**Think Spatial**

The UCSB brown-bag forum on spatial thinking

Presents

**Lisa Parks**

Film and Media Studies, UCSB

**Zeroing In: Infrastructure Ruins and Datalands in Afghanistan and Iraq**

Ellison 5824

12:00 p.m. Monday, 30 November 2010

**Abstract.** Zeroing in is an apt metaphor for the way citizen-viewers are positioned in relation to world events since they increasingly view them from the perspectives of aerial and orbital machines. Building on the work of Rey Chow, Paul Virilio and others, this essay delineates a series of knowledge practices that take shape in relation to satellite imagery. The discussion moves from an analysis of declassified US satellite images of bombed communication infrastructure in Afghanistan and Iraq to an analysis of a US policy known as the “shutter control rule,” designed to limit access to satellite imagery to protect US national security interests, and onto a discussion of Google Earth's emergence and some of the controversies surrounding its use. I consider how satellite images represent the world, or parts of it, simultaneously as sites of scrutiny, destruction and extraction. As the satellite image figures the earth's surface as a target of observation, conquest, and (re)development, it is commandeered in flexible economies of visual, military and corporate control, and in efforts to regulate acts of interpretation and access to information.

**Lisa Parks,** Ph.D. is Professor and Chair of the Department of Film and Media Studies at the University of California-Santa Barbara and is a research affiliate of the Center for Information Technology and Society and the Carsey Wolf Center. Her areas of interest include media and geography, globalization, and science and technology studies. She is the author of *Cultures in Orbit: Satellites and the Televisual* (Duke UP, 2005), and co-editor of *Planet TV* (NYU, 2003) and is currently writing two new books: *Coverage: Media, Space and Security after 911* (Routledge) and *Mixed Signals: Media Infrastructures and Cultural Geographies.* She is also co-editing the book *Down to Earth: Satellite Technologies, Industries and Cultures* (Rutgers UP) with James Schwoch. Parks was a research fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study (Wissenschaftskolleg) in Berlin in 2006/2007 and has given keynote lectures at Media Studies, Communication, and Geography Conferences and invited lectures in 15 countries.

The objectives of the ThinkSpatial brown-bag presentations are to exchange ideas about spatial perspectives in research and teaching, to broaden communication and cooperation across disciplines among faculty and graduate students, and to encourage the sharing of tools and concepts.

Please contact Don Janelle (ext 5267, janelle@spatial.ucsb.edu) to review and schedule possible discussion topics or presentations that share your disciplinary interest in spatial thinking.