

Amparo LASÉN

***Mobile Culture and Subjectivities:
Mobile Phone Trans-Personalisation in Young Couples***

Social networks need the mediation of objects, the shared agency of people and objects, as quasi-objects (Latour, 1993) or posthuman forms of entangled agency (Hayles, 1999) in order to provide time and space extension to people's interactions. Objects, such as the mobile phone, are shaping the material conditions of our existence, contributing to an emergent mobile culture (Urry, 2000; Goggin, 2006). This paper will analyse the transformations of subjectivities related to the uses and ownership of mobile phones linked to different types of convergence: convergence of different applications such as voice, text, data, images and music; and also the convergence of different interactions and social functions afforded by the device, such as connectivity, coordination, everyday organisation, control and monitoring, affective communication and emotion management, accessibility, heteronomy and autonomy, or privacy and transparency. The meeting of such diverse features in the same artefact reveals tensions and conflicts which are somehow hidden by the term of 'convergence'. Drawing on recent research carried out in Madrid about mobile uses and couple relationships, and on my former cross-cultural research about mobile phone uses and users in Madrid, London and Paris (Lasen, 2005), the paper will relate the account of some mobile phones contributions to the shaping of contemporary subjectivities with the concept of 'Dionysian materialism', coined by Peter Sloterdijk (1989) from his reading of Nietzsche. This notion of materialism, as an ecstatic and Dionysian learning, links the attention to the material conditions of our existence to the realm of passions, embodiment and affects. This can be explored through the study of associations between people and technology, for instance through the complex relationships of these devices with affects and emotions (from the creation of opportunities for the sharing and expression of emotions, or the affective link to the object itself, to its role in disciplining bodies and managing emotions), or the subtle combination of activity and passivity in the way people use and learn to use the devices

Dr. Amparo LASÉN is a lecturer and researcher at the School of Political Sciences and Sociology of the Universidad Complutense of Madrid. She holds a PhD from La Sorbonne, has been Academic Visitor at the Department of Sociology of the LSE and has worked as the Vodafone Surrey Scholar at the Digital World Research Centre of the University of Surrey. She has been researching and publishing on the social implications of mobile phone uses, especially in relationship to emotions and urban practices in London, Paris and Madrid, where she has conducted in-depth ethnographic research. Some recent publications are: "How to be in Two Places at the Same Time. Mobile Phone Uses in Public Places", in Höfllich J., Hartman M. (eds.), *Mobile Communication in Everyday Life*, Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2006, 227-252; *Understanding Mobile Phone Users and Usage*, Newbury: Vodafone Group R&D, 2005; "History Repeating? A Comparison of the Launch and Uses of Fixed and Mobile Phones", in Lynne Hamill, Amparo Lasen (eds.), *Wireless World: Mobiles – Past, Present and Future*, London: Springer, 2005, 29-60; "Affective Technologies. Emotions and Mobile Phones", *Receiver*, 11, www.receiver.vodafone.com/11/articles/index03.html.
E-mail: alasen@cps.ucm.es.