

1. Events

Event Details

Global things

Scientifique

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Workshop

Start date : 10 April 2014 02:00

Where : London

Hosted by : Global Things Project

Information sources :

<http://globalthingsproject.squarespace.com/>

We are interested to receive proposals for papers from researchers with original studies of specific objects and their relationship to global pr

Our keynote speaker is Sophie Woodward (Manchester), co-editor of 'Global Denim' (Berg Publishers)

<http://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/global-denim-9781847886323/>

If you would like to attend the workshop we invite you to send a 300 word abstract along with a short bio and details of your affiliation. Inter

About the 'Global things' project

The idea that the meaning of things changes over time and from place to place is a familiar one. But how do things achieve global status? The Global Things project will explore the question 'what makes something global?' It is frequently claimed that objects or things are global (for example, Big Macs, Hollywood movies, rap music) but what does this really mean, and what is involved in the process of 'going global'? If something is global, does it mean that it has lost any attachment to its origins (a particular place, for example), and therefore can no longer be 'local'? Moreover, what cultural processes are at work when something 'goes global'? Do the global trajectories of things help us understand our own relation to processes of globalization. Do we all see the same things in the same way, or are different interpretations of things still possible?

The meaning we give to things – and the role things play in making sense of the world – is particularly important under conditions of globalization where many reference points are eroded, mobilities enhanced (for some), and identities reconstructed in transnational space. Under such conditions in order to take control of our lives we need to be able to ground global abstractions in the everyday reality of objects: material culture can link the local to the global in very concrete ways.

The Global Things project offers, through its advocacy of 'methodological glocalism' – an analytical perspective which assumes that objects can be simultaneously both local and global, a new way at looking at the meaning of things and also a new way of looking at the world. 'Methodological glocalism', on Holton's account is the 'co-presence and interconnection of global and local'. '[I]t permits a non-reductionist account of interaction between the multiple scales on which social action takes place', thereby avoiding the trap of global determinism (Holton, 2008: 199-200). The ability to address the global without losing sight of the local is a major advantage when studying the globality of 'global things'.

There is a strong tradition (mainly anthropological and sociological) of studying things as representative of their epoch. Good examples include Asa Briggs' 'Victorian Things' and Paula Findlen's 'Early Modern Things'. There is also a range of popular anthropological studies of everyday objects, including Daniel Miller's 'Stuff' and 'The Comfort of Things', and Sherry Turkle's 'Evocative objects'. As yet, there has been no attempt to publish on 'global things'. However, in recent years a number of books have appeared which take as their focus the global nature of a particular object or brand, e.g. 'Global Pigeon' by Colin Jerolmack, and 'A Double Scotch: How Chivas Regal and the Glenlivet Became Global Icons' by Paul Pacult, but these studies deal with the unique qualities of particular objects or a highly individualized global trajectory rather than a generalised state of affairs.

The project seeks to identify a number of global things and explore what makes them global, what these processes can tell us about the cultural dynamics of globalization, and the relation of individuals to that process. The project will comprise a number of in-depth studies of global things. What makes the study distinctive is that each global thing will be explored from a variety of perspectives: if an object is truly global then it will not appear the same from every perspective. Capturing these many perspectives is at the core of the project (while recognising the impossibility of sampling absolutely every experience and interpretation of global things). Another challenge is to avoid the pitfalls of prioritising parochial or exclusively western perspectives.

For the project to be a success we require contributors from around the world to tell us of their perceptions or experiences of our global things. It is important that we incorporate a range of perspectives into our account of what makes the rubber duck or the piggy bank, for

example, a global thing. If you are able to assist us in this project please leave a message or post an idea on our corkboard page. You may also have suggestions for future 'global things' to be studied. If so we would love to hear from you.

Practical informations :