History of Media Studies Newsletter January 2024

Welcome to the 35th edition of the History of Media Studies Newsletter. The monthly email, assembled by Dave Park, Jeff Pooley, and Pete Simonson, maintains a loose affiliation with the new History of Media Studies journal and the Working Group on the History of Media Studies. Please contact us with any questions, suggestions, or items.

1. Working Group on the History of Media Studies

Note: Note: The Working Group is on a hiatus in January, and will resume in February. In the meantime, please take a moment to complete this survey about the online session timing, if you have not already.

The Working Group is hosted by the Consortium for History of Science, Technology and Medicine (CHSTM). Open to anyone interested in the history of the media studies fields. Instructions to join are here.

Questions? Contact us

2. Conferences, Calls & Announcements

If you have a call or announcement relevant to the history of media studies, please contact us.

1. *Making of the Humanities XI - Save the Date*
    - The next Making of the Humanities conference will be held at Lund University, Sweden from October 9-11, 2024. The MoH conferences bring together scholars and bring together scholars and historians interested in

the history of a wide variety of disciplines, including archaeology, art history, historiography, linguistics, literary studies, media studies, musicology, and philology, tracing these fields from their earliest developments to the modern day.
- Conference dates: 9–11 October 2024
- More details

2. *CFA: The Past and Present of Humanities Peer Review*
- Peer review, i.e. the institutionalized evaluation of scholars and their outputs by others working in the same field, is fundamental to knowledge production and research evaluation in the present-day humanities. However, the origins and development of humanities peer review remain remarkably poorly understood, particularly in comparison to the history of peer review in the natural and social sciences. This *Minerva* special issue aims to bridge this knowledge gap by exploring the historical evolution of peer review in humanities disciplines such as history, theology, philosophy, musicology, and linguistics. It seeks to uncover the diverse forms of humanities peer review that have existed throughout history, extending beyond currently dominant practices of academic peer review.
- **Deadline:** 15 March 2024
- More details

3. *CFP: European Society for the History of the Human Sciences*
- The European Society for the History of the Human Sciences (ESHHS) invites submissions to its 43rd conference to be held from 25 to 28 June 2024. The conference will be hosted by the University of Essex, at its Colchester campus in the UK, and will be held in person only. We invite proposals for oral presentations, posters, symposia or workshops that deal with any aspect of the history of the human, behavioural and social sciences or with related historiographic or methodological issues. This year's conference particularly encourages submissions related to the theme of inner life.
- Conference dates: 25–28 June 2024
- **Deadline:** 15 March 2024
- More details

4. *CFP: Society for U.S. Intellectual History*
- The 2024 USIH Conference will be a fully in-person meeting in Boston convening on November 14-16 at the Boston Sheraton. Due to the prohibitive costs of hybrid events (in combination with the challenges of making such events pleasant for participants), there will be no hybrid options for presentation or attendance. Within those parameters, we plan to

facilitate a conference that is accessible and welcoming to all who identify under USIH's broad definition of intellectual history as "ideas in action." We are committed to using the meeting as a venue for strengthening institutional connections to related organizations and contributing to USIH's ongoing efforts in DEI. The conference theme is "Knowledge and Belief."

- Conference dates: 14–16 2024
- **Deadline:** 15 April 2024
- More details

5. *CFP: The Future of German Screen Studies: Cultures, Media, Histories*
   - The field of German Screen Studies has always had a productively porous relationship with other disciplines, from media studies to art history, sociology to philosophy, as well as to various sites of artistic, literary and political practice. It has approached German histories of the moving image as much through genre and auteur as through visual analysis and historical context, critical theory and technical medium. "The Future of German Screen Studies" aims to take stock of our current understanding of these and others cultures, media and histories in order to map where this field may be heading as well as offer new genealogies of those images, figures and texts that have thus far defined it.
   - Conference dates: 19–21 June 2024
   - **Deadline:** 16 February 2024
   - More details

6. *CFP: Cheiron – The International Society for the History of Behavioral and Social Sciences*
   - The 56th Annual Meeting of Cheiron – The International Society for the History of Behavioral and Social Sciences – will be held at the Cummings Center for the History of Psychology at The University of Akron, Ohio, from Thursday, June 13th through Sunday, June 16th 2024. CHEIRON invites submissions of papers, thematic symposia, panels, roundtables, workshops and posters that deal with an aspect of the history of the human, behavioral or social sciences or related historiographical and methodological issues.
   - Conference dates: 13–16 June 2024
   - **Deadline:** 12 February 2024
   - More details

7. *CFP: Langer, Creativity, and American Thought: A Conference on the Work and Influence of Susanne Langer*
   - The Susanne Langer Circle announces an interdisciplinary conference covering all aspects of the thought of Susanne Langer. The conference will be

hosted by the American Institute of Philosophical and Cultural Thought (AIPCT), Murphysboro, IL, and by Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC), June 24-28, 2024. The conference is sponsored by the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy and the Foundation for the Philosophy of Creativity, along with AIPCT and SIUC. The conference will include keynote addresses, an artistic experience, a virtual reality demonstration and experience, and a conference dinner. Most speakers will be presenting in a series of plenary sessions.

- Conference dates: 24–28 June 2024
- **Deadline:** 31 March 2024
- More details

8. *Call for Submissions: 20th Anniversary Issue of The Journal of Community Informatics*

- On October 1, 2004, the first issue of *The Journal of Community Informatics* was published. It has since remained a free and open access, double-blind peer review journal featuring academic research and practitioner contributions at the intersection of CI research, practice, and policy. As a way to celebrate the past 20 years of the journal, and to open up new avenues for participation, we invite original submissions in these traditional formats, as well as new formats including artistic works such as poetry, audio/video recordings, and visual artwork, on topics including the past, present, and future of community informatics; reflections from journal article authors about the impact of their contributions; and personal/professional reflections on CI as a field of research and practice.
- **Deadline:** 1 May 2024
- More details

3. The Journal

History of Media Studies has joined Project JASPER, an initiative to preserve open access journals.

HMS encourages submissions (en español) on the history of research, education, and reflective knowledge about media and communication—as expressed through academic institutions; through commercial, governmental, and non-governmental organizations; and through "alter-traditions" of thought and practice often excluded from the academic mainstream.

4. New Publications

Works listed here are newly published, or new to the bibliography.

The History of Communication Research Bibliography is a project of the Annenberg School for Communication Library Archives (ASCLA) at the University of Pennsylvania.

1. Donovan, Pamela. "How Idle Is Idle Talk? One Hundred Years of Rumor Research." *Diogenes* 54, no. 1 (February 2007): 59--82. https://doi.org/10.1177/0392192107073434.

   ABSTRACT: This paper examines the stability of the concept of rumor in the past century. It is suggested that not only do models of explanation change, but rumors themselves also change - not just in content, but perhaps in the way they are believed or disbelieved. Social scientific interest in rumors begins with the birth of modern psychology in the 19 th century, shifts to social psychology and sociology in mid-20th century, prompted by governmental concern over subversion through rumor during the Second World War, and is finally revived by folklorists in more recent decades. Understood variously as a conduit of the unconscious and otherwise unendorsable thoughts, a mundane communication drift, or an intentional form of deception and provocation, many of our rumor model assumptions are drawn from that era and remain basically unchallenged. A central assumption emerged that ambiguous situations create a vacuum which rumor fills. By the late 1960s, despite a decline in social scientific interest in the topic, a handful of significant empirical and theoretical challenges emerge from scattered studies. The discipline of folklore begins to take more interest in contemporary rumor in the 1970s, and by the early 1990s the rubric of the rumor is almost entirely supplanted in English language scholarship by the 'urban legend' (Brunvand, 1981).

2. Finger, Anke. "Vilém Flusser's What If? On Designing Radical Futures." *Theory, Culture & Society* 40, no. 7--8 (December 2023): 91--101. https://doi.org/10.1177/02632764231168582.

   ABSTRACT: While Vilém Flusser's writings on (media) philosophy and communication have found a wide readership across the globe, another 'Flusser' has been present all along, interwoven perhaps, namely that of the 'obsessive futurologist'. Flusser, the futurologist, does not only imagine or predict media-

technological universes unfolding with, among, and for us, but he, in his insistence that 'communication is anthropology', also imagines scenarios of possible worlds to come. In his little-known book Angenommen: Eine Szenenfolge (1989), available in English translation as What If? Twenty-Two Scenarios in Search of Images (2023), he designs sketches of an Anthropocene fraught with nightmares and wonders. What If? offers insight into the radical futures of a slipstream Anthropocene that have to do with speculative design, with Flusser's concept of design as 'crafty' or slippery, and with art and the immense creative potential of failure versus reasonable, 'good' computing or calculability.

3. Foster, Hal. Review of *We are our apps*, by Jonathan Crary. *London Review of Books*, October 5, 2023. https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v45/n19/hal-foster/we-are-our-apps.

   ABSTRACT: *[first paragraph, in lieu of abstract] Art history was shaken in the 1970s and 1980s, and the epicentre was 19th-century art. Emboldened by the resurgent Marxism and feminism of the 1960s, engaged scholars including T.J. Clark, Thomas Crow, Linda Nochlin and Griselda Pollock asked difficult questions about class, audience, gender and sexuality, questions that were soon rumbling through other fields as well. Yet disruptive though these inquiries were, they mostly continued to insist on the centrality of the French avant-garde. Even as social and psychological readings were extended and deepened, the modern transformation of pictorial representation was credited to a celebrated line of painters from Courbet to Cézanne (with a few less well-known names like Mary Cassatt added to the list). A partial decentring of these artists had to wait for Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the 19th Century (1990), the first book by Jonathan Crary, now Meyer Schapiro Professor of Modern Art and Theory at Columbia. The recent move to digital modes of image production and distribution had prompted Crary to reflect on revolutions in visuality in the past.*

4. Fuchs-Kittowski, Klaus. "Against the Power of Computers and the Destruction of Reason. For the Development of Human Creativity and Judgement. Remembering the Critical Intellectual Joseph Weizenbaum on the Occasion of His 100th Birthday." *tripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique. Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society* 21, no. 2 (2023): 140--46. https://doi.org/10.31269/triplec.v21i2.1479.

   ABSTRACT: *This article is a reflection on the relevance of Joseph Weizenbaum's ethics today on the occasion of his 100th birthday. Today, there are many debates about the impact of AI technologies such as ChatGPT on society. Weizenbaum understood himself not as a computer and AI critic, but as a critic of society. He situated the problems of computing in the context of society. The paper shows that in the spirit of Weizenbaum we should also in the contemporary age of advanced AI remind ourselves that computers cannot understand, do not have feelings, and*

therefore cannot do many things that humans actively and consciously do. Acknowledgement: This article was translated from German to English by Christian Fuchs. A German version of this article will be published in FIfF-Kommunikation (see https://www.fiff.de/publikationen/fiff-kommunikation).

5. Fuchs, Christian. "A Marxist-Humanist Perspective on Stuart Hall's Communication Theory." *Theory and Society* 52, no. 6 (November 1, 2023): 995--1029. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-023-09524-5.

   ABSTRACT: *At the end of his life, Stuart Hall called for the reengagement of Cultural Studies and Marxism. This paper contributes to this task. It analyses Stuart Hall's works on communication and the media.*

6. Galili, Doron. "Neurotic Stars and Spellbound Viewers: Louis Bisch and Psychoanalytic Film Theory in Silent-Era Photoplay." *The Journal of Cinema and Media Studies* 63, no. 5 (2023). https://quod.lib.umich.edu/j/jcms/18261332.0063.501?view=text;rgn=main.

   ABSTRACT: *Responding to the popular fascination with psychoanalysis in the 1920s, Photoplay magazine commissioned American neuropsychiatrist Louis Bisch to write a series of articles that applied Freudian concepts to questions of film stardom and spectatorship, genres, censorship, and the cinematic apparatus. Markedly different from the 1970s canonical texts in the field, Bisch's work articulated a psychoanalytic theory that embraces cinema's lowbrow mass appeal and encourages spectators to adopt a demystified perspective on Hollywood. This article discusses Bisch's texts as an early instance of film theory written primarily for a female readership and as a forgotten anti-modernist road not taken in the history of theorizing cinema.*

7. Guthrie, Jason Lee. "Revising the First Rough Draft: On Journalism, History, and Journalism History." *American Journalism* 40, no. 4 (October 2, 2023): 500--505. https://doi.org/10.1080/08821127.2023.2264233.

   ABSTRACT: *Media history is more important than ever. Yes, this is true because media are more pervasive, more fundamental to our lives than ever. It is also true because media historians form one of the final bulwarks of fact-based research in a world awash with false claims and fake news. Yet, the importance of media history is not only ontological and methodological. It is also quite practical. This essay speaks directly to those who conduct historical research in the areas of journalism, media, and communication and who make their disciplinary homes in schools of journalism, media studies, and mass communication. This essay argues that such scholars are uniquely positioned to help address issues of conflict between journalists and historians, and offers some strategies for them to do so.*

8. Irrgang, Daniel. "Projective Imagination: Vilém Flusser's Concept of the Technical Image." *Theory, Culture & Society* 40, no. 7--8 (December 2023): 73--90. https://doi.org/10.1177/02632764231168576.

   ABSTRACT: The article discusses the technical image, a central concept in Vilém Flusser's later main work Into the Universe of Technical Images (1985a). After identifying its various dimensions, the analysis frames the concept as an amalgamation of disciplines, theories, and artistic practices the cultural philosopher Flusser explored during the 1960s and especially the 1970s. In particular, the field of information aesthetics developed by Max Bense and Abraham A. Moles, among others, as well as artistic video practices in France and the United States played an important role in both Flusser's biography and the formation of his technical image concept. At the same time, in Flusser's cultural philosophy the technical image is the condition and result of a new kind of human imagination, which in this paper is specified as 'projective imagination'.

9. Jóri, Anita, and Maren Hartmann. "Introduction: The Contemporary Relevance of Vilém Flusser." *Theory, Culture & Society* 40, no. 7--8 (December 2023): 57--72. https://doi.org/10.1177/02632764231168552.

   ABSTRACT: In this article, we introduce Vilém Flusser's theoretical trajectory from the philosophy of language and multilingualism to communication and media theory. Our focus lies on his works Kommunikologie [Communicology] and Kommunikologie weiter denken [Thinking Communicology Further]. Kommunikologie, which was written in Flusser's mid-career in the 1970s, but only published in the 1990s, consists of a set of articles and lectures and offers, among other notions, a great distinction between dialogue and discourse. The article takes this differentiation and explains its advantages and limitations. This leads to the introduction of the concept of algorithmic mediation as a 'communicological' take on current media developments. This also allows us to return to Flusser's question about the disappearing home and the need for windows to the world. We hence offer a combination of different aspects of his work less as a tool for the analysis of current developments than as a call for action.

10. Kay, Jilly Boyce. "On Joining the Editorial Team of European Journal of Cultural Studies in Its 25th Year." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 27, no. 1 (February 1, 2024): 146--56. https://doi.org/10.1177/13675494231173502.

   ABSTRACT: In this essay, I discuss my appointment as co-editor of this journal within the context of its history across its 25 years of life thus far, as well as within the field of cultural studies more broadly. I briefly consider the value and crucial importance of conjunctural analysis, cultural studies' complex but crucial relationship to Marxism, and the generative feminist possibilities of engaging with,

rather than ignoring or wholly disavowing, 'classic' theories of media and culture that may be problematic or limited. I also briefly identify some areas of inquiry that I see as important focal points for future cultural studies scholarship, particularly around contemporary mutations of popular and conservative feminisms, popular left politics, and the 'culture wars'.

11. Kinzel, Katherina. "Between Pluralism and Objectivism: Reconsidering Ernst Cassirer's Teleology of Culture." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 62, no. 1 (January 5, 2024): 125--47. https://doi.org/10.1353/hph.2024.a916714.

ABSTRACT: *This paper revisits debates on a tension in Cassirer's philosophy of culture. On the one hand, Cassirer describes a plurality of symbolic forms and claims that each needs to be assessed by its own internal standards of validity. On the other hand, he ranks the symbolic forms in terms of a developmental hierarchy and states that one form, mathematical natural science, constitutes the highest achievement of culture. In my paper, I do not seek to resolve this tension. Rather, I aim to arrive at a better understanding of how it arises, and of the different options that it presents for understanding the development of culture. I discuss three recent attempts at resolving the tension, put forward by Sebastian Luft, Samatha Matherne, and Simon Truwant, respectively. Based on a reconstruction of Cassirer's system of symbolic forms that centralizes the concept of function, I show that the most promising of these attempts, formulated by Truwant, is not successful. I then turn to Cassirer's philosophy of the cultural sciences, the implications of which for the present problem have not yet been sufficiently explored. I argue that in this context, Cassirer develops the contours of an alternative to the function-based view of cultural development. I conclude that this alternative does not resolve the tension either, but that it allows for a reconceptualization of the teleology of culture as open.*

12. Levin, Harvey J. "Television's Second Chance: A Retrospective Look at the Sloan Cable Commission." *The Bell Journal of Economics and Management Science* 4, no. 1 (1973): 343--65. https://doi.org/10.2307/3003157.

ABSTRACT: *This article examines the impact of an independent, nongovernmental commission's study on the regulatory policy governing cable television. In 1971, the Sloan Commission on Cable Communications released a final report-the Sloan Report-after privately assessing cable television's growth potential, cable's means to cross subsidize public channels, and cable's organization in terms of cross ownership and common carrier status. In addition to the brief Report, the Commission produced background papers and internal memoranda, which underscore the study's value in clarifying issues and in helping to structure the field for the future in the face of "regulatory hangover.".*

13. Nathaniel Brennan. "Nation and Nurture: Cultural Anthropology, World War II, and the Birth of National Cinema Studies." Ph.D. Dissertation, New York University, 2023. https://www.proquest.com/docview/2832917604?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true&sourcetype=Dissertations%20&%20Theses.

ABSTRACT: This dissertation investigates American cultural anthropology's contributions to the development of early film studies before and during World War II. Through detailed historical reconstruction, it demonstrates how fields of knowledge are formed in part through negotiations between and exchanges across existent disciplines. During the interwar period, anthropology's disciplinary cache increased dramatically. At that time, the culture concept introduced and promulgated by American anthropologists was widely adopted by social scientists in adjacent fields. Elsewhere, efforts to use the insights of the social sciences proactively to address the social unrest of the Depression years, led to greater collaboration between the social and human sciences which sought to understand the dialectical relationship between individual and society. Social scientific film studies emerged in this juncture. When the national emergency shifted from the Depression to the growing threat of fascism and global war at the end of the decade, several key cultural anthropologists began to consider how their professional training and insight could be used to preserve American democracy, boost national morale, and, ultimately, help Americans understand how cultural particularities shaped the worldview, philosophy, and expectations of all peoples ranged into groups, from small isolated communities to industrialized nations. As a form of global cultural currency, cinema was an obvious tool through which to explore these ideas. This is also a story about the development and transmission of ideas as a material process dependent on access to money and resources. As such, it emphasizes how institutions like philanthropic organizations, government agencies, colleges, and universities cultivate and delimit lines of intellectual inquiry. On the other side of the equation are the scholars, artists, and administrators who worked within, outside, and occasionally against these interests. and how new ideas are developed and put into use. Taking these two extremes into account helps to contextualize the situation in which ideas and theories come to fruition -- this relationship also helps us understand what happens when new ideas have run their course. Several issues deriving from this materialist view of intellectual history recur throughout the dissertation. The first issue is the development of ideas about cinema's usefulness. Thanks largely to capital investments from the Rockefeller Foundation, the ways that scholars thought about cinema changed dramatically in the latter half of the 1930s. Cinema, in addition to being a form of popular entertainment, could be used as a tool of social scientific instrumentation. It could be developed into as an educational or documentary tool. Alternately, popular films could be taken apart

and analyzed as sources of cultural intelligence about how people think and perceive the world. The second concept begins as a core tenet of cultural anthropology: culture is relative and malleable, but to the individual enmeshed within a culture it appears to be universal. Abstracting from that idea, anthropologists argued that these cultural regularities, when applied to complex modern cultures -- i.e., the nation -- constituted a definable national character. Combining these two concepts -- useful cinema and national character -- during World War II laid the foundation for a quasi-scientific (and therefore legitimate) understanding of cultural character.

14. Ridgway, Renée. "Deleterious Consequences: How Google's Original Sociotechnical Affordances Ultimately Shaped 'Trusted Users' in Surveillance Capitalism." *Big Data & Society* 10, no. 1 (2023). https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517231171058.

   ABSTRACT: *Google dominates around 92% of the search market worldwide (as of November 2022), with most of its revenue derived from search advertising. However, Google's hegemony over search and the resulting implications are not necessarily accidental, arbitrary or (un)intentional. This article revisits Brin and Page's original paper, drawing on six of their key innovations, concerns and design choices (counting citations or backlinks, trusted user, advertising, personalization, usage data, smart algorithms) to explain the evolution of Google's hypertext search engine technologies through 'moments of contingency', which led to corporate lock-ins. Underpinned by analyses of patents, statements and secondary sources, it elucidates how early Google considerations and certain affordances not only came to shape the web (backlinks, trusted user, advertising) but subsequently facilitated contemporary surveillance capitalism. Building upon Zuboff's 'Big Other', it describes the ways in which Google as an infrastructure is intertwined with Big Data's platformization and the ad infinitum collection of usage data, beyond just personalization. This extraction and refinement of usage data as 'behavioural surplus' results in 'deleterious consequences': a 'habit of automaticity,' which shapes the trusted user through 'ubiquitous googling' and smart algorithms, whilst simultaneously generating prediction products for surveillance capitalism. Advancing Latour's 'predicting the path' of technological innovation, this cause-and-effect story contributes a new taxonomy of Google sociotechnical affordances to critical STS, media history and web search literature.*

15. Scharkow, Michael, and Sabine Trepte. "National Diversity at Conferences of the International Communication Association." *Annals of the International Communication Association* 48, no. 1 (January 2, 2024): 17--36. https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2023.2261018.

ABSTRACT: Academic conferences, particularly international conference venues, have been suggested as a way to overcome inequality within academic associations. In this study, we assess the national diversity of 18 annual conferences of the International Communication Association (ICA) between 2005 and 2022 and compare the composition of conference contributors to that of ICA members. Our results show that although the overall national diversity of ICA conferences has more than doubled since 2005, and closely mirrors ICA membership, the effective number of contributing countries is still very low. National diversity differs substantially between divisions and depending on the conference venue, with non-US venues exhibiting significantly more national diversity. We discuss measures to evaluate and improve ICA's national diversity at different levels.

16. Subijanto, Rianne. "From London to Bali: Raymond Williams and Communication as Transport and Social Networks." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 27, no. 1 (February 1, 2024): 129--45. https://doi.org/10.1177/13675494231152886.

ABSTRACT: This article unearths Raymond Williams' approach to communication as transport and social networks. Existing literature argues that the field of communication's withdrawal from the study of transport leads to at least two setbacks: media presentism and a narrowed meaning of communication and culture. This article excavates Williams' concept of 'communication as transport and social networks' by first revisiting his larger method of cultural materialism that sees communication as a whole complex assemblage of different modes of communication to facilitate connection. This is then followed by a discussion on the use of this concept in his various works and, more intensively, in The Country and the City. To emphasize Williams' relevance to contemporary contexts, the next part of the article deals with an analysis of how digital media and contemporary transport networks facilitate the reproduction of Bali as a paradise. This article calls for a more dialectical understanding of communication that includes the inextricable relations between mobility and sociality, the material and the symbolic, and the transmission and the ritual in shaping human lives.

17. Whitted, Qiana, Randy Duncan, Pamela Jackson, Katherine Kelp-Stebbins, Susan Kirtley, Elizabeth Pollard, Nick Sousanis, and Daniel Worden. "Making the Case for Comics Studies: Program Directors Roundtable." *Inks: The Journal of the Comics Studies Society* 7, no. 3 (2023): 277--93. https://doi.org/10.1353/ink.2023.a916794.

ABSTRACT: [first paragraph, in lieu of abstract] DURING SUMMER 2023, Inks convened a roundtable of directors from six university programs and centers across the United States for a conversation about their experiences building, maintaining, and expanding comics studies, primarily at the undergraduate level. While degrees in comics and sequential art have become a staple of many studio

art schools around the world, academic comics studies programs are developing sporadically, with vastly different models of success. These programs tend to germinate from within English, Film Studies, and Communications departments, yet comics studies faculty hail from units across the arts, humanities, and social sciences, providing not only a boon to flagging enrollments, but a touchstone for interdisciplinary inquiry. Some faculty partner with local cons and publishers; others use the momentum of their programs to build and support new comics initiatives in the region. Over the course of this roundtable discussion, the participants shared their program's origin stories and addressed several key issues, including the value of cultivating administrative support, faculty affiliates, and other allies; how to develop community and commercial partnerships; and the importance of incorporating comics-making into the curriculum. Often a comics studies program can start with [End Page 277] a single class, a new professor, or an unexpected acquisition in the library's comics archives. These directors were able to speak to what comes next and explore questions about the lasting benefits of their efforts for students, faculty, and communities beyond the classroom. The roundtable was edited for length and clarity.

18. Zhao, Yuezhi, and Yu Hong. "Communication, Technology and Development at a Critical Juncture: Revisiting Dallas Smythe in China." *Chinese Journal of Communication* 16, no. 4 (October 2, 2023): 351--58. https://doi.org/10.1080/17544750.2023.2285974.

ABSTRACT: [first paragraph, in lieu of abstract] When pioneering Canadian critical scholar Dallas Smythe visited China more than half a century ago, he posited his metaphorical "After Bicycles, What?" question about China's developmental path. Back then, he probably could not have imagined the Chinese transnational corporation Huawei's leadership in 5 G technology today and the complex and protracted geopolitical struggles surrounding it. Yet the epic struggles centering on Huawei are only the tips of much larger icebergs that are colliding in a sea of tectonic changes in communications and the large global political economy. For many, the intensified contestations between a US-led capitalist power bloc and China are signaling an accelerated global transformation that mixes geopolitical, technological, ideological and socio-cultural shifts to a possible global re-ordering. As we try to refurbish our intellectual toolkit and even our entire knowledge regime to understand the nature of this epochal transformation at this critical juncture, we realize that Smythe's intellectual insights on the politically-embedded nature of technology, his theoretical bridging of communication to political economy, his critique of his native country Canada's entrapment in a dependent position on the US, and, ultimately, his fascination with the nature and direction of China's socialist developmental path, has become ever more pertinent for anchoring analysis of today's digitalized global communication for which China is an increasingly important part. Conceived in 2022, half a century after

> *Dallas Smythe's first research trip to China, this Special Section honors the legacy of his intellectual engagement with China. We call upon the spirit of Dallas Smythe in China for a number of reasons.*

Thanks for reading! The History of Media Studies Newsletter, a monthly email assembled by Dave Park, Jeff Pooley, and Pete Simonson, maintains a loose affiliation with the *History of Media Studies* journal and the Working Group on the History of Media Studies. Please contact us with any questions, suggestions, or items.

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