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# KOM Public Seminars

LUND UNIVERSITY | DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA  
AUTUMN 2019



# KOM Public Seminars

## Autumn 2019 schedule

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# Warm up Acts:

## The absent presence in live reality television

SEPTEMBER 4 | 1-3 PM | SOL CENTRE H140 | RESEARCH SEMINAR

Warm up acts offer a craft of live audience management that is hard won through years of creative and precarious labour practices (in stand up comedy, variety, theatre, television and leisure industries), and yet they are invisible in media industries and academic research. Why are warm up acts denied recognition? This research builds on production and audience studies, using a qualitative approach to explore the hidden work of warm up acts. Much attention has been given in academic research on live television and mediated events, in particular the care structures within a live event and the power of liveness to audiences watching at home. This research pays attention to the warm up acts and their audience, those affective moments when the staging of a live event involves a more intimate performance tailored for a studio audience.

The empirical data includes interviews with warm up acts in Britain; observations of warm up performances during the filming of a live reality talent competition (*Got to Dance*, *Princess*); and participant observations of live audiences for reality events with crowds of up to 6000 people. The data is used to recognise the value of warm up acts in the shaping of the affective structures for live entertainment. What we shall see is the skills and experience of the warm up act is of immediate value in audience participation, but this value can be turned into a negative as the work of the warm up sometimes blocks these professional entertainers from developing careers as stand up comedians or television presenters. Within the talent and entertainment industries these professionals are an absent presence: warm up acts stand in the shadows, part of a paradoxical profession that trains entertainers to not be the star of the show.

**Annette Hill** is a Professor of Media and Communication at Lund University and Visiting Professor at King's College, London. Her research focuses on audiences, with interests in media engagement, everyday life, production practices, genres and cultures of viewing. She is the author of seven books and numerous journal articles and book chapters on news and documentary, reality TV, television drama and entertainment, ethics and media violence, live events and sports entertainment. Her latest books are *Reality TV: Key Ideas* (Routledge 2015) and *Media Experiences: Engaging with Drama and Reality Television* (Routledge 2019).

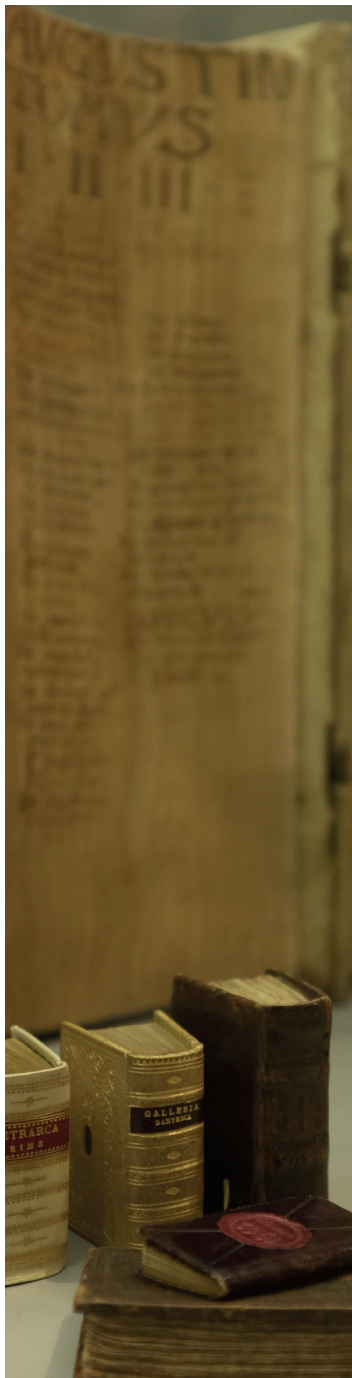


Photo: Zaki Habibi

## ”Arise, Sir Arnold?”

### Arnold Bennett, Virginia Woolf and class antagonism in literary discourse

SEPTEMBER 11 | 1-3 PM | SOL CENTRE A214 | GUEST RESEARCH SEMINAR



During the 1920s, the English novelist, playwright, journalist and editor Arnold Bennett (1867-1931) was involved in a celebrated and very public literary spat with his compatriot Virginia Woolf (1882-1941). Bennett is widely held to have been the loser; it is Virginia Woolf whose reputation is today by far the stronger as both the doyenne of the Bloomsbury Group and the high priestess of modernist literature. Her suicide did little to diminish her place in posterity, providing the opening, for example of Hollywood's "The Hours" (2002) starring Nicole Kidman and Meryl Streep.

At the time, however, it was Bennett who was by far the more famous –and indeed successful- of the two. It was Woolf who damaged his reputation and emerged (seemingly) the victor.

On the face of it, this was a dispute about character and realism in literature, a public face-off between old and new ways of writing fiction, most notably expressed in Woolf's essay "Mr Bennet and Mrs Brown", published by the Hogarth Press in 1924. This research, however, argues that at bottom, this dispute was not about literary theory but social class. Virginia Woolf was a snob who had no time for Bennett, a self-made man from the provinces who needed to write for a living –and at the time a very good living at that.

In all of this, Woolf was the protagonist while Bennett was an easy and publicity-friendly target due to his wealth and fame. This research argues, however, that Bennett was the wrong target. Woolf, on the other hand, emerges as not only a snob but also as a racist and an anti-Semite –in sharp contrast to her current status as a feminist heroine. It concludes by showing how and why Bennett turned down the offer of a Knighthood which, had he been the arriviste that Woolf considered him to be, would have elevated him to the title of "Sir Arnold Bennett."

Note: This seminar will presume no prior knowledge of the life and works of Bennett or Woolf, and will be rooted not in literary theory but in cultural sociology. The seminar will be given in English.

**Richard Howells** graduated from Harvard University before returning to his native England to take his doctorate the University of Cambridge. He has been Distinguished Visiting Professor at the Centre for the Arts in Society, Carnegie Mellon University, USA; a Visiting Scholar at St John's College, University of Oxford; a Visiting Fellow at Exeter College, University of Oxford, and Visiting Research Fellow in the Department of Politics and International Relations, also at the University of Oxford. He is currently Professor of Cultural Sociology at King's College, London.

Photo: Zaki Habibi



# Artificial Intelligence

## and its implications on communication and media

OCTOBER 2 | 1-3 PM | SOL-CENTRE H140 | GUEST RESEARCH SEMINAR

Artificial intelligence is the scientific study of how to get computers to do things we humans consider to require intelligence such as learn, plan, solve problems, understand natural language and so on (Russel and Norvig, 2009). Since there is no generally agreed definition of intelligence, the focus is usually on systems that behave intelligent rather than is intelligent. Human intelligence is mostly studied in the neighboring subject of cognitive science. In this talk I will give an overview of the area of artificial intelligence and to discuss some implications for the area of communication and media. One important observation is that AI both influences the area and can be used a method for studying the area.

**Dr. Fredrik Heintz** is an Associate Professor of Computer Science at Linköping University and a guest researcher at Lund University. His research focus is artificial intelligence especially autonomous systems, stream reasoning and the intersection between knowledge representation and machine learning. He is the Director of the Graduate School for the Wallenberg AI, Autonomous Systems and Software Program (WASP), the President of the Swedish AI Society and a member of the European Commission High-Level Expert Group on AI. He is also very active in education activities both at the university level and in promoting AI, computer science and computational thinking in primary, secondary and professional education.

# David Cameron meets the people:

## The performances of power and citizenship in the UK Brexit debate

OCTOBER 9 | 1-3 PM | SOL CENTRE A214 | GUEST RESEARCH SEMINAR

In June 2016, the British electorate voted by a small majority to leave the European Union. During the campaign, the prime minister of the day and figurehead of the Remain campaign, David Cameron, appeared on two high profile national television programmes in which he took questions from and engaged in debate with members of the public. Commentaries on the programmes were split between those who claimed that Cameron successful delivered his campaign message under pressure from the programme hosts and studio audiences and those who paid more attention to the interaction between the PM and the members of the studio audience who were less convinced.

In this paper, I begin with reflections on the broader political and cultural context for the emergence of such mediated discursive contests between the performance of power and citizenship. I argue that changes in the media as an arena of difference and contestation; challenges to liberal democracy arising from the complexity, scale and pluralism of society; shifting understandings of leadership and campaigning that involve authenticity with discipline, and the rise of popular forms of protest and activism combine to disrupt differentiations that are critical to liberal democracy (between politics and the political, between system and lifeworld, between political questions and questions of value). An analysis of the two programmes demonstrates a number of contradictions in Cameron's performance of power and illustrate the strategies of disruption deployed by members of the studio audience. I develop a genealogy of both the performance of power and popular dissent in the programme and conclude with reflections on the implications of these performances of power and of citizenship and the challenges they raise for the mediation of politics.

**Peter Lunt** is Professor of Media and Communication at the University of Leicester. His research interests include audience research, popular television, the public understanding of media regulation and media and social theory. He is the author of several books including *Talk on Television* (with Sonia Livingstone, Routledge, 1994), *Stanley Milgram* (Palgrave, 2010) and (again with Sonia Livingstone) *Media Regulation: Governance in the Interests of Citizens and Consumers* (Sage 2011) as well as many academic papers and chapters.



# A History of the Present: Stuart Hall on the Media

OCTOBER 23 | 1-3 PM | SOL CENTRE H140 | GUEST RESEARCH SEMINAR

**Professor Charlotte Brunsdon** is preparing the volume on media for the Duke University Press book series of Stuart Hall's writings edited by Catherine Hall and Bill Schwarz. She studied at that Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham in the 1970s, and has continued to work on questions of the analysis of television in the Department of Film and Television at Warwick University, where she specialises in British audio-visual culture. Her most recent book is *Television Cities: Paris, London, Baltimore* (2018), and earlier work includes *Feminist Television Criticism* (with Lynn Spigel) and *London in Cinema* (2007). She is a Fellow of the British Academy.

This paper draws on research to edit a volume of Stuart Hall's engagement with the media. Hall was a prolific contributor to, and analyst of, mass media throughout his life. In addition to his better known academic writing on television, he gave radio talks, wrote reviews and worked on television programmes. He was involved in a number of collaborative projects analysing the press, photography and television, and his work bridges the altering balance between the printed press and the new medium of television in post-war Britain. His interest in popular culture and the mass media is both formative for cultural studies and an historical witness to British culture and society in the twilight of Empire. In this presentation, I will outline the contours and concerns of Hall's media work, exploring how he conceptualises different media at different historical moments. I will also discuss some of the problems an editor meets when working with such an extensive, dispersed and multi-platformed archive, in which similar issues may be addressed across widely dispersed texts and projects. My governing questions are: can this enormous and diverse body of work be organised into coherent patterns; to what extent is it possible or desirable to abstract a method for media analysis from this work; and finally does this media work tell us about more than its ostensible objects of study?



Photo: Fredrik Miegel



# What's in a Word:

## Interrogating 'Engagement' in Transmedia Culture

NOVEMBER 6 | 1-3 PM | SOL CENTRE A214 | GUEST RESEARCH SEMINAR

For much of their history, the screen industries prioritised 'exposure', or getting their content in front of as many people possible, as the defining feature of the relationship between content and audiences. The past fifteen years, however, have seen exposure replaced with 'engagement' as the key indicator of successful content. Despite this prominence, what 'engagement' means to those who create or experience screen content remains elusive. This seminar will explore key findings from the Understanding Engagement in Transmedia Culture project. Consisting of interviews with practitioners and audience focus groups, the project takes a specific term, 'engagement' as a catalyst to discuss what makes screen experiences meaningful and why certain experiences are elevated over others as 'engaging'.

**Dr Elizabeth Evans** is Associate Professor of Film and Television at the University of Nottingham. She is the author of *Transmedia Television: Audiences, New Media and Daily Life* (Routledge, 2011) and the forthcoming *Understanding Engagement in Transmedia Culture* (Routledge, 2020). She has also published numerous articles in journals include *Convergence*, *Participations*, *The International Journal of Communication Studies*, *Critical Studies in Television and Pervasive Ubiquitous Computing*.

This seminar will initially offer an overview of the project's aims and methodology. It will then focus on how research participants broadly defined engagement within the context of transmedia culture. Digital technologies have proliferated the ways in which audiences can access content. Media experiences have increasingly become transmedia experiences as audiences move between and across different storytelling forms, platforms and devices. The rise of transmedia culture blurs the well-established boundaries between media forms as film, television and videogaming are brought together on the same devices and in the same narrative universes. Within interviews and focus groups, the consequences of this blurring emerged in how engagement was defined in relation to different media. Whereas practitioners predominantly saw different components of a transmedia narrative as generating different kinds of engagement, audience focus group participants saw greater similarity between their engagement with different media. These two positions will then act as the starting point for a model of engagement that sees it as inherently transmedia. The seminar will therefore end by examining the project's engagement model and its consequences for how screen studies understands audience experiences.

# Crip Theory:

## A Useful Tool for Social Change

NOVEMBER 13 | 1-3 PM | SOL CENTRE A214 | GUEST RESEARCH SEMINAR

**Mikael Mery Karlsson** is a PhD student at Gender Studies department, Lund University. His background is mostly sociology but also gender studies and philosophy. Mikael started his PhD project in Lund in 2016.

A few years ago, Crip Theory was the new black among feminist and gender scholars in Sweden. Since then its appeal has weakened. As yet, there is no boom of new dissertations or research projects using Crip Theory, and debates about it largely seem to have disappeared. In this paper, I will argue that the rumours about the death of Crip Theory are greatly exaggerated.

My paper is based on an ongoing research project that aim to understand a contemporary political struggle. It builds on interviews and observations with crip- and/or sex activists involved in the struggle for sexual equality. In the aftermath of sexual revolution in the 1960s, activists from, or in close alliances with the disability movement, began discussing issues of sexuality and disability. Over the last decades, the struggle for sexual equality has expanded and intensified. Crip theory and its understanding of ability as a form of performativity may open up new possibilities to understand and contextualise fights against ableism and sexual oppression. By starting from the particular case in focus for my research, this paper can contribute to the growing field of studies exploring demands for justice and strategies for social changes in an age of neoliberal transformation. Taking studies of activism as a starting-point, I want to invite the participants in this seminar to a discussion about the possibilities and obstacles for bringing these struggles into an ableist institution such as the university.



# KOM Research seminars

## Autumn semester 2019 programme

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The KOM seminar series is an international and multidisciplinary forum for research in the Communication and Media Department at Lund University. The seminar series features scholars from within the University and around the world, presenting academic research in the social sciences and humanities.

Our aim is to share ideas and dialogue on the theories and practices of communication and media, including journalism studies, media and communication studies, media history, and rhetoric.

For further information please contact seminar coordinator Tommy Bruhn at [tommy.bruhn@kom.lu.se](mailto:tommy.bruhn@kom.lu.se). You can also see our website: <http://www.kom.lu.se/forskning/konferenser-och-natverkstraffar/>

Cover photo: Fredrik Miegel