When understood as components of physical and social landscape, media display a distinct and decisive set of qualities. First, more than tools for recording, storing, and transmitting information, they appear as resources for negotiating with reality and with others within a particular situation. Second, more than individual devices performing specific functions, they appear as infrastructures that underpin the space and “innervate” it, as Walter Benjamin would have said. Third, more than entities that are part of a territory, they become the territory—the playground, or even the battleground, where the mediation is made possible.

The notion of mediascape, that I borrow from Arjun Appadurai and I redefine as the specialized environment that promotes or facilitates mediation between individuals and with reality, can provide a useful conceptual framework for such an amalgamation of physical and social landscape and technical devices. The lecture will present some theoretical questions tied to an environmental consideration of media and will discuss some potential case-studies, including the movie theatre, the highway, the city, but also the waste dump where obsolete technologies are discharged.

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