - Salamensky, 2001). In her account of social relationships and self-presentations in muds, then, she interprets these «real-time» interactive domains as virtual stages on which to «play» collaboratively with identity, or rather with multiple identities. She recognises, much as

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8 It is interesting that a virtual place is often referred to as a «room». Similarly, people speak of «visiting sites» on the World Wide Web. So in circumstances of «digital sociality» or «virtual travel» (Urry, 2000, p. 70), some of the vocabulary associated with local physical settings or with ‘corporeal travel’ is being employed in an effort to contextualize, or to «re-embed», «disembedded» social relations (see GIDDENS, 1990, pp. 79-80).

9 See also ROBINS (1996, 25), who offers what is in some ways a similar critique of the idea that cyberspace can be treated as a separate and alternative reality.

10 When attending to the presencing of places on the computer screen, it should be noted that, although the focus of my discussion here is on participation in muds, many other places (and people) are «accessible» via the Internet. For example, see MILLER and SLATER (2000) on «chat rooms» and «ICQ» (stands for «I seek you») interactions, SNYDER (2000) on live «personal webcam sites», and BAYM (2000) on a «Usenet newsgroup community». When attending to the uses of televisions, computers and other electronic media in household settings, it is also worth noting an argument made by LIVINGSTONE (2002, pp. 158-159), who contends that family members today are often «living together separately» in multi-screen domestic cultures.
Goffman (1959) did when he employed various dramaturgical metaphors in his analysis of social behaviour, that the self in (offline) everyday life routinely plays «different roles in different settings at different times [...] when, for example, she wakes up as a lover, makes breakfast as a mother, and drives to work as a lawyer» (Turkle, 1996a, p. 14). However, according to Turkle, there are two main distinguishing features of online identity construction. Firstly, her work stresses the fact that most participants in muds are known to one another only through their own «textual descriptions», and so «the obese can be slender, the beautiful plain, the “nerdy” sophisticated» (Turkle, 1996a, p. 12). Caroline Bassett (1997), amongst others, makes a similar case for muds as places in which to experiment with performing or «doing» gender, including acts of «gender-switching». Secondly, citing the frequent use of multiple «windows» on the same computer screen, Turkle (1996a, p. 14) proposes that selves may now exist in «many roles» and «many worlds» at the «same time».

Turkle’s observations on online interactions and performances are interesting, but what saves them from being merely another account of the «utopian» possibilities of virtual cultures is the link that she makes with participants’ offline lives. As well as mudding herself, in the role of participant observer, she conducted face-to-face conversational interviews with some fellow «mudders» in an effort to make sense of the connections (or disconnections) between those identities they construct on the screen and their presentations of self in what one of her interviewees called the «RL window» (RL stands for «real life»). This kind of approach to researching the Internet attempts to hang on to two related contexts, namely «the social spaces that emerge through its use (online)» and «the circumstances in which the Internet is used (offline)» (Hine, 2000, p. 39). For example, she presents detailed case studies of Stewart and Robert, students who had each spent many hours mudding on a regular basis (see also Turkle, 1996b, pp. 165-173). Whereas Stewart is seen by Turkle to have been «acting out» his emotional problems through a fantasy alias in the setting of a mud, without ever satisfactorily resolving them, Robert is understood to have been «working through» the difficulties that he brought with him from RL. Whilst I am a little uncomfortable with Turkle’s analytical judgement as to what constitutes the good or bad psychological consequences of mudding, these two cases do, nevertheless, demonstrate the value of combining data that is drawn both from electronically mediated and physically co-present communication.

Returning to Kendall (2002, p. 225), it is important to note the conclusion of her ethnographic study, which involved not just virtual contacts with anonymous others but also attendance at occasional (and therefore eventful) face-to-face group meetings of several of the BlueSky participants: «Online relations do not occur in a cultural vacuum. However much people may desire to leave behind the constraints of their offline cultural backgrounds [...] their social interactions online remain grounded in understandings and contexts that intersect with offline realities». In the case of the virtual pub that she investigated, the majority of regulars were American, male, white and middle class, working as computer programmers or in similar computer-related employment. Indeed, most were routinely «logging on» from a workplace setting, with the main periods of heavy usage being lunchtime and late afternoon, Pacific standard time. The mud that is described in her book is a collectively performed «masculine space» in which «patterns of speech, persistent topics, and a particular style of references to women and sex create a gendered environment» (Kendall, 2002, p. 72). There is a blurring of the spheres of work and leisure here, since much of the chat actually revolves around the uses of computer technology. For these reasons, she insists that it is important to understand BlueSky as one site, among many, both in online and offline social realities, where a version of «hegemonic masculinity» is reproduced on a daily basis.
4. TWO ‘THERES’ THERE IN MOBILE PHONE USE

The third account is a story told by sociologist Emanuel A. Schegloff (2002, pp. 285-286), which is set on a train carriage in New York:

A young woman is talking on the cell phone, apparently to her boyfriend, with whom she is in something of a crisis. Her voice projects in far-from-dulcet tones. Most of the passengers take up a physical and postural stance of busying themselves with other foci of attention (their reading matter, the scene passing by the train’s windows, etc.), busy doing «not overhearing this conversation» [...] Except for one passenger. And when the protagonist of this tale has her eyes intersect this fellow-passenger’s gaze, she calls out in outraged protest, «Do you mind?! This is a private conversation!».

A further echo of Scannell’s concept of the doubling of place is to be found in Schegloff’s own commentary on that story of mobile phone use (Americans call it a «cell phone»). This young woman at the centre of the tale is, in his words, «in two places at the same time – and the railroad car is only one of them. The other place that she is is “on the telephone” [...] there are two “theres” there» (Schegloff, 2002, pp. 286-287). We are not accustomed to thinking of speaking on the telephone as an instance of «being-in-place» (see Casey, 1993, p. XV), and yet the participants in telephone conversations, whose bodies reside in separate physical locations, are constructing what Schegloff (2002, p. 287) terms «occasions of talk-in-interaction», in which there is a shared virtual co-presence, rather like that created by «synchronous» Internet chat.

Although Schegloff does not say so explicitly, the story that he tells us is, in my view, one in which plural and competing definitions of «the situation» become apparent. The protagonist, who is physically on a train journey and in the public setting of «the railroad car», is, she protests, having a «private conversation» (for further discussion of mobile phones as «devices for private talk in the company of strangers», see Sussex Technology Group, 2001). While her assertion is in some ways surprising, given that she is speaking «in far-from-dulcet tones» and so her voice is clearly audible to other passengers in the same carriage, and while this assertion is also a possible source of humour in the narrative, there are still signs that could support such an indignant expression of personal experience: «this young woman is talking to her boyfriend, about intimate matters, in the usual conversational manner – except for the argumentative mode, and this also, perhaps especially, makes it a private conversation» (Schegloff, 2002, p. 286). Interestingly, almost all of the fellow passengers collaborate to support this woman’s defining of the situation. In ethnomethodological terms, they are «doing “not overhearing this conversation”». They cannot help but overhear the argument (or at least one side of it) but pretend not to hear, busily looking down at their «reading matter» or else out of the carriage windows, thereby avoiding eye contact with the mobile phone user so as not to intrude openly on another’s intimate business. Of course, there is a single passenger who, as Schegloff’s tale implies, refuses to accept the performed pretence, perhaps as a result of being irritated by the intrusion of private talk into a public setting. What I am suggesting is that, at the point where eye contact is made, the two «theres» there end up colliding with one another.

By way of conclusion here, I want to discuss two further sets of issues that are raised by this story of mobile phone use, because each is important for the way in which we understand electronic media, time-space arrangements and social relationships today. The first of these has to do with the complex links between communications,
mobility and proximity in late modern life. Earlier in this paper, we have looked at examples of simulated co-presence in electronically mediated communication, where «the character and experience of “co-presence” is transformed since people can feel proximate while still distant» (Urry, 2002, p. 267). Given such a capacity for presencing at a distance (see also Meyrowitz, 1986, on the «para-proxemics» of television), or for multiple (imaginative and virtual) «mobilities» via electronic media, why is it, then, that people continue to feel the need for corporeal travel in order to be with others in physical places (what has been called «the compulsion of proximity», see Boden - Molotch, 1994)? As John Urry (2002, p. 256) asks, quite simply, «Why do people physically travel?».

Schegloff’s account is, after all, about an event occurring on a train journey. He tells us that this train is taking commuters home from Manhattan to Long Island at the end of a working day, and the context is therefore one of physical mobility, or a «moving-between-places» (Casey, 1993, p. 280). Passengers in the carriage evidently have an investment in travelling home physically, just as they would have had an investment in travelling to work that morning. «Getting-there» and being-there, in embodied ways, are presumably significant acts for them (although, of course, «telework» involving the use of information and communication technologies has helped to shift the relations between home and work for some people, see Haddon - Silverstone 1995). Indeed, the compulsion of proximity is not only evident in the day-to-day routines of commuters like these. Following the death of Diana, there were embodied acts of «pilgrimage and witnessing» (see Couldry, 2000, pp. 37-38) to sign condolence books and lay flowers with others in public places, or even to be in attendance in central London near the event of the funeral itself (where the service could be viewed on large, outdoor television screens). Similarly, as was reported in my discussion of Kendall’s work at the end of the previous section, several of the mudders who participated on BlueSky felt the need to meet face-to-face in a physical location from time to time 11.

The second set of further (closely related) issues arising out of Schegloff’s story, and one which I touched on briefly in my discussion of the first account, has to do with what Giddens (1990, p. 140), in his wide-ranging study of the consequences of modernity, sees as the intersection of estrangement and familiarity with changing arrangements of proximity and distance. In marked contrast to pre-modern cultures, in which an encounter with a stranger would have been a relatively rare occurrence, contemporary urban places may be the site of fleeting contacts with hundreds, or perhaps even thousands, of unknown others every day. Goffman’s concept of «civil inattention» is the name he gave to a form of «unfocused interaction» that is routinely played out in public places, such as city streets where passers-by acknowledge each other’s physical presence with a swift glance before «casting the eyes down as the other passes – a kind of dimming of lights» (Goffman, 1963, p. 84). While train carriages are not quite the same sort of public places as city streets, partly because the passengers there are in one another’s company for a longer period than are passing pedestrians, what seems to have upset the protagonist in Schegloff’s narrative is her fellow-passenger’s refusal to perform «polite estrangement» (Giddens, 1990, p. 81), the conventional «courtesy» of averting the gaze.

11 Urry (2002, p. 269) talks about the ways in which communications conducted via mobile phones and «text-messaging» services are «enabling the flexibilization of people’s paths through time-space», so that the precise times and places of face-to-face meetings may now be negotiated «on the road» (and see Ling - Yttri, 2002, for illustrations of the use of «mobile communication» to co-ordinate physical mobilities).
Conversely, if known others in pre-modern cultures typically inhabited a shared physical location (as they still do in certain circumstances) then social relationships of familiarity in the late modern age can be «stretched» across distances. Telephones, static as well as mobile, are technologies that have clearly helped to facilitate this stretching or extension of relationships (which has been thought by some to involve a simultaneous «shrinking» or compression of the world, see Moores, 2002). Historically, according to Claude S. Fischer (1991), the telephone industry’s «discovery» of sociability was not immediate, and yet a significant proportion of the medium’s information flows is now made up of «intrinsic» calls for friendship and «kinkeeping» purposes (see Moyal 1992) or, more colloquially, «calling just to keep in touch» (Drew - Chilton, 2000).  

Paul Drew and Kathy Chilton (2000) offer a fascinating conversation analysis of the transcripts of telephone calls made by family members living some distance apart. They point out that the regular timing of such calls is usually based on knowledge about the daily or weekly routines of the known others being contacted: «so, for example, a daughter might telephone her mother on Sunday evenings, at a time when she knows that her mother will have finished her evening meal, but before she settles down to watch some favourite television programme» (Drew - Chilton, 2000, p. 137). Among the types of «small talk» found in their data is what they term an «oh-prefaced environmental noticing». These noticings were occasionally spontaneous references to happenings in the local physical environments of the telephone users, but in addition they often included «aural noticings» concerned with «voice quality, background noise, etc.», which indicates that «if shared local resources are prime targets for the making of small talk, then perhaps shared resources from the aural environment are [...] likely to trigger comment in telephone conversation in the absence of mutually accessible physical resources» (Drew - Chilton, 2000, p. 151).

This brings us back, ultimately, to where the paper (and also the final section of the paper) began. By drawing our attention once again to the media settings (in this case, for talk-in-interaction) that overlay the physical locations of electronic media users, Drew and Chilton are returning to the pivotal idea that place, and experiences of being-in-place, can be pluralized in and by electronically mediated communication.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


12 Of course, a significant proportion is also made up of talk between strangers. For example, see Gumpert (1990) on the practices of «phone sex», in which participation with an unknown other (or others) facilitates the construction of fantasy narratives and personae, or else Cameron (2000) on «call centre» workers who must routinely engage in «standardized interactions» with members of the public.


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Ling R. - Yttri B., Hyper-Coordination Via Mobile Phones in Norway, in Katz J.E. - Aakhus M.


RÉSUMÉ

L’essai affronte les concepts de «duplication de lieu» et «différentes possibilités d’être» en rapport à la radio et à la télévision. Moores montre comme ils peuvent être généralement appliqués à tous les médias électroniques, comme l’Internet et le téléphone. De la même façon que la radio et la télévision, les nouveaux médias offrent la possibilité d’une transmission virtuellement instantanée d’information à travers vastes distances spatiales. Tous ces médias donnent vie à expériences de simultanéité, liveness et instantanéité en lieux «trans-localisés».

L’idée que le lieu, et l’expérience d’être-en-lieu, peut être pluralisé à travers la communication électronique médiate, est démontrée par l’utilisation des médias. Moores décrit l’exemple du douleur d’une famille qui a vu à la télévision l’enterrement de la Princesse Diana: l’istantanéité de la transmission a produit l’effet de «être-là», d’être impliqué en la situation. L’auteur raconte, même, le cas d’un participant à un MUD: il souligne comme on peut voir l’Internet comme un monde en continuité avec autres espaces sociaux de la vie quotidienne, et pas comme un monde séparé de la socialité «in real life». Donc, on doit concentrer l’attention sur la ‘présence’ des lieux dans l’écran et, de la même façon, sur ces lieux où le public voit et interagit avec l’écran. Cette approche a été utilisée pour analyser le troisième cas, l’histoire d’une conversation téléphonique privée dans un train: la jeune fille qui téléphone est en deux lieux: en la voiture et au téléphone.

RIASSUNTO

Il saggio affronta il concetto di «duplicazione dello spazio» e di «diverse possibilità di esistenza» in rapporto alla radio e alla televisione. Moores mostra come questi due concetti possono essere applicati a tutti i media, da quelli tradizionali a Internet e alla telefonia. Così come la radio e la televisione, i nuovi media offrono la possibilità di una trasmissione quasi istantanea attraverso grandi distanze. Tutti questi media consentono di fare esperienza della simultaneità, della presenza e della istantaneeità in luoghi «trans-locali».

L’idea che il luogo, e l’esperienza di essere in un luogo, possa essere moltiplicata attraverso la comunicazione mediata è dimostrata dai processi di utilizzo dei media. Moores analizza l’esempio del dolore di una famiglia che ha visto alla televisione i funerali della Principessa Diana: l’istantaneeità della trasmissione ha prodotto l’effetto di «essere-là», di coinvolgimento emotivo nella situazione. L’autore considera anche il caso di un partecipante a un MUD: sottolinea come si possa vedere Internet come un mondo senza soluzione di continuità con altri spazi sociali della vita quotidiana e non come un mondo separato dalla socialità «in real life». Dunque, si deve concentrare l’attenzione sui luoghi rappresentati sullo schermo e, contemporaneamente, su quei luoghi in cui il pubblico interagisce con lo schermo o, semplicemente, lo guarda.

Questo approccio è stato utilizzato per analizzare il terzo caso, la storia di una conversazione telefonica privata in un treno in cui chi telefonà è contemporaneamente in due posti: nello scompartimento del treno e al telefono.