Probing affordances of “green” transitions: The semiotic landscapes of sustainability

Abstract

In this talk, I present two case studies ultimately grappling with the same question: What are the “affordances” (Gibson, 1979) of shifts towards sustainable reinventions? The first study employs Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2006) multimodal social semiotic approach to investigate beefy landscapes, materialized in organic food stores in Germany. It speaks directly to Thurlow’s (2019) discourse-centred commodity chain analysis and demonstrates that beefy landscapes are an alarming part of the global “clean food” discourse that masks unsustainable realities which are deeply rooted in environmental escapism. The second study looks at semiotic material appearing in Essen – a Germany city awarded the European Green Capital title in 2017 – and shows how the political economy of city clean-ups is implicated in the creation of urban eco-arenas accentuating the socioeconomic stratification and privileges of valorised places.

References


Speaker

Maida Kosatica is a Professor of Urban Semiotics and Semantics in the Department of Anglophone Studies at the University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany. Maida’s research interests include semiotic landscapes, multimodal critical discourse analysis, environmental communication and the discourse of ecosystem services. In her research, Maida is committed to investigating the politics of violence and suffering and political economies of sustainability and the environment.

Date: 9 October 2023 (Monday)
Time: 4:00 PM HKT
Venue: EN Meeting Room for EN Staff and PhD students / Zoom for other audience

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