

“What Can We Learn From Street Scenario”

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How is it possible that ordinary media practices politically create the liminal space?

In order to understand the complexity of cultural development in Thailand, a new approach and methodology are required. To sketch the image of such an approach, I will argue that research on spatial practices of everyday life needs to be conducted.

It has been universally accepted that Western norms, deriving from its legacy of ideas, have played a major role in every modern society. Many countries have

been inclined to guide the future of their nations by proposing national developing plans based on the idea of modernism. Besides tensions, conflicts, and resistances to the modernist idea that have happened in such societies, there are also functional adaptations and absorbed alterations that take shape in multi-layered forms. Implicitly, these types of adapting and modifying forms can be found in social and cultural topology, consisting of complex media landscapes, administrative landscapes, linguistic landscapes, and economic landscapes. It has become crucial to investigate people's common life and everyday discourses in order to gain a



better understanding of how they define their existence socially, culturally, economically, and ecologically within this space of collision of the new and the old and in addition to that, how they make do with and make use of the material world to cope with the new economy in their own ways. In this instance, it is possible that the same technology used in everyday life is used in different fashions. A research project on media ethnography — spatial discourses of everyday life embodied in those above mentioned landscapes — is a necessary one.

Due to the new form of economic ways of living, multi-layered fashions of practices constitute a form of liminal space; the third space where possibilities that translation and negotiation of such practices take place.

The major objective of my research project will be aimed at this third space. I believe that this space can be found, or be realized, in the universe of the symbolic elements grouped together as mentioned earlier — landscapes of media, administrative space, linguistic world, and economy of livelihood mentioned earlier.

Generally speaking, these symbolic elements can be discovered by observing everyday life on the street (vendors, advertising signage, commercial window

displays, footpaths, architecture, etc); in domestic areas (living room, bath room, kitchen, bed room); in public districts (museum, department store, park, civil place, theater, temple, bar, bookstore, work place, and so on); in academic discourse (critical writing, theoretical debate, educational history/knowledge); and in media as a means of expression, or common ways of communication (printed and electronic media, body gesture, ritual activities, fashion, dressing, music, art, graphic design, and etc).

In this paper I wish to consider some aspects of the notion of ‘media contestation’ found in daily practices or in a site of contestation of ordinary people. So doing, I wish to begin my exploration on this idea with a story of my first hand day-to-day experiences in Chiang Mai, Thailand. It is a story about “stray dogs sleeping in the middle of the street”. Its attempt is to bring the case of stray dogs sleeping in the middle of the street into consideration of social science works and media studies in order to obtain better understanding of the implicit political contestation embedded in ordinary ways of living.

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