Nordicom Review: Journal from the Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research

Editor
Ulla Carlsson
Nordicom
Göteborg University
Box 713
SE-405 30 Göteborg
Tel: +46 31 773 12 19
Fax: +46 31 773 46 55
e-mail: ulla.carlsson@nordicom.gu.se

Editorial Board
Ole Prehn
Department of Communication
Aalborg University
Krogstr. 3
DK-9220 Aalborg Ø
prehn@hum.au.dk

Tom Moring
Swedish School of Social Science
Box 16
FI-00014 University of Helsinki
Tom.Moring@helsinki.fi

Anna Kristín Jónsdóttir
Department of Sociology
University of Iceland
IS-101 Reykjavik
akj@hi.is

Liv Hausken
Department of Media and Communication
University of Oslo
Box 1093 Blindern
N-0317 Oslo
liv.hausken@media.uio.no

Birgitta Höijer
Department of Humanities
Örebro University
SE-701 82 Örebro
birgitta.hoijer@hum.oru.se

NORDICOM invites media researchers to contribute scientific articles, reviews, and debates. Submission of original articles is open to all researchers in the field of media and communication in the Nordic countries, irrespective of discipline and institutional affiliation. All articles are refereed.

Aims and Scope
Nordicom Review (ISSN 1403-1108) provides a major forum for media and communication researchers in the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The semi-annual journal is addressed to the international scholarly community. It publishes the best of media and communication research in the region, as well as theoretical works in all its diversity; it seeks to reflect the great variety of intellectual traditions in the field and to facilitate a dialogue between them. As an interdisciplinary journal, Nordicom Review welcomes contributions from the best of the Nordic scholarship in relevant areas, and encourages contributions from senior researchers as well as younger scholars.

Nordicom Review offers reviews of Nordic publications, and publishes notes on a wide range of literature, thus enabling scholars all over the world to keep abreast of Nordic contributions in the field. Special thematic issues of interest are also published from time to time.

Nordicom Review is a scholarly journal published by the Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research (Nordicom) a non-profit institution within the Nordic Council of Ministers.

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Nordicom Review

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The language of Nordicom Review is English. Manuscripts shall be no longer than 8000 words – notes and references inclusive. Articles longer than 8000 words will not be refereed. Manuscripts shall be submitted in three copies and be accompanied by an abstract of 100-150 words and six key words. The recommended length for debates is 2000-4000 words, for book reviews up to 1500 words.

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All correspondence should be addressed to the Nordicom Review Editor Ulla Carlsson, Nordicom, Göteborg University, Box 713, SE 405 30 Göteborg, ulla.carlsson@nordicom.gu.se

Detailed instructions pertaining to the manuscript

• The author shall be identified on a separate title page only.

Manuscripts shall be written on one side of each page and doubled spaced throughout, including notes and list of references.

Subheadings shall be limited to two levels.

Quotations shall be enclosed within double quotation marks.

Citations in the text shall quote the names of author(s) and date of publication, with page number if appropriate, Kivikuru (2003) or (Kivikuru, 2003: 23).

Italics shall be indicated by italic style or underlining. References to tables and figures shall be specified in the text.

The data upon which figures are based shall be supplied.

References to notes shall be indicated in superscript in the text: notes shall be presented as endnotes (i.e., at the end of the article).

References shall be listed alphabetically in a standard form given as in the following examples:


Titles in foreign languages shall be translated and English title shall be placed in parenthesis.

Correspondence
Correspondence about manuscripts should be sent to the Editor of Nordicom Review.

Ulla Carlsson
Nordicom
Göteborg University
Box 713
SE-405 30 Göteborg
ulla.carlsson@nordicom.gu.se
The 17th Nordic Conference on Media and Communication Research
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The 17th Nordic Conference for Media and Communication Research was held in Aalborg, Danmark, 11th-14th August 2005. Arrangers and hosts for the conference were the Association of Media Researchers in Denmark (SMID) and the Department of Communication in the Faculty for the Humanities at Aalborg University. More than 320 scholars from Denmark (66), Finland (22), Iceland (2), Norway (77) and Sweden (65) gathered to discuss current research and findings. In addition, some participants came from further afield, for example, from Austria, the Baltic States, Germany and Great Britain in Europe, and from Ethiopia, Canada and the USA.

The conference proceedings included plenaries and thematic seminars in 28 different working groups, where about 240 research papers were presented. In addition participants enjoyed a number of social gatherings and cultural events. The Nordic conferences, held every second year, and particularly the working groups, have contributed greatly to the development of media and communication research in the Nordic countries. The working groups have the following headings:

- Media and Global Culture
- Media Structure and Economics
- Medialization of Religion and Culture
- Media History
- Film History
- Television: Institution, Production and Text
- Radio and other Sound Media
- Political Communication
- Journalism Research
- The Sociology and Aesthetics of News Reporting
- Media Use. Perspectives, Methods and Theory
- Children, Youth and Media
- Media Education
- Fiction in Film and TV
- Visual Culture

- Language and Rhetoric in the Media
- The Media’s Construction of Gender
- Public Relations/Planned Communication
- Mediated Risk, Crisis and War Communication
- Digital Text: Genre, Form and Process
- Digital Culture: New Forms of Social Interaction and Communication
- Media and the Multiethnic Society
- Media and Communication Theory: Research and Disciplines
- Intimidation Communication
- Marketing Communication and Aesthetics
- Media Development
- Computer Games
- Interactive Television

A number of the papers presented at the conference have been revised and edited to become articles that were then submitted for review for publication in English. Together, the articles presented in this special issue of Nordicom Review give the reader some idea of the breadth and depth of Nordic scholarship in the area.

A supplement contains the lectures held in plenary sessions and a list of the papers presented in English.
Responsibility for arranging the conferences is divided into two parts. More comprehensive questions, such as the theme, keynote speakers, working groups and fees are the responsibility of a Nordic Planning Committee, whose members are appointed by the national media and communication research associations. Members of the Committee that planned the conference in Aalborg were Anne Jerslev, SMID (Denmark), Chair; Leif-Ove Larsen, NML (Norway); Thorbjörn Broddason, University of Iceland; Inka Salovaara-Moring, TOY (Finland), Mats Ekström, FSMK (Sweden); and Ulla Carlsson, Nordicom.

A Local Planning Committee, consisting of Gunhild Agger (Chair), Peter Allingham, Janne Bang, Christian Jantzen, Ole Prehn, Tove Arendt-Rasmussen, Henrik Sand and Jørgen Stigel, all at Aalborg University, were responsible for the arrangements and details of the conference. Henrik Sand served as coordinator for the conference as a whole.

The next Nordic conference is to be held in Helsinki, Finland, 16th-19th August 2007.

Göteborg in October 2006

Ulla Carlsson
Editor
Sounding the Media

An Interdisciplinary Review and Research Agenda for Digital Sound Studies

Klaus Bruhn Jensen

Abstract

Sound remains significantly underresearched as a form of communication, as a modality of experience, and as a resource for cultural expression and social action. This article provides an overview of the several disciplinary and interdisciplinary sources of contemporary sound studies. As a point of departure, the article identifies and contextualizes three prototypes of sound – speech, music, and environmental soundscapes – with reference to previous work in linguistics, musicology, history, and other fields of study. A wide range of contributions are reviewed with particular reference to their explanatory value concerning different types of sound media. The article distinguishes between three degrees of media, enabling communication in the flesh, mechanically or electronically reproduced communication, and digitally mediated communication. In each case, sound can serve as a vehicle of information, as a mode of communication, and as a means of action. The article outlines a conceptual matrix, integrating the sound prototypes, the media forms, as well as the social uses of sound, with a view to further research. Finally, some specific issues on the agenda of current sound studies are discussed.

Key Words: sound, communication theory, digitalization, linguistics, musicology, soundscape.

Introduction

Sound is a constitutive part of diverse forms of communication in contemporary society – from the early-morning alarm clock, followed by the voices of our beloved, by online and offline conversations with colleagues, and by music throughout the day on stationary as well as portable players, to the late-night entertainments of surround-sound stereo, tv sets, and computer terminals. During the 1990s, three historical prototypes of sound – speech, music, and environmental soundscapes – underwent important transformations. Speech became almost omnipresent via mobile phones; music became separated from previous analog technologies and corporate infrastructures through the intervention of Napster and related developments; and soundscapes became an increasingly manifest component of computer interfaces, from Windows overtures to the personalized signals of handheld devices. The 2000s have been witnessing a further emphatic and differentiated reliance on digital sound formats, for example, the coming
of internet telephony (VoIP), the growth of multimedia online gaming and virtual worlds, and the early stages of pervasive computing. And yet, sound remains significantly underresearched as a form of communication, as a modality of experience, and as a resource for cultural expression and social action, even if recent years have witnessed a revitalized interest internationally in the area (for overviews, see Bull & Back, 2003; Leeuwen, 1999; Truax, 2001).

This article presents a review of several bodies of theory and empirical evidence from different research traditions that have examined sound, exploring their combined potential for advancing an interdisciplinary research agenda particularly regarding studies of digital sound. Digitalization, which is changing the very conditions for the production, distribution, as well as the uses of sound by individuals, organizations, and whole societies, provides a unique opportunity for rediscovering and reexamining the place of sound in culture and society. Computers have been sound media for some time; it is time for research to sound computers.

Because sound studies have no natural home in the academy, no full-scale equivalent of disciplines such as art history and film theory, addressing still and moving images respectively, any review will offer a selective recombination of findings and insights. The present review, while recognizing the contributions of, for example, psychoacoustics (e.g., Plomp, 2002) and audio engineering (e.g., Alten, 2002), focuses on sound as communication – as a source of meaning and as a resource for action in social and cultural contexts. The first section below revisits previous work on the three sound prototypes noted above – speech, music, and environmental soundscapes. Whereas much of this work is anchored in disciplines such as linguistics and musicology, a number of contributions have fallen either outside or between disciplines or, as in the case of musicology, they have challenged the discipline from within. The following section locates digital sound within the wider field of sound studies, outlining three technological degrees of sound media, their distinctive features, and their interrelations. Next, the sound prototypes and the three degrees of media are joined in a matrix which serves to identify a range of issues for empirical and theoretical research. The final section structures and discusses these issues as part of a research agenda that covers sound as a vehicle of information, as a mode of address in communication, and as a means of action both at the interface and in the social contexts embedding media and their users. In conclusion, the paper raises a meta-issue of research, suggesting that the current interest in sound studies itself may be the product of a reconfigured media environment in which sound has come back in style.

Three Fields of Sound Studies
Speech: from Classical Rhetoric to Modern Discourse Studies
‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with humans, and the Word was humans.’ A secular restatement of the New Testament (John 1:1-3) serves to articulate the modern understanding that speech or symbolic communication is constitutive of being human. Language, along with abstract thinking and self-awareness, is commonly considered among the minimal conditions for civilized social interaction (Megarry, 1995: 48). One distinctive feature of language is that it enables reflection and negotiation before individuals, organizations, or whole societies take action. Language supports not just great leaps of the imagination and grand collective projects, but, perhaps most important, doubt and delay. As noted by Aristotle (Clarke, 1990: 11),
words allow humans to consider that which is at least temporarily absent – in space, in
time, and from one's immediate experience – through thought experiments and dialogue.
Speech, thus, can represent what is absent from, but imagined within, face-to-face
encounters, opening up universes of what is not yet, what might be, as well as what ought
ever to come to pass. Present sounds allow for absent realities.

Writing, print, electronic, and digital media, each in specific ways, radically extended
the capacity of humans to imagine, represent, and communicate, also in each other’s
absence. Present media allow for absent realities, absent communicators, or both.
Information and communication technologies – from the alphabet to the computer –
provided one necessary condition for the historical development of complex social
systems across time and space, and for the massive human transformation of the natural
environment (for reviews of 'medium theory' research, see Deibert, 1997; Meyrowitz,
1994). Not surprisingly, the relative determination of society by technology, and vice
versa, has remained subject to intense research debate (for key positions, see Biagioli,
1999). Comparatively less attention has been paid to the continued and constitutive
functions of speech within and around technologically mediated communication (for
exceptions, see, e.g., Gumpert & Cathcart, 1986; Scannell, 1991). Also before and
beyond media and communication research, scholarship traditionally has subordinated
speech as a communicative practice to language as a formal structure.

Rhetoric, being the grandparent of language study, drew on the resources and
conventions of oral tradition while developing as a social practice as well as a field of
research (for a history of rhetoric, see Kennedy, 1980). Yet, paradoxically, ‘classical’
rhetoric was being codified and consolidated as part of a transition to literate culture.
Havelock (1963), for one, noted how Plato’s attack on the bardic poets for being less
than trustworthy in matters of government, historiography, and science, announced the
passing of an oral culture. In areas as diverse as commerce, religion, warfare, and
politics, writing and literacy provided strategically important means of social organiza-
tion and control (see further, e.g., Goody, 1987; Goody & Watt, 1963; Innis, 1951; 1972/
1950; Scribner & Cole, 1981). Rhetorical practice itself was informed and sustained by
written manuals – alphabetization facilitated codification. And, it was not least in the
shape of “secondary rhetoric” (Kennedy, 1980: 5), as applied to diverse genres of
literary and other written communication, that rhetorical concepts continued as a major
influence on European scholarship and education into the nineteenth century. Poised
between oral practice and literate form, rhetoric has remained a source of inspiration for
communication theory up to and including ‘mass media’ studies.

The plethora of practical manuals on the art of speaking well in public help to account
for the still common reference to ‘only rhetoric’ – form without substance. It might be
more appropriate, in fact, to refer to ‘only literacy’ – texts without context, as memor-
ized and delivered on cue. Classical rhetoric had emphasized the intimate relation
between knowing that something is the case, and knowing how to speak about it for a
purpose and in a context. Aristotle observed that rhetoric is the source of a particular
kind of knowledge which is probable and reasonable in relation to the business at hand
– in comparison, logic can provide certain or necessary knowledge across contexts, at
least about some aspects of reality (Clarke, 1990: 13). An important legacy of rhetoric
for contemporary communication studies, then, is its close focus on context. This focus
has been revitalized, for example, by the ‘new rhetoric’ (Perelman, 1979) and by the
field of science communication studies, probing how researchers themselves articulate
and legitimate their findings (e.g., Brodkey, 1987; Gilbert & Mulkay, 1984; Simon,
1989). As speech and other auditory modalities of communication are being reembedded in everyday contexts through mobile technologies (J. E. Katz & Aakhus, 2002; Ling, 2004), both ‘old’ and ‘new’ rhetorics can offer theoretical and methodological frameworks for empirical research.

The distinctive capacity of writing and, later, print to transcend context made the written word a focus of language study for centuries. As a social infrastructure and source of power, sustaining empires and cosmologies, literacy required both a canon of forms and procedures, and a class of literate individuals to maintain it, on behalf of the powers that be. *Philology* (see, e.g., Cerquiglini, 1999; Olender, 1992), while focused originally on classical Greek and Latin, developed a wide range of general techniques for performing textual criticism of both historical, scientific, and literary works, fact as well as fiction, in different languages. By establishing the origins and relative authenticity of diverse texts, philology served as a crucial mediator of knowledge from and about the past, recontextualizing history in the present. The essentially contestable nature of this enterprise was witnessed, for example, during the nineteenth century when philology, while acquiring a new level of precision, participated actively in political projects of nation-building. By documenting and delimiting ‘national’ languages and literatures, philology provided justifications for what was then a new type of imagined communities (Anderson, 1991: 67-82). Across national boundaries and social contexts, moreover, literacy became a generalized resource of cultural distinction (Bourdieu, 1984, 1988). Literacy gives access to a particular heritage, and it empowers the literate to negotiate inclusion in and exclusion from this heritage, even the appropriate language for doing so. Like money, literacy talks – it speaks of social structure in action. The different historical varieties of language study, by implication, speak of how cultural capital has been administered by scholarship on behalf of society.

*Linguistics* in its twentieth-century incarnation performed a reorientation, on the one hand, away from the diachronic and comparative attention of philology to language as a vehicle of history and culture. Instead, linguistics came to highlight language as a structure in its own right and in a synchronic perspective. The seminal work of Saussure (Saussure, 1959/1916) served as a key influence on other structuralist and systemic turns beyond linguistics and into the social sciences. On the other hand, twentieth-century language study did remain focused on writing in its various shapes and, for all practical purposes, on a canon of written language – on form and norm. One ambition of modern linguistics was to develop into an autonomous ‘science’ beyond a subordinate role of servicing literary and other ‘arts’ of language. That ambition was expressed most systematically by so-called transformational-generative grammar (TG), which sought to discover a ‘deep structure’ of language that would account for the seemingly infinite variety of its ‘surface structures’ in speech and writing (Chomsky, 1965). TG was informed by the widely influential notion of human cognition as computing; a metaphor that was taken literally, to varying degrees, in the borderlands of TG and AI, or artificial intelligence research (Boden, 1996). If the constituent structures of human language production and understanding can be operationalized as algorithms, then computers may conceivably model not just the form of writing, but the content of reasoning, as well. And, given appropriate multimodal facilities, computers might speak with their users. The binary alphabet, thus, could be said to reconfigure the boundary between ‘writing’ and ‘speech’ (Bolter, 1991; Finnemann, 1999). Precisely speech, however, with its sensitivity to context has posed one of the most serious obstacles so far in the development of operational AI systems (Partridge, 1991).
In recent decades, linguistics has returned to speech as a key object of study, including the many public and private settings in which language use makes daily life possible. Under a generic heading of discourse studies, much work has addressed discourse as a social process over above texts as the products of language (for an overview, see Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001) (for other approaches to ‘discourse’ as a theoretical framework, see Phillips & Winther Jørgensen, 2002). In linguistic terminology, discourse studies go beyond the grammar, semantics, and phonetics of single, abstracted sentences, to include pragmatics, which examines the social uses of language in complex sequences and situated contexts. Several factors, internal as well as external to research, help to explain this ‘pragmatic turn’ (Jensen, 2002a: 38-39). Internally, linguistics joined an interdisciplinary turn across the humanities and social sciences, exploring the role of language in the micro-coordination of everyday life. In this regard, linguistics has been returning to what Saussure (1959/1916) had envisioned as an extrapolation of linguistics, namely, semiology, or a science that would study “the life of signs in society” (p. 16) (which today is more commonly referred to as semiotics (Posner, Robering, & Sebeok, 1997-98)). To exemplify, sociolinguistics has gone beyond the documentation and comparison of ‘dialects’ and ‘sociolects’ in order to account for them as implicit worldviews and constitutive practices within the ongoing structuration of society (Giddens, 1984). The title of one classic text – “the logic of non-standard English” (Labov, 1972/1969) – indicates that, as late as 1969, it was still necessary to argue the point that, in this case, spoken Black English was more than an illogical aberration from the norm.

The external circumstances of language study, next, help to explain such a ‘finding.’ The anti-authoritarian upheavals during the 1960s were questioning received notions of a common cultural heritage, as well as of ethnicity, class, and gender (Harvey, 1989; Roszak, 1969). The challenges to consensus were being amplified throughout society by a new media environment in which, not least, television was transcending social boundaries (Meyrowitz, 1985). Importantly, the challenges were being posed not merely as ‘issues’ in media content, but equally through the forms of communication – through diverse variants of language as practiced by distinctive subcultures. The cultural diversity of language was now undeniably there to be listened to every night on the news, also by language scholars.

Over the longues durées of history, it is fair to conclude that the study of language has tended to revolve around literacy. Societies depending on writing similarly came to depend on practices for administering and maintaining the written word. The de facto ‘othering’ of speech and its variants is best seen as a cultural consequence of a changing social infrastructure, rather than of any grand ideological or metaphysical battle between literacy and orality, as held by much poststructuralism since Derrida (1976/1967). Like language itself, language study is conditioned by its material and institutional circumstances, including the technologies available. Before the late nineteenth century, speech disappeared into the air unless documented by hand for particular purposes (Millard, 1995; Nyre, 2003; Sterne, 2003). From the 1940-50s onwards, lightweight recording equipment made fieldwork and subsequent transcriptions of language use more feasible (Fielding & Lee, 1998: 28). And, recent ‘corpus linguistics,’ working from empirical samples rather than imagined prototypes, depends on computer analysis to determine how people actually speak (and write) (Halliday, 2004).

In sum, current sound studies are positioned to benefit from previous research about language on at least two counts. First, the rhetorical tradition as well as the
interdisciplinary field of discourse studies have offered many and diverse insights into speech as practice and process. Second, philology and linguistics have provided concrete approaches to writing both as a cultural technology and as an analytical resource, as enhanced by mechanical and digital means of reproduction. Speech – and the study of speech – is amplified through written techniques of notation, transcription, and analysis.

Music: From Autonomous Works to Interested Listeners

Form and norm have served as guiding principles for research on music, as well. For one thing, the academic study of music – musicology – arguably has been wedded less to sounds than to notes. Traditionally, the discipline has placed a strong emphasis on ‘works’ as formal objects, as they are represented in written scores, curating and commenting on an “imaginary museum of musical works” (Goehr, 1992). This is in spite of the fact that song and improvised performances presumably account for the majority of all musical events both historically and currently, literally accompanying people from cradle to grave (e.g., Crafts, Cavicchi, & Keil, 1993; DeNora, 2000). For another thing, musicology has been remarkably focused on a particular portion of the notated heritage, namely, the canon of ‘classical’ instrumental music especially from the late 1700s onwards. (The term ‘classical’ music itself dates from the late 1800s (Potter, 1998: 65) and remains debated.) Although, for example, Dahlhaus (1982b/1967: 92), indicated that a canon may be understood as what is being ‘chosen from,’ rather than a few ‘chosen’ works, publications in musicology widely argue for or imply an absolutist and universalist position (e.g., J. Johnson, 2002). If literary and other aesthetic studies have cultivated the autonomy of artworks with a passion, musicology has pursued aesthetic autonomy with a vengeance.

Like rhetoric, music has been practiced as both art and scholarship since Antiquity (Treitler, 1998: 3). More so than rhetoric, musical scholarship has retained an intimate link with musical performance, as witnessed at conservatories as well as university schools of music (Kingsbury, 1988; Nettl, 1995). Scholars will normally be expected to practice music or, minimally, to be formally ‘literate.’ Also the published literature indicates that it is the aesthetics of musical works as means of expression and contemplation that has remained at the top of the ‘research agenda’ – if that is a relevant terminology (for classic texts, see Treitler, 1998) (for overview and discussion, see, e.g., Bergeron & Bohman, 1992; Christensen, 2002; Dahlhaus, 1982a/1967). In comparison, the broadly social uses of music in politics, religion, or primary socialization have remained on the periphery of the field as a minority concern. This is in spite of early contributions on music by some of the founding figures of sociology (Schütz, 1976a/1944, 1976b/1951; Weber, 1958/1921). As in the case of language study, the profile of academic musicology is explained, in part, by its infrastructural position vis-à-vis other social institutions. Musicology has served, in large measure, as the keeper of canonical tradition regarding the appropriate social uses of sound, as defined by shifting religious and secular establishments. The implicit commitment to musical performance, catering to the powers that be, has manifested itself, moreover, in particular scholarly techniques. According to Kerman (1985: 59), the meticulous, archival care for the “facts and texts” of music amounts to a variant of positivism. It is the socially interested nature of both music and musicology that a great deal of recent work has come to underscore.
Certainly, the musicological mainstream had been supplemented and, to an extent, challenged by several other forms of inquiry during the twentieth century. Ethnomusicology, in particular, has detailed the constitutive role of music in the everyday life of diverse cultural groups and settings, including processes of identity formation and practices of religion (Born, 2000; Manuel, 1988; Nettl & Bohlman, 1991). Like other contemporary anthropology, ethnomusicology has extended its methodologies to western musics and comparative studies, probing the cultural standing of Mozart from the viewpoint of a complete outsider or ‘Martian’ (Nettl, 1992) and symphony concerts as social rituals (Small, 1987). Psychology has addressed the cognitive and affective aspects especially of the reception of music, ranging from Gestalt-oriented approaches (Meyer, 1956) to cognitive models of how musical structures are generated in the mind (Lerdahl & Jackendoff, 1983). Much of the growing body of work during the past few decades, however, has chosen a rather narrow route in its empirical studies, examining responses to brief musical segments typically within a laboratory setting (e.g., Deutsch, 1999; Hodges, 1996; Sloboda, 1985), also in the attempt to capture the crucial link of music and emotion (Juslin & Sloboda, 2001). Semiotics, moreover, has made a bid for studying musical sounds as signs, with implications for the constitution of subjectivity and the exercise of cultural agency (Cumming, 2000; Hatten, 1994; Nattiez, 1990; Tarasti, 1994). Still, as in the case of musicology proper, semiotics has been limited by its formal analytical categories as derived, in part, from Saussurean linguistics. Music therapy, finally, has begun to document in some detail the healing powers of music, even while recognizing the difficulties of explaining the processes at work beyond the level of tacit or enacted knowledge (Bunt, 1994; Wigram, Saperston, & West, 1995). In this regard, music therapy can be said to sum up a dilemma in much previous scholarship on music, being caught in a methodological bind between artful practice and scientific positivism.

The reassessment and reinvigoration of musicology that seem to be underway (Cook & Everist, 1999) have been facilitated by two specific departures from the mainstream. From within, the tradition has been challenged head-on by the so-called ‘new’ or ‘critical’ musicology, which has brought the origins of music in, as well as its implications for, society to the fore, reemphasizing meaning, power, class, gender, and other classic concepts from the social sciences and cultural studies in the discourse of research (Kramer, 2002; Leppert, 1993; McClary, 1991, 2000; Subotnik, 1991). According to Subotnik (1991: 141), the interrelation of music and society should be treated, not as a hypothesis to be tested, but as a premise for research in the first place. While internally diverse, the New Musicology has taken a broadly critical, emphatically theoretical, and historically grounded position, drawing inspiration from a Frankfurt-School lineage of social theory, feminism, and discourse theory, in order to substantiate some of the ways in which music articulates socially interested perspectives on reality. In addition to raising controversial issues regarding musical divides between social segments, and recovering female composers and musicians that have gone unrecognized in music history (McClary, 1991), this group of researchers has also broadened the methodological scope of musicology, drawing on visual representations of music and musicians as well as other historical evidence in order to place musical texts in their social contexts (Leppert, 1993). Still, the methodologies of the New Musicology have, in practice, stayed comparatively close to the core musical ‘texts,’ whether notated or performed, treating other evidence as supplementary. Most important perhaps, the process of listening and employing music for social ends is still largely being extra-
polated from the works rather than from evidence concerning the listeners themselves, despite some recent work on hearing in social and historical contexts (Erlmann, 2004). In this respect, research on music may be retracing the steps of media and, not least, film studies, which, until quite recently (e.g., Stacey, 1994), relied on an audience of one – the researcher – to furnish interpretations of the media text at hand.

The second, external challenge to musicology has come from the field of popular music studies (for key texts, see Frith & Goodwin, 1990; Middleton, 1990) (for overview, see Hesmondhalgh & Negus, 2002; Longhurst, 1995; Shuker, 2001; Starr & Waterman, 2003). Whereas ‘popular’ music might be considered both historically and ontologically primary, the term is often used as a synonym for ‘not classical,’ and is most commonly associated with those genres that reach a mass audience through technological reproduction. Frith (1996: 226) has suggested that one may begin to think of the history of music generally in terms of a folk stage grounded in the body, an art stage sustained by notation, and a pop stage enabled by reproduction, which have entered into shifting, remediated configurations. Addressing the ambiguous position of much contemporary popular music in between ‘genuine’ folk and ‘commercial’ pop sources, the field has produced modern classics of its own, for example, on the place of music in African-American culture (Keil, 1966) and on the emotional qualities of music in the media (Tagg, 1979). Moreover, studies of the words or texts of popular songs (Hawkins, 2002; Jones, 2002; Middleton, 2002) serve as one reminder that ‘classical,’ instrumental music might be considered a historical anomaly – music and speech have typically been constituents of the same cultural practice. The downside of the focus within popular music studies on subcultures and social institutions is that, frequently, less explicit attention is given to musical practices as music. Middleton (1990: 158), for one, noted a tendency for subcultural theory to rely excessively on homology to account for the relationship between musical and social structures: Rock, for instance, may qualify as ‘screw and smash’ music, but that description says little about its specificity as a cultural practice of sound and speech. Studies of music and society still tend to be silent on either society or music, partly because of limitations in the available theoretical and terminological repertoires.

Music follows people from cradle to grave, but not so musicology. One indication that this situation may be changing is the publication of volumes examining music and society which bring (new) musicology and popular music studies inside the same covers (Clayton, Herbert, & Middleton, 2003; Scott, 2000). In addition to the diversity of traditions complementing and challenging mainstream musicology, recent decades have witnessed a growing number of studies in the sociology and social psychology of music (Hargreaves & North, 1997; Martin, 1995; White, 1987), addressing questions of identity and gender (Solie, 1991; Whiteley, Bennett, & Hawkins, 2004), of music in mobilizing social movements (Ansell, 2004; Eyerman & Jamison, 1998; Garofalo, 1992), of early opera as a social experiment in the emotional implications of music (R. Katz, 1986), as well as of the changing historical uses of technologically mediated music (Nott, 2002). Indicating one agenda for further research, Peterson and Kern (1996) found that while the traditional divide between highbrow and lowbrow music tastes may be dissolving, it is especially highbrow listeners who have embraced popular music, as well. At an institutional level, Born (1995) showed how, over the course of the twentieth century, avantgarde ‘serial’ music contributed to new configurations of ‘classical,’ experimental, and popular music. And, in the context of everyday practices, Finnegan (1989) detailed how different conceptions of ‘composition’ and ‘performance’ enter into
various musical subcultures or art worlds (Becker, 1982), high and low, professional and amateur. In each case, technology is changing the conditions of what will count as music, for whom, and to what social ends.

**Soundscape: From Music of the Spheres to Ambient Environments**

The notion that the natural environment, indeed, the entire universe, carries meanings that are articulated, in part, through sound, is familiar from the ancient idea of the music of the spheres (James, 1995; Treitler, 1998: 102f.). The harmony of the spheres was understood as an expression of the numerical ratios of a ‘world-soul,’ yielding mathematical principles with implications for astronomy, metaphysics, and music, and, according to some, sounding the universe. (A contemporary parallel is ‘DNA music,’ generating musical syntheses from DNA sequences (Gena & Strom, 2001).) Whereas a modern perspective would suggest a categorical distinction between natural events and human actions, and between incidental and intentional meanings, nevertheless humans habitually ascribe significance to both social and natural settings – as symbols in their own right or as arenas of action. Watzlawick et al. (1967) made the point that one cannot *not* communicate, noting that the presence of humans in a shared time and space necessarily implies communication: The body shows itself, and it sounds. Social contexts, similarly, cannot *not* communicate, at least as enabling conditions of what can or should, cannot or should not, occur there. From homes and offices, to public transportation and rural landscapes, environments are increasingly planned and engineered, thus anticipating, configuring, and contributing to meaningful interactions, including silence. Appadurai (1996) has suggested ‘scapes’ as a covering term for various material and simultaneously meaningful frameworks of human action. Soundscape, while currently associated, for example, with mobile media, have taken a variety of historical forms.

The specific terminology of ‘soundscape’ is normally credited to the Canadian composer and musicologist, R. Murray Schafer (1977). Recalling the medium theory (Meyrowitz, 1994) of his countrymen, Innis and McLuhan, that media typify particular epochs of culture and consciousness, Schafer interpreted the history of sound as a process of *schizophonia*, by which technologies have increasingly divorced sounds from their origins, thus potentially polluting both social and natural contexts, and desensitizing audiences to the potential richness of sound in work as well as leisure. One of Schafer’s important contributions has been to identify sound as a general and complex modality that should be studied as a natural phenomenon, an artistic expression, as well as a mode of communication. Several international, comparative studies have built on this perspective to assess the contemporary state of soundscape around the world (Truax, 1995) (see also Jarviluoma, 1994; Southworth, 1969). As a framework for theory development and further empirical research, however, Schafer’s position is limited by its highly normative premises, in effect demonizing noise, praising silence, and implicitly advocating a return to preindustrial soundscape (e.g., Toop, 1995: 253f.). A comparable position within communication studies, influenced by the media ecology of Postman (1985), appeared in Albrecht (2004).

Perhaps surprisingly, historians have been at the forefront of recent sound studies (Bailey, 1996), reassessing the evidence regarding past soundscape, which, unlike textual and pictorial sources, literally disappeared into the air until the advent of recording technologies from the late 1800s. One important contribution came from
Corbin (1998), who explored the significance of village bells as frame-setters in the French countryside during the nineteenth century. Beyond the traditional enactment of standardized time in local communities, bells gave rise to deep social conflicts after the French revolution of 1789, involving state authorities, the church, as well as laypeople, particularly over the appropriate religious or secular uses of bells within a community. And, as part of conflicts between communities, bells were abducted, reused, and recast. In a different national setting, the recasting of bells into cannon could be seen to symbolize the predicament of the American south after the Civil War (M. M. Smith, 2001) – both the war and the sounding bells were lost. Meanwhile, trains and other noisy machines continued their westward journey, representing the industrial future of the Northern victors and a renewed challenge to the American pastoral ideal of a quiet life in the wilderness (Marx, 1964). With reference to early modern England, Smith (1999) has suggested that the growing importance of literacy for the organization of society was changing the perceived implications of sound as a mode of interaction as well as a sensory experience in oral communication. In the case of music, studies also have considered hearing in a historical perspective (Burnett, Fend, & Gouk, 1991; Wegman, 1998), and have reemphasized the continued importance of oral tradition, both as a presence in daily life and as a concrete force in shaping the musical practices of religious and other literate institutions, for example, Gregorian chant (Jeffrey, 1992), and in framing the understanding of musical works as orations and organisms (Bonds, 1991).

In a contemporary perspective, soundscapes have increasingly been reengineered and mediated, from incidental spaces of hearing to dedicated places of listening – whether in private homes or concert halls. Forsyth (1985) charted the development of music ‘auditoria,’ from the first public performances in English taverns of the 1600s, to the growth of concert facilities for the growing middle classes particularly from around 1800. Thompson (2002: 7), moreover, noted how the engineering of specific contexts for listening entailed a “silencing of space,” as reverberation came to be defined as noise, to be replaced by different degrees and varieties of ‘virtual sound.’ Also audiences fell silent, as attention became focused on the stage and its musical performances, giving rise to individual, interior experience, rather than social interaction with others in the hall (J. H. Johnson, 1995). Other public places, such as shops and restaurants, have been studied as soundscapes comprising both specific information and contextual ambience. Slow music, for instance, may induce people to stay longer and drink more in restaurants (Bruner, 1990). One distinctive component of modern urban life has been ‘muzak,’ establishing an ambient ground through ‘mood music,’ or what Lanza (1994) referred to as “elevator music,” in workplaces, shops, and other enclosed soundscapes (see further Barnes, 1988) (on the history of muzak, also http://www.muzak.com, accessed June 10, 2005).

Private settings, equally, have constituted historically shifting soundscapes for families and their social circles, large or small, offering piano recitals, radio broadcasting, or home-stereo listening. With portable audio devices came additional degrees of freedom in the creation of ad hoc soundscapes, beginning with the portable gramophone at picnics and ‘discos’ during the 1910s (Nott, 2002: 33-43). While the transistor radio made music and other sounds more mobile from the 1960s, it still imposed a collective soundscape on its immediate surroundings – spaces of hearing rather than places of listening. The Walkman from 1979 enabled individual listeners to create a private auditory realm within the public domain. Bull (2000) has shown the multiple ways in which the Walkman enabled people to negotiate the experience of self
vis-à-vis social reality (see also Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay, & Negus, 1997). And, with mobile phones, iPods, and other playback devices, portable and personalized soundscapes are proliferating in public, as well (Humphreys, 2005). ‘Early’ notions of immersive mediascapes during the 1980s (Levy, 1993) envisioned a form of virtual reality that would transpose a full-fledged context onto a single multi-functional text – the world in a medium. Current developments in ubiquitous and pervasive computing, potentially, reverse this relation, as they embed media in diverse objects, artefacts, and settings (Lyytinen & Yoo, 2002) – the world as a medium. Soundscapes and ubiquitous mediascapes generally are challenging received notions of what is a medium.

**Sounds of Three Degrees**

**Media of the First Degree**

The familiar dichotomy of ‘mediated’ and ‘unmediated’ communication assumes that the human body, giving off sounds and other expressions, does not qualify as a medium of contact and exchange, but somehow communicates directly. This dichotomy is, in part, a product of the first phase of ‘mass communication’ research, which focused on technological mediation as a necessary link between one sender and many receivers. With the rise of several more differentiated media formats – both one-to-one and many-to-many – the dichotomy is increasingly in question. At the present stage of both media history and media theory, it is helpful to distinguish conceptually and analytically between three degrees of media (Jensen, 2002b).

Media of the first degree can be defined, in preliminary terms, as the biologically based, socially formed resources that enable humans to articulate an understanding of reality, for a particular purpose, and to engage in communication about it with others. The central example is verbal language, or speech – additional examples include song and other musical expression, dance, drama, painting, and creative arts generally. Such media depend on the presence of the human body, and operate in local time-space, often relying on comparatively simple, mechanical techniques such as musical instruments and artistic or writing utensils as constitutive elements. (Handwriting presents a special case, which has supported complex historical communication systems. However, its comparatively inefficient forms of reproduction and distribution, arguably, made this a transitional cultural form (Meyrowitz, 1994: 54)).

Beyond conversations involving family and friends, neighbors and coworkers, sound is constitutive of a variety of social practices. An illuminating historical example is ‘rough music’ (E. P. Thompson, 1991: 467-538), or the ‘naming and shaming’ of people who had offended a community, which was common in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England, having parallels in other European countries and the US. While chanting and shouting obscenities is hardly associated with either aesthetic or social harmony, rough music recalls the variable boundary between music and noise, for example, when sounds are used to articulate a social position for oneself and to interpellate others (Attali, 1985). And, rough music is not entirely a thing of the past: On March 11, 2005, BBC World News reported that authorities in Andhra Pradesh, India, had sent groups of drummers to tax evaders’ houses to make them pay up (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/4397907.stm, accessed July 4, 2005).

Several kinds of research have addressed communication in the flesh, crisscrossing the three audio prototypes reviewed above. A rare contribution on the general phenomenology and experiential qualities of sound was offered by Ihde (1976).
Psychoacoustics has moved beyond the examination of single sounds to consider the contextual ‘scenes’ (Bregman, 1990) in which sound events are perceived and interpreted (Handel, 1991; McAdams & Bigand, 1993; Plomp, 2002). Also within the arts, sound has received growing attention under headings of multimedia, intermedia, and sound art (Kahn, 1999; Shaw-Miller, 2002), partly with reference to its contribution to synaesthesia (Baron-Cohen & Harrison, 1997; Cook, 1998; Cytowic, 1989). With further reference to sound as a resource for action as well as a source of meaning, Pittam (1994) outlined an approach to the human voice as a constitutive element of social interaction. Ostwald (1973) suggested how the sounds of one’s own body – from heartbeats to humming – help to ground everyday routines. And, complementing studies in the pragmatics of language, work on kinesics and nonverbal communication has emphasized how the copresence of bodies in context helps to frame and orient their interaction (Birdwhistell, 1971; Hall, 1969, 1971). Schneider (1994) specifically explored concert singing as a bodily and kinesthetic form of expression. In a crosscultural perspective, Feld (1990) showed how sound may serve as a common denominator for the cosmology and concrete communicative practices of an entire community or culture (see further Baumann & Fujie, 1999; Classen, 1993; Howes, 1991).

Current references to the ongoing ‘mediatization’ of politics and culture may obscure the fact that embodied speech, music, and other sounds remain integral to everyday life. As noted by one standard textbook of media studies (McQuail, 2005: 18), the total number of face-to-face interactions that occur within the micro-coordination of daily life by far outnumber those communicative events which are technologically mediated. Moreover, speech became an integral part of the modern mass media, notably radio and television, further stimulating audience interactions around media (Gumpert & Cathcart, 1986; Scannell, 1991). Indeed, Ong (1982) argued that the technological reembedding of speech had produced a new form of ‘secondary orality.’ Speech delivers not just the contents, but also many of the forms that have been remodeled as media genres – the town crier as news announcer, the court jester as talkshow host. For digital sound studies, it is essential to consider not just the reworking of analog sound technologies, but also the human body as a source and medium of sound, in its own right and as a constituent of soundscapes.

**Media of the Second Degree**

Media of the second degree are Benjamin’s (1977/1936) technically reproduced and enhanced forms of representation and interaction which support communication across space and time, irrespective of the presence and number of participants. Early modern examples included the standardized reproduction of religious and political texts through the printing press (Eisenstein, 1979). In radio talkshows, conversation took on new forms, just as acting styles were adapted from the theater stage to cinema and television. Thus, media technologies have performed a reembedding, both of media of the first degree and of people in relation to distant others, issues, and arenas. Over the last decade or so, several volumes have sought to stimulate research on the specificity of sound in technologically mediated communication (e.g., Altman, 1992; Cook, 1998).

Most basically, recording technologies from the late nineteenth century onwards enabled the preservation of sound events (for a historical overview, see Millard, 1995). Apart from the new possibilities of documenting social and cultural history, for instance, through oral sources (Dunaway & Baum, 1996), not least popular music gained new
resources of expression as well as distribution. In an early contribution on the relationship between sound and technology, Jones (1992), for example, described the recording process as a cultural practice that is accomplished jointly by audio artists and technical professionals. Negus (1992), further, pointed to the various social conflicts and ideologies of creativity that overlay the concrete process of producing pop. Chanan (1995) noted the distinctive ways in which popular and classical forms of music tend to be recorded, leaving greater scope for the ‘production’ and ‘remixing’ of popular music. And, Hennion (1997) has clarified the wide range of ‘mediators’ – from scores and instruments, to recordings, clubs, concert halls, and street settings – which make very different kinds of music, from baroque to rock, available to different social and cultural groups. In this perspective, recording technologies are but one constituent of the cultural infrastructure of music.

In media terms, it was sound transmission technologies that made radio the first ‘mass medium’ on a national scale. Within media studies, however, radio was overshadowed by television during the first decades of the field’s comparatively short history, despite early studies outlining an agenda (e.g., Cantril & Allport, 1971/1935). In addition to institutional and social histories as well as overviews (Crisell, 1994; Douglas, 1999; Hendy, 2000; Scannell & Cardiff, 1991), recent work has begun to address the cultural implications of radio, including its aesthetic forms and everyday uses (Crisell, 2004; Hilmes & Loviglio, 2002), its place in clashes between musical cultures (Biocca, 1990), and its specificity as an auditive medium (Aaberg, 1999). Regarding television, with few exceptions (Altman, 1986), it is only quite recently that research has come to examine, for instance, music in relation to televisual genres and flow (Negus & Street, 2002).

Like television, film has largely been conceived as a ‘visual’ medium in both research and public debate. The exception is film music, which has been examined rather extensively as a constitutive feature of narration especially in the fiction film (e.g., Kalinak, 1992; Kassabian, 2001). On a more modest scale, dialogue as a means of expression and mode of address to audiences, has been the subject of some studies (Chion, 1999; Kozloff, 2000). Paradoxically, at present, silent film may be stimulating a more general and sustained focus on sound. Extending a renewed interest among film scholars in the silent era, Altman (2004) detailed how music and other sounds were part of the experience of ‘cinema’ from the outset, as films, popular songs, and music in combination entered into the program of various entertainments (see further Abel & Altman, 2001). Studies of silent film sound substantiate the more general point that media are incrementally and “culturally invented” (Carroll, 1988: 143), being shaped at the intersection of new technological potentials, cultural traditions, and institutional circumstances. What started out as separate modalities, as mediated by stand-alone technologies, subsequently entered into multimodal multimedia, facilitating new forms of creativity and communication.

**Media of the Third Degree**

Media of the third degree are the digitally processed forms of representation and interaction which reproduce and recombine previous media on a single platform – computers can be understood as ‘meta-media’ (Kay & Goldberg, 1999/1977). The central current example is the networked personal computer. This ‘interface,’ however, is likely to change substantially as technologies are adapted further to the human senses, and inte-
grated into both common objects and social arrangements. A characteristic feature of media of the third degree is their (potential) multimodality, partially reenacting or simulating the qualities of interaction in the flesh. In certain respects, humans are media; in certain respects, digital media can substitute the social roles of humans.

Figure 1. Media of Three Degrees

Computer networks enable forms of interaction that are more similar to interpersonal than to mass communication, as exemplified by the informality of e-mail and chat. The configuration of media of three different degrees may be understood as a wheel of culture, recirculating forms as well as contents throughout the historically available cultural technologies (Figure 1). Sound is a case in point. Through mobile phones and other portable devices, people are able to increasingly design and manage their own soundscapes, conversing with friends and family at a time and place of their choosing, and ‘pulling’ musical numbers to generate or relieve moods. Simultaneously, users can access entertainments and information services of the ‘push’ variety.

Research has begun to account for the distinctive features of media of the third degree (e.g., Gauntlett & Horsley, 2004; Jones, 1998; Lievrouw & Livingstone, 2002). Studies, to some extent, have considered sound as a constituent of digital media forms. For music, beyond the much publicized and controversial issue of sharing already existing files (Leyshon, Webb, French, Thrift, & Crewe, 2005), one potential use of the internet is online collaborative music making and performances (Barbosa & Kaltenbrunner, 2002). Sound art, more generally, has gained specific digital resources (Greene, 2003; Paul, 2003). Speech has become a more prominent component of the media environment as a whole, not least through the diffusion of cell phones and other mobile devices, with implications for both the conventions of conversation and the maintenance of social relationships (J. E. Katz & Aakhus, 2002; Ling, 2004). Also chat in the literal sense of the word, through generally available conferencing systems such as iChat (http://www.apple.com/macosx/features/ichat/, accessed November 24, 2005), is reintroducing speech as a constituent of online communication. And, in the case of soundscapes, computer games rely extensively on sound effects, music and, for multiplayer gaming,
spoken interaction for coordination of the gameplay (Friberg & Gärdenfors, 2004; Stockburger, 2003; Williams, Caplan, & Xiong, 2005). In a wider perspective of political and cultural participation, sounds may contribute to the sensuous involvement of an interested public, as facilitated by collaborative archives (e.g., http://freesound.iua.upf.edu/, accessed November 24, 2005). The Sonic Memorial project, for one, commemorating the events of September 11, 2001 and the sounds of the neighborhood around the World Trade Center, included functionalities in its website to enable visitors to “add a sound” (http://sonicmemorial.org, accessed March 11, 2005) (Cohen & Willis, 2004).

Most of the work on digital sound media lies in the future. The media of three degrees provide a framework in which to approach the distinctive affordances (Gibson, 1979; Hutchby, 2001) of sound under different technological circumstances. Figure 2 gives a nine-cell matrix with examples of the kinds of communicative events and actions that enter into the field of sound studies. The final section outlines some of the issues to be addressed as part of a research agenda with particular reference to digital sound.

**Figure 2. A Matrix of Sound Prototypes and Media Platforms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First degree</th>
<th>Second degree</th>
<th>Third degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speech</strong></td>
<td>• Parent-child dialogue</td>
<td>• Answering-machine message</td>
<td>• Coordination of supermarket shopping via mobile phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Instructions in work team</td>
<td>• Dictated medical file</td>
<td>• Computer-supported foreign-language learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parliamentary debate</td>
<td>• Royalty’s broadcast to citizenry</td>
<td>• Synthetic-voice switchboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music</strong></td>
<td>• Lullaby</td>
<td>• ‘Our song’ played at dinner·</td>
<td>• Personalized ring tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Work song</td>
<td>• Opera recording</td>
<td>• Collaborative online music performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Religious chanting</td>
<td>• National anthem played back at sports</td>
<td>• MP3 archive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Soundscape</strong></td>
<td>• Mother’s womb</td>
<td>• Family den</td>
<td>• Ambient sound during iChat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fishing boat</td>
<td>• Elevator</td>
<td>• CAVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Marketplace</td>
<td>• Cinema hall</td>
<td>• Location-based sound installation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Towards a Research Agenda for Digital Sound Studies**

*Information, Communication, and Action*

One common feature of sound media is their potentially invasive quality – sounds engage anyone within hearing range. As commented by McLuhan and Fiore (1967: 112), “we simply are not equipped with earlids.” The various audio modalities, moreover, are comparatively open and contextually flexible as sources of meaning. Music mostly serves non-representational, but strongly suggestive functions. In comparison, speech carries highly conventionalized meanings across contexts. And yet, the human voice incorporates many additional layers of meaning, giving away the gender, age, personality, cultural background, and emotional state of the speaker. Sounds are difficult
to control or predict, may turn against their senders, and may get in the way of communication with others. Corner (2002), for one, noted that music tends to be used sparingly in television documentaries so as not to compromise the factual status of the narrative.

In order to capture the specificity of speech, music, and other audio modalities, as they enter into different media, it is useful to return to the basics of communication theory. Media are vehicles of information; they are channels of communication; and they serve as means of both interpersonal and macrosocial action. The conceptual pair of ‘information’ and ‘communication,’ moreover, is familiar from several fields of research. Philosophy traditionally distinguishes between proposition and modality, i.e., a potential reference and the reality status being assigned to it in an assertion (Audi, 1996: 499). In structuralist literary and film theory, enoncé refers to a work as a statement or message, whereas enonciation captures the act of enunciation (Stam, Burgoyne, & Flitterman-Lewis, 1992: 105). And, in speech-act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969), a distinction was introduced between the locution (propositional components) and the illocution (a social act being accomplished, for example, a question or an answer). In conjunction, information and communication accomplish socially coordinated actions – from discussion and voting, to consumer purchases and investments, to cultural and aesthetic involvement. To exemplify, the internet constitutes a historically unique configuration of information and communication, being a digital marriage of a massive information archive with high-speed communications. Most important perhaps, the internet enables users to act and interact, not just with each other and at a distance, but with the system of communication in ways that may significantly reshape the very system (Finnemann, 2005) – through textual input, visual display, and sound.

- **Information.** Sound serves as an explicit and regularized vehicle of delimited items of information. This is the case, for instance, in oral narratives, but presumably also with fire alarms (no warning without an implied object of attention) as well as jingles and other ‘program music’ that seeks to generate ideas or values in the listener (Tagg & Clarida, 2003).

- **Communication.** Sound facilitates intersubjective relations of communication. An oral narrative engages its listeners, young and old. A fire alarm, when activated by a person or by smoke, addresses a warning to the inhabitants of a building. And, program music produces, however tendentially and momentarily, some level of understanding and orientation in the audience.

- **Action.** Sound accomplishes physical as well symbolic actions, over and above the (speech) act being performed in and of communication – sound becomes action as it is embedded in established social practices and institutions. Story-telling is a classic part of primary socialization; fire alarms accomplish evacuations; and program music reactivates imagined communities (Anderson, 1991), ranging from nationalism to consumerism.

**Speech, Music, and Soundscapes Revisited**

The three prototypical audio modalities – speech, music, and soundscapes – enter into different configurations of information, communication, and action, raising a variety of research questions concerning the social uses of different sound media. Concerning speech, recall, to begin, the portion of *Fahrenheit 471* (Bradbury, 1976/1954) where people are depicted as memorizing entire books in order to ensure that they may be
reprinted once the present ‘dark age’ of banning books is over. The scenery suggests two points, namely, that language remains an eminently flexible resource for articulating human experience as information, but also that speech is exceedingly vulnerable as a medium for storing and communicating such information to others. Media of the third degree can be said to have given oral communication a new lease on life. Beyond the Fahrenheit universe, not just bound books, but audio books, online voice chat, and offline conversation may survive as history, depending on the archiving practices of national and international institutions. Speech accomplishes a multitude of everyday actions, from public speech acts of naming or passing sentences, to the most intimate of family conversations. Societies are being spoken every day.

Music, as noted, is generally not considered a vehicle of information so that, in philosophical terminology, music may have sense, but no reference. In Langer’s (1957: 240) terminology, music consists of “unconsummated symbols,” to be consummated by listeners. In context, however, music is readily consummated as information, being associated with product brands or political ideologies. Furthermore, music indirectly refers to and identifies an aesthetic heritage for trained listeners, effectively reaffirming their social identity and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984). Being able to distinguish a composition by Bach from one by Händel is as much a representation of the listener as of the music. (In the case of speech, similarly, the identity of ‘mother’ and other familiar voices is recognized through their grain (Barthes, 1977/1972) – in semiotic terminology, sound can be understood as an ‘iterative index,’ whose reference is communicated and maintained over time.) Music also acts – for example, as signals denoting transitions to, from, and within social ceremonies, or by generating an ambience for what should, or should not, happen in a given context, from the discotheque to the funeral parlor. Music performs the basso continuo, as it were, of a great deal of social interaction.

Soundscapes, while being composites of sound, may be analyzed on a par with media and their component parts. On the one hand, the various sounds constituting a soundscape can be natural events, customized signals, musical sequences, verbal utterances, etc. As such, one or more sounds might be interpreted as ‘texts’ or responded to as cues for orientation and involvement. On the other hand, soundscapes provide a grounding of diverse activities in context – social ‘figures’ against an auditive ‘ground.’ Short of a neat and discrete set of audio modalities, sound studies will benefit from analyses which recognize this dual status. Soundscapes make up aggregated sets of information, communicating to listeners and anticipating their likely range of activities. In literary terms, soundscapes amount to a horizon of expectations (Jauss, 1982). In the philosophical terms of Wittgenstein (1958), listeners, while having no explicit interpretation of the soundscape as such, may nevertheless know “how to go on” (No. 154).

Also the distinctions between audio modalities within soundscapes, finally, call for analytical attention – when is a voice speaking, and when is it singing, with what implications for listeners? And, given the potential for technological mediation and modification, the status of sounds is called into question – is that my cell phone ringing or a sound effect on my radio? Chion (1994) identified three ways of listening to and interpreting sounds. First, listening can be ‘causal,’ responding to sounds as the effects of events or actions that call for alertness. Second, sounds can be approached in terms of their semantics, as carriers of a coded message, typically verbal language. Third, people listen to sound as sound, what Chion called ‘reduced listening,’ notably when treating sound as an aesthetic phenomenon. Although each mode of listening might be associated particularly with one sound prototypes (reduced listening to music, semantic
listening to speech, causal listening to soundscapes), sound studies need to explore their interrelations in empirical research on audiences. Moving beyond the traditional emphasis of musicology on reduced listening, as performed expertly by musicians and musicologists, it is essential to ask to what extent and in which ways listeners practice this cultural ideal. Complementing the focus of linguistics on semantics, it is important to examine how reduced listening to the quality of voices, and causal listening to the implied social structure of turn-taking within a group, may enter into everyday interaction, technologically mediated or not. Also in practical terms of designing and developing, for example, multimodal internet search engines, a key challenge is to be able to typologize and operationalize both audio and other modalities.

Sound Media Remediated

This review has suggested how a given medium will reproduce, reconfigure, and remediate the modalities of previous media forms. In their volume on the process of remediation, Bolter and Grusin (1999) emphasized that, in the present terminology, ‘mass’ media of the second degree are being reshaped within ‘new’ media of the third degree. Sound media serve as one reminder that also ‘embodied’ media of the first degree need to be reconsidered in theory development concerning the media constituting contemporary culture. Extending the perspective of Bolter and Grusin (1999), further research may explore at least three varieties of remediation (see further Jensen & Helles, in press):

• Recycling. Taking websites as a familiar illustration, a key component of sites from diverse areas of social life is material which has previously appeared in other media, or which simulates their genre conventions. Typical examples include the sounds and images of radio and television news, advertising, and self-presentations by business companies and civic organizations, sometimes in the form of media subsections – an online organizational ‘newspaper,’ ‘radio station,’ or ‘television station.’ Political-party and parliamentary sites, for example, feature national anthems. And, personal homepages commonly include popular music items as a way of articulating the owner’s identity while simultaneously positioning users.

• Redifferentiation. Studies of the web and the internet as such have variously advocated and criticized the notion of ‘convergence’ (Gordon, 2003), that many, most, or even all media are becoming integrated in technological, institutional, and perhaps sociocultural respects. The concept of redifferentiation seeks to acknowledge a complex process of convergence as well as divergence across media of all three degrees. On the one hand, digitalization and interrelated communication protocols potentially join previously separate kinds of mass-mediated, organizational, and interpersonal interaction. On the other hand, their concrete configuration on a digital platform gives rise to highly differentiated social uses. Again with reference to websites, both company magazines (‘mass’ print medium) and children’s stories (‘interpersonal’ interaction) are read aloud at some sites; videos of the kind commonly found in malls and supermarkets (‘how to cook with our products’) reappear at websites; and personal homepages invite users to engage in karaoke.

• Reverberation. The term ‘reverberation’ is introduced here to capture traditionally oral forms, ranging from personal interchanges to religious and poetic expressions, which are finding new outlets in digital media, from websites to cell phones. This can
be thought of, tentatively, as a form of ‘tertiary orality,’ extrapolating from Ong’s (1982) notion of the secondary orality of electronic media. The sound of the human voice literally reverberates speakers’ bodies and listeners without earlids, carrying connotations of authenticity and, perhaps, a transcendental reality. In the context of websites, blessings and prayers are downloadable from religious organizations, whereas hymns and national anthems at parliamentary and party sites invite citizens to align themselves with particular social collectives.

Whereas the perspective of remediation directs attention toward the different material and institutional platforms on which ‘information’ is presented, additional research questions concern the specificity of sound as ‘communication.’ For websites, Jensen and Helles (in press) identified three levels in the communicative uses of sound. At a first level, sound is ‘in your face’ as a direct mode of address – speech hails a visitor to a website, or music frames the interaction being initiated. Such pushing of sound may be used rather sparingly and specifically, as noted, given the personally invasive and culturally controversial status of sound. At a second level, sound effects or soundscapes will alert and orient users to transitions and choices to be made within the flow of interaction with the medium. At a third and final level, once media users enter and remain within a subsection of a website, a television narrative, or a music video on a portable device, they make themselves available to a multimodal complex of text, video, as well as audio. One might think of a modified version of the WYSIWYG principle (‘what you see is what you get’) of graphic user interfaces, underlying the three levels of sound: ‘what you hear’ is, as a rule, a consequence of what you selectively pull from ‘what you see.’

Figure 3. Dimensions of a Research Agenda for Sound Studies

Conclusion

Sound studies are still in their early stages, and have much to gain from an extraordinarily broad range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary sources. This review has recovered a great deal of previous research on three prototypes of sound – speech, music, and soundscapes – for media and communication research. The analysis of theory and em-
pirical findings has suggested that digital media provide a special opportunity to reexamine both the expressive qualities and the social uses of sound across media of the first, second, as well as third degrees – from bodies speaking and singing, to avatars responding in kind. Digitalization has brought sound and its diverse uses as information, communication, and action to the fore once again. Figure 3 summarizes the dimensions of a research agenda for future sound studies with reference to the three sound prototypes, the three media degrees, and the status of sound as information, communication, and action.

As shown by Peters (1999) in his history of the idea of communication, the available technologies and institutions of communication help to explain how researchers as well as the general public, over time, have thought of different media and modalities. The coming of mass communication, during the nineteenth century, served to thematize ‘communication’ as a general human practice, joining face-to-face and technologically mediated communication in a common vocabulary. During the post-1945 period, another general category of ‘media’ emerged, as epitomized by McLuhan (1964). His reference, however, was primarily to ‘mass’ media, even if the changing conditions of interpersonal communication in the global village were duly noted. Indeed, the record of communication research as a whole still shows the existence of a great divide between two separate worlds of ‘interpersonal’ and ‘mediated’ communication studies (Rogers, 1999). It is only within the last decade or so that students of the media have come to to refer to themselves in terms of ‘media and communication’ research, as symbolized by the IAMCR, which used to be the International Association for Mass Communication Research, but which, since 1996, is the International Association for Media and Communication Research. The field is currently working out the implications of that seemingly innocent change of terminology.

Perhaps communication researchers are still catching up with the general idea of communication. Perhaps media researchers are still in need of a general definition of media. Sound studies are a good place to continue the search for both media and communication.

References

Acknowledgments
An earlier version of this article, entitled “Sounds of Three Degrees: The Interdisciplinary Sources of Sound Studies,” was presented as a paper at the 17th Nordic Conference for Media and Communication Research, Aalborg, Denmark, August 11-14, 2005. The author is grateful to the organizer of the Working Group on Radio and Other Sound Media, Lars Nyre, and other participants for their contributions to the discussion. Special thanks are due to Michael Bull, Rasmus Helles, and Steve Jones, who offered constructive comments on the conference paper.


On the Open and Closed Space 
of Public Discourse

LEIF DAHLBERG

Abstract
The subject of this article is to investigate the notion and status of public discourse in contemporary media. The article opens with a reading of the trope the 'open' (das Offene) in Rainer Maria Rilke’s eighth Duineser Elegie and then discusses the meanings given to openness and public (Öffentlich, Öffentlichkeit) in the academic discourses of law, philosophy, political theory, and sociology. However, the principal focus of the article is on the artistic and political interventions by two Austrian artists, Otto Mittmannsgruber and Martin Strauß, made in commercialized public spaces in Austria and Germany during the years 1995-2004. Their artistic works directly address issues of power and public discourse, and effect both a questioning of unilinear mass media communication and a politicization of commercialized public space. In the article it is argued that the interventions of Mittmannsgruber and Strauß in commercial mass media make strikingly visible the simultaneously open and closed nature of contemporary public discourse.

Key Words: public space, public discourse, advertising, ad-busting, media art

Introduction
This article discusses the notion of and conditions for public discourse in contemporary European society. It concerns itself in particular with public discourse in advertisement space, which simultaneously constitutes an open and closed discursive space. Advertisement space is used for planned communication (product and corporate advertisement, social information or political propaganda) in which the aim of the sender is to create strong public recognition of product or brand identity. The central focus of the article, however, is on the artistic and political interventions in commercialized public spaces by two Austrian artists, Otto Mittmannsgruber and Martin Strauß, interventions which are used as prisms to examine the nature of public discourse today. During the years 1995-2004, the artists executed a series of artistic projects in public spaces in Austria and Germany, primarily on billboards used for advertisements. Through a playful and ironic use of the rhetoric of visual language of advertisements, the artists achieve an allegorizing deconstruction and effacement of the iconographic strategies of corporate product identity. In this way, Mittmannsgruber and Strauß open our eyes for the conditions for and the meaning of public discourse in public spaces of today.
Much has been written about the public sphere, public spaces or public discourse and I make no claim to say anything substantially new, but perhaps this article may shed some new light on public discourse in public spaces and how it shapes this space as part of the public sphere.¹

The Open and Closed (Rilke)

In his eighth Duineser Elegie, Rainer Maria Rilke depicts how the animal relates to the world as open ("Mit allen Augen sieht die Kreatur / das Offene"), while the eyes of man are "as turned around" (wie umgekehrt) and surrounded by traps that prevent free sight (Rilke 1991: 470-472).² This conversion, or "turning about", is forced upon us already as children, turning us away from the open and towards the already interpreted. According to Rilke, in the face of the animal, in the look of the animal, we can see freedom from the closed, pre-interpreted world, an unawareness of death that contains an openness towards God. The regard organizes space, but space and time also organizes the regard. In the poem Rilke develops this theme in different ways and describes how man is unable to see "nowhere without nothing" (Nirgends ohne Nicht) but only sees world. We know nothingness only as death. The unaffected seeing we can only perceive in the animal, never experience ourselves. This condition for our perception also describes a historical itinerary, where civilized man with his acquired knowledge has lost the animal's pure seeing; it describes a fall from innocence and grace.

But in some animals, Rilke writes, "in the vigilant warm animal" (in dem wachsam warmen Tier), one can perceive the burden of an inexpressible sorrow. However, it is not a consciousness of death, but a "faint memory" (Erinnerung) that what we long for once has been "closer, truer and enclosed itself around us infinitely caring" (näher gewesen, treuer und sein Anschluß / unendlich zärtlich). It is the memory in the warm blooded animal of an existence before birth; while after we are born, expelled from the womb, "everything is distance" (ist alles Abstand). There is in these animals a kind of historical consciousness of coming after, of having fallen from a previous state of grace. The poet then exclaims:

O Seligkeit der kleinen Kreatur –
Die immer bleibst in Schoße, der sie austrug;
ο Glück der Mücke, die noch innen hüpf,
.selbst wenn sie Hochzeit hat; denn Schoß ist Alles.

For these smallest creatures there is no difference between the unborn condition and life in the world. For them there is no difference between the closed, safe being, and the open, unprotected world. They are always at home. In their world there is no division between home and away, between private and public. But for civilized man, the distinction between private and public is like an open wound.

Rilke’s poem describes man’s condition as a cultural being as created by drawing up a series of boundaries with subsequent separations, spatial and temporal. According to Rilke these borders and distances exist as much within man as outside. Yet this activity of organizing the world in ourselves is unable to create a stable order in the world. Rilke writes that we order the world in ourselves, but only in order to see it fall apart ("Wir ordnens. Es zerfällt"); and then finally we fall apart ourselves: "Wir ordnens wieder und zerfallen selbst." This endless toiling refers both to individual human beings
and to man in general, what concerns the individual is also true of how man as a social being structures the world.

The conjunction of the individual and the general, of part and whole, constitutes a rhetorical figure (metonomy) that contains an internal division of the kind Rilke speaks. Man is always separated from mankind by his own individuality. As is suggested in Rilke’s poem, the individuating process is initiated already in childhood, but it is only as adults that we fully learn to make proper and responsible distinctions between ourselves and others, between private and public. It is therefore fitting that in most societies the transition from child to adult is marked by rites of passage (Gennep 1909: 93-163). In western societies one graduates from secondary school, gets a job or goes to university and moves into an apartment of one’s own. This transition into the adult world does not necessarily designate a loss of the protected haven of the family, but signals an entry into the political sphere.

One of the most important borders that civilized man has drawn is precisely the one between what is one’s own and what is shared, between private and public, what the ancient Greeks called oikos and polis. What is contained in this distinction? The English and French term public (publique) has a double etymology which is quite telling: the word comes in part from the Latin poplicus (of the people), in part from pubes (adult). It is as an adult one is given entry to what is shared, the common sphere, and to matters of state, the political sphere. But not all public places are political, and not all political spheres are public. In the words of Hannah Arendt: "Wherever people gather together, it is potentially there, but only potentially, not necessarily and not forever.” (Arendt 1958: 199) The public realm is also delimited by areas that are not of common concern, but are considered private (from Latin privatus, “withdrawn from public life”), as well as such matters of state that are closed from the public. It follows that what takes place in public, happens in the open (compare the German das Offene, heard in Öffentlich, Öffentlichkeit): everything that appears in public can be seen and heard by everybody (Arendt 1958: 50).³ This shared and open public realm is in turn a necessary condition for making sound political judgements in a democratic society.

Indeed, in modern western societies there is a strong connexion between the view of democracy as a theory of accountability and responsiveness in decision-making process and theories of the public sphere as a form of public communication that will facilitate this process. But what qualities should the public sphere have in order to nurture and sustain a vigorous and democratic public life? Who should participate and on what conditions? What should be the forms of public discourse and who should decide the issues to be discussed? How should the actors communicate with each other? And what is the desired outcome of political debate in the public sphere?

In order to get a preliminary idea of the different (and differing) meanings of the notion of the public it may be helpful to set up a matrix over separate aspects of public space and political discourse:
Concrete spaces

Council, assembly rooms, meeting places, etc

Editorial columns, political articles; TV-debates, etc.

The public sphere

Political discourse

Concrete figurative spaces

Concrete spaces

Concrete figurative spaces

Abstract spaces

Unpolitical discourse

Public places, public spaces

News, articles & TV-programmes on sport, fashion, music, culture; chat pages

The public space

The distinct spatial order of the schema is in several ways misleading. There does not exist an agreed nomenclature of different public spaces and the discourses that occur there. However, it is quite common that one by public places mean concrete and (primarily) unpolitical spaces; by the term public space is meant an abstract and (primarily) unpolitical space; and by (the) public sphere is meant an abstract and political space. Apart from disagreeing about whether this corresponds with ordinary usage of the terms, one may argue against these distinctions that the division between the political and unpolitical cannot be made (so) univocal, either in theory or in practice. This is quite correct. It can also be noted that depending on how one draws the line – between the political and the unpolitical – the public sphere will look quite different. There are furthermore several reasons why such a distinction perhaps should not be made at all (the public is always political) and that the border to the private also always (already) is political (Foucault 2001; Foucault 1997; Foucault 2000; Smith 1999). It should also be noted that just as there are different kinds of public spaces and public discourses, the private realm has many different faces.

In her book The Human Condition (1958), Hannah Arendt discusses at some length the meaning of the public realm as an open and shared space, in particular as regards the classical Greek city state (Arendt 1958: 50-78 et passim). In her view, a true public realm is only possible with a limited number of citizens, the ideal found in the Greek city state. When the number of people increases, there develops "an almost irresistible inclination toward despotism, be this the despotism of a person or of majority rule [...]." (Arendt 1958: 43) In Arendt’s view, the classical public realm was a space where the citizen could appear as an individual, hence it was a scene of distinction (Arendt 1958: 41, 56, 58). In contrast to the private realm, which was characterized by inequality, necessity, labor, and futility, the public realm was considered a space of equality, freedom, and permanence, and it was in the public realm that the individual could earn recognition and honour (Arendt 1958: 32, 73). Although not always made explicit in the discussion, this view of the classical public sphere often forms the ideal for the modern public sphere. In other words, when applied to the modern age, the public realm is frequently a figurative notion. Arendt herself makes this clear when she writes that with the rise of the nation state there emerges a new realm, which is neither private nor public, that she calls the social realm (Arendt 1958: 28, 257). For Arendt, the indistinction of private and public constitutes a threat to a well functioning public sphere, and hence to democracy (Arendt 1950). In contradistinction to this view, there are those who argue that the insistence on separating the private and public realms leads to excluding groups (or interests) from the public realm. For instance, Seyla Benhabib has argued that the public sphere should not be understood agonistically as a space of competition for recognition and immortality among a political elite. Instead, it should be viewed "democratically as the creation of procedures whereby those affected by general social norms and collective political decision can have
a say in their formulation, stipulation, and adoption.” (Benhabib 1992: 87) Furthermore, Benhabib argues for the proliferation of several, autonomous public spheres, which would ensure that radically different interests may articulate and voice their views.

The kind of public space that Jürgen Habermas calls the *bourgeois public sphere* (*bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit*) is characterized exactly by being separate from the political power, but at the same time constituting an arena where one may discuss and criticize political power, and where political opinions can take shape (Habermas 1962: 14-26). The bourgeois public sphere, as conceived by Habermas, constitutes a middle-space between the private realm and the state, a space that has developed out of the private sphere (Habermas 1962: 27-43). In analogy with Rilke’s poem one can say that the bourgeois public sphere has been borne by the private sphere, and that it looks back to it as at a forlorn place. The idea is that the public sphere should simultaneously be open and sheltered. Hence according to Habermas this public sphere should still be conceived as “private” in relation to the state, and he draws the following diagram over the bourgeois public sphere in the eighteenth century (Habermas 1962: 30):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Private realm</th>
<th>Sphere of Public Authority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil society (realm of commodity exchange and social labour)</td>
<td>State (realm of the &quot;police&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjugal family’s internal space (bourgeois intellectuals)</td>
<td>Court (courtly-noble society)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sphere in the political realm</td>
<td>(Market of culture products) &quot;Town&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sphere in the world of letter (clubs, press)</td>
<td></td>
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In Habermas scheme, the bourgeois public sphere appears as a dialectical middle term, growing out of the historical opposition between civil society and political power, between the private realm and the state (Habermas 1962: 141). As such, it will be dependent on a precarious balance of power between civil society and the state (Habermas 1962: 181).

Just as the public sphere in the classical city state was historically determined, the bourgeois public sphere as described by Habermas is said to emerge in specific historical and political circumstances, most important is the social rise of the bourgeoisie and the development of an independent press. Although Habermas’ thesis about the bourgeois public sphere has been very influential, there has been levelled serious criticism that his description of the period is both tendentious and idealistic. On the one hand, he is said to have failed to account for social groupings not belonging to the bourgeoisie, who have oppositional interests to them (sometimes termed *counterpublic spheres*); he has not taken into account that women not only were excluded from the public sphere, but that the bourgeois public sphere was characterized by rational discussion and universality, qualities which at the time were considered essentially male; and there existed a number of other journals that had different agendas than the ones Habermas put emphasis on (Thompson 1968; Fraser 1992; Carey 1995; Thompson 1995: 71-75). On the other hand, it has been argued that Habermas idealises the forms of the intellectual and political discussion: far from being an arena for open dialogue among equals where the shared objective is a search for truth and the common good, the debates were conducted by a social and economic elite and ruled by conflicting interests and partisan politics (Schudson 1997). Whereas Habermas in later works has conceded the first series of criticisms, he has maintained that the notion of the public sphere as an arena for dialogue
and reason constitutes a historical ideal, though not necessarily an existing reality (Habermas 1996: 329-387 et passim; Dahlberg 2005).

The views and theories of the public sphere presented so far have all put emphasis on active participation of the citizens, although in different degrees. The most inclusive theories are those that argue for a plurality of public spheres and a floating distinction between private and public. In their view, no space is really outside the political, and hence the private realm can only mean exclusion from the public sphere and deprivation of power. According to this view, the objective is to expand the public sphere and to avoid exclusion. In the view of the public sphere presented by Arendt, on the other hand, which in many ways is similar to conceptions of direct democracy found in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the decisive role of the public sphere is to empower the individual and make him or her an active participant in the decision-making process. In contrast to this view, in the theory of public sphere presented by Habermas, often called a discursive theory of democracy, the principal role of the public sphere is to be a space for public communication and dialogue governed by mutual respect between the participants. Although in Habermas’ theory the active participation of the public is viewed as positive, it is not considered as an end in itself. Instead, the principal objective is public dialogue and deliberation.

One can discern yet another theory of the public sphere, found in classical liberal theory and with roots in the works of Edmund Burke and John Stuart Mill (Burke 1790; Mill 1861). In this theory, sometimes termed representative liberal theory, the participation of the citizens in the public sphere should be limited and largely indirect. Instead of direct participation, the discussion should be carried out by representatives, either in the form of interest groups or (preferably) political parties. The main function of the public sphere is to provide the citizens with enough information about the political parties so that they can choose intelligently among them (Schumpeter 1942; Downs 1957; Kornhauser 1960). The public sphere should therefore be a free market place of ideas governed by expertise, transparency, proportionality, and with the ultimate goal of reaching sound decisions. This conception of the public sphere is strongly rejected by Habermas and other representatives of discursive theory. In their view, political communication in representative liberal theory is reduced to the strategic struggle between parties and interest groups for the attention and support of an audience of self-seeking and divided private individuals (Habermas 1996: 362).

These four different models or traditions of the public sphere are defined in relation to each other, and the differences between them are to some extent a matter of emphasis. It is also important to keep in mind that private and public designate figurative spaces and do not refer to natural categories. Instead they describe culturally constructed phenomena and are used to construct and legitimize relations of power in society.

Transformations (Commerce & ICT)

In contemporary society, public space and public discourse – whatever more precisely is designated by these terms – are going through radical transformations. These changes are not in the first place related to the decline or refeudalization of the public sphere (due to social and political changes) that have been discussed by Habermas and others (Habermas 1962: 195; Boggs 1997). The transformations are instead related on the one hand to a massive commercialization of public places and of the public space; on the other hand to the use of new digital information- and communication technologies (ICT)
The former is apparent in several ways. While merchants since ancient times have gathered in public places to conduct their business, the trend in the last several decades have been to create their own trading places, shopping malls and shopping clubs (Leong 2001; Chung 2001). In some suburban areas it seems as if shopping has become the only way one experiences public life (Leong 2001: 134, 153). Another striking form of commercialization of public space is that of advertisements, which – apart from political propaganda in times of election – are the only media voices in these environments. Although advertising has been around for a while, it was only in the late nineteenth century that it became an industry and began to be a real presence in the urban landscape (Danesi 2002: 181-183). In contemporary urban and suburban society, advertising clutters public space. Apart from print and electronic media (the press, radio, television, Internet), it is found in the subway, on buses and bus stops, on billboards and covering house facades. But as if this was not enough, the latest trend in marketing is to saturate every conceivable space with commercial messages: on fruits and in lunch bags, in the bottom of beer glasses, in bathrooms and on the display of ATMs, in text books and schools, on the concrete of sidewalks and the sand on the beaches (Berger 2001: 430-446; Klein 2000: 87-105; Gunter & Inaba 2001). We live in a world of ubiquitous advertising.

The radical transformation of modern ICT means that public institutions communicate with citizens in different ways than before, just as citizens may communicate with the authorities in new ways. This involves challenges and leads to changes in the meaning of the public sphere, both spatially and discursively. One example is what in Sweden is called 24 hour authority (24-timmarsmyndigheten), which provides social information around the clock and serves as a portal for many public services (Proposition 1997/98:136). In many other contexts new ICT has lead to changes: with the Internet ordinary citizens have been provided with the possibility to communicate with other people in ways that previously were reserved for those who enjoyed considerable political, economic or cultural capital. As an example of this can be mentioned diary-writing on the Internet, so called blogs, which simultaneously is an intimate, private form of communication and is publicly available for anybody who has access to Internet. The communicative practices made possible with new ICT will lead to changes in the distinction between private and public even more radical than what we saw in the 1950s and 1960s with the introduction of broadcast television. There are even voices that argue that the distinction between private and public may dissolve altogether (Camp & Chien 2000). Furthermore, the multiplication of media channels leads to a fragmentation of the media as a single or unified public sphere, which would affect its role in democratic society.

There will be reason to come back to these issues in other contexts. However, in the remainder of this article I want to discuss the significance of the fact that mediated discourse in (physical) public places in contemporary western society to a large extent has been monopolized by an advertising monologue that shuts out other public discourses, and that this advertising monologue closes in the mediated discourse in public spaces in a persuasion and marketing discourse whose primary – if not exclusive – objective is to speak to us as consumers. In this sense one may speak of public discourse in these environments as being closed to the public, but in extension also that this advertising monologue threatens to transform these public spaces to a closed space. What is the significance of this figurative transformation of the open public space into a closed space? What are the effects on public discourse in general? Would it be correct to as-
sume, with Arendt, that the banishment of citizens from the public realm is a way to do away with plurality in human society (Arendt 1958: 220-221). In order to explore these and related questions I will now look at some artistic interventions in commercialized public space made by the Austrian artists Otto Mittmannsgruber and Martin Strauß.

**Media Art & Public Art (Mittmannsgruber and Strauß)**

During the years 1995-2004, Mittmannsgruber and Strauß executed a series of artistic projects in commercialized public spaces in Austria and Germany, primarily on billboards used for advertising (in streets, at bus stops, house facades). These public media spaces are used for planned communication (primarily product and company advertising, but also social information and under election periods for political propaganda) where the objective of the sender is to create a strong consciousness in the receiver of product and brand identity. Through a playful and ironic use of the rhetoric of visual language in advertising, Mittmannsgruber and Strauß have achieved an allegorizing deconstruction and defacement/effacement of the iconographic strategies for product and company identity.

In the years 1995 and 1999, they carried out a project with the title “Monolog des Vertrauens” (Monologue of trust) with 2200 posters and 29 different subjects put up on billboards in Vienna, Graz, Linz and Innsbruck (in 1995), and in Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Frankfurt and Essen (in 1999) (Mittmannsgruber & Strauß 2004: 14-24). Each advertising poster was reduced solely to the name of the company. But the company name was also stripped of its typical form. In this way the visual image of the company’s logotype was negated, and with it the formal identifications of the companies that had been established through years of brand marketing. Instead, the company names were made part of a common communicative structure and were set, one and all, in the same collective print scheme. As Mittmannsgruber and Strauß themselves note, this made for an aesthetic uniformity of representation otherwise never seen in this context:

The foregrounds of advertising posters always present the rival slogans of the respective companies – each one aimed at emphasizing the uniqueness of its advertising message, both in its verbal text and in its visual image. In our project these aesthetic constructs were dismantled and, in one double step, completely eradicated. (Mittmannsgruber & Strauß 2004: 22)

In this way Mittmannsgruber and Strauß turn the rhetoric of advertising upside-down and inside out. In order to understand the “advertisements” the viewer is forced to actually read the names (perhaps even the letters) and then for him or herself make the connexion to the company and its product. Hereby the relation between name and image (the logotype) is being estranged and disautomatised, but it also effects a rhetorical effacement of company identity: there is no longer a purely visual difference between Benetton, Esso, Saeco, Adidas, and Honda. This heretic approach to advertising is radically new, which perhaps is one reason why the participating companies not only were willing to subject themselves (and their brands) to this kind of treatment, but also to foot the bill (Ullrich 2004: 124).

As will be discussed later, it may also be considered trendy to be associated with alternative social movements such as culture jamming and ad-busting.

In a similar way Mittmannsgruber and Strauß effaced the differences between company identities in a project with the title “Shokomonolog” (Chocolate monologue). This project was carried out in Vienna in 2003 with 1100 posters and 11 different subjects
(Mittmannsgruber & Strauß 2004: 94-104). In contrast to "Monolog des Vertrauens", the companies were here allowed to retain their logotypes, but instead are assimilated by "selling" the same product: chocolate bars. It is suggestive to read the image of the chocolate bar as a metaphor for the vain promises made by advertisements: by buying chocolate you will be happier, more attractive and in general more satisfied with life. But of course eating chocolate will do none of these things, if anything it will make you thirsty. If the primary objective of advertising is to create desire for something the product itself never can provide, then Mittmannsgruber and Strauß’s chocolate monologue constitutes a visual allegorization of this kind of advertising rhetoric.

1. Monolog des Vertrauens (Photograph by Otto Mittmannsgruber)
In these two projects the two primary objectives of advertising were deconstructed visually and rhetorically: to create a unique brand/product identity and to create a unique desire that only the company’s products can satisfy. It is important to note, however, that it was up to the viewer to figure out what was going on and what it might mean. At the time when “Monolog des Vertrauens” and “Shokomonolog” were posted on billboards, there were neither any explanatory texts nor any suggestions that there were artists at work. The only paratextual indices of art consisted in newspaper articles and art reviews. The responses from ordinary people were diverse and also varied between different projects. Some campaigns ("13 tote Österreicher", “Fremd”, “52 Zitate”) provoked strong reactions both in media and directly from people. Other strong reactions came from advertising agencies who felt ignored or viewed the artists as competitors – some large advertising companies even warned their clients against taking part in art projects.

In order to understand the cultural meanings of these interventions in commercialized public space, it is illuminating to compare them with advertising that violates the unwritten laws of marketing. The traditional (and still predominant) form of advertising focuses on selling products and brand names. Whereas companies have always tried to associate their products with certain lifestyles, it is only recently that the central focus is on selling lifestyles and not products (Berger 2001: 148-161; Klein 2000: 27-61). If this marketing strategy is a heresy of sorts, then what of an advertisement that makes ironical comments on itself as advertising? A striking example is the commercial for the soft drink Sprite with the slogan “Image is nothing. Obey your thirst.” Although this kind of self-conscious and self-ironic advertising hardly will become a very strong trend in marketing, it is popular among companies trying to reach alternative and media-conscious youth groups (Berger 2001: 167-181). There are even companies that flirt with anti-advertising movements engaging in cultural jamming or ad-busting (Berger 2001: 448-461). As examples of the latter can be mentioned advertisements for Reactor jeans (1997) and Captain Morgan Rum (2000), which both appropriate the visual language of ad-busting (Berger 2001: 458-459).

In this context, one can read Mittmannsgruber and Strauß’s interventions as artistic and playful expressions of cultural jamming, but on a fairly large scale. However, as these advertising campaigns never ceased being commercial advertisements, it is not obvious to call them art, or even sponsored art. But then what are they? In a time when film directors like Woody Allen and Spike Lee make television commercials and poets write copy for advertising, it is not strange if visual artists work with advertising as a material for their art. The advertisements for Absolut vodka are well known examples, as are Graham Sutherland’s advertisements for Shell (Walker 2001: 59). Other prominent examples of mixing art and advertisements are Andy Warhol’s detergent boxes and prints of Campbell’s canned soup, and inversely the appearance of artworks of Roy Lichtenstein, Frank Stella, and Alexander Calder in advertisements (Walker 2001: 61). When Mittmannsgruber and Strauß’s projects were shown at the Museum für angewandte Kunst (MAK) in Vienna in 2004, it would seem that the art world had given it its blessing. But rather than settling the issue, it raises more questions than it answers. For instance, does the exhibition of their work in a museum for applied arts really qualify the work as art? And how does it articulate the relation between art institutions and the market place? Perhaps the question if it is art is misplaced, perhaps it is better to ask what it means to call these interventions art.

Another project by Mittmannsgruber and Strauß, with the title “Ich” (I), focused on a different aspect of advertising rhetoric, the address or interpellation (Mittmannsgruber...
As in all forms of mass media communication, advertising must create and maintain contact with the audience (phatic communication), which it can do in various ways in different contexts. In advertising, the preferred way to achieve this objective is by finding a means to speak directly to our dreams of who we want to be. Hence “successful copywriting depends upon insight into people’s minds: not individual minds [...] but into the way the average people think and act” (Gilbert Russell, quoted in Leavis 1930: 11). The talent to connect to our deepest feelings is worth millions in the advertising industry. Not only can good advertising in fact “explain us to ourselves,”15 but according to Marshall McLuhan the advertising of our time constitutes ”the richest and most faithful daily reflections that any society ever made of its entire range of activities.” (McLuhan 1964: 232) If the aim of all advertising is to sell (products or services) and to turn the audience into buyers and consumers, preferably without being made aware of it, the overarching ideology of advertising consists of an interpellation of the audience as consumers. This project (“Ich”) constituted a rhetorical analysis of the communicative situation of the advertising text.

If in the first two mentioned projects, ”Monolog des Vertrauens” and ”Shokomonolog”, the rhetorical analysis of the advertising monologue makes use of estrangement as aesthetic device, in ”Ich” it makes explicit the communicative interpellation in advertising. In a sense, this intervention is more openly critical of advertising, but perhaps also more difficult to grasp for the viewer. It should not be obvious to the passer-by what

2. Ich (Photograph by Otto Mittmannsgruber)
the word "Ich" signifies in the advertisement. The way the word "Ich" is torn out from the poster also gives associations to ad-busting, although for the uninitiated it would be impossible to discern whether it is authentic or not.

This ironic and critical device becomes even more striking in the project called “Fremd” (Stranger) (Mittmannsgruber & Strauß 2004: 44-49). It was carried out in southern Austria in the year 1997 with 200 posters and a single subject. The image seems to represent a crumpled kitchen towel over which is put the text "Wir bleiben unter uns" (We stay among ourselves). In the bottom right corner, where the trade mark or logotype normally are placed in advertising posters, there is a slanted banner with the text "1996 konnten wir 92 Prozent aller Asylanträge ablehnen!" (In 1996 we could reject 92% of all asylum applicants!). The poster was conceived on the occasion when the European Union had proclaimed 1997 a “Year against racism, anti-semitism and xenophobia” and Austria the previous year had ranked last among the European countries that had accepted refugees (Mittmannsgruber & Strauß 2004: 46). One can interpret the crumpled kitchen towel in different ways, but undisputably Mittmannsgruber and Strauß have opened the advertising monologue not only towards an ironic discourse, but also to an expressly political one.

At this point one has to address the difficult question of politics and art, and what makes art political. This question means something quite different today than it did in the 1960s and 1970s. When the magazine *Artforum* in 2004 made a special issue on art and politics, it was obvious that the critics were quite uncomfortable with the juxtaposition of the two terms. At the same time, however, they could not fail to notice that the contemporary art scene is becoming increasingly political. And it is not just a question of individual artists, political art seems in fact fashionable, as can be seen from the last two Documentas (1997 and 2001) and Venice Biennali (2003 and 2005), and the 2004 Whitney Biennial (Griffin 2004: 205; Danto 2004).

One way of answering the question of what makes art political is to say that all art is political, although primarily in a conservative or reactionary way by affirming existing traditions and art forms, as well as institutional and social structures in which art is exhibited and produced. A more discriminating view of political art is expressed by
Andrea Fraser, who defines it as “art that consciously sets out to intervene in (and not just reflect on) relations of power, and this necessarily means on relations of power in which it exists.” (Fraser quoted in Bordowitz 2004: 215) According to Fraser, the intervention must be the “organizing principle of the work in all its aspects”, not only in its form and content, but also in the mode of production and circulation. On these conditions, I think it would be safe to say that surrealism was a political art movement (and part of dadaism also); and that the works of John Heartfield, Victor Burgin, Jenny Holzer, and Barbara Kruger are political in a strong sense (Walker 2001: 107-108, 124). Nevertheless, even though the works of these artists are radically political, that does not prevent the art as system from recuperating them and transforming them into a “form of capital within art discourse.” (Fraser quoted in Bordowitz 2004: 215) It would seem that Mittmannsgruber and Strauß’s artistic interventions in commercialized public space also would qualify as political in this strong sense, yet it is uncertain what kind of value or currency they will have in the art world.

In this context one could also mention another strand in marketing: advertising with a social agenda. This form of advertising comes in two forms: public authorities or non-profit organisations that want to inform the public on certain matters (such as the dangers of smoking, of drug abuse, of driving drunk, of pollution, etc.); and companies who want to be associated with good causes (such as equality for women, stopping child abuse) (Berger 2001: 292-325). A rather extreme example of the latter are Oliviero Toscani’s advertisements for Benetton, though one can sometimes debate whether the “causes” here are not sensational rather than good (Berger 2001: 249, 250-251; Walker 2001: 159f).

Mittmannsgruber and Strauß’s artistic interventions are aimed directly at questions of power and of public discourse, and they enact a questioning of one-way mass media communication and a politicizing of commercialized public space. Who gives and who takes the right to use public spaces as an arena for public address? And cannot the public demand the right to use this physical mass medium in order to participate in public discourse? One way of articulating these questions is by writing them down on advertising posters. In the project “Karusell”, which was carried out both on billboards and in newspapers, exactly these kinds of questions were asked, accompanied by a thick arrow pointing either at an adjacent advertising poster or newspaper article.16 In this way, the viewer or reader was addressed not as a passive audience, but as participant in public discourse. This interpellation of the viewer constitutes a rhetorical figure Jean-François Lyotard has called ”metalespsis of the partner” (métalepse du partenaire), through which the (passive) spectator is implicated in the position of (active) partner in a dialogue.

4. Karusell (Photograph by Otto Mittmannsgruber)
(Lyotard 1983: 47). However, the questions are not only directed towards the primary viewer, but are also about others, for example how children are affected by advertising. In this way Mittmannsgruber and Strauß reframe the advertising monologue in the form of a conversation; one may say that it has been “dialogized” (Bakhtin 1981). The advertising monologue is broken against other discourses and can no longer remain unquestioned, unopposed. Likewise, in the images that document the interventions as communicative situations, the simultaneously open and closed nature of public discourse in commercialized mass media is made strikingly clear. As viewer of these images one is caught by a movement that simultaneously opens the advertising monologue and reveals its closed nature.

As a final example of Mittmannsgruber and Strauß’s artistic explorations of mediated communication in public spaces, I will take the project “Demokratie” (Democracy), carried out in Vienna in 2000 with 800 posters and 20 different subjects, also executed in newspapers and local radio stations (Mittmannsgruber & Strauß 2004: 74-83). The posters were monochrome black with the word “Demokratie” printed in large, white letters. In the posters were also inserted two sections of other advertisement posters, these being put in the “right” position according to the original. One of the sections was always the one that showed the brand logo, or part of it. In the newspapers, the advertisement consisted only of the word “Demokratie”, but to the word was added the symbol ®, the sign used to indicate registered trademark. One may read this as critique that commercial forces have taken over the public discourse in modern democracies, that there is not enough space for citizens to make themselves heard in the public sphere; and also as a critique of Coca-Cola-Democracy where people are happy as long as they may satisfy their artificial desires. The version of the project that was published in newspapers suggests that democracy may be represented as much as a trademark as a product. And what does that mean?
As mentioned above, several of Mittmannsgruber and Strauß’s interventions in commercialized public spaces were done in cooperation with the companies whose products and trademarks were advertised. How does this affect the meaning and artistic integrity of the projects? By presenting advertising as art, this gives an aesthetic value to advertising (and to the products). This is in line with the increased prestige that advertising has received in the last decades, both culturally and aesthetically. But are we to perceive Mittmannsgruber and Strauß’s “artistic” practice as allied with this tendency or as a critical commentary of it? Or both?

Another aspect of their project constitutes an investigation of the various roles for art in commercialized mass media, for art as a mass media, and for media art as public art. What is the role of art in society and outside the museum and exclusive art collections? What happens with art when it ventures into the public sphere, and what happens with the public sphere when art enters? In order to answer these questions we will have to return to the different figurative public spaces in contemporary society.

**Conclusion**

As stated in the introduction I make no claim to say anything substantially new about the public sphere, public space, public spaces or public discourse. However, in studying the interventions by Mittmannsgruber and Strauß in commercialized public space, it has become clear exactly how closed this discourse is, both in terms of not being open to the public and in being confined to a persuasion and marketing rhetoric. Although commercialized public space is only a limited part of a general public space, albeit a quite substantial part, one may still view it as a figure of the public sphere. In this respect it shows a striking resemblance to the representative liberal theory of the public sphere. The ordinary citizens are not welcome to participate, the larger (commercial) players get proportionally more media space, and the role of the public is to choose among the products.

As a figure of the public sphere, commercialized public space also shows some resemblance to the view of the public sphere as an agonistic arena where the actors (companies) can fight for and earn public recognition. That is exactly what companies strive for when they market their brands and products. Mittmannsgruber and Strauß’s rhetorical analysis is quite effective in showing this. However, as the citizens (consumers) largely are excluded from participating, the resemblance with Arendt’s model of the public sphere is in fact rather weak.

In the discursive view of public space, commercialized public space is a direct negation of public dialogue and deliberation. However, when Mittmannsgruber and Strauß open up the advertising monologue for other voices and turn it, through metalepsis of the partner, into a conversation, then it would appear to look in the direction of public dialogue and deliberation. The same could in fact be said about their extensive use of irony, which aims at provoking thought and critical reflection in the public body. But again, it is a far way to go for commercialized public space to come anywhere close to Habermas’ ideal of the public sphere.

As for the view of the public sphere as being (ideally) multiple and not closed to the private realm, Mittmannsgruber and Strauß’s analysis of the rhetorical interpellation of the consumer in “Ich” reveals that advertising operates on private fantasies, and hence (always) already has dissolved the distinction between private and public. We had just not noticed it before. As regards plurality of public spheres, one can argue that the
project “Demokratie” revealed that commercialized public space can be constituted as a part of the political public sphere. In the words of Arendt, already quoted above, one can say that “it is potentially there, but only potentially, not necessarily and not forever.” By their example, Mittmannsgruber and Strauß show that commercialized public space can be reclaimed for other purposes, other functions, and in this way be opened to the public.

Notes
1. An extensive bibliography on the notion of the public sphere is found in Strum 1994.
2. Rilke, “Die Achte Elegie”: ”Mit allen Augen sieht die Kreatur / das Offene. Nur unsre Augen sind / wie umgekehrt und ganz um sie gestellt / als fallen, rings um ihren freien Ausgang. / Was draußen ist, wir wissens aus des Tiers / Anlitz allein; denn schon das frühe Kind / wenden wir um und zwingens, daß er rückwärts / Gestaltung sehe, nicht das Offne, das / im Tiergesicht si tief ist. Frei von Tod. / [...]”
3. Arendt also writes: “the reality of the public realm relies on the simultaneous presence of innumerable perspectives and aspects in which the common world presents itself and for which no common measurement or denominator can ever be devised. For though the common world is the common meeting ground for all, those who are present have different locations in it, and the location of one can no more coincide with the location of another than the location of two objects. Being seen and being heard by others derive their significance from the fact that everybody sees and hears from a different position. This is the meaning of public life.” (Arendt 1958: 57)
4. In fact, already Hannah Arendt noted that, “[h]istorically, the last public realm, the last meeting place which is at least connected with the activity of homo faber, is the exchange on which his products are displayed.” (Arendt 1958: 162)
5. For fuller treatment of the subject, see Presbrey 1929; Houck (ed.) 1969; Lear 1994.
6. For an influential discussion of how television affected the public sphere, see e.g. Meyrowitz 1985: 73-125. For discussion of how the Internet may transform the public sphere, see e.g. Poster 1995; Slevin 2000: 185-197; Papacharissi 2002.
7. “The public space, the private sector space, and the personal spaces merge seamlessly.” (Camp & Chien 2000: 14)
8. This should not be confused with what Habermas calls representative public sphere (Habermas 1962: 7). The advertising monologue that goes on in public places does not only try to persuade us to act in certain ways; it speaks to us not as citizens (or as subjects) but as consumers.
9. The projects are also documented on the website http://www.kunstundmedien.org/htm/mono.htm.
13. For a critical discussion of the notion of the art world, see Dahlberg 2001.
14. A striking illustration of this question is the growing importance of merchandising in art museums. It is not uncommon that the visitor has to pass through the museum shop in order to come to the collections (Leong 2001: 144-153).
15. This is a comment made about the legendary American advertising creator Bill Bernbach. Quoted in Berger 2001: 39.
16. The project was carried out in Vienna in 2002 with 1000 posters and 5 different subjects in combination with 20 different advertising posters. The newspaper project appeared in Die Standard, 16-22 January 1999 (Mittmannsgruber & Strauß 2004: 50-61).

References


"Plakatkunst im öffentlichen Raum". *NBK Aktuell* (Berlin), March 1999.


Media Diversity
and the Politics of Criteria

Diversity Assessment and Technocratisation of European Media Policy

KARI KARPPINEN

Abstract
Diversity and pluralism are foundational principles that seem to underlie much of the arguments in European communication and media policy. Consequently, the positive value associated with these concepts can be exploited in arguments for various and often-incompatible objectives. This paper discusses the uses and implications of different definitions and empirical objectifications of media diversity in media policy with a particular focus on how certain definitions and political rationalities become institutionalized and normalized in expert and policy discourses. It is argued in the article that the growing body of research on media diversity as a measurable concept implies a shift from the normative and political questions to more narrowly defined technocratic and market-driven definitions of media and culture, a move which itself is not without normative and political implications.

Key Words: media diversity, public policy, governance, media performance assessment, technocratisation

Introduction
Media diversity constitutes one of the key objectives in the name of which arguments are made in both theoretical and political debates on media policy. As such, diversity and pluralism are foundational values that hardly anyone is opposed to. Opinions on the meaning and nature of these concepts are many though and they embody some of central conflicts in contemporary media policy. Respectively, the aspects and levels on which media diversity can be conceptualized have been subject to numerous analyses. The purpose of this paper, however, is neither to review them nor to offer new definitions. Instead, the article will follow Nikolas Rose’s (1999: 29-30) claim that instead of analysing what concepts or words mean, it is sometimes more important to analyse what they do; what they make possible, the sentiments they mobilize, and the ‘regimes of truth’ they constitute. Consequently, my intention is not to seek the foundations of the concept of media diversity or to dwell on its possible definitions, but to locate some contradictions and lines of power in its current use.
Based on the undisputed merits of social, political and cultural pluralism, diversity and variety in the media are desirable ends in themselves. But as McLennan (1995: 7) has noted, the constitutive vagueness of pluralism as a social value gives it enough ideological flexibility so that it is capable of signifying reactionary things in one phase of the debate and progressive things in the next. Similarly, in media policy the positive value of pluralism and diversity has been exploited in arguments for various and often incompatible objectives: for free competition as well as further public interventions and public service obligations. This ambiguity raises a question of whether media diversity in substance amounts to anything more than a fetished catch-phrase.

The article aims to examine the contestation of media diversity as a political objective with a particular focus on how certain definitions and political rationalities become institutionalized and normalized in expert and policy discourses. The analysis is premised on the idea that the contestation of any ethico-political concepts can be analysed on many levels: (1) in normative and theoretical debates, (2) their political, strategic or rhetoric uses, or (3) on the level of implicit political rationalities and evaluation criteria that political considerations rely on. Each level implies a different mode of discourse, explicitly normative, political-strategic, or empirical-objective. While the explicit theoretical and political struggles are better covered in the existing literature on media diversity, I will focus particularly on the third level of contestation, what I call ‘the politics of criteria’. Drawing from the recent research into the role of ideas and concepts in public policy, it can be argued that the ‘success’ of political ideas and paradigms often rely, not on grand ideological clashes, but on their capability to become institutionalized and embedded in the norms, standard practices and calculations of policy-making (see Hay, 2004). This also implies an aim to illustrate how contested political ideas move from one domain to another, from theory to politics and further on to the informational practices of governance, and how they are transformed in the process. The first part of the paper will thus outline the rise of the diversity discourse in European media policy and attempt to expose some of its inherent contradictions and their political implications. Employing the notion of ‘governmental technologies’, the final part of the paper will then discuss some of the techniques used to stabilize, or de-contest, media diversity into a supposedly objective and reliable policy indicator, internalized by policy-makers and experts alike.

Contestation of normative concepts as such is not foreign, or undesirable, to any sector of politics. The aspect of the diversity discourse that I want to focus on here is its technocratisation, i.e. attempts to bring closure to the political contestation in the name of empirical objectivity or expert knowledge. With increasing inclination to develop empirical indicators to measure media diversity, the scholarly and policy discourse on media diversity has arguably shifted to more instrumental considerations and practices that link with the general trends of technocratisation and instrumental rationality in public policy. Even in itself, media diversity as a concept alludes to objectivity and neutrality that seem to transcend the dilemmas inherent in terms such as quality or social responsibility in assessing media performance. This makes it more compatible with both the needs of technocratic expert assessment and the broader ideology of anti-paternalism, pluralism and multiculturalism in media and cultural policy.

Unfortunately, this inclusiveness also serves to veil political conflicts and antagonisms in media policy and often obscures the properly political or normative aspects of evaluating media performance and setting policy objectives. Thus, my paper is not an attempt to define but rather re-politicize and re-contest the concept of media diversity.
After outlining the initial approach, the rationales, contradictions and political consequences of its different uses are discussed here especially in the context of regulatory objectives and evaluation criteria set for (public) broadcasting.

**Governing Media Performance**

To locate the current contribution theoretically, I will briefly situate the approach in terms of the tradition it draws from. Departing from most media policy analyses, politics and policy are here understood neither solely on the basis of competition between interests nor as a battle between some coherent ideological doctrines. Instead, I will focus on the definitional power that both influences the construction of policy problems and delimits the possible alternatives of dealing with them. This brings about questions on how the uses of concepts legitimate and justify certain political aims and practices, and how they form political framings of problems that guide the considerations and possible alternatives of decision-makers.

Derived from Foucault, the concept of governmentality has recently become central to analysing and understanding the rationales and techniques of political power and public policy (see Foucault, 1991; Rose & Miller, 1992; Dean 1999; Rose, 1999). Central to this perspective is the recognition that the activities of government and regulation are always bound up with the developments in knowledge and the powers of expertise. In short, it is premised on the idea that ideas and action are mutually constitutive. As Hay (2002: 258) argues, “it is the ideas actors hold about the context in which they find themselves, rather than the context itself, which ultimately informs the way in which they behave”. This implies that definitions and interpretations of concepts such as media diversity can have political effects independently of actual empirical changes in media structures.

In particular, the discussion in the article is informed by the concepts of political rationalities and governmental technologies. According to Nikol as Rose and Peter Miller (1992), any forms of governance can be analyzed in terms of their political rationalities, “the changing discursive fields within which the exercise of power is conceptualized, the moral justifications for particular ways of exercising power by diverse authorities, notions of appropriate forms, objects and limits of politics and conceptions of the proper distribution of such tasks”. Governmental technologies, on the other hand, refer to the “complex of mundane programmes, calculation, techniques, apparatuses, documents and procedures through which authorities seek to embody and give effect to governmental ambitions” (ibid: 175).

Conceptual definitions and empirical objectifications of media diversity are thus analysed here as intertwining tools of political control. The recognition of governing as a complex activity, which cannot be viewed simply as the implementation of any particular political or normative theory, makes political rationalities conceptually distinct from political philosophies or ideological doctrines. It also means that political rationalities cannot be divorced from the mechanisms or technologies through which thinking about government is put into effect. The incorporation of philosophies or theories into governmental practice always necessitates connection with various administrative techniques and forms of calculation which modify, if not transform, the original theories and their objectives. Such techniques, it is argued, contribute to the governing of a certain area of social life as ‘intellectual machinery’ that renders the world thinkable and amenable to regulation (Rose & Miller, 1992; Rose, 1999). In other words,
governing a sphere requires that it can first be depicted in a way that represents it in a
form in which it can enter the sphere of conscious political calculation. Events need to
be transformed into political language, and furthermore into information, reports and
statistics. And although necessary, these can never be neutral in a sense that they are
always bound to specific political rationalities.

The fact that normatively charged concepts can easily be remoulded for any politi-
cal purposes, need not necessarily be seen as negative but as an inherent aspect of po-
litical contestation. According to Rose and Miller (1992: 178), political discourse by
definition is “a domain for the formulation and justification of idealized schemata for
representing reality, analyzing it and rectifying it”. From this perspective, analysing
policy is not a question of what concepts or words, such as freedom, diversity or democ-

racy, mean but rather of analysing what they do, the way they function in connection
with other elements, what they make possible, the sentiments they mobilize, and regimes
of truth they constitute (Rose 1999: 29-30). Diversity discourse thus serves here as an
example of the role of expert knowledge in the production of political rationalities.
Consequently, my intention is not to seek the foundations of the concept of media di-
versity or to offer new definitions, but to find contradictions, ambiguities and lines of
power in its current use in politics. Equally, the contribution can be conceived as an
attempt at scholarly self-reflection since academic research clearly is one of the main
institutions of intellectual machinery that produce conceptual and empirical means ap-
plied in governing the media.

The Rise of the Diversity Discourse

The breakthrough of the ‘pluralistic consensus’ in Nordic and international debates on
media and cultural policy is usually placed in the 70s and 80s. With the idea that all
forms of culture contain their own criteria of quality and that no definition of quality can
legitimately repudiate another, the universal basis for defining cultural quality was then
broken (Nielsen 2003: 238). This applies particularly well to the media where the pa-
ternalism and elitism often associated with traditional public service values became
under increasing criticism, consequently spurring the need for new legitimating princi-
ples. In television policy, the use of the term media diversity is thus linked to the debates
about deregulation of electronic media that began around Europe in the 1980s, and it
was in policy-making responses to the expansion of commercial broadcasting that the
concept of media diversity began to gain more and more prominence in policy debates

According to a number of writers, defining characteristics of contemporary (post-
modern) political condition in general is radical socio-political pluralism and acceptance
of multiplicity and pluralism in all social experiences, identities, aesthetic and moral
standards (McLennan, 1995; Mouffe, 2000; Kymlicka & Norman, 2000). In this vein
of anti-essentialism, John Keane (1992), for example, has argued that social values such
as democracy and individual freedom should be conceived as means, and necessary
precondition, of protecting philosophical and political pluralism, rather than as essen-
tialist or inherent principles. On the face of it, diversity and pluralism as media policy
goals would thus seem well suited to the contemporary emphasis on de-centralization
and multiculturalism in social theory. Yet, this emphasis, Nielsen (2003: 238) argues, did
not immediately offer new opportunities for the orientation of public policy, but instead,
created an open situation, where the articulations and hegemonic definitions of diver-
sity were and still are contested.

With this in mind, the development of the diversity discourse in European media
policy provides an interesting example of institutionalization and normalization of a
certain policy paradigm and the struggles involved in it. One powerful articulation has
been the equation of diversity with freedom of choice, and the general framework of the
free marketplace of ideas. Within the various discourses that emphasize socio-political
pluralism, the belief in social centralism, rational progress, a homogenous public, and
social engineering have all come to seem politically questionable (McLennan, 1995: 78-
79). Thus, pluralism, variety and choice are generally seen as the opposite of paternal-
ism, constructing an image of media history as a continuum from public regulation and
planning towards ever increasing freedom of choice for the consumer and freedom of
operation for the industry. As influential as it has been, the neoliberal articulation of
diversity and the market is not unquestioned though. The defenders of public service
broadcasting, in particular, have adopted diversity and pluralism as the core of their
remit and consequently promoted a more interventionist articulation of diversity
(Collins, 1998: 62). The Council of Europe and the European Parliament, for example,
have paid ample attention to public service broadcasting as a crucial institution for
guaranteeing media diversity, to an extent that this commitment is now found in number
of European treaties and declarations. Similarly, national legislations all around refer
to diversity and pluralism as both general principles of media policy and specific jus-
tifications or demands for public service broadcasting. In other words, the free market
and public service discourses rely on different political rationalities in interpreting di-
versity and pluralism as media policy goals, the former based on competition and free-
dom of choice and the latter on broader defence of ‘principled pluralism’, an attempt
to serve the whole society with various political views and cultural values (see Van Loon

However, it seems that the discourse of consumer choice has become prevalent
enough to force the defenders of public service to increasingly adapt to it too. Economic
modes of argumentation and economic vocabularies have come to dominate the Euro-
pean media politics in general and freedom of choice for consumers, in particular, has
become a main value to which arguments are based on when deciding on channel li-
censes, norms of regulation or performance assessment (Pauwels, 1998; Venturelli,
suggested to this end that media diversity itself serves as a transitional concept that
conveniently assists a shift from the public service dominance to the market approach.
This is because it frames the discussion on the democratic role of the media as a rea-
sonable difference of opinion between two different ways of achieving the same goal
(diversity of supply). Implicit in such discourse, he argues, is the idea that through devel-
opment of the new media and increased competition, the problems of market failure
might be corrected and the special need for public regulation would be on the way out.

The definitional and discursive power that frames the boundaries of political discus-
sion also depicts in the vicissitudes of media policy in the EU. While the European
Parliament has consistently since the early 90s attempted to raise the issue of media
pluralism to the Commission’s agenda, the attempts to build on a political and cultural
definitions or pluralism and diversity have repeatedly failed due to the opposition of
industry groups and the Commission, and their ability to redefine the terms of the de-
bate (Kaitatzi-Whitlock, 1996; Sarikakis, 2004). First, the questions on pluralism and independence of the media have been relegated under the competition policy, marginalising any problems specific to the media sector (Doyle, 1997). Second, when dealing explicitly with media contents, diversity has been defined as choice between programme types or genres, raising an immediate concern with limiting the remit of public service to producing content that is not profitable or not taken care of by the commercial market (Feintuck, 1999: 59-61; Harrison & Woods, 2001).

**Performance Assessment and Technocratisation of Media Policy**

In addition to the revival of pluralism in social thought, there is another and perhaps related development that is even more pertinent to the present discussion. Hay (2004), for example, has associated the institutionalization of the new neo-liberal policy-paradigm with a shift from normative to more normalized and necessitarian political rationalities. Similarly, Van Cuilenburg and McQuail (2003) have suggested that explicit references to moral and normative components in European media policy debates have largely been supplanted by more market-oriented and supposedly more pragmatic concerns. The socio-political media policy paradigm, which was shaped by normative concerns relating to the needs democracy and the social responsibility of the media, has been replaced by a new paradigm that emphasizes mostly technical and economic considerations. Such considerations are usually presented as pragmatically problem-oriented, and unlike the political practice illegitimately justified by ideologies, rational politics is characterized by treatment of social facts as more like the natural facts, requiring ever-increasing expert knowledge and objective analysis. Following from this, Hay (2004) argues, political rhetoric is increasingly couched in terms of the non-negotiable character of external, either economic or empirical-objective, imperatives, with which the various normative views on the public interest are at pains to reconcile with.

The distinction between market approach of diversity, which emphasizes choice and deregulation, and the public regulation approach, which relies on cultural-political norms of cultural diversity, civic equality and universalism, is not without consequences in terms of this development. While the market definition of diversity is rather easily quantified and measured, the more qualitative and multifaceted public service ideals clearly are not. On the contrary, the remit of public service broadcasting is especially intangible and normative, embedded in the ideas of public sphere, citizenship, pluralism, creativity, national culture, all values that are notoriously difficult to define in an unambiguous way, let alone measure empirically (see Jakubowicz, 2003; Coppens, 2004).

Regardless, there is a general European trend of developing more and more specific objectives and performance criteria for (public) broadcasters to justify their accountability and efficacy. Partly the new accountability is due to the increased criticism and scrutiny of PSB in the EU and by the private broadcasting lobby. Especially the concerns related to competition policy and common market have raised the need to develop tangible criteria to distinguish the domain of public regulation as an exemption from the market principles (Harrison & Woods, 2001: 499; Syvertsen, 2003: 167-168; Coppens, 2004). Moreover, the technocratic trends in media and cultural policy have been associated with a more general set of ideas about the reorganisation of the public sector, known as ‘the new public management” (Nielsen, 2003; McGuigan, 2004). According to Nielsen, the roots of these ideas are in the diminishing possibilities of political de-
cisions to shape policy, and on the other hand, the increasing needs to control social complexity. This has created a need for new administrative instruments of control, “disciplining mechanisms that formally, but potentially also in practice, ensure central government’s continued control over the tasks it has delegated to decentralised levels” (Nielsen 2003: 240).

Thus, the attraction of neutrality and objectivity evidently contribute to the popularity of diversity as the key principle of media policy. For diversity seems more neutral and less value-dependent than quality or social responsibility, making it resistant to any remnants of paternalism in media and cultural policy. Consequently, media diversity is more and more treated in the administrative discourse as an empirical construct, an indicator amenable to objective measurement. Indicators used in such administrative media performance assessment around Europe vary from very elaborate frameworks of qualitative and quantitative assessment to rough calculations of programme type diversity (see Hellman, 2001; Coppens, 2004). In any case, they indicate a commitment to diversity as a measurable concept, a tangible and empirically assessable construct rather than a justification for policy initiatives or another abstract dimension of media freedom. Thus, it seems that the idea of performance assessment based on ‘reliable and objective evidence’ is now firmly embedded in European media policy too, as it has been in the US for some time now (see Howley, 2005). Although there, the demand for objective and reliable empirical evidence in assessing diversity as a policy goal has also met with resistance from various public interest groups who claim that reduction of diversity to a single quantitative measure fails to account for the complexities of media landscape and substitutes mechanical devices for serious analysis of media power (ibid: 103-104).

Indeed, it is not difficult to point out several problems in the administrative discourse of diversity evaluation. To critical theorists concerned with depolitization, the emphasis on instrumental reason and expert knowledge has always been problematic. As Habermas (1996: 45) has put it, rationality in the choice of means often accompanies irrationality in orientation to values, goals and needs, essentially depriving democratic decision-making of its object. With this in mind, all attempts at definitions or measurements of media diversity involve political and normative choices and contestation over the meaningful norms and criteria of setting policy goals that cannot be reduced to mere facts and figures. Thus, attempts to impose common criteria or conceptual framework for analysing media can be seen as attempts to reach political closure, or attempts to stabilize the political contestation and establish certain criteria and concepts as hegemonic.

Following Nielsen’s critique of evaluation practices in cultural policy (2003), I would concur that a formal and technocratic control discourse, with no reference to the general normative debate on the functions of the public sphere and the media, can have comprehensive consequences for the media policy as well. These would potentially include weak public debate on the normative issues related to the organisation and tasks of the media as well as arbitrariness and unintentional consequences in setting policy objectives. Instead, there is a need for reflection of evaluation criteria such as diversity in relation to overall socio-political goals for the public regulation of the media. Above all, there is a need to discuss the underlying overall rationales of media policies, such as supporting pluralistic public sphere, and their relation to other objectives such as economic growth or political integration. For employment of ‘objectives criteria’ in policy decision-making easily misses the fact that these are often contradictory goals whose relative priorities should be politically settled.
Diversity and the Structure of Differences

So is more diversity always better? Belief that diversity can be absolute or linear value is easy enough to repudiate. It might seem that all things plural, diverse and open-ended are to be automatically regarded as good. But as McLennan (1995) has pointed out, in deconstructing it, we are faced with questions of the following order: Is there not a point at which healthy diversity turns into unhealthy dissonance? Does pluralism mean that anything goes? And what exactly are the criteria for stopping the potentially endless multiplication of valid ideas? Even the best known proponent of ‘radical pluralism’ in political philosophy, Chantal Mouffe (2000), explicitly denies the type of extreme pluralism that valorises all forms of difference and espouses heterogeneity without any limits, because for her, such pluralism crucially misses the dimension of the political. Because of its refusal to acknowledge the relations of power involved in the all ‘constructions of differences’, such naïve pluralism is actually compatible with the liberal evasion of politics, converging with the typical liberal illusion of a pluralism without antagonism (ibid: 20).

Similarly, while media diversity clearly denotes heterogeneity on some level, it can be defined in any number of ways and it can refer to any aspect of the media: sources, outlets, opinions as well as genres and representations. In debates on media policy, diversity can refer to the extent which media contents reflect and serve various interests and opinions of the public, or it can refer to the general diffusion of media power in society on the level of ownership, economic structures, and political influence. Considering the variety in possible definitions of diversity, empirical evidence on the relations of different aspects of diversity tends to be very ambiguous too. For instance, it is entirely possible that market competition would enhance the number and variety of program types and genres available to the public, while at the same time reducing the diversity of political views or cultural representation or even excluding some contentious issues altogether.

Consequently, there is no absolute means to define or measure media diversity, but rather it is only intelligible in relation to some criteria and definitions that are deemed more important than the others. As Van Cuilenburg (1998) puts it, media diversity always has to be ‘gauged’ in some way to the variations in social reality. The question arises then, how to conceptualize this relationship. How are the differences against which diversity is examined constructed, institutionalized and operationalized? Here, most studies follow McQuail’s (1992: 144-145) conceptualization, in which the media is seen to contribute to diversity in three ways: (1) by reflecting existing differences in society, (2) by giving equal access to any different points of view, or (3) by offering a wide range of choice for individuals. Each of these implies a different interpretation on the meaning of media diversity and the standard by which it should be assessed. Notably, most empirical approaches are based solely on the third, freedom of choice, while the political value of diversity would seem to rely equally on the broader conceptions of pluralism and reflection of social differences.

Further challenges to the notion of media diversity are posed by technological developments and the complexity of the contemporary media landscape. The suggested shift from the mass broadcasting model to a more differentiated and individualized narrowcast model of communication only adds to the blurring of the line between public and private communication. Although the technological development would seemingly diversify the uses of media, it has also brought about fears of fragmentation, extreme individualism, loss of common public platforms, and their consequences for the public.
sphere (see Gibbons, 2000; Sunstein, 2003). Van Cuilenburg (1998: 41) has presented some of these problems in ‘diversity paradoxes’, contradictions between the aspects of diversity that cannot be reconciled. For instance, more reflective diversity usually goes with less diversity in terms of equal access for all groups. Similarly, the explosion of information increases choice but also bring along waste and overload of information. Even though the expansion of channels might lead to increased choice, there is no corresponding effect on the citizens’ access to relevant information. On the contrary, increase in the diversity of supply may reduce the actual consumption of diversity (exposure diversity) (Gibbons, 2000: 308-311; Van der Wurff, 2004: 216). Consequently, Van Cuilenburg (1998: 45) goes as far as claiming that these paradoxes make diversity in information and opinion completely fictious, a mythical concept with no practical meaning. For, he argues, the real issue for media policy is not lack of information but information accessibility, particularly access to new and innovative ideas and opinions of small cultural minority groups.

**Diversity Assessment as Governmental Technology**

In the above, I have dealt with some of the problems and normative contradictions involved with media diversity as a theoretical concept. But, as emphasized, governing a sphere cannot be viewed simply as the implementation of any particular political or normative doctrines. The incorporation of these models into governmental practice always necessitates connection with various administrative techniques and forms of calculation which modify, if not transform, the theories and their objectives. As noted earlier, political rationalities cannot be divorced from the mechanisms or technologies through which thinking is put into effect and through which they become institutionalized and normalized in the practices and calculations of policy-making.

If the debate on diversity as an objective is seen in terms of battling political rationalities, we should also take a look at the means through which they are translated into governmental technologies. Leaning on the discussion of the ambiguity of media diversity as a normative principle, I will turn to the consequences of what I see as one such technology, the conceptualization of diversity of television programming as a measurable and empirically tangible variable. There are countless approaches for assessing media performance, based on content analysis, market analysis, political economy approach and many others. In terms of diversity, information on the structural diversity of the media system has been rather easily available in the forms of research on market shares, concentration of ownership and sheer number of outlets, but when diversity is regarded as referring specifically to media contents, the empirical approach becomes much more problematic both methodologically and politically.

Regardless, there is an established field of academic empirical diversity research in addition to the governmental and regulatory commissioned studies on the diversity of television programming (see Napoli, 1999; Hellman, 2001; van der Wurff, 2004; Aslama et al, 2004). In principle such research can take any aspect of diversity as a meaningful variable, but in most cases, studies on television programming have focused on the diversity of programme types. According to van der Wurff, programme-type diversity is considered is a meaningful indicator of diversity, because (1) it is deemed a relevant criteria when making viewing choices, and (2) it is deemed important policy indicator and monitor by the regulators and governments, for instance of whether (public) service broadcasters offer enough specific programme types. In truth, pragmatic reasons
having to with the ease of operationalisation and classification probably have as much to do with it though. In any case, the interpretation of diversity in terms of programme types or genres has consequently become the common focus of both scholarly and policy debates on media diversity (van der Wurff 2004: 216).

The specifics of operationalisation can be endlessly discussed, but the focus of my criticism here is more general. Articulating diversity with any empirical index, instead of viewing it in the context of the political contestation, has political consequences more insidious than the debate on methods of measurement implies. However, by way of illustrating the choices inherent in any empirical tools, I will focus my critique on a few specific problems with this type of research and especially with the notion of programme type diversity.

First, I argue that the emphasis on freedom of choice as a normative framework is limited in terms of conceptualizing media diversity, for it presumes consumers whose differentiated preferences are best satisfied by offering a variety of different types of programming. Thus, media is conceptualized as a consumer good like any other with no reference to reflection of different social values, openness to new ideas, or other aspects associated with political and cultural pluralism. Second, the status of programme types as meaningful variable is not only incomplete but itself politically problematic. Reduction of diversity to variation of programme types reflects on the broader issues with political consequences. In particular, it marginalizes any qualitative or holistic ideals that characterize public service broadcasting. In addition, I have already argued that there are principled reasons to criticize the enchantment to empirical diversity research. By representing media diversity as a measurable variable, instead of a contested political value, it turns media policy away from values and public deliberation towards instrumental rationality and technocratic decision-making. In doing so, philosophical and political ideals that media policy declarations are reaching for are in danger of turning into mere rhetoric.

**The Fallacy of Free Choice**

As noted, political rationalities can be conceived as paradigms or cognitive schemas through which political problems are conceptualized. Among the central metaphors through which almost any public policy is conceived today are naturally the marketplace and ‘choice’. As Zygmunt Bauman (1997) puts it, freedom of choice has become the main stratifying variable in our multidimensionally stratified societies, to an extent that choosing is everybody’s fate. Only the ranges of realistic choices differ and so do the resources needed to make them.

In the tradition of critical political economy of the media, models based on free competition and choice have long been criticized for ignoring that choice is always pre-structured by the conditions of competition. The belief that consumer choice directs the media in accordance with the general will of the people misses that the influence of the consumer is passive, reactive rather than proactive, and the extent of alternatives for choice is always limited by the structural effects, such as the concentration of ownership, high costs for market entry, advertising, unequal representations and political influences (Curran 2002: 227-230). More eloquently, Bauman (1999: 73-78) explains that throughout modernity, the principal tool of ‘setting the agenda for choice’ or preselection has been legislation, a tool which political institutions are now abandoning. However, this ‘liberalisation’ does not necessarily mean that the freedom of choice
is expanding, but that the power of preselection is being ceded to other than political institutions, above all the markets themselves. Consequently, the code or criteria of preselection is changing, and among the values towards which choosers are trained orient their choices, short-term pleasure, hedonism, entertainment and other market-generated needs come to occupy a superior place. Thus, Bauman argues that the late-modern emphasis on the freedom of choice and individual autonomy has not really increased individual freedom, but has instead lead to unfreedom, transformation of a political citizen to a consumer of market goods.

The simplistic equation of media diversity to market competition and free choice thus fails to take into account the wider relations of power in which the media are situated. Contrary to the language of ‘the free marketplace of ideas’ where the market is seen as self-regulating and spontaneous mediator, the market itself is a politically designed institution, not a homogenous, unstructured and unregulated natural entity. As Keane (1992: 119) notes, the actual shape of the markets must always be crafted by political and legal regulation and it hardly emerges spontaneously as a neutral mediator of civil society. Secondly, any market also imposes its own criteria of preselection that necessarily limits the range of public choices.

Leaving philosophical critique aside, the prevailing definitions of diversity can also be seen as reversely analogous to the logic of marketing and its construction of hypothetic target audiences. Ien Ang (1991) criticized the biases inherent in official knowledge about television audience some time ago by drawing from Foucault’s power/knowledge thematic. According to Ang, the institutional forms of knowledge production, such as ratings and target groups, construct audiences into objects of control and consequently suppress the actual complexity of understanding audiences. In a way, current diversity measurement bears a reverse analogy to this, for it reduces the cultural institution of television programming to distribution system of goods that satisfies a pre-defined set of hypothetical preferences. Thus, calculating indexes on the distribution of programme types sheds no light on the diversity of views and representations in the media, nor does it account for the general diffusion of media power on the structural level. However, in addition to being insufficient, such indicators can have more insidious consequences politically.

Another dubious feature of diversity indicators is their customary reliance on industry-generated data. As the original criteria for the selection of such data and criteria are often inaccessible to the public, their measure of ‘objectivity’ and ‘reliability’ must inevitably fall under suspicion. This is also a more general flaw of such administrative research. Analysing evaluation practices in cultural policy, Nielsen has concluded in general that the criteria for evaluation in such evaluation often remain poorly illuminated and the assessment appears as a goal in itself, as control for control’s sake, as “secular rituals that modern, fundamentally incalculable and intractable society invents in order to maintain confidence in its own rationality” (Nielsen, 2003: 240). Taken that diversity always needs to be gauged to some external social reality, in relation to what is it gauged when it is based on already existing categories of programming, the definitions of the very same institutions whose performance it claims to assess? Is it too far-fetched to conclude that this makes up a circular argument that serves the self-legitimating function of affirming the ‘rationality’ of political choices and the existing media system?

I have already hinted at some particular problems with the empirical research of programme-type diversity and the institution of public service broadcasting. Quite apart from the methodological problems involved in analysing the public broadcasters per-
formance (see Jakubowicz, 2003), there are fundamental and principled problems particularly with the notion of programme type diversity. Although public broadcasters have generally, and due to their own benefit, not been in a hurry to discredit the existing frameworks of performance assessment, there are some principled problems that are ill compatible with the ethos of public service. Defining public service broadcasting in terms of programme type or genres, an assumption which is implicit in much of the debate, is in many ways inconsistent with the broad-ranging cultural and social aspirations of PSB that are not based on any quantitative or measurable criteria (Harrison & Woods, 2001: 495). Also implicit in much of the diversity research is an idea of a ‘division of labour’ between channels, but the division of labour applies only to supply, and not to exposure (Napoli, 1999; van Wurff, 2004). In addition, this line of argument easily leads to the conclusion that public service remit should be limited to serving the underserved and underprivileged audience with commercially non-profitable content.

Of course, market analysts have vested interest in utilising analytic frames that lock people into the roles of consumers and segmented audiences, defined by specific consumer preferences (Nielsen, 2003: 243). The general premises of democratic media policy, however, are not conceived with respect simply to creating satisfied customers. At least this does not exhaust the meaning of the declarations on the value of freedom, pluralism and other routinely and consensually praised objectives of public media policies. Nielsen (2003: 243) states rather high-mindedly that: “By virtue of its empowering and enlightening objective, public cultural policy cannot be content with works or activities that only aim to please and confirm superficial preferences and opinions. On the contrary, an important element in the practice of public cultural policy is to create activities that challenge these immediate private preferences, and a central criterion for success and for quality, will be precisely whether these activities are capable of facilitating experimental processes that open the mind and senses of the public to something they didn’t know they wanted”. Although highbrow, the quote captures the contradiction between the logics of cultural policy and competition policy that seems so pervasive in contemporary media policy. Yet, it can’t be assumed that this dilemma of pluralism will be solved by doing away with politics and turning political considerations into either private matters of individual choice or expert consideration.

Conclusion

The values and meanings associated with pluralism and diversity are open-ended and subject to continuous process of social negation, and it is not feasible to invoke an absolute final value or an authority (scientific, moral or political), to establish the relevant norms and criteria for their assessment. Nicholas Garnham (2000: 165-166) has noted that moral absolutes such as freedom of speech are especially susceptible to being mobilized for political interests because of their unquestioned and mythological status that prevents the critical examination of their premises. The core argument of this article is thus that questions of media structure and performance are essentially political and ideological questions that imply a dialogue between different values. Respectively, the choices made to assess the state of various demands posed to the structure of communication will depend, not only on the choice of objective method of assessment, but upon different visions of society and the public sphere. However, the recent trends of rationalisation or technocratisation of public policy point to growing incapacity to deal with such questions in political terms, as requiring not simply technical but properly politi-
In response, there have been numerous calls in political theory to return to a more normative (and democratic) form of politics (Mouffe, 1993, 2000; Hay, 2004). In line with this aim, this paper set out to demystify and deconstruct some of the rationalist premises upon which public legitimation of media policy is premised on.

It can be claimed that this emphasis on public debate and democratic politics is rather uncontroversial, even revealing a fair amount of naïveté. There will always be need to make policy decisions on the distribution of various privileges and resources and base those decision on deficient information. Criticizing empirical assessment from the vantage point of political and normative ideals is perhaps too easy, since there are always trends that fall outside the chosen indicators and data, and these shortcomings in general need no reminder. Therefore, the biggest problem of such research is not that they are insufficient but that they create an illusion – although not entirely through their own fault – that questions of media diversity or media performance in general could ever be conceptually unambiguous problems that can be solved by technical means. From this perspective, diversity measurement should be seen more as an addition to media policy debate, rather than as an ‘objective’ technocratic instrument that provides the absolute criteria or authority to police the media.

A lot of the uneasiness raised by the questions of cultural evaluation and policy has to do with the general problem of reflecting on values in both administrative and theoretical debates. As McQuail (1997) notes, the academic variant of media policy analysis has typically been long on ‘realism’, anxious to appear economically and technologically literate, and rather short on idealism and fundamental criticism. Cultural studies, on the other hand, shunning the formal legal-economic discourse, are more inclined to interpret or celebrate than to problematize or politicize. Although I have emphatically criticized the way diversity is conceptualized in the administrative policy research, it is not clear whether the reputedly more critical approaches of cultural analysis fare any better. In their incapacity or unwillingness to deal with the broader structures of communication and its political and social contexts, the mainstream of cultural studies has not contributed much to the debate on the norms and values of media regulation either (Ferguson & Golding, 1997). Actually, many have argued that the stress on popular consumption, active audiences, and individual creation of meaning are actually rather complicit with the neo-liberal idea of consumer sovereignty (Gitlin, 1997; McGuigan, 1997; Garnham, 2000). Thus, repeated appeals to complexity, pluralism and contingency of media culture may also reflect the inability of researchers to really tackle the politically sensitive issues of media performance and the norms of evaluation.

As this growing uneasiness with the populism of much of the cultural studies indicates, it is becoming increasingly clear that the treacherous questions of value and quality can never be totally averted in cultural evaluation and policy-making. As McQuail (1997: 49) grudgingly concedess, “The only alternative to considered and coherent media policy seems to be the patently messy and intellectually incoherent attempt to uphold somewhat arbitrarily chosen values (with sometimes dubious undercurrents and allies)”. Similarly, the criticism presented above is more suggestive and provocative than particularly analytic. It is not undesirable per se that broadcasters are accountable of their performance or that this is somehow monitored. But the developments I have discussed become problematic when the criteria developed for assessment begin to guide the overall norms and aims of public policy, and not the other way around. What can be expected from administrative, and especially scholarly, evaluation discourse is critical self-reflection in terms of the concepts, indicators and criteria they employ. In addition to devel-
oping new criteria of assessment, there is a need to ask, what aspects do the existing criteria emphasise, what are their premises, and what political consequences they may have.

The present complexity and multiformity of media systems and media use itself precludes any attempts to impose any unambiguous criteria for assessing the public interest. In this situation of change in both media and policy, it can be argued the very nature of policy-making is changing, bringing about a need for new approaches to its analysis as well. With more positive aims, McQuail (1992: 312) as well as Van Cuilenburg (1998) have suggested that a revised agenda for performance assessment should put more attention to structures of provision and to audience and reception. In one recent attempt worth mentioning, a concept of ‘social demand’ has been proposed as a way of combining the policy studies and audience research (Raboy et al, 2003). As an empirical notion it distinguishes itself from the politico-philosophical notions of public interest, but it also goes beyond the individual preferences mediated by the market, the purpose being to seek new grounds to analyse the objectives of media policy, their legitimacy, and to produce useful and relevant information for the needs of public policy. Other comparable possibilities are many and beyond the scope of this paper, but in any case, it seems that relevant assessment of media performance – and engagement with diverse value choices inherent in the use of notions such as ‘quality’ or ‘diversity’ – for policy or other purposes requires a combination of various approaches. In terms of media diversity, the unsolved problem remains, how to conceptualize the need for pluralism and diversity, inherent in all normative accounts of the public sphere, without falling in the trap of relativism, indifference, and unquestioning acceptance of market-driven difference and consumerism.

In any case, what needs to be remembered with all assessment and evaluation is that means and ends ought to be kept separate. Setting political ends is a properly political and normative question that ought to guide the choice of means and methods, not the other way around. In the end, questions related to the normative ideals of media systems, quality, or public interest can never be measured by any other means than by public debate and deliberation. Attempts to cut corners and solve value questions once and for all, whether through invisible hand of the market or through scientific methods, are all equally weak.

Notes
1. In its broadest definition, media diversity refers to the heterogeneity on the level of contents, outlets, ownership or any other aspect of the media deemed relevant. Different frameworks have been suggested to analyze its different subcomponents, such as source, content, and exposure diversity, and their hierarchies and relations (see McQuail, 1992; Napoli, 1999; Hellman, 2001). There is also some confusion regarding the difference, or a possible hierarchy, between the concepts ‘media diversity’ and ‘media pluralism’. Here, I will not make a systematic distinction but will primarily employ the concept ‘media diversity’, especially when referring to the empirical approaches, while pluralism is understood as a more diffuse social value. In any case, both function as umbrella terms or conceptual categories that I have no intention to define in the article.
2. The relationship between the number of media outlets and the diversity (however defined) of available content and the actual content that is watched is all but linear as a plethora of contradictory and ambiguous research on the effects of competition and ownership structures on content attest (see McQuail, 1992; Meier & Trappel, 1998; van der Wurff, 2004; Aslama et al, 2004).
References


Between Individualism and Community

On Media Consumption, Political Interest and the Public

JOHANNES ANDERSEN & NIELS NØRGAARD KRISTENSEN

Abstract

Media consumption in Denmark as well as other western democracies seems to be in transition in several ways. Fewer people keep up with politics and societal developments. Still, on the other hand, people show considerable political confidence and belief in personal political skills as well as in possibilities for making a “difference”. Often this phenomenon is given a theoretical foundation in the notion of “reflexive individualization”.

This chapter draws the contours of an emerging role of political citizenship and identity: The individualized citizen. Embodied here is a character which is highly engaged and interested in politics, but at the same time does not follow along with current events in the media.

The media continues to play an important role as a central tie between laymen and political authorities but its status and functioning is changing and its decisive role in democracy might be in decay.

The individualized citizen represents a subjectivization and individualization of the political. The awareness and the scope and horizon of political orientations and engagement is increasingly turned on towards personal interests – possibly resulting in an erosion of the public spirit or the common good. The final section of the chapter also discusses possible consequences of a gradual cut between political elites and ordinary citizens.

Key Words: media consumption, political interest, the public sphere, reflexive individualization, political identity, political communication

Introduction

Media consumption in Denmark and other traditional democracies is changing dramatically. Fewer and fewer people take the time to read their newspaper thoroughly, and the number of daily readers is also falling slightly (the spread of the distribution of free newspapers has meant that newspaper readership has not fallen more dramatically than is already the case). The radio is increasingly used as entertainment and background music instead of as a key to orienting oneself about central political events. There are still many television viewers, of course, but there are no longer quite as many who are primarily interested in using the television to orient themselves and keep up with politics and the general developments in society. As with the radio, the television is increas-
ingly used for entertainment, and most people have few qualms about skipping a news transmission or two. Finally, conceptualizations are developing as regards the diverse stream of political information and debates that have become accessible as a result of the spread of the Internet.

At the same time, reflexive individualization has made an increasing impact (Giddens 1996), which has, among other things, contributed to the dramatic weakening of, e.g., class identity, the right-left orientation in political questions and close connections between voters and parties. At the same time, the political self-confidence of modern citizens has been fortified. They know more and more about what they want and what they do not, as well as how to get what they want. They are not afraid of raising their demands to the authorities and politicians, and they are constantly considering how they can position themselves optimally in the political universe (Goul Andersen et al. 2000), including the media sources they can use and how they can best approach an issue if they wish to influence the public debate. In other words, the media continue to play a role as a central tie between the population and political authorities. This is based on the logic that when something is going on in the public, i.e. something that has attracted the attention of the central media, the authorities must address it (Togeby et al. 2003, p. 215).

In short, significant tendencies can be observed in terms of a change in one cornerstone of the political public, i.e. the media. On the one hand, their ‘natural’ status as the forum and channel for disseminating political debate and information is weakened, while on the other, they are increasingly employed in strategic communication with the people they wish to impact; for example, in the case of a young couple that uses the media to expose a real estate company and problematic legislation after having been cheated out of an apartment (Politiken, 19.07.2005). At the same time, political engagement is becoming increasingly individualized, which is among the factors contributing to a weakening of social capital (Putnam 2000, p. 216ff).

The result of these two tendencies is not necessarily a weakening of the public’s political interest and political participation. Actually, further to reflexive individualization, one can easily imagine widespread political participation and interest. Nor does it necessarily mean that the media are losing their significance, but rather their status and function. However, the central question is whether this combination of the shift in the placement of the media in the public sphere and the increasing individualization of the political sphere has a decisive impact on the political culture, e.g., whether it affects the character of the public’s political interest. This will be examined more closely in the following sections.

**Political Engagement, the Media and the Public**

Political interest is fundamentally structured around two factors: on the one hand, knowledge about political conditions and, on the other, normative engagement in the form of basic opinions about what is good and bad in society. The more one knows, the more engaged one becomes, as one sees the perspectives and consequences in any given situation. Moreover, the more one becomes engaged in relation to a given perspective or phenomenon, the more political interest one displays.

The balance between these two elements cannot be determined beforehand, but one cannot approach political questions on the basis of knowledge alone. A normative element is necessary if one is to point out a perspective for political engagement. Nor can
one focus on opinions alone. A minimum of knowledge about what is going on is necessary in order to relate normatively to the developments in society. The two factors are therefore very closely interrelated. Naturally, the ideal is a combination of comprehensive knowledge and a pronounced normative political interest.

Nor is it simple to determine what is impacting what according to a development perspective. Knowledge affects personal involvement and one’s interests, while at the same time personal involvement often means that the individual citizen acquires experience with political life and the opportunities one can pursue in order to make a difference, which again often leads to an increased need for information and knowledge (Buckingham 2000). In any case, there is talk of contexts that are closely associated with the political public, political socialization and political learning, and thereby also closely connected in practice with media consumption.

In order to further illustrate the questions referred to in the above, attention in the following is devoted to the connection between political interest and media consumption in Denmark. This connection can be illustrated in a figure combining interest and media consumption. The result is a typology consisting of four different citizen types, as indicated in Figure 1. Further to this point, one can articulate a number of assumptions regarding central development tendencies and thereby a number of theses that will be pursued more closely below.

**Figure 1. Political Interest and Media Consumption**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of the media for political orientation</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Occasionally or rarely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Widespread Political interest</td>
<td>The active citizen is involved and well-oriented. Here, great political interest is combined with extensive media usage and presumably also with extensive political participation.</td>
<td>The individualistic citizen is involved without keeping up with political events through the media. A citizen who possibly first and foremost believes in her own subjective interests. Here, widespread political interest is combined with limited media consumption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited Political interest</td>
<td>The faithful citizen feels that one is obligated to keep up with political events. Or the conservative citizen, who must assure herself that the world is still there, and otherwise simply continues with her daily routine. Here, extensive – perhaps ritual or habitual – media consumption is combined with a limited political interest.</td>
<td>The indifferent citizen, who is not interested in politics or community. Here we observe a lack of political interest combined with limited media consumption in relation to politics. Conversely, one can easily imagine extensive media usage for entertainment purposes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two classical types are the active and indifferent citizens, which traditionally represent polar opposites. Numerous studies have been carried out for the purpose of identifying these types more closely (preferably with grading between the two poles)
The point made in these studies has often been that the role as citizen is an invitation extended to the citizen to become an active citizen; just as it has also been broadly perceived that the greater the citizen’s experience with political participation, the greater the likelihood that he/she will be active. This is entirely in keeping with the traditional perceptions of the significance of political learning (Nørgaard Kristensen 1998). At the same time, it has also long been held by many that those assuming the active citizen role simultaneously develop a political perspective that emphasizes the democratic community, i.e. both the democratic norms and procedures, on the one hand, and a political perspective that entails fighting for the good life for the benefit of the community, on the other. This is a basic assumption in a long number of theories about political engagement (Bang et al. (ed.) 2000).

The passive citizen is regarded as the precondition for the active citizen, and the active citizen is, in turn, a precondition for the functioning of a democratic political system. If nobody will assume the role of, e.g., candidate for a popularly elected assembly, active party member and debating citizen, the democratic system cannot function. On the other hand, it is not necessary for everyone to be active, meaning that both positions are legitimate.

The position as faithful citizen has also traditionally played a certain role, but theoretically it has not been regarded as a central figure. Citizenship as an obligation has always represented a logical possibility, but as long as the engagement has solely been motivated by a sense of obligation and not an actual interest in becoming involved in the political sphere, it has been difficult to respect this position. This citizen type is all too reminiscent of passive and faithful (party) soldiers who do what they are told.

The latter position or type is identified as the individualistic citizen, which embodies something of a contradiction: a citizen who is engaged and interested in politics, but does not follow along with current events in the media. This poses a theoretical and practical challenge, and there has not been significant focus on this variant in the past. As reflexive individualization continues to spread, however, there is reason to take this combination seriously, as there can well be talk of a citizen type that is on the rise, not least among the youngest generations. Furthermore, there is talk of a citizen who first and foremost emphasizes subjective engagement and the interest in making a difference to advance his/her own interests instead of pursuing knowledge, nuances and optimal solutions for the common good.

In other words, the fundamental assumption in this article is that the individualistic citizen is the logical result of societal developments in recent years, and that the position represents a subjectivization and individualization of the political, which may be tantamount to a weakening of the democratic community. On the basis of this assumption – that citizens increasingly pursue their own interests and legitimize their political choices or interests on the basis of a perception that this is the way they simply think that things should be done – then less consideration is granted to the common good and to political issues being regarded from more than one side. But of course, the question is whether this is indeed the case.

In the following, our inquiry will first focus on whether the individualistic citizen type is becoming increasingly widespread or whether it is a marginal and therefore rather uninteresting category.

Second, our investigation will focus on whether the individualistic citizen holds a different view on, e.g., politics and democratic norms than does the population at large. The assumption is that this group has a particular perspective on the political, such that
their own interests are in focus. The consequence of this may be that one then also underestimates the ordinary democratic norms. If this is the case, then it is truly possible to point out long-term democratic problems. On the other hand, while one is able to observe a group of individualistic citizens, they may not distinguish themselves significantly from the rest of the population. There is, therefore, no reason to talk about dramatic democratic problems. We will primarily rely on quantitative data when examining this more closely.

Third, we will examine in more detail the manner in which this group articulates their own relationship to politics and the media in practice. Why has one group – despite their political involvement – not included the news coverage provided by the conventional media as a pivotal point in their everyday life? The hope here is that it will be possible to open the discussion to questions of relevance to political learning and political socialization. Qualitative data will predominantly be employed to this end.

**The Individualistic Citizen**

There is evidence indicating that observations regarding the presence of individualistic citizens in Danish society are not entirely awry. For example, Table 1 indicates the spread of the types referred to above. In practice, of course, actual media use may be quite different. Some rely on the newspaper, while others depend more on the television; some use all forms of media, while others only use a single media source.

The general typology in Table 1 is constructed on the basis of a comparison of three different forms of media consumption: the use of newspapers, radio and television. If one uses at least one of these media sources daily to acquire information about politics, one is tallied as an active media consumer. As there is considerable overlap between the different forms of media consumption, this coupling means that 50 per cent of the Danish population can be characterized as active media users, as they at least make use of the newspaper, radio or television – or all of the above – to obtain news about politics.

**Table 1. Political Interest and General Media Consumption in Relation to Keeping up with Political Events, 2004 (per cent)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political interest Widespread</th>
<th>Limited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of the media for political orientation</td>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Occasionally or rarely</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are also different ways of calculating political interest. In this study, the people indicating that they are ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ interested in politics are placed together, while those saying that they are only ‘slightly’ or ‘not at all’ interested in politics are placed together. The result is that 63 per cent claim an interest in politics, while 37 per cent only have a limited interest in politics.

These two calculations have been cross-referenced in Table 1, which demonstrates the general division into the four types. As expected, the ‘active citizen’ is the most widespread type, covering 40 per cent of the population. The ‘indifferent citizen’ in-
cludes 27 per cent of the population, while 23 per cent of the population falls into the ‘individualistic’ category. Finally, only 10 per cent can be regarded as ‘faithful citizens’.

Examining the social background of the four citizen types more closely, as accounted for in Table 2, it is hardly surprising that men, the so-called ‘68-generation’, the post-war generation, seniors, and persons with secondary schooling are all over-represented among the active citizens. This is entirely in line with other studies of political activity.

Table 2. Citizen Types and Social Background, 2004 (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citizens</th>
<th>The active</th>
<th>The individualistic</th>
<th>The faithful</th>
<th>The indifferent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age – year of birth:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-87</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-74</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945-59</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930-44</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 1930</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary school</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school, e.i. high school</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 also illustrates that men and youth are overrepresented among the individualistic citizens. This provides a sense that there may in fact be some truth to the notion that the individualistic citizen type can be perceived as a logical consequence of contemporary societal developments, which is supported by the fact that this type is manifested most clearly among young people.

As regards the faithful citizen, women, the post-war generation and persons with very limited education (no secondary education) are overrepresented. Finally, women and the 80s-generation are overrepresented in the indifferent group. The latter might be somewhat surprising, but this is in fact in line with other studies indicating that young people are generally uninterested in politics. In other words, among the two youngest generations, one can observe a polarization of the political culture among young people, with the ‘interested’ on one side and the ‘uninterested’ on the other. What they have in common is that they do not keep up with the news on a daily basis.

It is not possible to make generalizations about developmental tendencies on the basis of a single study. Doing so requires data from several different points in time. Such an account is presented in Table 3, which indicates the combination of political interest and media consumption for a number of different media sources, as observed in 1990, 1998 and 2004. Again, there is reason to proceed with caution when making (too) firm conclusions about developmental tendencies. Thus, the development in political interest does not merely reflect a long-term tendency; it is also influenced by actual
events, which for a brief period of time can spark extraordinary bursts of interest. This was the case in 1998, when both an exciting political situation surrounding an election to the Danish parliament, the Folketing, and dramatic events in the EU prompted interest to surge to unusually high levels. Since that time, it has settled down to the ‘ordinary’ level.

Table 3.  Political Interest and Media Activity, 1990, 1998 and 2004 (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use the following media to keep up with political events:</th>
<th>Political interest 1990</th>
<th>Political interest 1998</th>
<th>Political interest 2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interested</td>
<td>Not interested</td>
<td>Interested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often/daily</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally or rarely</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often/daily</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally or rarely</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often/daily</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally or rarely</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often/daily</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally or rarely</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>61</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That said, it is especially possible to examine the development in the use of newspapers more closely. We have examined three different years in order to observe development, and the tendency is quite clear: There are an increasing number of politically interested people who do not use the newspaper on a daily basis to keep up with politics. In other words, on the basis of newspaper consumption alone, there would appear to be an increasing number of individualistic citizens. At the same time, the number of indifferent citizens is increasing, while the number of faithful citizens is falling drastically; yet another observation that is hardly surprising. Who wants to subscribe to a newspaper just on the basis of tradition when one can obtain the ‘necessary’ information by other means and no longer must subscribe to a specific newspaper because of party affiliation or the like?

When it comes to radio and television use, the study only includes two different years, of which one (1998) in particular unfolds in a situation that met with especially great political interest. Nevertheless, a picture demonstrating the same tendency begins to appear. There is an increasing number of individualistic citizens and more indifferent citizens, while there are fewer active citizens, as indicated both by radio and television use. Internet use is also included in this account, but here there are still so few daily users that it cannot be construed as an alternative to the other media. Internet use is therefore hardly interesting in this connection.

After getting this far, we thus assume that over the course of the past 15 years, there has been an increasing number of individualistic citizens in Denmark. These are citizens who are interested in politics, on the one hand, but who keep up with the news in the media to a limited extent, on the other. The question now is whether they represent a new
group with a unique political culture, in which the subjective and individualistic aspects are at the forefront at the expense of democratic norms and a sense of the common good, or whether this group only distinguishes itself from the rest of the population as regards its media habits. This will be examined more closely in the following section.

**Individualism, Politics and Democratic Norms**

The data available for this study enable us to look more closely at the extent to which the individualistic citizens distinguish themselves from others in terms of levels of knowledge, political self-confidence and democratic norms. There is only talk of isolated snapshots, but hopefully these snapshots will provide a sense of what – possibly – is at play in relation to the political culture of the different groups.

The point of departure is the assumption that reflexive individualization is most apparent in terms of an emphasis on personal interests, subjectivization and an interest in personally making a difference in relation to the political sphere at the expense of the emphasis on democratic norms, orientation in relation to the community and the strengthening of the opportunities available to the people to exercise influence.

When it comes to the individual’s assessment of his/her own insight and knowledge about politics, the active citizens score highest. This is apparent in Table 4. This may not be particularly surprising, as they are people who are both interested in politics and follow the news media on a daily basis. It is therefore quite natural that many of those exhibiting this type of behavior perceive themselves as people with a good understanding of politics; however, they are very closely followed by the individualistic citizens, whose level is almost as high as that of active citizens. And both are far above the levels of the faithful and the indifferent, the latter in particular. Unfortunately, the available data do not include questions about actual knowledge, rendering it impossible to test the assessments of the respondents in practice.

The active and individualistic persons also frequently discuss politics and pursue arguments and their own viewpoints in these discussions, yet again far above the level found among the faithful and the indifferent. However, one might have expected that especially conversations with others would be what provided better insight for the individualistic citizens – on the grounds that they do not make use of news media on a daily basis – but there is no evidence indicating that discussions play a particular role here. As already mentioned, they follow the *active* type relatively closely.

As regards self-confidence, it is hardly surprising that the active citizens exhibit the highest levels of political self-confidence. This is entirely in line with the most common assumptions regarding political socialization and learning, where political interest motivates the individual to become involved in activities that provide experiences that again contribute to the reinforcement of self-confidence (Goul Andersen 2000, Kaid (ed.) 2004, p. 357f). As shown in Table 4, 40 per cent of them would take the political initiative if they found there was reason for doing so. And they also have a certain measure of faith that the Danish parliament, the Folketing, and the government listen to them when they speak. The individualistic citizens do not have quite the same high level of political self-confidence. First and foremost, they have considerable doubts as to whether they would take the initiative if the Folketing were considering proposed legislation that was regarded as unjust or dangerous. This is something that can hardly be related to the individualist approach, as inquiry is directly leveled at both individual and collective initiatives. In any case, the confidence among individuals lies close to the
When considering tolerance towards religious extremists and racists, the individualistic citizens demonstrate a rather vacillating course. Their tolerance is lowest in relation to religious extremists, while it is greatest in relation to groups who are judgmental about other races and ethnic groups.

Finally, the individualistic citizens do not distinguish themselves significantly from others in relation to views on politics and democracy. They do not demonstrate a unique

### Table 4. Assessment of Knowledge about Politics and Democracy in Denmark, Together with Political Self-confidence, 2004 (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Per cent that agree with the following statement:</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Individualistic</th>
<th>Faithful</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
<th>Ave.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues in Denmark.</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe other people in Denmark are more informed about politics and government activities than I am.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often discuss politics when I am together with friends, family or colleagues.</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I have a strong opinion about a political issue, I often try to convince my friends, family or colleagues that they ought to share my views.</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-confidence</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is likely that – alone or together with others – I would do something if the Danish parliament, the Folketing, was considering legislation that I felt was unjust or detrimental.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I were to do/organize something, I believe that the Parliament would deal with my views seriously.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People like me don’t have any influence on what the government does.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>View on politics and democracy in Denmark</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referenda are a good way of making political decisions.</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political parties encourage people to become active in politics.</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political parties do not provide voters with genuine choices.</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious extremists must have the right to conduct public meetings.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups that are judgmental of other races or ethnic groups must have the right to conduct public meetings.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment of the wellbeing of democracy (0: poor – 10: good):</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Today</td>
<td>8.06</td>
<td>7.58</td>
<td>7.64</td>
<td>7.27</td>
<td>7.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 years ago</td>
<td>7.94</td>
<td>7.28</td>
<td>7.12</td>
<td>6.73</td>
<td>7.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 years from now</td>
<td>7.27</td>
<td>6.97</td>
<td>6.81</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>6.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

average, which must be seen in connection with the observation that self-confidence among the faithful and indifferent citizens is relatively low.

When considering tolerance towards religious extremists and racists, the individualistic citizens demonstrate a rather vacillating course. Their tolerance is lowest in relation to religious extremists, while it is greatest in relation to groups who are judgmental about other races and ethnic groups.

Finally, the individualistic citizens do not distinguish themselves significantly from others in relation to views on politics and democracy. They do not demonstrate a unique
form of critique or cynicism in relation to the political parties, nor does their assessment of the value of referenda deviate from the other groups. One can possibly catch a glimpse of a measure of critique as regards the notion that the parties constitute the path to genuine political choices, but this tendency is not entirely clear. As regards assessment of the wellbeing of contemporary democracy, they are close to the average. So yet again, it is not possible to trace critique, cynicism or optimism.

In summary, one can assert that the individualistic citizens’ own assessment of their own knowledge, self-confidence, political institutions and the wellbeing of democracy in general lies very close to the average in Denmark. And in those instances where significant exceptions can be seen, the level is close to the relatively high level observed among the active citizens. The individualistic citizens enjoy discussing politics and do not experience problems keeping up with politics. It is only in the case of tolerance that they demonstrate distinctly different behavior. The question now is whether they also score close to average in relation to the emphasis placed on democratic norms.

Table 5.  Assessment of Democratic and Political Norms, 2004 (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment of the importance of the following democratic norm (0: not important – 100: very important):</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Individualistic</th>
<th>Faithful</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
<th>Ave.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democratic norms – respect for the law</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always following the rules and the law</td>
<td>87.3</td>
<td>86.8</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>87.6</td>
<td>88.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never trying to cheat on my taxes</td>
<td>82.1</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>83.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always voting in public elections</td>
<td>95.4</td>
<td>93.6</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>91.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Always keeping an eye on what public authorities are up to</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>75.2</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>68.1</td>
<td>74.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being active in social and political associations</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choosing products on the basis of political, ethical or environmental grounds, even if it might cost a little more</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trying to understand the thinking of people with other views</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>79.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity and welfare</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping people in Denmark who are less well-off than oneself</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>76.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping people in the rest of the world who are less well-off than oneself</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>66.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring that all citizens enjoy a reasonable standard of living</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>92.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 5, considerable importance is generally attributed to the fundamental democratic norms concerning respect for the law. Here, the individualistic citizens’ assessments of themselves lie at the lowest level; however, the difference between the active and individualistic scores is not significant. Conversely, the faithful and the indifferent assessed the norms significantly higher than did the individualistic citizens. In other words, there is evidence indicating that political interest is synonymous with a general assessment of the importance of respect for the law that is slightly lower than among the rest of the population. Furthermore, one gets a sense that it is the individu-
alistic citizens in particular who assume this position. Though as mentioned, this difference is not statistically significant, so one cannot draw extensive conclusions on the basis of these figures. This may be because individualistic citizens, based on their political interest, are willing and able to become involved and negotiate things and feel they do not always have to follow the letter of the law if better results can be achieved by bending the law according to prevailing conditions and available opportunities, i.e. a more reflexive approach to the law.

As regards assessment of the importance of various political activities, the individualistic citizens’ own assessments are slightly above average. The active citizens place the greatest emphasis on political activities, whereas the indifferent citizens place the least emphasis on them, which is indicative of their general political interest. In relation to tolerance, the individualistic citizens are close to average and relatively distant from the active. This is hardly surprising when one compares this assessment with the aforementioned views about the rights of various groups to conduct public meetings.

Interestingly enough, however, it becomes apparent that the sense of solidarity displayed by the individualistic citizens towards those who are less fortunate – both in Denmark and globally – is at the bottom of the scale, near the indifferent citizens. Here, they distinguish themselves significantly from the assessment made by the active citizens as regards the importance of solidarity. The same is true of their assessment of the importance of ensuring a reasonable universal standard of living. In other words, universal welfare holds little appeal for individualistic citizens.

In summary, then, one can say that the active and individualistic citizens are in line with one another as regards their assessment of the fundamental democratic rules of play, with the individualistic citizens scoring at somewhat lower levels. Their paths divide, however, in relation to their respective assessments of tolerance, solidarity and welfare. Here, the individualistic citizens score significantly lower than the active citizens.

In summary, the image of the individualistic citizens can be sketched as a group with political self-confidence that is interested in debate – a group that evaluates their own level of knowledge as being relatively high. They do not distinguish themselves very much from the average in this regard. Nor do they do so in relation to their assessment of political activities; contexts in which the active citizens score at the highest level. Conversely, it is possible to point out interesting discrepancies as regards assessment of the fundamental democratic rules of play, where they attain the lowest scores. This is also the case when solidarity and welfare are on the agenda.

In relation to some questions, this group then lies close to the active citizens, while in relation to other questions the group is close to the faithful and indifferent citizens. They are relatively positive in relation to the political community. The most significant exception concerns respect for the law, but here they are close to the active citizens. Conversely, they score lowest as regards solidarity and welfare, i.e. questions regarding the social situation of the community. Moreover, there are also very shifting in their opinions about tolerance. These observations may indicate that, in central areas, these individuals either underestimate the significance of the common good or follow subjective views rather than fundamental common principles.

In summary, one can then see characteristics among the individualistic citizens that point in the direction of the subjectivization and reflexive individualization that has been raised as a hypothesis in the introduction. However, this is hardly a question of unambiguous tendencies. The question then becomes how representatives for the individu-
Individualistic citizens articulate their own political universe. Some thoughts on this are presented below.

**Power and Media**

In the following, a number of examples of possible types of identity constructions will be given that are of relevance to the coupling of high political interest and limited media consumption, as they thematize the elements of politics that form meaning and opinion in this regard. The statements stem from a number of qualitative interviews (Kristensen 2003). In this connection, however, it must be specified that these empirical data are derived from a different study with research questions somewhat different from the studies we have used as the basis for the individualistic citizen type thus far. The qualitative data stem from a study under the *Danish Democracy and Power Study*, which included attempts at mapping the perceptions of the power relations in Danish society held by the people of Denmark, as well as their sense of their own role in Danish democracy. In other words, the persons classified in this article as ‘individualistic citizens’ are not necessarily the same persons who formulate their views in the qualitative section.

As such, there are methodological problems affecting comparison of the different types of data with one another – and it is by no means possible to draw direct conclusions between the studies. Thus, the following only represents our interpretations of the possible relationships, which are first and foremost of an illustrative character. However, we find it defensible – as well as interesting – to dwell upon a number of possible and more explanatory variables, which can help indicate the tendencies that we have observed and described thus far. It is therefore somewhat thought-provoking that it appears to be possible to recognize the individualistic citizens in the existing qualitative data, some examples of which will be provided below.

Per Nielsen is 56 years old and receives a disability pension. He is divorced and lives alone in a townhouse. He has various small jobs, including a “skånejob”, a job created and funded by the municipality whereby he works approximately fifteen hours a week in a small, local gymnastics club in Jutland. Per is definitely reflexive and politically interested, but he is not politically active. He points out that the television contributes to determining a number of specific perceptions of politicians, which are not particularly flattering.

**Per:** I think that there is a kind of devaluation of politicians that is going on. And I think that television contributes to it. It’s getting to the point that all of their statements are reduced to headlines. They keep repeating everything until you’ve fallen asleep. They have those kinds of statements that they repeat on a semi-annual basis. In other words, it’s almost only individual cases – you can’t really get a grasp of extensive policy through the TV. It’s impossible. You can hardly do so by reading the newspaper. But then the one side acts offended and furious, and the other side gets kind of defensive. You get tired of that, but apparently it’s all you get.

Per is against the general presentation of politics and the political game in the media. He has an image of the game and has seen through the presentation, seeing it as being characterized by simplification, entertainment, theatrics and (partially artificial) dichotomies.

Finn Berg represents yet another example. He is 58 years old, lives in Copenhagen and drives a taxi. In the past, he has worked in the world of banks and finance and has...
been a state-authorized real estate agent, but has since dropped his career in order to live “the free as a bird” life of a taxi driver. Finn stresses that the media determine our way of thinking to a great degree, and he uses the Danish Prime Minister as an example of how the media and politics are coupled and utilized for dramatization, personification and manipulation.

Finn: Our Prime Minister in Denmark today – he’s a media figure. You can just see how he has imitated Tony Blair, who suddenly started imitating Clinton. They’re always promoting themselves. I mean, they know what kind of power they have. That’s also why “de autonome”1 react. They’re smart. That’s why they react – to get at the hypocrisy. They throw an egg at his [the Danish Prime Minister’s] head when he’s out to donate DKK 22,000 to some kind of shelter (in Nørrebro), and at the same time he’s sitting there and has power over all of the cutbacks that affect the down-and-out. And he has “sold” to the public the message that he has done something for these people. And the moment he’s in the media, he gets an outpouring of sympathy from the entire population. They think that it’s too damn much that the Prime Minister is hit in the head with an egg. But is it? Is it? I don’t know. It has something to do with power. I won’t justify it. I just want people to see it.

Finn explains that essentially everything that happens in society is politics, i.e. related to power. But power is something he distances himself from, not least when power assumes the character of ‘hypocrisy’. Finn is very politically interested, but not active himself. “I think that others will regard me as an anarchist or provocateur. I don’t want power over anyone, but there sure as hell better not be anyone who has power over me – that’s what my need for freedom is all about,” he explains. Finn is revolted by the “play for power.” Conversely, he is obviously an individualistic person who celebrates personal autonomy.

Most of the respondents have apparently seen through much of the strategic communication, as well as the functions and roles of the media, including the ability to serve as a political ‘spokesman’ or democratic ‘watchdog’. Read what Lisbeth Begtrup has to say, for example:

Lisbeth: I mean, if there is something that’s causing you problems or something you can’t get through the system – then you can go to the media. And then suddenly they’re able to move mountains for you.

Susser Feit is 47 years old and resides north of Copenhagen. She has a master’s degree in economics and business administration and works as a journalist and consultant. She has also seen through the game and the political mechanisms surrounding the media world, though this does not mean she regards the media as the means of power for certain actors:

Susser: (the political) agenda isn’t steered by the media – it’s steered by the people who are good at presenting what the media want. It’s a misunderstanding to say that things are controlled by the media. The parties, the business community, trade unions and professional associations and whoever – they use the media. They know how the media works and that the readers want drama. That’s the case for all of the actors in society who know how things are supposed to be presented in order for the media to take notice. The members of the media are just doing their jobs. They have to earn money, and they know what to do. BT [a
Danish tabloid newspaper] is well aware of which headlines sell newspapers – and the same is the case for the magazine publishers and TV-Avisen [the news transmission produced by the Danish public service television station].

The respondents referred to above represent a perspective on how the media present a political life that is in many ways somewhat cynical (and doubtlessly realistic), including the various ‘behind the scenes’ interests and power mechanisms. Moreover, a consistent observation is that the respondents have problems recognizing their personal political identity in the selections and ‘angles’ in the political coverage. At the same time, they object to the depictions presented to them. In the concluding section, we will examine the possible implications of this more closely as regards citizenship, political engagement and the public.

Conclusion

In this article, we have attempted to examine the consequences of changing media habits combined with the political interest as regards political socialization, learning, democratic citizenship and the political public. Beginning with the latter, the general perception is that the contemporary media play a rather decisive role in Danish democracy. One can therefore hardly conceive democratic regulation of a modern, complex society without the intervention of the mass media (Hjarvard 1995). In other words, according to this understanding, the media occupy an entirely central role in relation to the democratic processes, as they have gradually assumed important elements of the functions that were formerly taken care of by the political parties in Denmark. Owing to the extent of their organization, the parties formerly served as a guarantee for the communication of information and opinions to their members via meetings, internal publications, flyers, the party press, etc. In keeping with the classical Habermasian ideal of the public, parties constituted the means of communication as well as the very public. This function has gradually been taken away from the parties and instead – in the orthodox (theoretical) perception – it has been left to the media to communicate to the public.

According to the Habermasian ideal (Habermas 1981), public dialogue – and not least a critical public – serves to improve the basis of information, increases the level of reflection, and augments the sense of responsibility among decision-makers. Together with free choice and party competition, in short, more qualified decisions are made, as the decision-makers are forced to consider the overriding societal values and interests, which together constitute the foundation for the principle of popular sovereignty (Eriksen & Weigård, 1999). That which precedes the actual election to public office – the information level, dialogue and opinion formation – thus receives a fundamental status whereby the media can be attributed a decisive role in democracy. In order for the collective, public debate to unfold against the background of the best-informed foundation and according to optimal conditions, information about society, which serves as the basis for the knowledge and arguments used by citizens, must be present and optimal. Obviously, this places demands upon the channels of communication and sources that are to provide and deliver this information about society, i.e. the media.

The question then becomes, what happens to the democratic debate and political communication in a modern democracy if the connections are gradually cut between political elites and ordinary citizens? What happens to the formation of opinion? What happens to the political culture? And what consequences does this then have for political
socialization, democratic learning or political participation? What happens to citizenship if the traditional citizen roles are gradually replaced by the emergence of the individualistic citizen?

Obviously, this article is not able to fully respond to all of these questions – but individual indications as to possible answers will be given. A particularly pressing question is thus, based on the findings presented, what can one imagine will happen to the political mobilization and learning processes? How are they to be created, developed and reproduced, if no longer via information from the media and debate in a shared public? The answer to these questions must to some extent be tied to central aspects of individualization and reflexivity, and thereby to the role of citizens in a democracy. More specifically, this concerns empowerment as a learning process, whereby political insight and political values are formed via concrete involvement, e.g. in the ‘little politics’. One of the consistent characteristics of the individualistic citizen would appear to be a clear emphasis on individual autonomy. The larger political communities and collective mobilization do not appear attractive, among other reasons because it is felt to be far too difficult to reach agreement on a common, shared project. However, there is nothing wrong with their political interest, the consequence being that modern citizens empower themselves on their own, individually: one creates one’s own spheres of opportunity and learns to develop them.

In this connection, it would be natural and tempting to tie our findings to Gidden’s life politics concept. Life politics is exactly about the creation of self-identity, and thereby about individualization and reflexivity. If the individual then increasingly constitutes the basis for politics and policy, this correspondingly and naturally undermines the need to keep up to date with the developments in ‘the big politics’. This will then help to explain the reduction in media consumption observed in the group we are referring to here; however, one must be cautious about drawing overly extensive conclusions in this regard.

We have argued that there is an increasing subjectivization of the political sphere in which the acquisition of political values, as a result of the above, is increasingly occurring independent of the mass media. We are by no means writing off the value of traditional channels for political socialization and learning, but the point is that political interest is separate from media consumption. At the same time, Table 4 indicates that these channels do not merely appear to have been replaced by other well-known channels, including debate with family and friends. These relationships then leave us with a pressing question, i.e. how do socialization and learning proceed if the political public is increasingly experienced as having evaporated, and insofar as the media do not act in relation to the ideals and conceptions of the public?

On the basis of both the quantitative and qualitative data, there is much to indicate that many people no longer experience the existence of a public in the classical sense. Many people, thus, reject the mass media as their source of knowledge and political values. In this connection, Table 3 demonstrates a particularly massive and remarkable fall over time in media consumption among the politically interested. This must inevitably be thought to have clear consequences for democratic citizenship – for the democratic conversation – and the common interests concurrently with the fall in the opinion-forming impact of the media. This then themesizes the question of how the citizens alternatively convert political information and argumentation to political opinions, and to some extent the question of how we must then state the reasons for the observed development.
In this connection, a possible explanation could be a general rejection of that which Jørn Loftager refers to in his publication as part of the Danish Democracy and Power Study (Loftager 2004) as the “play for power,” which is in perfect harmony with the statements presented in this article. When the mass media focus more on political power showdowns than on substantial political programs and questions as to what the politicians represent, democratic problems develop, as the voters lack the issue-oriented information upon which they are to form their opinions.

Next, it can be claimed that the political sphere has grown and spread significantly over the course of recent decades, cf. the “explosion of politics,” as it has been referred to in Denmark (Pedersen et al. 1994). The time when journalists could narrowly focus on the national parliamentary and national economic conditions is long gone. Contemporary politics are much more about the opportunities available to the individual to realize himself/herself, as well as the organic, cultural and identity-based questions (Giddens 1996, Beck 1992, Gibbins & Reimar 1999). These questions did not receive the same weight and significance in the past. At the same time, this places demands on the media, which are expected to provide an information service that appeals to the total life situation of the recipients, including public as well as private roles (Hjarvard 1999). An actual ‘match’ between one’s own life situation and the depictions of politics and democracy is hardly possible any longer in a modern, functionally differentiated and ‘culturalized’ society. But if the gap between these poles is felt to be too large, then this can quite conceivably undermine the general interest in the media, while at the same time political engagement remains intact.

For it would appear as though many people are encountering problems in rediscovering their own political identity in the image constructed by the media, and at the same time, it has become more difficult to catch a glimpse of a classical political public. The consequence of a separation of political interest from the consumption of news coverage in the media can therefore contribute to further erosion of the political public. In addition to the argument made here about the subjectivization of politics, there is indeed ample evidence indicating a widespread experience of politics as primarily consisting of theatrics, the cult of personality, and political commercialization. The individualistic citizen has seen through these mechanisms and simply says, “I don’t feel like it.”

Note
1. Left-wing political extremists, predominantly young people.

Quantitative data
The quantitative study is primarily based on data from a representative investigation of democracy and citizenship, conducted by the Department of Economics, Politics and Public Administration, Aalborg University, within the framework of the ISSP (the International Social Survey Program). Data collection was carried out by the Danish National Institute of Social Research (Socialforskningsinstituttet) in 2004, and a total of 1167 respondents participated.

Data from an election study in 1990 and a research project entitled Democracy from Below (1998) have been used to construct Table 3.
References
Beyond Representation

Newspapers and Citizenship Participation in the Case of a Minority Ethnic Group

CAMILLA NORDBERG

Abstract

Processes of defining citizenship become particularly exposed in a media context, since this is an arena where a broad range of actors get their voice heard. The aim of this contribution is to explore the claims-making activities by different actors in stories about the Roma in Finnish newspapers. I want to elucidate the access to the mediated space and provide some examples of how citizenship claims are raised and contextualised. The empirical study is based content analysis and qualitative text analysis of articles from 1990-2003 in both the largest Finnish-language and the largest Swedish-language daily newspapers (Helsingin Sanomat and Hufvudstadsbladet). While Romani voices do have the possibility to contest dominant views in newspaper stories related to the Roma, this article argues, firstly, for a diversified coverage on Romani issues and, secondly, for increasing dialogue between a broader group of actors.

Key Words: newspapers, citizenship, claims-making, ethnicity, Roma, Finland

Introduction

Citizenship, in a broad sense, is understood as the relationship between the nation-state and its members, an affiliation which is defined by a set of relations between rights, duties, identity and participation (see e.g. Delanty 2000, Lister 2003, Turner 1993). While studies of the materialisation of political, civil and social rights have been significant for analyses of the unequal distribution of resources, there is an increasing emphasis on processes of claiming rights – not solely on the legal rights per se.¹ There is also a subsequent empirical vacuum or tendency to avoid analysis of the “actual spaces in which citizenship is expressed” (Jones & Gaventa 2002: 19). With this contribution I want to shed light on one of the central spaces or arenas of citizenship agency – the daily press.

The content of the citizenship category is influenced by the practices of different political and administrative elites, civil society, ordinary citizens’ practices, scholarly and media debates. It is obvious that the media has a double role in relation to notions of citizenship. Firstly, the media is essential within the frame of citizenship identity work. Citizenship has been strongly connected to nation-state building. The very function of the media has always been to create shared narratives and a shared history which
promotes shared values (Kivikuru 2003: 26). For scholars of nationalism, the importance of print media for creating a sense of belonging to the national community is familiar (Anderson 1991; Billig 1995; Calhoun 1997). While instances of homogenising national identity building can be traced in the press, challenging and marginal discourses are equally salient. Subsequently, the second role of the media in relation to citizenship is to serve as an arena for negotiation and contestation. Not only elite actors but also ordinary citizens can participate through letters to the editor and interviews. The potential diversity of voices turns the daily press into a powerful arena for empirical analysis of citizenship agency.

This study takes a particular focus on claims-making, defined by Ruud Koopmans (2004: 454) as a process of “collective and public articulation of political demands, call to action, proposals, criticisms ... which, actually or potentially, affect the interests or integrity of the claimants and/or other collective actors”. So, claims can be raised by target groups as well as by other actors on behalf of disadvantaged groups. The media, or in this context the press, only represents a small selection of the universe of political actions and statements. Yet what is interesting here are the public claims and not those claims that were not successful in reaching the public arena (c.f. Koopmans 2004). Different nation-states obviously have different traditions and languages of citizenship (Bussemaker & Voet 1998; Siim 2000). Koopmans concludes that the selection process by the media is a central mechanism “by which citizenship regimes impinge on patterns of public claims-making” (2004: 454). Through looking at claims-making practices in newspapers we can not only learn about the role of a particular group, here the Roma, as part of the political community, but also about the citizenship cultures of different national models.

Minority Ethnic Group Claims

During the last decades there has been an increasing concern with “the need to uncover the reality of the citizen often conceived as ‘male-white-able-bodied’, and to take action to enable minority groups to participate in social, political and civic life, defining and claiming their rights to become equal, active citizens” (Jones & Gaventa 2002: 15-16). This study takes a particular focus on claims-making activities in the press in relation to Finnish Roma, a minority ethnic group with full and equal membership rights within Finnish society, yet with a marginalised position in terms of full participation. The approximately 10 000 Roma of Finland have experienced a long history of attempted assimilation and elimination. In spite of such violation on Romani cultural integrity, they have remained a minority ethnic group with its own particular identity. As a result of various social transformations and an increasingly multiculturalist discourse, the Roma are now formally recognised as a minority in the constitution and in various international agreements. The position of the Roma within the Finnish nation-state is quite multifaceted and the construction of ethnic difference is presumably more complex than in the case of immigrants. On one hand, the Roma have continuously been defined as the eternal ‘other’. On the other hand, they have a long historical and institutional anchorage within the nation-state (Grönfors 1977; Huttunen 1997; Markkanen 2003; Nordberg 2003; Vehmas 1961).

Claims-making by different minority ethnic groups in relation to the nation-state has focused on issues of cultural rights and recognition of difference. Multicultural politics or a politics of recognition propagate a public account of differences, institutionalised
in legal instruments, policies and practices (Kymlicka, 1995; Taylor, 1994). Several scholars have, however, raised critique against the essentialist stance on collective identities as a prerequisite for a politics of recognition (e.g. Benhabib, 2002). Fraser (1997: 185), in a response to pluralist multiculturalism, concludes that it “tends to substantialize identities, treating them as given positivities instead of as constructed relations. It tends, consequently, to balkanize culture, setting groups apart from one another, ignoring the ways they cut across one another, and inhibiting cross-group interaction and identification”. It is also being questioned whether claims for recognition are efficient enough means to counteract inequality and oppression. A politics of recognition potentially “diverts attention from the struggle for economic inequality and social justice”, leaving the prevailing social order intact (Parekh 2004: 202; also Fraser, 1997; Lister, 2003). A way out of the tension within identity politics is to emphasise not the identity categories as such but the process or practice of struggle and claims-making. Cultural rights involve not merely the right to be represented, but also the negotiation of difference at communal spaces in which competing positions and claims are brought together (Murdock 1999: 30). Deliberative democracy calls for the recognition of all citizens as being capable of engaging in debates about the common good (Benhabib, 2002). A focus on claims-making conceptualises citizenship as agency, giving a sound role to the citizen’s participation in defining the common good.

Aim, Data and Methods

With this contribution I would like to shed light on the claims-making activities by different actors in stories about Roma in Finnish newspapers. Firstly, I want to elucidate access to the mediated space. Who are the dominant actors, which are the dominant topics and how are these interconnected? Secondly, I want to provide some examples of how citizenship claims are raised and contextualised. The focus thus is on Romani – and other agents’- participation and voice rather than merely representation in the press, even though the latter is highly significant for citizenship as well, in the form of the public construction of citizenship identities. The nature of the research questions calls for a combination of ‘quantitative’ and ‘qualitative’ methods.

The access of different voices and the possibility to participate in debates on certain topics are analysed with content analysis (see e.g. Bergström & Boréus 2000; Krippendorff 1980), using only a few recording units. I chose to focus on the dominant topics and actors in each article. The content analysis is based on 263 articles, 202 articles from Helsingin Sanomat (HS) and 61 from Hufvudstadsbladet (Hbl) between 1990 and 2003.

Both of the two newspapers selected for the study are national dailies. HS is the dominant daily with 1.1 million readers. The paper states it is independent and non-aligned. Hbl was selected because of its potential to bring a minority perspective to the public debate. While Finland is officially a bilingual country, the Swedish-speaking Finns amount to only six per cent of the population. Hbl is the largest Swedish language newspaper with 136,000 readers. It is also officially non-aligned, but closest to the Swedish-speaking Party.

As far as these newspapers’ own archives are concerned, I had access to an exhaustive database on the subject resulting in 529 articles: 451 articles from HS and 78 from Hbl between 1990 and 2003. The remarkably different quantity of available articles in these two newspapers stems from different archive procedures and accessibility. HS maintains
an exhaustive internet archive, which can be accessed by anyone through paying a fee. From the first search results on Roma and Gypsy-including derivatives-articles on asylum-seekers and non-Finnish Roma as well as briefs about TV-programmes or public events that were not considered as reviews, were excluded. Hbl does have a small-scale internet archive, but it covers only the years from 1998 onwards. The 78 articles from Hbl were collected on the basis of a list of articles on Roma/Gypsies from 1990-2003 submitted by the newspaper’s archive. While the HS archive includes every text containing the word Roma or Gypsy, the Hbl archive predominantly includes texts with a major focus on the minority ethnic group in question. After an initial coding of the 529 articles, I decided to select for the final analysis only cases or articles where the main focus was on Roma, subsequently filtering cases where Roma were mentioned in the text but with a minor role. This procedure selected the 263 articles for the content analysis.

The qualitative analysis drew on a first sample of 186 articles: 141 articles published in HS and 45 articles published in Hbl. The sample was collected according to whether an article contained claims and arguments related to Finnish Roma or not and whether the story on the Roma constituted one of the major themes of the article. These two qualities were coded within the realm of the categorising content analysis (see Table 1 in the appendix). According to Fairclough, the data for analysing discourses can be selected on the basis of such a preliminary survey of the corpus (1992: 230; see also Pietikäinen 2000). As it was not possible to closely analyse all the 186 stories, I made a final selection of texts for a closer reading and decided to concentrate on the 60 texts from the years 1990, 1994, 1998 and 2002. Romani voices or actors are more frequently occurring in these texts. Persons of authority and politicians are represented to a slightly higher degree than in the total data and the press to a lesser degree. Since the press is interpreted as the actor in a large amount of short and descriptive news items containing no other source, it is not surprising that the voice of the press is salient more often in the total material (see Table 2 in the appendix).

The Roma in the Finnish Press – Topics and Actors

Most young Roma do not speak Romani and the everyday language among Finnish Roma is Finnish, or in a few occasions Swedish (see also Huttunen 1997). While the lack of a language barrier means that the Roma, theoretically, have the same access to the media as the rest of the population, they constitute a comparatively apolitical group and letters to the editor are, for example, very seldom occurring in the dailies. The number of illiterate Roma was relatively high only a few decades ago and the tradition of reading newspapers has remained weak (Markkanen 2003). Consequently, the agenda-setting of the media and the use of sources have a significant influence on the possibilities for the Roma to get their voice heard and to avoid a situation in which inclusions and exclusions are shaped only from above.

To gain an insight in the distribution of topics on the Roma in general as well as over time, the dominant topic of each article was coded. Thus, the article or story constitutes the sampling unit (Krippendorff 1980: 57-58). While a single article may contain several topics, the dominant one was conceived as that which gained most space in terms of mm column. It is still important to be aware of the fact that what is identified as the dominant topic is ultimately based on the interpretation of me as the analyst.

As Table 1 shows, the early 1990’s newspaper coverage was concerned with issues related to the social situation of the Roma- focusing on general feature stories and writ-
ings about public service and educational issues. A cultural political turn is noticeable after 1993. Linguistic rights are debated alongside political mobilisation. The public debate on cultural and linguistic rights saw a peak in 1993 with a proposed amendment of the Finnish constitution, through which the Roma, the Sámi and other groups were granted the right to maintain and develop their own language and culture. From 1997 onwards the emerging agenda of discrimination is arguably a result of newly signed minority right treaties and various reports launched by international organisations. There seems to be a shift from a social to a cultural to a legal agenda. These shifts can be compared to similar findings from a study of the Parliamentary debate on Romani issues (Nordberg 2004). What is different on the media arena is the emerging emphasis on crime stories.

The most dominant topics have been reviews of culture, crime, discrimination and racism. All these topics may imply a rather reactive form of newspaper coverage. It is familiar from previous studies that the coverage in the daily press largely follows the official views and that the topics of the media correspond to the concerns of the majority, particularly to those of the political and administrative elite, rather than to concerns of the minority itself (van Dijk 1991; Pietikäinen 2000). Rather than disassociating Romani group identity from the way it is usually defined, the media reproduces a traditional conceptualisation of being a Rom through the emphasis on crime reports of different kinds and on articles on Romani musicians and entertainers.

Arguably, when looking at the absolute numbers of articles, roughly the same number of articles has been produced on the general situation of the Roma, on public service and education over time. The decreasing share of social and background reporting is not a consequence of decreasing coverage about these things but rather of increasing coverage of Romani issues in general and of discrimination and crime in particular. In 1990-1993 the newspapers published no more than 23 articles with a predominant focus on Romani issues and in 2001-2003 the number had risen to 84. It is clear that the internationalisation of politics has brought about an increased coverage of Romani issues as

| Table 1. The Share of Topics in Articles with a Predominant Focus on the Finnish Roma in the Helsingin Sanomat and Hufvudstadsbladet |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reviews of culture | 17,4 | 13,2 | 25,0 | 13,1 | 17,5 |
| Crime | 8,7 | 2,9 | 21,6 | 20,2 | 15,2 |
| Discrimination and racism | 8,7 | 5,9 | 18,2 | 19,0 | 14,4 |
| Political agency | 8,7 | 16,2 | 6,8 | 13,1 | 11,4 |
| Roma rights, background, general situation | 21,7 | 5,9 | 10,2 | 9,5 | 9,9 |
| Appointments | 0,0 | 20,6 | 1,1 | 8,3 | 8,4 |
| Public service and education | 13,0 | 10,3 | 6,8 | 3,6 | 7,2 |
| Other | 8,7 | 10,3 | 5,7 | 2,4 | 6,1 |
| Language and culture | 4,3 | 11,8 | 2,3 | 2,4 | 4,9 |
| Transnationalism | 8,7 | 2,9 | 2,3 | 8,3 | 4,9 |
| % | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 |
| N | 23 | 68 | 88 | 84 | 263 |
part of the ordinary newspaper agenda. This follows a general trend of ‘multiculturalist’ journalism (see e.g. Cottle 2000; Raittila & Vehmas 2005). Stories on discrimination and racism as well as on crimes directed towards the Roma elucidate the oppression of the Romani people and the need to take action against discriminatory and criminal practices. Nonetheless, it potentially contributes to constructing the Roma in a rather essentialist and stereotypical way if these reports are not counterbalanced with stories about the Roma as full and equal members of society, of Roma who are not victims of discrimination or involved in criminal acts. It is necessary to more closely analyse the texts in order to trace possible contestations of essentialising identity categorisations within the stories, but from the content analysis we can learn that the agenda-setting rather reproduces than balances a stereotypical understanding of Romani identity.

Studying actors in the press potentially opened up an analysis of power and influence in public discourse. The main actor was coded in each article. When one article contained several actors the dominant one was understood as that which gained most space in terms of mm column. Instead of actors or voices, participants are sometimes coded. While being a participant “opens up the possibility to be heard” (c.f. Pietikäinen 2000: 189) and indicates presence or being mentioned in newspaper texts, the explicit objective by identifying actors or claimants, is to study the participants who actually get heard and make a statement.

Table 2. The Share of Actors in Articles with a Predominant Focus on the Finnish Roma in the Helsingin Sanomat and Hufvudstadsbladet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actors</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Press</td>
<td>17,4</td>
<td>38,2</td>
<td>45,5</td>
<td>39,3</td>
<td>39,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma</td>
<td>39,1</td>
<td>42,6</td>
<td>29,5</td>
<td>26,2</td>
<td>32,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authorities</td>
<td>8,7</td>
<td>10,3</td>
<td>10,2</td>
<td>9,5</td>
<td>9,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>17,4</td>
<td>5,9</td>
<td>8,0</td>
<td>6,0</td>
<td>7,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13,0</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>2,3</td>
<td>13,1</td>
<td>6,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicians</td>
<td>4,3</td>
<td>2,9</td>
<td>4,5</td>
<td>6,0</td>
<td>4,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 presents the distribution of actors over time. When there is no particular source being quoted or a reader who has written a column or letter to the editor, the dominant actor is interpreted as the press.

Table 2 shows that the possibility to get heard in stories related to the Roma has relatively decreased for members of the group. There was a peak of Romani actors being quoted or engaging in the press debate between 1993 and 1996, coinciding with the ‘cultural turn’ after which there was a decrease. Also expert voices are comparatively less dominating than in the earlier days, while politicians obtain slightly more influence in the stories. The visibility of the authorities has remained quite stable. The institutionalisation of minority rights and the subsequent emphasis on the public sphere in catering for minority ethnic rights might be reflected in the more evident agency by political elites.
Table 3. *Share of Actors on Topics in Articles with a Predominant Focus on the Finnish Roma in the Helsingin Sanomat and Hufvudstadsbladet*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actors</th>
<th>Reviews of culture</th>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>Appointments</th>
<th>Discrimination and racism</th>
<th>Language and culture</th>
<th>Political agency</th>
<th>Transnationalism</th>
<th>Public service and education</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Roma rights, background, general situation</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Press</td>
<td>56,5</td>
<td>62,5</td>
<td>45,5</td>
<td>31,6</td>
<td>30,8</td>
<td>30,0</td>
<td>38,5</td>
<td>21,1</td>
<td>31,3</td>
<td>11,5</td>
<td>39,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma</td>
<td>28,3</td>
<td>17,5</td>
<td>27,3</td>
<td>13,2</td>
<td>46,2</td>
<td>60,0</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>52,6</td>
<td>43,8</td>
<td>53,8</td>
<td>32,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authorities</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>15,0</td>
<td>4,5</td>
<td>21,1</td>
<td>7,7</td>
<td>3,3</td>
<td>7,7</td>
<td>10,5</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>23,1</td>
<td>9,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>10,9</td>
<td>2,5</td>
<td>9,1</td>
<td>5,3</td>
<td>15,4</td>
<td>3,3</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>10,5</td>
<td>18,8</td>
<td>7,7</td>
<td>7,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4,3</td>
<td>2,5</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>23,7</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>3,3</td>
<td>15,4</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>6,3</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>6,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicians</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>13,6</td>
<td>5,3</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>38,5</td>
<td>5,3</td>
<td>0,0</td>
<td>3,8</td>
<td>4,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>263</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From Table 3 we can see why Romani actors are less visible during the end of the 1990’s and during the new millennium. Topics with a high degree of Romani participation include background and general stories, language and culture as well as articles on appointments to different tasks and positions, whilst the increasingly emphasised topics of discrimination and racism as well as crime are predominantly or to a relatively high degree commented on by authorities. None of the articles on transnational Romani issues is dominated by the voice of the Roma themselves, rather this is an agenda controlled by politicians.

The content analysis points to an increasing interest of the Finnish press in Romani issues in general and in issues related to the legal and human rights realm in particular.

A Qualitative Analysis of Citizenship Claims-Making

Claims-making in the press in relation to Romani issues is a complex phenomenon involving Romani actors as well as various elite actors and, to a very limited extent, the general public. It encompasses a variety of topics and issues. In the rest of this article I would like to shed light on the dynamics of these practices and on some dilemmas of claims-making in relation to Romani issues in Finland, even though I would argue that these phenomena are not unique for a Finnish context and obviously not only for the minority ethnic group known as Finnish Roma. The following question governed the qualitative text analysis: What kind of claims can be found in the texts and how are these claims contextualized? The notion of claims is here understood as political demands, call to action, proposals and criticisms related to the relationship between the Roma and the majority society (see Koopmans 2004).

For the qualitative analysis it was an important aim to use a data-driven approach. I have re-organised the texts according to various citizenship claims and under each claim I have collected examples of how this claim is contextualised, how notions of citizenship are articulated in the various text segments (c.f. Pietikäinen 2000; Silverman 2001; Winter-Jørgensen and Phillips 2000). This re-organisation of the data made it possible to finally identify two major rationales – claims related to difference and claims related to sameness. The former of the two is a category of claims-making dominated by the Roma, while to latter of the two is voiced by various actors.

Difference

Claims-making activities drawing on difference or on a particularist citizenship identity are predominantly carried out by Romani activists. These claims-making strategies relate to the collective identity of the Roma and to claims for recognition of this particularist identity and to cultural or group rights. Cultural and linguistic rights are mentioned in different texts by different actors, but when other than Romani voices are heard they are seldom engaging in any form of reasoning or claims-making.

Citizenship theory has been concerned with the process of evolving rights. Starting from civil to political and then social rights, the new era of rights has increasingly been about the recognition of identities and difference in society – a cultural dimension of citizenship (Fraser 1997; Isin and Wood 1999; Lister 2003; Young 1998). During the early 1990s, Romani members of the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs were interviewed in HS:10 “Instead of social welfare for Gypsies, the new Board emphasises the promoting of Romani culture and language. Among other things, an educational and
cultural centre of our own is being sorted out” (HS, 5.1.1990). A redirection of social rights to cultural rights has been suggested by, amongst others, Pakulski (1997). Such a shift of emphasis of right claims is more clearly articulated in the Anglo-Saxon scholarly and political debate and the social dimension of citizenship rights is not totally rejected in the data of this study. Nonetheless, it is clear that the a ‘cultural turn’ traced in the content analysis around 1993 was initiated or actively propagated by Romani activists already at the very beginning of the last decade. A push factor behind this call for action was arguably the stigmatised identity evolving from social welfare claims.11 Claims for cultural recognition are generally unspecific during these times, but when cultural markers are brought to public attention they are conceptualised in a rather narrow and traditional manner. Talk about the wandering Roma, for example, is not visible after this period:

The dominant reason for oppression has been the animosity of the majority population and the secret admiration of the unyielding wanderers. Their wild and free lifestyle was already a threat to the feudal society (HS, 16.8.1994).

Traditional Romani culture is seen as strongly linked to earlier days. One of the Romani representatives suggests that settling down will destroy what he depicts as Romani culture: “Romani culture is lost as people settle and work. It is the modern-time, to which everyone has to adjust” (HS, 1.2.1994). Thus, the decline of traditional Romani life is accepted as a feat of modernisation and statements attached to traditional culture are not framed as right claims, rather as claims for recognition of historical misrepresentations and for understanding and respect. Thus, also these claims are articulated within a counter-discourse against a stigmatised Romani identity. One of the Romani participants draws on the concept of caring when contesting the meaning of citizenship virtues, i.e. of being a ‘good citizen’:

In the Finnish society a good person is extremely productive and efficient and according to that he is measured. But when the Roma say ‘damn, that was a good man’, the content of the words are entirely different. The good man has been a warm person, who has cared for other people. The cold Finns, who feel less and less responsibility for each other, frighten Nikkinen. Caring has become a public matter, financed by taxation (HS, 16.8.1994).

While claims for understanding and respect can be rather passive and intertwined with the notion of tolerance the claims in this context do challenge dominant conceptualisations of citizenship. Nick Stevenson (2003: 152-153), in his search for cultural citizenship, calls for not merely the empowering of ‘the other’ within public conversations, but for an “understanding of the social processes that have historically promoted some views over others”.

The evolving cultural rights discourse is salient from the mid-1990s, corresponding to external events related to the internationalisation of Finnish politics. Cultural rights are increasingly claimed, not only for the sake of revaluing a stigmatised identity in relation to the majority society, but for the value of cultural rights for the individual’s self-esteem. Cultural right claims are seemingly raised in two different ways. Firstly, claims are raised for the support of culture and particularly Romni language training. Cultural and linguistic right claims are legitimised on ‘humanitarian’ as well as on ‘social policy’ grounds. The lack of recognition of the Romani language and culture is argued to create a poor self-esteem and a feeling of being less gifted in school. A Roma
who made a tutorial for teachers concludes that: “If schools cannot support the child’s particular identity, the child may become distressed and anxious” (HS, 15.12.1994). Linguistic and cultural right claims are predominantly articulated in relation to young people. From the point of view of social policies, the recognition of linguistic and cultural rights is argued to promote a successful education and integration in the larger society:

Roma children need more education in their own language than they receive now. Only 240 of a total of 1700-2000 Roma children going to pre-school and comprehensive school receive their education in their own language, says Secretary General, Miranda Vuolasranta, from the Advisory Board for Roma Affairs... The level of education concerning the Roma is often lower...the reason is the language handicap of the parents and low education, says Vuolasranta. Since children do not receive their education in their mother tongue, they are often classed as being less capable, states Vuolasranta, stressing the role of the teachers and the teacher training (Hbl, 4.2.2002).

In spite of full formal recognition and state policies, which are materialised in legal instruments, there is a growing debate on how to implement these rights in practice. After a decade of claims-making with no sound criticism towards the state apparatuses, we can now find more calls for action involving also openly critical voices.

According to the law Romani children have the right to their own language and culture, but in practice the law is not implemented... Only a few municipalities carry out their duty to arrange mother tongue instruction for Romani pupils... By the end of the day, the majority decides which sector of the Romani culture that is being developed. “For this reason sawing courses are offered to Romani girls. There is a feeling that something has to be done and what is done is what first slips into mind” (HS, 27.2.2002).

Secondly, while linguistic rights claims were particularly explicit from the middle of the 1990s onwards, a new form of cultural rights claims were emphasised at the beginning of the 21st century. These claims can be interpreted as claims for presence and visibility. Rather than claiming minority rights, the line of argumentation is now that the majority has the right to information about the minority ethnic groups and that schools need to include information about Romani history in their curricula. These claims were legitimised by referring to the shared history of the nation-state and to the participation in the (second world) war: “We have lived side by side for 500 years. Romani men participated in the Finnish wars but school books do not refer to it” (HS, 27.2.2002).

While scholarly debates have highlighted the risk of identity politics for cultural balkanisation – of ‘setting groups apart from one another’ (Fraser 1997: 185), the claims-making activities by the Roma do not draw on such logic and they subsequently do not threaten the national communitarian narratives. They rather emphasise the role of identity politics for integration, something which also can be interpreted as a result of the long collaboration between the Roma and the public authorities on the policy on Roma (see e.g. Suonoja & Lindberg 2000). What can be noted, however, is a contested view among the Roma on how to present Romani culture to the broader public and in this respect the newspapers have an important role in promoting a dialogue between different actors – Romani as well as other. During 1998 there was an intense debate about some TV series portraying the Roma in an arguably stereotypical way. A film-
maker with a Romani background produced the fiction with a biographical touch. In the following press debate, predominantly about the blood feuding among Finnish Roma, the Romani film-maker was heavily criticised by the Roma and accused of being a betrayer and not a genuine Rom. The debate pointed to an unsolved dilemma about the boundaries of minority group integrity and openness. The internal critique towards the film was justified in the press by referring to the long history of oppression and the fear of losing newly broken grounds of mutual acceptance and tolerance.

Now we see that this first TV-series, with all its prejudices and clichés, threatens to smash everything into small pieces. The series overflows with exaggeration, and contains very little of normal Romani life. Miranda Vuolasranta explains that the question is so sensitive simply because most people know so little about the Roma (Hbl, 18.1.1998).

The quote shows how loose the ends of representation are, how vulnerable the minority perceive its constructed public identity as well as the experienced importance of this identity for legitimising demands for recognition and rights. This form of argumentation could also explain the earlier lack of open critique towards state policies, a critique that is visible only after the new Millennium. A journalist interprets the dilemma:

As long as the majority of the population has the power to formulate the type of problems faced by the Roma population, perhaps it is too much...to demand an open dialogue concerning the most difficult questions concerning the minority culture. On the other hand, the question concerns what the courts, researchers, journalists etc. should do with unofficial knowledge of the kind mentioned above, if all of those concerned prefer to deny the issues rather than discuss them (Hbl, 18.1.1998).

I would argue that the major trends in the claims-making practices during the latter years of this study are, firstly, the emphasis on empowerment and agency from within the community and, secondly, the increasingly open discussions about new forms of intergenerational problems facing the community in contemporary society.

Traditions are vanishing. Young people are involved in drug and medicine abuse. It has taken away their identity. Among us, it is unacceptable for children to stay out after eight o’clock or to be even drunk in front of the parents. Such a respect for parents is now gone. I do not know what it will be like in ten years; it is very frightening. Too easily young Roma conform to the street life of the majority and to a bad way of living... Now the 45-60 year old must take their responsibility and talk to their young ones (HS, 18.3.2002).

Debates on difference and particularity and cultural rights are debates solely carried out by the Roma, and there is not really any dialogue among different actors about the nature of cultural rights.

**Sameness**

Alongside with claims drawing on the right to difference – to recognition, culture and language, claims are raised for equal or similar treatment. These are two rationales which are obviously interdependent. Three different notions of claims-making related to sameness can be found. Firstly, claims for recognition are not only articulated as the understanding of difference, but in another counter-argumentative way – within a dis-
course of anti-ethnicisation which relates to the desire for normality and the right to be ‘ordinary’. Cultural features known to the broader public are argued not to be so different from those of the majority. It is, for example, stressed that the majority population has overrated the distinctiveness of purity customs:

I do think that the norms have been overrated in public. Many of them are also complied with in majority families, Helsinki-based Leila Vuolasranta notices (HS, 5.1.1990).

Citizen’s obligations are equally claimed to stand above family obligations: ‘The family is extremely important to the Roma. But prior to family ties one has to follow law and order’ (HS, 18.3.2002). Thus, this first notion of claims for sameness can be understood as a claim for being seen as any Finnish citizen. Secondly, to counter-act the stigmatised collective identity calls for being seen not just as a Finnish citizen but as an individual rather than a group member. Debates on crime reports, discussed by the Roma well as by journalists in columns, are particularly drawing on such a disassociation of negative characteristics linked with the Romani people:

This is a question about just one individual who has committed a crime, and such individuals exist in all groups. We are afraid that the issue will expand to become a fact concerning the entire minority, which is often the case with the Roma, says a Rom who prefers to remain anonymous – just because she does not want to be labelled. She mentions the police murder almost a year ago that was committed by the Dane, Steen Christensen, as an example of how “good Nordic citizens” are seldom linked to their backgrounds in the same way (Hbl, 13.10.1998).

I would like to stress that the topic of crime in the content analysis does not merely imply reported crimes committed by, or directed towards, a Rom. There are also critical discussions about crime reports and also the press is critical towards the lack of stories about Romani everyday life. In relation to the previously mentioned TV-series, a journalist concludes:

The main problem with the TV-series...is perhaps that in spite of everything, it is not so much about the things that are shown, but about the things that are almost never shown on TV or in other mass media...stories concerning normal Romani everyday life – where someone has a job within mainstream society, another has a traditional profession, no immediate stabbing threat exists, and children go to school (Hbl, 18.1.1998).

A researcher completes the argument: “We are still waiting for Romani portrayals in which the individuality and difference of the characters would overshadow communitarian traits” (HS, 20.1.1998). The ambiguity of these statements is that “everyone” is aware of the fact that the diversity within the community and the everyday life of minority ethnic group members are hardly visible in newspaper reports, but the media logic and practices seem to be written in stone. Unfortunately this is also true for the perception of mediated messages and representations. Thirdly, and perhaps the most visible, claims-making strategies are related to notions of sameness as equality and as non-discrimination, an agenda which was increasingly emphasised during the latter years of the study. While the Roma claim equal access to housing, work and education, such claims to socio-economic justice are comparatively rare. Moreover, when claims for improved housing conditions are raised they are justified by the influence of good
housing conditions on schooling. For a claim to be successful it seems to require an emphasis on integration in the larger society, something which was salient also in the case of linguistic rights. Romani claims-making in the Finnish press predominantly draws on the benefits of cultural and social rights for integration than on the actual citizenship right of cultural and social equality. Equal treatment facilitates contributions to the nation building:

It would be important to find ways by which also a Romani family in very deep water would find an apartment, which, for example, makes children’s schooling possible (HS, 11.12.1994).

Not until the 21st Century are voices raised for increasing social policy resources to the education of the Roma. Lacking equality is rather articulated in relation to discrimination and the targets of such criticisms are not the bureaucratic apparatuses but ordinary people and different representatives of the private sector. A legal discourse is dominating this anti-discriminatory agenda, controlled by the authorities rather than by the Roma themselves. Discrimination is not permitted; it implies a violation of Finnish law and is therefore clandestine.

This is about a criminal offence according to the paragraph in the penal code, which explicitly forbids such discrimination based on race, nationality, ethnic group... (Hbl, 22.7.1998, editorial).

The quote above is related to a report on discriminatory practices in the restaurant business conducted by HS. A reporter followed three Romani women to thirteen Helsinki restaurants, out of which entry was denied to seven. The report sparked an intense debate. The issue of discrimination of the Roma suddenly became an issue of national or societal interest. This case contributed to the high rate of stories on discrimination at the end of the 1990s. The discussion mobilised a broad group of actors, including various elites. It also highlights the image of reactive rather than proactive coverage of Romani issues. Minister of European Issues, Ole Norrback, filed an appeal concluding that:

...individual cases certainly do not justify a denial of entry to the premise for all Roma. According to the Minister, Finnish society still seems to encompass characteristics resembling the American South before Martin Luther King... When racism occurs it must be responded to. I respond now, besides as a Minister, as an ordinary citizen (HS, 14.7.1998).

In this respect Romani discrimination became a public issue. It is also one of the topics which actively engage a variety of actors in a public discussion. A closer reading of the argumentation elucidates an assumed prerequisite of referring to national or state interests, rather than to merely human rights as in rights for the individual to be protected from humiliating treatment of different kind. A representative of the restaurant business makes a statement about Finland’s reputation in terms of international cooperation and competition while discriminatory practices within the restaurant industry are conceived as a result of “conflicts”:

Finland cannot afford to be labelled as a state in which discrimination is part of everyday life. Alongside the unsettling of the principles of a state of law, it also makes international cooperation more difficult and weakens competition in the travel industry. Besides considering new regulations, new solutions by which conflicts can be relieved must be found (HS, 25.7.1998).
When a Romani representative makes claims related to anti-discrimination, also he draws on a discourse of nation-building and claims respect according to the Romani contributions to nation-state building:

I am good enough to represent Finland and the whole of Europe in the world, but I am not allowed to enter my local pub ... Also Romani men defended Finland then, when we were at war, and also now we have to fulfil the duties as Finnish citizens and also gain rights for ourselves... (HS, 12.8.1998).

It is a rather small group of the Roma who give voice to most articles on Romani matters, while some actually new agendas and claims are raised by a few representatives in their first and only ‘moment of fame’. While the cooperation between Romani and majority elite actors seems quite successful on some matters brought to public attention, such as the case of HS on discrimination, it simultaneously limits the possible agendas and issues in the newspaper coverage.

**Conclusions**

This study takes a particular focus on the communicative space of the media and on its role as an arena for negotiation and contestation. The media, in this case the daily press, has the potential of involving all kinds of voices or agents, debating all kinds of issues. Access to the media brings about the power of influencing those claims which successfully reach the public arena.

The narrow agenda on Romani issues covered in the Finnish press reproduces the familiar image of the Roma as outsiders, as entertainers, criminals and victims. While the increasing coverage of issues related to human rights and discrimination highlights the insufficiency of the welfare state in catering for all the different forms of exclusion embedded in a formally equal notion of citizenship, writings on discrimination are still contributing to the construction of Romani identity as that of being victims. This construction is underpinned by the lack of Romani representatives debating discrimination in the press. There is also a surprising shortage of feature stories recognising the Roma not only as representatives of a collective ethnic identity, but as individual citizens with multiple identities triggered in different settings.

Newspaper representatives and other elite groups do criticise the narrow agenda-setting on Romani issues, but only through a *de facto* more multifaceted coverage of Romani issues we can learn about the complex reality and about the different realities of the Romani people in Finland. In spite of the increasing emphasis on multiculturalist journalism and the increasing coverage of Romani issues in Finnish newspapers, the diversity of stories has not increased, rather the opposite.

While the qualitative analysis of claims-making indicates that Romani actors do have the possibility of contesting dominant claims and positions, the claims-making activities are limited to issues which are rather ‘safe’ and typically justified by making reference to interests of the nation-state, something which is familiar also from other settings, when expressing a sense of solidarity with the nation-state rather than with a trans-national Romani community (Huttunen 1997; Nordberg 2006). Claims for social and linguistic rights, such as the right to learn the Romani language and the right to decent housing, are interlinked with the aim of integrating into the larger community. In general, the reliance upon the redistributive role of the welfare state seems quite stable and claims-making related to socio-economic injustice is rare. Subsequently, the analysis seems to support the
scholarly critique that a politics of identity may divert attention from struggle for economic inequality and social justice (e.g. Fraser 1997). Romani actors who get access to the newspaper arena do, however, constitute a minor group of activists.

It is not possible to draw too large conclusions regarding more recent trends, but perhaps the shift during this millennium towards more specific critical statements and the emphasis on empowerment from within, opens for increasing dialogue between a larger group of Roma and the state apparatuses about how to implement and transform those social and cultural rights which already exist in the form of legislation.

Notes
1. Arguably, the substance of rights does influence the capability to take action as a citizen. Contemporary writing emphasises the need to conceptualise citizenship as a bundle of rights and obligations as well as an active practice (Lister 2003).
2. Critical voices have, however, been raised against the increasing influence from other media on behalf of traditional print media and the impact of such a transformation on the citizenry as an active and reflexive producer of media products (Isin & Wood 1999; Sennett 1974).
3. Next to the legacy of political and economic liberalism, Finland’s agrarian history has contributed to a strong influence from communitarian political and theoretical thinking (Anttonen 1998: 357).
4. The kind of content analysis used here includes the counting of certain elements in the texts. In this respect it could be labelled as quantitative content analysis. Yet interpretive elements are present also in this kind of analysis. The distinction between qualitative and quantitative content analysis is obviously never clear-cut (Bergström & Boréus 2000). Nonetheless, what distinguishes quantitative content analysis as it is used in this study from the qualitative text analysis is the focus on manifest as opposed to connotative, latent or “between-the-lines” meaning (see Riffe et al 1998: 19, referring to Berelson 1952).
5. The intracoder reliability was checked by recoding a sample six months after the first coding. Using the formula suggested by Holsti (1969), the intracoder reliability was .96 for the topic as well as for the actor variables.
6. The difference between the two newspapers in terms of the coverage of Romani issues was not very significant with regard to the diversity of actors. For this reason the reported results of the content analysis do not distinguish between the two papers. It is also problematic to focus on newspaper comparisons in the content analysis when the HS archive procedures possibly generated a more complete sample of articles with a larger share of short news briefs.
7. The legitimisation of immigration control in relation to Romani asylum-seekers is reported in another study (Nordberg 2004).
8. The list of articles was cross-checked against the database of Brage’s press archive. This procedure revealed another three articles only.
9. The intracoder reliability was checked by recoding a sample six months after the first coding. Using the formula suggested by Holsti (1969), the variable determining whether an article had a dominant focus on the Roma, or not, had a reliability of 1.0. The variable determining whether an article contained claims, or not, had a reliability of .92.
10. The Advisory Board on Romani Affairs is a consultative body where Roma representatives and the state meet in what is nowadays a permanent institution. Half of the members are members of Romani NGOs and half of the members are representatives of various Ministries.
11. A more accurate example of an attempt to counter the social policy framework surrounding Romani issues is also salient in the repeated suggestion to relocate the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health to the Ministry of Education (see e.g. Suonoja & Lindberg 2000).

Acknowledgements
I would like to thank the participants of the 17th Nordic Conference on Media and Communication Research, and particularly Gunilla Hultén, for stimulating discussions and valuable comments on an earlier draft of this paper. I am also grateful for the possibility to present this article at a research seminar arranged by the Department of Social Sciences at Åbo Akademi University and for the fruitful comments by the participants. The study is financed by the Foundation of the Research Institute at Åbo Akademi University and by Svensk-Österbottniska samfundet.
References


Appendix

Table 1. Articles which Include Claims-Making and has a Dominant Focus on Finnish Roma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Claims</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>263</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>266</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. The Share of Dominant Actors in Articles Selected or not Selected for the Qualitative Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actors</th>
<th>Not Selected</th>
<th>Selected</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Press</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roma</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authorities</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politicians</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>203</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Youth and New Media in the New Millennium

THORBJÖRN BRODDASON

Abstract
There is general agreement among media and communication scholars that a monumental shift is occurring in the media and communication habits of young people. In the present paper, this shift is discussed within the framework of a long-term study of six samples of Icelandic youths, covering a period of 35 years. A persistent decline in use of the “old” media, such as books, newspapers and radio is demonstrated, while the social role of television is shown to be undergoing a transformation comparable to what happened to book reading centuries earlier. All this is discussed in the light of the onslaught of new technologies and new media of communication.

Key Words: gender, age, time, old media, new media, ambivalence

Introduction
The ongoing research project “Children and Television in Iceland”, which presently extends between 1968 and 2003, provides a unique perspective on changes and developments in the uses of traditional media of communication among consecutive samples of youths in an affluent and fast-moving Northern European population. At the same time, the project figures as a running measure of the impact of new media as they have been introduced and gradually incorporated into the Icelandic culture during this period of time. In this paper, some key findings of the project – relating to a persistent decline in book reading, fundamental changes in the uses of television, the rapid penetration of the Internet and the explosive introduction of mobile phones – will be accounted for.

Among contemporary students of youth and media, the metaphors may differ somewhat from one study to the next, and the vocabulary is not always identical, but there appears to be full agreement on the main conclusion: A monumental shift is occurring in the media and communication habits of young people. According to Sonia Livingstone: “As we enter the twenty-first century, the home is being transformed into the site of a multimedia culture, integrating audiovisual, information and telecommunications services” (Livingstone 2002: 1). This transformation is exemplified, on the one hand, in the near-ubiquity of the Internet in the homes of ordinary people (Livingstone and Bovill 2001) and, on the other, in a prevalent disregard for book reading (The Scotsman 2004; National Reading Campaign 2004; Hegna 2005). At the same time, we would do well to “resist...extreme claims that the era of the book and print literacy are
over. Although there are discontinuities..., there are also important continuities” (Kellner 2002:92). It is also important to keep in mind that access to, and participation in, the new multimedia culture is far from evenly distributed. As David Buckingham points out: “…the most striking development here (not only in the UK but in many other industrialized countries) has been the increasing polarization between rich and poor” (Buckingham 2000:77). No less important is the question of gender: “…researchers have consistently found that girls have less access to computers, are less interested in them and spend less time using them than boys…” (Buckingham 2002:79). This last observation inevitably raises the proverbial question of the chicken and the egg.

Early studies of television on both sides of the Atlantic were directly prompted by concerns about the social effects of the medium, especially on children. In their classic study, Hilde T. Himmelweit and her associates acknowledge their starting point: ’Every new medium of communication has in its time aroused anxiety…Now it is the turn of television’ (Himmelweit, Oppenheim and Vince 1958:xiii). Over the years, television became a well-established fixture of our existence (Broddason 1996); yet Himmelweit’s observation was still echoed – and amplified – three decades later: “For every new mass medium appearing on the scene, a “moral panic” has occurred” (Rosengren and Windahl 1989: 249). This viewpoint has persisted to this day, even though the authors of more recent works try to strike a balance between accounts of optimism and pessimism (Buckingham 2000; Castells 2001; Livingstone 2002).

The mobile phone is given particular attention in some recent works. In an ambitious study of Norwegian youths, Hegna (2005) notes a significant reduction in feelings of loneliness between 1992 and 2002. Hegna goes on to suggest that the mobile phone is the simple explanation of these changes (Hegna 2005:43). According to Barry Wellman, this is a time for individuals and their networks, not for groups. The mobile phone affords liberation from both place and group, and rather than being embedded in one social network, person-to-person interactors continuously switch between networks (Wellman 2001:238-248). “These trends are tantamount to the triumph of the individual, although the costs for society are still unclear” (Castells 2001:133). “If ‘community’ is defined socially and not spatially, it is clear that contemporary communities are rarely limited to neighbourhoods…” (Wellman 2001:233). The shift away from place-based inter-household ties to individualized person-to-person interactions and specialized role-to-role interactions (Wellman 2001:231) has given rise to the concept of networked individualism. I shall return to this concept towards the end of this paper. First, however, a brief introduction to the long-term research project that is the source of my data.

The Research Project “Children and Television in Iceland”

A Note on Method

The research project Children and Television in Iceland consists presently of six surveys that have been conducted over a period of 35 years, starting in 1968 and continuing at regular intervals until the last one so far, in 2003. The population basis for these surveys has been defined in the same manner on each occasion, i.e. the last six classes (in 1968 only the last five classes) in elementary school in three Icelandic communities, Reykjavík, Akureyri and Vestmannaeyjar. The research settings have been practically identical over the years. Pupils were randomly sampled on an individual basis and participation was entirely voluntary. The surveys were in the form of written questionnaires.
and were conducted during school hours at the same time of the year, two to three months into spring term. 1 Sample sizes and response figures are shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Response rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>733</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>795</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>824</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>961</td>
<td>817</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>857</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1008</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the response rates are highly satisfactory on all six occasions, the figure for the 2003 survey is relatively low due to an influenza epidemic that coincided with the field work.

**The Questionnaire**

Most questions have remained very much the same over the years. Obviously, though, additions have been necessary, in order to accommodate the ever-growing ranks of what is collectively known as the “new media”. The 2003 questionnaire was 16 A-4 pages long and consisted of 83 questions altogether, many of which contained a number of sub-questions. Aided by pilot studies and accumulated experience, we have sought to establish a level of sophistication in the wording of questions that would be acceptable to ten-year-old children. The length of the questionnaire has also been determined with ten-year-olds in mind. The schools turned the children over to us for two consecutive sessions (about 80-90 minutes in total). Apart from the questionnaire, the participants were also requested to fill out a television diary for the previous week (aided recall). The supervision of all sessions, including distribution and collection of questionnaires, was in the hands of the team of researchers and their trained assistants, and care was taken to dissociate the operation from the daily school routine. This was particularly important, considering that the children were “borrowed” from the school, during school hours and remained on school premises.

Apart from standard background questions, the questionnaires have dealt with the uses of all the traditional media of mass communication, including book reading; leisure activities other than media use; travel; some knowledge issues; orientation to the future; and a narrow range of attitudes. Additions to the most recent surveys include questions regarding the respondents’ possession of various items that reflect changes in the media and communications culture. Since the 1991 survey, this particular cluster of questions has contained the lists reproduced in Table 2 (figures indicate the rounded total percentages of affirmative responses). A few of these will be discussed below. By and large, my figures and tables lend support to the general consensus among researchers as to where the media culture is heading. What puts my material somewhat apart is the extensive time perspective that I can invoke in order to demonstrate some of the suspected trends.
Table 2. Children and Television in Iceland: “Do you own, or is there in your room, any of the following?” 1991-2003: 10- to 15-year-old youths in Reykjavík, Akureyri and Vestmannaeyjar (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Record player</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD player</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games computer</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Added in 1997</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal computer</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile phone</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VCR player</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Added in 2003:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVD-player</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet connection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laptop computer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm computer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP3-player</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minidisk player</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This item was dropped from the list in 2003.

A Shift in the Media Culture: The Evidence

As discussed above, researchers agree that the lives of ordinary people have in recent years undergone a significant transformation in terms of their media and communication habits. This has affected all age groups in disparate societies, and people in all walks of life. It seems evident, however, that it is the young ones who are most deeply involved. This is probably true across geographical, cultural, social and economic distances.

An “Old” Medium in New Circumstances

For those who grew up without television, it takes some effort to label this mass medium as “old”. Hence the quotation marks. I find it fitting to start this exemplification of changes by demonstrating how television, which arguably falls well outside the definition of “new media” (Livingstone, Bovill and Gaskell, 1999: 10), has undergone a transformation in terms of its uses in the household. Much scorn has been heaped upon television since its inception seventy years ago. At the same time, it is not disputed that, on its arrival, television became the focal point of the home where members of the family spent their time together. Metaphors abounded; one of my favourites is The Electronic Hearth (the title of an insightful work by Cecelia Tichi, 1991). This view of television rests on the premise that we are discussing the television set in the singular, which was not unreasonable during the first decades of the new medium. During the 1980s, it became apparent that we no longer could take single-TV homes for granted as a general rule. Consequently, when preparing for the 1991 survey, I added a question about the
number of television receivers in the respondent’s home. As Table 3 shows, the number of homes with three or more television receivers more than tripled between 1991 and 2003.

**Table 3. Children and Television in Iceland: Number of TVs in Respondents’ Homes 1991-2003: 10- to 15-year-old youths in Reykjavík, Akureyri and Vestmannaeyjar (per cent)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No TV</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One TV</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two TVs</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three TVs</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four or more TVs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean no. of TVs</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N:</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>834</td>
<td>773</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quite clearly, at the turn of the 21st century, the days of the “electronic hearth” were numbered; it was rapidly being replaced by several screens, scattered throughout the house, enabling household members to watch TV in solitude if they so wished. This development fits well with the general conclusion that “…television still dominates the leisure hours and interests of children and young people…” (Livingstone, Bovill and Gaskell 1999:11). We are seeing here one aspect of the progressive advance of the “media-rich bedroom“ (Livingstone 2002). The implications for social interaction within the family, parental supervision and reciprocity are quite profound. Here, as always, the differences between boys and girls must be kept in mind (Table 4).

**Table 4. Children and Television in Iceland: Per cent of Respondents with own TV 1991-2003: 10- to 15-year-old youths in Reykjavík, Akureyri and Vestmannaeyjar (per cent)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The very strong and persistent gender bias that Table 4 reveals calls for a comment; I shall return to that issue below. Tables 5 and 6 confirm that the opportunities offered by the proliferation of TVs are appreciated.
Table 5. Children and Television in Iceland: Per cent of Respondents who watch TV “usually”/“very often” alone* 1968-2003: 10- to 15-year-old Youths in Reykjavík, Akureyri and Vestmannaeyjar (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watch TV “usually”/“very often” alone</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In 1968 and 1979, the wording of the response was: “I usually watch TV alone”. From 1985 onwards, a five-graded multiple choice response was provided to the question “How often do you watch TV?”, including “Alone…very often”.

Table 6. Children and Television in Iceland: Per cent of Respondents who Watch TV “very often” with Parents 1985-2003: 10- to 15-year-olds in Reykjavík, Akureyri and Vestmannaeyjar (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2003, the overall percentage of those who claim to watch TV “very often” with their parents is less than half of what it was in 1985. Gender differences, with respect to this question, disappear during this time. This is probably best explained with reference to the prevailing gender differences demonstrated in Table 4: having more access to TV in their private space, the boys are provided with both motive and opportunity to desert the family’s living room in greater numbers than the girls.

Table 7. Children and Television in Iceland: Hours and Minutes Spent Watching TV* 1985-2003: 10- to 15-year-olds in Reykjavík, Akureyri and Vestmannaeyjar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>11:21</td>
<td>9:11</td>
<td>10:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>13:00</td>
<td>11:17</td>
<td>12:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>13:29</td>
<td>11:28</td>
<td>12:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>12:34</td>
<td>13:49</td>
<td>13:09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Measurement methods are not identical over the years.

Considering the proliferation of TVs in the households and their growing presence in the private spaces of the young people, it would seem reasonable to expect a strong increase in time spent watching TV. Although my measures of television viewing intensity are not identical over the years, I feel justified in comparing the figures for the past four surveys. Table 7 confirms the hypothesis that more and more time is being spent watching TV, but only to a moderate degree: we see an overall increase of some 30 per cent over a period of 18 years. The table also shows time-honoured gender differences.
in the expected direction, but only in three cases; in the latest survey, we do indeed find a distinct gender difference, but it is in the opposite direction: whereas in 1985, 1991 and 1997 (and actually in 1968 and 1979 as well, even if direct quantitative comparisons with later surveys are not permissible), boys watched television more than girls, in 2003 the girls reported an average figure that is one hour and fifteen minutes higher than that for the boys. This difference holds for each of the six age groups except the youngest: the 10-year-old girls watched television 25 minutes less on average during the week in question than did the 10-year-old boys. Further, we register an actual decline in television viewing among the boys in 2003, so steep in fact that they have even fallen well below the 1991 figure. And this is happening while an ever-increasing number of respondents (especially boys) report private ownership of television. When we start looking for an explanation of this important turnaround, the idea of displacement suggests itself and the obvious candidates to effect the displacement are the “new media”. I shall return to this question, but first I shall consider the question of displacement with regard to another media issue.

A Truly Old Medium in New Circumstances

Audiences for old-fashioned printed matter (books, magazines, newspapers) obviously precede audiences for broadcasting and digital media. In the past, when the question of displacement has arisen, it very frequently has been focused on the question of reading versus watching TV, (Knulst and Kraaykamp 1997; Koolstra and van der Voort 1996; Neuman 1988). More recently, attention has increasingly turned to old-fashioned reading versus uses of the new media (Livingstone, Bovill and Gaskell 1999).

We have included questions regarding leisure reading in our surveys from the very outset of the research project Children and Television in Iceland. Consequently, we are able to speak with some confidence about changes in reading habits. The following question has been put to our respondents in each survey:

If you think carefully, how many books, apart from school books, do you think you have read during the past 30 days? (1968 and 1979).

Have you read any books during the past 30 days? (Here we do not mean books that you may have read in relation to your school work) (1985, 1991, 1997, 2003).

Table 8. Children and Television in Iceland: Number of books read during “the past 30 days” in 1968-2003: 10- to 15-year-olds in Reykjavík, Akureyri and Vestmannaeyjar (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One to nine</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten or more</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean no. of books</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The categories in Table 8 are chosen so as to highlight the extremes: on the one hand, we have those who have not read a single book during the period in question, and on the other, the very heavy readers for whom hardly a day passes without some leisure reading. The overall trend between 1968 and 2003 is unmistakable, especially with regard to the “non-readers” whose ranks are constantly swelling. The diminishing numbers of the very heavy readers are also apparent, with the most dramatic downturn occurring between 1997 and 2003. Admittedly, the figure for 1979 stands out as something of an anomaly in this context; this is in all likelihood best explained by the new comic book genre, which had been recently introduced on the Icelandic market in 1979, and enjoyed considerable popularity at the time of the second survey. These publications take much less time and effort than ordinary books, and they can even be enjoyed without being “read” in the proper sense of the word (for a more comprehensive discussion of this problem, see Broddason 1996:120-123).

It is well established that girls read more than boys, and also, that book reading declines during the teens. Tables 9 and 10 confirm this.

Table 9. Children and Television in Iceland: Number of books read during “the past 30 days” 2003: 10- to 15-year-olds in Reykjavík, Akureyri and Vestmannaeyjar According to gender (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of books:</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One to nine</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten or more</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10. Children and Television in Iceland: Number of books read during “the past 30 days” 2003: 10- to 15-year-olds in Reykjavík, Akureyri and Vestmannaeyjar According to age (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10-11</th>
<th>12-13</th>
<th>14-15</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of books:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One to nine</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten or more</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the past several decades, television has been the favourite scapegoat for those adherents of the displacement hypothesis (see, for instance, Neuman 1988) who bemoan the decline of reading. During the 1980s, Corteen and Williams made this cautious statement on the basis of meticulous empirical work: ‘At least for some children, time spent with television displaces reading practice’ (Corteen and Williams 1986:71).

Before I continue, I wish to put in a reminder that there is more to printed matter than just books. As Table 11 demonstrates, the decline in reading is in no way confined to books. The level of newspaper saturation among youths in the 1960s and 1970s is impressive, particularly if we keep in mind that regular delivery of newspapers to Akureyri
and Vestmannaeyjar was much less reliable in those days than it is in the 21st century. The steady decline in the reading of newspapers since the 1979 survey must be regarded as one indication of a radical shift in the media culture. Interestingly, the strong gender differences that characterize the figures for book reading are either absent or marginally in the opposite direction with regard to newspaper reading. This of course reflects the fundamentally different (gender-contingent) purposes served by newspapers, on the one hand, and books, on the other.

Table 11. Children and Television in Iceland: Percentage who read a newspaper daily or almost daily 1968-2003: 10- to 15-year-olds in Reykjavík, Akureyri and Vestmannaeyjar. By Gender (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures I have presented in this section provide strong evidence that reading in the traditional sense is in an increasingly sharp decline among Icelandic youth. We might even forecast that well-filled book shelves – the pride of any Icelandic home up until now – will soon be a thing of the past, and that newspapers will wither away in the next few decades. Considering the importance attributed to reading and literacy as key elements in modern democratic society (Broddason 1996:112-120), it is important to find out what is displacing reading.

The Really New Media

The information gathered during our surveys makes it possible to explore several kinds of relationships in order to chart changes in the media culture of young people. Thus, we find that there is a strong negative relationship between book reading, on the one hand, and ownership of television, a personal computer and an Internet connection, on the other. This finding holds most of the time for boys and girls separately, but only within certain age groups. Table 12 serves as an example. The highly significant differences between owners and non-owners of an Internet connection are sustained within both gender categories, but only in one out of three age categories (12- to 13-year-olds).
Table 12. Children and Television in Iceland. Book reading according to responses to the question “Do you own, or is there in your room…an Internet connection?” 2003: 10- to 15-year-olds in Reykjavík, Akureyri and Vestmannaeyjar (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don’t own Internet c.</th>
<th>Own Internet c.</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of books read during past 30 days:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One to nine</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten or more</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p<.000

Not so long ago, mobile telephones were an unknown feature of the daily lives of ordinary adults, let alone children and teenagers. The rapidity with which this situation changed is probably without parallel (Table 13). It is a challenging task to try to fathom the implications of this development for social relations and our conceptions of individuals, groups and networks (Castells 2001; Wellman 2001).


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ownership of mobile phones is becoming so pervasive that it makes little sense to attempt any analysis in terms of differences between owners and non-owners. The avalanche fell, so to speak, in between surveys. In order to catch it in progress, we would have needed a survey in the year 2000 or thereabout. It is striking that, among all the new communications phenomena, it is only in the acquisition of this particular gadget that the girls have some edge on the boys. That the mobile phone is being used by young people is common knowledge; no survey results are needed to prove that. But what, if anything, is the mobile phone displacing? This question will not be answered conclusively here, although the book reading figures discussed above suggest one obvious victim and, at least as far as the boys are concerned, television is on the defensive for the first time in history. However, the explosive introduction of this new medium has ramifications far beyond displacement effects, because it has facilitated the creation of previously unheard of communication situations and relations. Tables 14 to 16 throw some light on how the mobile phone is being used.
Table 14. Children and Television in Iceland. “How often do you speak to...on a mobile phone?” Percent who say “Once a day” or “More than once a day” Survey of 2003. 10- to 15-year-olds in Reykjavík, Akureyri and Vestmannaeyjar (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Significance:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>p&lt;.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>p&lt;.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relatives</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>p&lt;.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>p&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15. Children and Television in Iceland. “How often do you send an SMS to...?” Percent who say “Once a day” or “More than once a day” Survey of 2003. 10- to 15-year-olds in Reykjavík, Akureyri and Vestmannaeyjar (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Significance:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>p&lt;.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>p&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relatives</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>p&lt;.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>p&lt;.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16. Children and Television in Iceland. “How often do you receive a SMS from...?” Percent who say “Once a day” or “More than once a day” Survey of 2003. 10- to 15-year-olds in Reykjavík, Akureyri and Vestmannaeyjar (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Significance:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>p&lt;.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other relatives</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>p&lt;.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mobile telephone has become an essential ingredient in the daily lives of boys and girls, but distinctly more so for girls. This new gadget is clearly very important for contacts with relatives, and has drastically changed the context of these contacts in comparison with the situation only a few years earlier. This is even more true of contacts with friends: Especially the girls seem to rely on the mobile to keep their social networks running, talking on the phone and sending and receiving SMSes. The extent to which the mobile phone instigates or accelerates changes in their peer relationships cannot be deduced from my figures.

Sonia Livingstone and Magdalena Bober (2004) found that a tenth of 9- to 11-year-old UK children and a fifth of 12- to 15-year-olds had access to the Internet in their own bedrooms. Similar figures in my 2003 survey are 14 per cent for the 10- to 11-year-olds,
27 per cent for the 12- to 13-year-olds, and 46 per cent for the 14- to 15-year-olds. Boys are more likely than girls to have their own Internet connection, but the gender difference is much more marked among the Icelandic sample (40 per cent versus 18 per cent, respectively). However, Table 17 shows that both boys and girls use the Internet.

Table 17. Children and Television in Iceland. Uses of the Internet. Percent who say “Once a day” or “More than once a day” Survey of 2003. 10- to 15-year-olds in Reykjavík, Akureyri and Vestmannaeyjar (per cent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chat on the Internet</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send and receive e-mail</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Much as expected, the boys are more frequent Internet chatters than the girls. Intriguingly, however, the girls are actually level with the boys when it comes to use of the e-mail function. Although this may come as a surprise, it fits very well in with the findings regarding the use of mobile phones. E-mail, after all, is in principle little different from SMS. At the same time, of course, this means that the girls are becoming familiar with the computer and may very well point towards greater equality in this area in the near future.

Some Conclusions

The proliferation of television sets in the home has helped in the creation of a new environment; we may speculate about a new individualism, possibly greater isolation, less communality in the family etc.: “...enforced conviviality being a thing of the past for all but the poor” (Livingstone 2002:136). However, a corresponding dramatic increase in television viewing has not materialized; there is even at last some suggestion of television being displaced by other activities, related to the “new media”. Another aspect worthy of note is the change in the nature of television viewing. Although recent research has shown that “watching television remains primarily a social activity...” (Livingstone 2002:144), my results indicate that the numbers of lone viewers are rapidly increasing: in 2003 no less than 40 per cent of my respondents claim to watch “very often” alone – up from 28 per cent in 1997. The media rich child may be alone, but she is not necessarily lonesome. And this same child may very well watch television in a different frame of mind from her elders. Television is perhaps becoming more of a background medium than was envisaged previously.

Icelanders consider themselves to be bookish; when comparing themselves to the rest of the world, they boast of a comparatively high literacy rate, very high book publication figures, and a high level of interest in literature among the general public (Broddason 1996). The decline in book reading, which my figures demonstrate, is consequently a matter of concern. The 2003 survey shows the average number of books read during the “past 30 days” falling below two for the first time. Reading has been considered inherently good and television, the main competitor during the latter half of the 20th century, is still regarded with scepticism. How far this popular view is justified is of course debatable, but strong support for it from the scientific community is readily available: ‘A great deal of our thinking, reading, and learning involves successive ef-
forts to attend, while the viewing of television and films is less likely to require effort’ (Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi 1990:140). Research results also show that the longer people sit in front of the set, the less satisfaction they say they derive from it (Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi 2002:4). Television is no longer the sole culprit; we find – as usual – that boys read less than girls, and they turn out to possess the new media to a considerably greater extent. The displacement effects of the new media on reading and even to some extent on television viewing seem self-evident, but further analysis is needed to lay bare such effects.

Attitudes towards computers and the Internet are more ambivalent. The Internet explosion together with the mobile phone revolution has prompted the discussion of concepts like “networked individualism” and “communities of choice” (Castells 2001; Wellman 2001). The development towards both convergence and interactivity is gradually making habitual ways of looking at things and asking questions more or less obsolete. The Internet will provide an answer, almost irrespective of the question; and not just one answer, but more likely answers by the hundreds or thousands. Many of them will turn out to be irrelevant or of low quality. When the Internet goes wireless, as it is rapidly doing, the question of which room the Internet connection is located in becomes totally meaningless. The freedom and opportunities offered by the Internet are beyond measure, and the same may be said of the worries that the Internet is bound to cause any responsible parent or guardian of minors. A teenager or even a pre-teenage child may have joined something that she thinks is her “community of choice”, peopled by her peers, but in actual fact she may have become involved in an organized network of unscrupulous adult predators who manipulate her skillfully from the first chance encounter on the Internet (for a macabre example see Eichenwald, 2005). The mobile phone also adds a new dimension to our personal freedom and it definitely alters and complicates the parental role.

The empirical findings reported above demonstrate a rapid ongoing movement among modern youths into a new world that they are actually helping to build at the same time. They often navigate it with greater skill than do their elders, but lacking the experience and cynicism that only comes with age, they are alarmingly vulnerable to all kinds of influences.

It is a formidable challenge to facilitate the fruition of the noblest dreams attached to the new media, while at the same time shielding children and young people from the menacing forces that have demonstrably taken partial possession of the very same technology.

Notes
1. For a comprehensive account of the survey procedures, see Broddason (1996).
2. The knowledgeable reader will note that some items, which have become popular in the past two years, are missing.
3. Paradoxical as it may seem in view of the present findings, book publishing flourishes as ever before in Iceland at the beginning of the 21st century and newspaper publishing is at an all time high in terms of printed and distributed copies.

References


Abstract
This article presents an analysis of the role of the media in the symbolic construction of work and leisure at home. Dealing with individuals who represent a post-industrial and cultural labour market and who work mainly at home, the analysis focuses upon the ritual transformations of everyday life and the role of the media within it.

Leaning on social interactionist Erwin Goffman and his concepts of regions and frames, as well as a dimension of the materiality of culture, this analysis combines a perspective on media use as ritual, transformations in everyday life and the organization of material space. From this perspective, the discussion penetrates the symbolic dimension of media use in defining borders of behaviour and activities in relation to work and leisure at home.

Key Words: everyday life, home, work, ritual, media use, material culture

Introduction
Modernity has changed our preconceptions of home (Frykman & Löfgren 1987). The division of society and everyday life into public and private spheres has had consequences for the way we make use of home as well as its cultural significance (ibid.). Our traditional understanding of home, grounded in modernity, as essentially private and female can mainly be understood in terms of capitalist industrial production and its separation of home and work (cf., Campbell 1987). Today, this capitalist industrial production is not the dominant mode of production everywhere, and the cultural logic of industrial society has therefore been questioned (cf., Castells 1996). Post-industrial society and its modes of production have changed the relation between work and leisure and hence also our everyday life (Giddens 1984:131). These changes are not least important with respect to our understanding of home, especially its relation to time and labour. The core of this cultural change lies within modernity, or more specifically, its afterlife.

Media studies have traditionally regarded everyday media use primarily as a home-based activity (cf., Hagen 1994, also Morley 1986, 2004, Gray 1992, Hermes 1995, Gauntlett & Hill 1999, Larsen 2000). Media use has also been regarded as a leisure-time achievement. Despite the increasing mobility of modern media, which offer great opportunities for media to accompany several kinds of activities in many different kinds of milieu, the home is still an important place for understanding our everyday media.
use (cf., Nilsson 2004:249). What ought to be reconsidered, however, is the preconception of home as leisure based, a back region and mainly private (Campbell 1987:101, du Gay 1996:76).

This article revolves around our understanding of media use at home, and more widely, its relation to the spheres of the everyday in times of shifting organization of labour. Relating to our former knowledge of media use at home (cf., Hagen 1994, also Morley 1986, 2004, Gray 1992, Hermes 1995, Gauntlett & Hill 1999, Larsen 2000), this article strives to avoid a one-eyed focus upon media use at home as a leisure activity. On the contrary, my aim is to focus upon individuals who accentuate the post-industrial organization of labour with blurred distinctions between work and leisure, individuals who lack governing superiors and a particular place at which to work. Thus, the aim of this article is to elucidate the significance of the media in post-industrial everyday life by analysing and discussing the media’s role in everyday transformations between work and leisure, by focusing on three individuals who are characterized by their non-traditional and cultural occupations.

**Empirical Material and Interpretation**

The following discussion is based upon an analysis of three particular individuals who embody work situations that are of particular interest given the purpose of this article. The individuals have been chosen from a large empirical material (55 qualitative interviews), and the small amount of analytic items used here represent my aim to reach depth and richness in the analysis. This kind of “thick description” strives towards a multidimensional interpretation of the object under study and offers a rich and deepened understanding of a quantitatively small material (Geertz 1973:Chapter 1, see also Hermes 1995, Gullestad 1996).

The analysis is a combination of qualitative interviews and interpretations of the interviewees’ homes conducted in 2003 and 2004. The interviews lasted for approximately two hours and revolved around media use and everyday structure from a broad perspective, particularly focusing upon the relation between work and leisure. The spatial analysis has focused upon the construction of the material rooms, especially the symbolic significance of the mediated milieus. Both analyses have paid particular attention to the ritual transformations of the temporal and spatial dimensions of everyday life, above all concerning the role of the media.

**Everyday Rituals and Framing**

This discussion takes its point of departure in the concept of region first used by social interactionist and sociologist Erwin Goffman in the late 1950s (1959). The background of this concept is an assumption that our everyday life can be regarded as a combination of different temporal ritual states – although ritual in a particular quotidian sense (in opposition to the anthropological meaning of the word ritual, which is everything but trivial, cf., Turner 1977, Rothenbuhler 1998, Couldry 2003). We shift daily between different kinds of temporal states and, depending on the character of each state, adjust our behaviour and our preconceptions to the present state. According to Goffman (1959:24), work is such a ritual state, as are play, rest, etc. A temporal ritual state is a condition in which we allow ourselves to act and perform in a particular way, where a performance should be understood as the way in which we present ourselves to others.
(and at the same time to ourselves) within the frames of our everyday life. For some of us – teachers, actors or people working on TV – this shifting between different roles and the different kinds of characters we are presenting to others in different situations is supposedly a natural and familiar part of everyday life. For others, the changing kinds of performances we make in different contexts are carried out more unconsciously and therefore seem gloomier (even though most people certainly have a feeling that they act differently towards their children at home than towards their colleagues at work). When shifting between these ritual states, we also shift our attention to the surrounding environment, and in this way our own behaviour changes its character. The distinction between different kinds of ritual states in everyday life concerns how we think about ourselves in relation to our present social and material surroundings. Goffman defines a region as:

any place that is bounded to some degree by barriers to perception. Regions vary, of course, in the degree to which they are bounded and according to the media of communication in which the barriers to perception occur. Thus thick glass panels, such as are found in broadcasting control rooms, can isolate a region aurally but not visually, while an office bounded by beaver-board partitions is closed off in the opposite way. (Goffman 1959:106)

Goffman, an anthropologist and a sociologist mostly well-known known for his interests in the play of social interaction in human life, was apparently also well aware of the material dimension of communication in everyday life. The constitution of the region, in itself a social construction, is therefore intimately connected to the material conditions of the physical room in which it is constructed. These conditions hence create space and frames, of and for human behaviour and social interaction. Consequently, the material conditions of space, or what might be regarded as the actual place within which the communicative act takes place, are important for how the human interaction (also when there is just one individual occupying the particular space) is developed. In his later work *Frame analysis* (1974), Goffman points at the social and material settings surrounding human behaviour, constructing opportunities for particular kinds of performances. He also points at the ‘keyings’ of a situation, subtle indications that a state of an act has fundamentally changed (ibid.: 40-83). A slight change in behaviour may be the key that tells the spectators that a playful wrestling game has suddenly turned into a hostile fight. This change in behaviour may be hard to articulate clearly, but obvious to all participants in the event. As Goffman’s theory of frames and ‘keyings’ was developed in a society and an everyday structure less permeated by the media, his focus lies upon the social interaction of people, and on the lack of interaction in the back regions. Today, from the horizon of our modern media culture, it is important to keep two things in mind.

First, we must consider that our everyday media cannot be regarded as empty artefacts, without cultural meaning. There is always a kind of cultural relation constructed between the television, radio or book and the individual involved in consuming it. John B. Thompson refers to this cultural relation as ‘mediated quasi interaction’, as a way of experiencing an interaction with the media although no two-way communication is actually taking place (Thompson 1995:84 ff). Another dimension of this is articulated by French philosopher Bruno Latour, who argues that our everyday artefacts must be regarded as agents in relation to which we measure and create our daily behaviour. This assumption takes as its standpoint the fact that human culture has never been constructed around social interaction alone. Instead, and in opposition to almost all other living
beings, human beings have always relied on material artefacts to communicate and express meaning as well as to orient in the world and to understand the milieu in which they are acting within (Latour 1992, 1991/1993).

Second, we must also consider the fact that the material conditions of everyday life can be easily reconstructed by adding or changing the media environment that accompanies them. Thus, the materiality of a situation can be subtly changed, for example by turning the radio on and off, and hence the possibilities to act, to embody a signifying practice within the situation is also changed. In everyday life in modern culture, these kinds of material ‘keyings’ are often mediated; signifying practices are accompanied by particular kinds of media moods, constructing everyday understanding about places (cf., Connell & Gibson 2000:6).

The frame of a situation is, thus, an abstract category and may be useful as an analytical tool when examining every kind of social situation. A particular situation acquires its characteristics in relation to many different factors: whether it is a private or a public event, whether the particular room in which it takes place has been constructed for public or private occasions and the kind of people the situation involves at the moment. In this respect, spaces can have many different kinds of profiles, including and excluding individuals by particular means (Stockfelt 1988:148 ff). The profile of a situation creates frames for what kind of behaviour is appropriate in the particular situation and the different kinds of exclusivity generate norms that the individuals involved in it must consider. Personal exclusivity excludes individuals according to who they are, and the home as arena is a place with a high degree of personal exclusivity (cf., Frykman & Löfgren 1987, Campbell 1987). If you were to find someone making breakfast in your kitchen who does not belong to your family, you would certainly be utterly surprised. Acting like you are at home in someone else’s home (for example changing the TV channel without asking first) is a severe transgression of the exclusivity of the situation. The same kinds of mechanisms are also developed in classrooms, offices and other places where access is delimited on a personal basis. Social exclusivity instead restricts access to a particular place by regulating behaviour. A strong profile creates strict rules for behaviour, like churches, cinemas, mortuaries or concert halls. A less strict profile is that of a shopping mall, where it is regarded odd, but not at all forbidden, to speak to yourself (which is not accepted at church or during a classical music concert). Stockfelt argues that music, and thus other kinds of media milieus, can be used to create different kinds of exclusivity. In the shopping mall, easy listening music is played to embrace many different kinds of music tastes that can be represented by the potential customers. When obscure avant-garde pop music is played in a tiny music club, the medium is likewise used to profile the place, but in this case to exclude those who are not welcome. The media is thus involved in creating the degree of social exclusivity of a place and thereby its frame. But different kinds of profiles, at the same time, also create different kinds of spaces for media use. Listening to a piece of music or watching a particular film is a different kind of act depending on whether it takes place alone at home or in the company of others at a music or film festival.

Thus, it is clear that media use and other kinds of human behaviour are profoundly dependent upon the frames that regulate the situations in which the media are used, but also that these frames are changeable. The frame of a situation is important for the way we use the media (texts, genres, etc.). By introducing a new element into the situation (another human being, a different kind of media content), the character of the situation may be fundamentally changed, and thereby also the frames of social acts and interac-
tion we have to consider in order to stay within the social norms of behaviour. These elements can be materially (the radio is switched off to mark that breakfast time is over) or mentally defined (“Now let’s do something useful”). The changing frames also change our possibilities to act individually and socially.

Goffman’s theory of the presentation of self was developed to analyse everyday life in a broad sense, and was also developed in a society where mediated communication was a less fundamental part of human life and interaction. Accordingly, some important aspects of Goffman’s theory ought to be discussed. It is impossible to neglect the impact of the media on human interaction and experiences of the self, as we, for example, know that modern media have loosened up our former ‘natural’ relation to, and ties between, time and space (cf., McLuhan 1964/1999, Meyrowitz 1985, Thompson 1995, Giddens 1990). But less substantial aspects are also important for our understanding of modern life. According to Goffman, the distinction between front and back regions describes two kinds of regions that differ both geographically and in terms of function. They differ geographically because the back region was formerly understood as a place where the individual could retire, withdraw from the eyes of others and from the behaviour demands created by the public sphere (even though back regions, Goffman points out, could also be used by groups of people preparing a common performance). Today, however, the back region – the place where the individual can withdraw and rest, prepare for future actions on the former arena or engage in intimate matters – can at any moment be produced with support from modern media. Walkmans, Ipods, mobile phones all construct barriers between the individual and the world around him; within these barriers, private spaces and, in some respects, back regions are developed. The blurring of the private and the public, and the back and front regions, due to modern media has opened our eyes to many intimate details of the private lives of others. Another aspect of this is the individualization of culture exemplified by the extended use of mobile phones. Many different kinds of media consumption activities are today taking place in solitude, which certainly affects the user’s behaviour. Although it would be naïve to believe that loneliness demolishes all social rules and all norms for behaviour, it is still interesting to focus upon the kinds of rules of behaviour that solitude creates. What kinds of frames do we construct for ourselves? And how do we organize space when no one can see us?

Jussi, Per-Fredric and Sarah: Everyday Lives at Home

I will deepen this discussion and go further into the analysis by putting forward the three individuals under study and their media use in everyday life, particularly regarding the relation between work and leisure at home. These three individuals are all representatives of the new labour market in that they work with different kinds of symbolic meaning production, all of them have flexible working hours (at least in relation to an employer – none of them actually have one) and a great deal of independence regarding how to organize work time and leisure time in everyday life. Despite these apparent similarities, the analysis will also point at some evident differences between them. The most interesting part of the analysis will focus upon how the media, as they are included in creating the frame of (everyday) space, contribute to creating a symbolic room within everyday life in which a particular kind of behaviour is appropriate at the same time as other kinds are not. The persons in focus here are now to be presented.
Jussi is an autodidact artist in his early fifties, a married man and the father of three girls (aged 2-10 years old). He lives together with his family in a small house in the countryside near the sea. Ever since he decided to become an artist in his early twenties, he has managed to survive economically on his art and therefore few other (job-related) activities compete for his time. Sometimes he must leave home to overview some part of his artistic production (for example, his sculptures are moulded in a foundry a day-trip away) or to discuss exhibitions with museums, art galleries, etc. But most of the time he stays at home to work in his newly built studio in the garden, just outside the family house.

Per-Fredric, a single man in his early thirties, works as a freelance journalist. He lives in an apartment in a suburb just outside a larger city. Per-Fredric is an educated pharmacist who added journalism to his education and thereafter changed his profession. One day a week he still works in a pharmacy, but the rest of the week he stays at home to develop his freelancing. Per-Fredric’s apartment has a kitchen, a bathroom, a bedroom, a living room and a room where he works. He enters the office every morning at about nine o’clock, takes a proper break at noon (when he eats and listens to the radio for approximately an hour) and then returns to his office and stays there until six o’clock in the evening.

Sarah is in her mid-twenties and studies humanities at a university. She shares an apartment together with a female friend, but also spends many nights at her boyfriend’s, and sometimes he stays over at her place. Nowadays, Sarah’s time is more strictly structured than before, as the university course she is taking at the moment contains more lectures, seminars, a larger amount of group projects, etc. than her former courses. Still, this does not mean more than a maximum of two hours a day. Besides this, she usually works as a waitress in a restaurant during weekend lunches and sometimes (but more seldom) also on weekday evenings. As Sarah and her friend share a very small apartment, the few rooms must make space for many different tasks. Sarah’s friend sleeps in the kitchen, and Sarah’s bedroom is at once living room, dining room, TV room, and also the place where Sarah works. She usually spends a few hours at the university every day and then goes home to study in the afternoon.

In the following text, the role of the media in creating frames of work space and leisure space at home will be discussed with the three individuals as a point of departure. The core of the analysis will be the ritual aspect of the media in creating frames between work and leisure in both material and mental respects, i.e. constructing particular work rooms and leisure spaces in everyday life, and also the creation of mental frames of acceptable everyday behaviour. Besides this, the role of the media in the production of everyday regions will also be analysed.

**Media Use and Everyday Structure**

In a broader perspective, it is easy to acknowledge differences in the overarching structures of the lives of the three individuals. For Jussi, who has young children, the social responsibility for the children and the rest of the family is a factor that generates frames for the use of space and time in his everyday life. The times structuring the children’s school hours, kindergarten and free-time activities are rarely negotiable, and the rest of the family life must try to adapt to these fixed time spots. Per-Fredric and Sarah have different social situations. Because both of them in some respects live by themselves (although Sarah has a female roommate as well as a boyfriend), their social obligations
at home are less strict. They both live active social lives outside home; they meet many friends, go to the cinema, bars and (more seldom) theatres. Many of these activities take place in the evenings, something that certainly affects their everyday structure. Per-Fredric must make different kinds of considerations in his work; on the one hand, he is dependent on the time structure of those people he is involved with in his work – papers and magazines that we works for, interviewees he needs to get in contact with, etc. On the other hand, he is free to work whenever he wants and could easily write all his articles at night if he felt like it, not least thanks to all the different kinds of information now available 24 hours a day on the Internet. Because Sarah has regular lectures and other school-oriented activities, her time is, in a way, more structured. But these activities do not usually require more than two hours a day, leaving her considerable free time to spend as she pleases. The time structure of these two people shows an interesting difference. Sarah tries to create spaces for particular kinds of activities, TV viewing, for example, is only allowed after five o’clock in the afternoon, as the earlier hours are dedicated to studying. Nevertheless, she feels an obligation even during the evenings to engage in her university literature, and often has to read for another hour to be able to watch television without feeling guilty. Per-Fredric organizes his temporal life more strictly. He has firm working hours (from nine a.m. to six p.m. and a proper lunch break at noon), even though he admits that he sometimes leaves his office earlier in the afternoon to watch the American sitcom *The Simpsons* or other similar TV shows. His evenings are free, available for private social activities.

The frames of everyday life and the symbolic rooms they create, thus, must be understood as constituting, in many respects, a mental aspect. Jussi, who due to his family really strives not to work during evenings (i.e., after six o’clock p.m.) or at weekends, has severe difficulties separating his artistry from other parts of his everyday life (he often returns to the studio after dinner and transforms the weekend family trips into occasions when he can gather material for his paintings and sculptures). Per-Fredric finds it much easier to turn work off at the end of the day, even though his profession too is a fundamental part of his identity and a great source of pride.

**Media Changing as an Everyday Ritual**

For all three persons discussed here, home has a core position in everyday life, as it is an arena for work as well as rest, social gathering and moments of peace and quiet. Home is a place marked by a strong profile of personal exclusivity in that not just anyone can walk into it or be expected to appear there. For those who work at home, like Jussi, Per-Fredric and Sarah do, this strong exclusivity is loosened up. Jussi is visited by customers, collaborators, journalists and others, all of whom are invited to come to his studio at home. Per-Fredric’s telephone is used for private as well as job-related phone calls, and Sarah and her university mates regularly meet at home for their group projects. The profile of the home is thus changeable and dependent on the present activity taking place within its four walls as well as on the people who are spending time there at the moment.

To make everyday life work and to provide opportunities for all of life’s necessary tasks, the three individuals all have their own ways of making space for the diverse spheres of the everyday, where the media are important in the symbolic transformation of the everyday. In even more symbolically significant events – marriages, baptisms, etc. – particularly symbolically loaded artefacts are used, e.g. the ring, the holy water, etc.,
that state beyond doubt that a ritual transgression has taken place, from one state to another (Turner 1977, Rothenbuhler 1998:Chapter 1, Couldry 2003:22-25). In a more ordinary situation, the media can also be used for a parallel transgression of space from one kind of profile and into another.

For the three individuals presented here, the most important everyday transgression deals with the relation between work and leisure. The transformation is shown in three different shapes, three dimensions that can be combined in different ways and with individual variations: one geographic dimension, one intermedia dimension and one intramedia dimension. The geographic dimension is the truly material dimension; how the room or rooms are constructed at home and how moving from one room to another means leaving leisure time for work time. The intermedia dimension describes how the changes in media accompaniments are symbolic signs involved in the transformation of everyday space. The intramedia dimension, finally, deals with the changing of channels, programmes or genres within the same transformation.

Geographic Dimension
The geographic dimension is evidently dependent upon the actual character of the physical milieu. Jussi might be said to have the most manifest division of everyday spaces (but not of everyday spheres, as he is the one respondent who is the least capable of separating work from other parts of his life). He has his studio in a separate house in the garden, where most of his artistic production takes place (other parts; moulding sculptures and constructing frames for his paintings are still made in the basement of the family house). Jussi’s workday naturally begins about eight o’clock in the morning when the rest of the family leaves home for work, school and kindergarten. Jussi usually watches the morning news on TV, first in his home and later on when he has moved to his studio. The studio is the base of his work even though he sometimes has to run back and forth to check the hot wax pots on the stove. The studio is within sight of the family home and within reach for the rest of the family. Nevertheless, it is a separate building and entering it includes a true physical transformation.

In Per-Fredric’s apartment, one of the rooms is his office. His home includes a great many kinds of media: books, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, video and DVD-player, telephone and mobile phone, computer and different kinds of computer games. There is a clear division between work media and leisure media, as the TV, video- and DVD-player, radio, daily paper, magazines and books are gathered in the living room, bedroom and the kitchen, while the work-related media (scientific magazines, books, a tape recorder and his computer) are in his office. The computer, on which he also listens to the radio while working and plays games in his spare time, is thus the only transgressing medium (besides his telephone) in Per-Fredric’s everyday life. His workdays also involve a physical movement, as his morning routine includes eating breakfast in the kitchen but also watching the morning news on TV in the living room. He works from nine o’clock in the morning in his office where the computer, tape recorder and all his papers are gathered. Per-Fredric takes a proper break at noon and then leaves for the kitchen (and listens to the public service talk channel on radio while eating). Moving from one room to another creates and loosens up frames for acceptable behaviour, time for work and time for leisure.

Sarah, who recently moved into a one-room flat together with a female friend, cannot make any such manoeuvres. Movements in space are prohibited by the restricted
space available. Another important fact is that the many places in the apartment already have a strict profile, which diminishes the possibility for other activities (as the bed, for example, is a place for rest and sleep). Sarah longs to have a computer at home, something she is used to have, and perhaps a computer would work as a marker of a proper work place, which she currently lacks. Instead she is referred to different spots in the apartment when studying: the dining table, her bed, or even the floor. As a university student, Sarah could very well spend her days at the university library, something she dislikes as the (alleged) silence and sounds are far too annoying. She does most of her studying at home, or more seldom at a café.

Intermedia Dimension

The intermedia dimension adds a symbolic dimension to the physical movements in the room, and with help from the media transforms space from leisure to work. Both Per-Fredric and Jussi manifestly use the media in this way. Jussi watches the morning news on TV both at home before leaving for the studio and when he has entered the studio but not really started to work yet. This short period of time is an everyday liminal condition in between work and leisure, as the material surroundings connote work (the studio) but the media surrounding connotes leisure (the television). Work truly begins when the TV is switched off and the radio instead turned on. Jussi usually starts his working day with the public service talk radio channel on, a channel he is very fond of. Per-Fredrik has a comparable morning ritual; he too strengthens the physical movement by changing the media; switching off the TV, turning on the radio (although the public service classics channel). Sarah, who finds it hard to concentrate in the wrong kind of sound environment or in silence, does not accompany her studying with any kind of media. On the other hand, she accentuates the transformation of her home from leisure space into work place by folding up the daily paper. Sarah usually takes a lunch break and (re)reads the morning paper after her lecture has finished. She describes that reading as “a legitimate way to keep off the books”. After that, no other kinds of media (besides university literature) are allowed until five o’clock in the afternoon. Even though she sometimes finds it hard to concentrate and cannot study with expected efficiency, this period of time is reserved for work, and her home is not transformed back into a private place until five o’clock when the leisure media are allowed again. Despite this, Sarah is not as strict as the other two when making time barriers in everyday life. She often feels that she has not worked hard enough and tries to study for another hour in the evening to ease her bad conscience. Only after that can she fully enjoy her TV viewing.

Intramedia Dimension

The intramedia dimension works in the same way. Jussi has the most evident transformation in the form of a three-step model where the physical movement into the studio is emphasized by a changing of media (from television to radio). He finally enters his professional self by also changing radio stations; the talk-oriented public service channel is changed into the classics channel, whose instrumental sound is regarded as less disturbing. This intramedia change of space indicates that he is now completely on duty (after this he also dissolves time structure and takes no breaks, not even a lunch break).

All three of them also use the media to retransform space from work space to leisure space and time from work time to spare time again, and the television is the marker of recreation for all of them. Jussi, who usually stays in his studio until six o’clock in the
afternoon, changes back to his morning media habits when television broadcasts the afternoon news at five p.m. There he gets an intermediary hour in between work and leisure. Per-Fredric turns on the six o’clock news on television, and Sarah turns on any TV programme at five to mark that today’s work has been done and that evening time has now started.

**Everyday Framing**

The transformation of Goffman’s temporal ritual conditions in everyday life has here been manifested in terms of physical movements and changes in different media forms and channels. We have also seen how these acts are ‘keyings’ in defining situations for particular purposes. These ritually organized states can be understood as regions in which we are determined to act and interact in certain ways that are defined by the fundamental characteristics of the situation (the frame), rules regulating performance (the kind of profile) and the social norms of behaviour in that particular situation. The media, thus, contribute to framing the everyday in at least two ways: both as material artefacts that, in various combinations, structure space and the way we act in it, and as symbolically significant signs that offer and restrain different kinds of social behaviour. This perspective also points to the question of how the media help to profile space, i.e. how norms of behaviour are linked to certain mediatized milieus.

To further understand the significance of the media in organizing everyday life, we will here take a closer look at how the organization of the physical room, together with the media, allows certain kinds of acting. Because the situation is defined by the frame, constructed by significant characteristics and elements as well as the profile concerning rules and regulations for behaviour, it is important to look both at the material conditions of communication as well as the cultural conventions restraining our thoughts and behaviour. Jussi’s, for example, is constructed to make way for certain kinds of behaviour, but not others. His work room is actually a small house of its own, constructed with an open inner roof that creates a particular kind of open space familiar from the art world (museums, art galleries, etc.). It has also been decorated according to a familiar artistic norm; walls, roof and the wooden floor all painted in white, very few pieces of furniture – an armchair, a small pedestal painted in white and with some flowers in a vase, the television on its stand (the mentioned radio was never seen), a bookshelf with a few (artistic) books and a slanting drawing desk. Another dominating part of the studio is the window that covers a large part of the long side wall, letting nature come close; horses in a muddy pasture with a glimpse of the sea behind them, all drenched in sunshine. This place only has room for art and the artist. Everything else has been taken away, and it is easy to imagine how the studio only allows the creative artistic work it has been built for. Newspapers, magazines and books (except for a small number of art books) are excluded from this milieu. The television is the only odd item, but as we have seen its primary function is as an intermediary sign between work time and leisure time. In this ascetic environment, there is no stationary telephone (although Jussi carries his mobile phone with him), and words and singing are also forbidden (by the change from talk radio to instrumental classic radio).

Per-Fredric’s occupation as a freelance journalist is far more dependent on new media technology. He is online all day long, and spends a great deal of time talking on the phone. The media also allow regular daily contacts with his friends; one morning ritual is to phone a few friends, who just like him are self-employed, and to check some in-
teresting websites (mostly news and football sites). His also checks the news on the web repeatedly during the day. Per-Fredric’s office is not detached from the outside world like Jussi’s, but has a constant link to the surroundings through the media. Whereas Jussi’s studio is sacral and free from connections with the surrounding world, Per-Fredric’s is filled with media technology and ways to communicate with others. His profession is also much more dependent on contacts with others, and even though Per-Fredric has created his own time constraints for his working hours, these borders are more blurred than Jussi’s, as he constantly leaves his job mentally (to check the news, search for football scores, etc.). The profile of his office is thus defined by its media equipment: a computer, a telephone with recording ability, papers and files with work material. This media milieu is much unlike the other rooms in the apartment, which contain daily papers, video- and DVD-player, fiction literature, etc. and allow for different kinds of (media) behaviour.

In Sarah’s home, a small number of square metres have to hold many different activities, and thereby the room (the one and only in the apartment) determines behaviour less strictly. The apartment is neatly cleaned and everything seems to stand in its correct place (perhaps because they had only lived there for a short period of time). Sara’s (work) room, thus, does not have the clear profile of labour that Jussi and Per-Fredric have created with help from (and lack of) certain kinds of media technology, making space for particular kinds of acting. Neither can she emphasize the ritual transformations of her everyday by moving physically from one room to another. The only room in the apartment holds many different functions; TV, radio, video, all kinds of literature and newspapers, and soon also a computer are ever-present and only her mental structures set the limits. Hence Sarah’s organization of time is less strict than that of the others, and her leisure media use and time for work are often blurred (as she often feels obligated to study during evenings as well).

Thus, the media, and their different kinds of texts, are connected by the respondents to different kinds of socially constructed demands that to various degrees are related to work and leisure. Different combinations of media artefacts in the everyday lives of the respondents accordingly create certain kinds of socially accepted behaviour. These preconceptions are expressed by imaginations of different kinds of media (texts), but are also organized in relation to the surrounding social context. This is most evident in the strong connection between television, leisure and lack of duties – even though Jussi’s and his wife’s strict regulation of their children’s TV viewing also sheds light on other moral notions of everyday life (cf., Morley 1986, Jensen et al. 1993, Andersson & Jansson 1998). Sarah’s complicated relation to reading – the fact that she both enjoys it and finds it legitimate, but at the same time feels guilty about reading and not studying her university literature – also illustrates this.

Media Use at Home in Post-industrial Everyday Life

What does the above tell us about the role of the media in constructing post-industrial everyday life? For the three respondents, the media are involved in everyday life construction in at least two ways. On the one hand, they create boundaries in physical space. By combining different kinds of media in different material rooms, certain norms of behaviour are recommended. Per-Fredric’s different media milieus in the rooms in his apartment thus make space for social behaviour. Another example is the lack of mediated links to the outside world that signifies Jussi’s studio and at the same time keeps
distracting thoughts away. These combinations and constructions of mediatized space thus make way for certain kinds of social behaviour, but they also create borders between the symbolic rooms of everyday life. By accentuating transformations in space as a ritually significant sign, as in the everyday lives of Jussi, Per-Fredric and Sarah, spaces are opened for different everyday ritual states: work, play, rest, etc.

Besides this, the media also work as links between the material rooms at home as well as to the world outside (cf., Larsen 2000:165-190). The continuous use of websites, e-mail correspondence, telephone and web radio that signifies Per-Fredric’s work-days in that way keeps him in constant contact with the outside world, just as his stationary telephone also transgresses borders within the household (as his private phone calls are linked by the same numbers as his official calls). The symbolic rooms of everyday life are also linked in a similar manner; Jussi’s liminal news viewing in his studio is an example of such a connection, as are Sarah’s difficulties reading fiction literature because it makes her feel guilty about not studying.

Everyday life in post-industrial society, as illustrated by the three individuals analysed here, is a socially peculiar situation. According to Goffman’s theory of presentation of self in everyday life (1959), the frames of a situation are mainly created through social interaction with other people. It is in relation to other individuals and social groups that we construct ourselves and thereby chose to act and perform in particular ways (see also Giddens 1991). The above analysis, however, points at situations that are framed, and thereby profiled, by individuals acting in (physical) solitude. By using external factors, such as various combinations of media artefacts and texts and the material construction of space, the correct framing of a situation (and its correct behaviour) is produced despite this solitude.

This framing, thus, is constructed in different ways by the respondents; Jussi and Per-Fredric act for example in relation to a manifest material frame, where physical boundaries within the home contribute to symbolic frames between work and leisure. But there are also symbolic keys to the frame of the situation, and thereby to our understanding and judgement of it, here accentuated by different kinds of media. The intramedia changes that Jussi uses to gradually transform his home from leisure to work in the morning (and back again in the afternoon) constitute such a keying, just as Per-Fredric’s afternoon session with The Simpsons confirms a definitive and automatic end of his working day.

The mediated profile of behaviour within the material as well as the symbolic rooms thus regulate the behaviour of the three individuals even when no one else can see them. Thus, the modern separation of public and private spheres does not mean, even on a microanalytical level within the household, that the private sphere – which is perhaps most private when we are also alone – can be characterized by any kind of lack of social norms (cf., Elias 1994).

The symbolic significance of the media in everyday life, thus, maintains as well as loosens up the strict boundaries between private and public spheres in modern everyday life. The maintenance of boundaries, thus, is accentuated by these three individuals’ desire to keep strict temporal as well as spatial borders between work and leisure in everyday life. The linking character of the media at the same time contributes to loosening up these borders by offering micro-pauses during work time, as does Per-Fredric’s computer or his telephone.

An important difference is nevertheless accentuated between the organization of work of the three persons analysed here and pre-industrial production when everyday life (as
well as society at large) lacked a separation of the public and the private. In the above analysis, strict boundaries between private and public, between work and leisure at home, are accentuated (even though they are not always strictly followed by the respondents). These boundaries are organized individually, as are their accompanying norms for acceptable behaviour that organizes life within the walls of home.

Note
1. Here the more subtle version limoid (liminal-like) could have been used instead (Couldry 2003:33). My choice to still use the term liminal here does not indicate any mixing of the religious and the everyday ritual.

References


The Mediated Body

Cosmetic Surgery in Television Drama, Reality Television and Fashion Photography

ANNE JERSLEV

Abstract
Taking Vivian Sobchack’s idea of the digital morph as not only a digital practice but also a metaphor for a culture obsessed with the idea of bodily changes, of reversibility and metamorphoses, the article takes a closer look at the visual construction of the body as a site of transformation, modification, and improvement in both television, film and fashion photography. The article focuses on the two reality programmes /Extreme Makeover/ (ABC) and /The Swan/ (FOX), the American drama-series /Nip/Tuck/ and an extended series of fashion photographs from /Italian Vogue/ July 2005 by American photographer Steven Meisel titled /Makeover Madness/. The article argues that this modifiable body is today’s /natural body/ and it concludes that even though the modified body, digital or not, is noticeable everywhere in contemporary visual culture it may, primarily, point out what our culture wants to deny.

Key Words: the body, makeover television, fashion photography, beauty, the female body, cosmetic surgery

Introduction
Digital techniques have rendered the body modifiable to hitherto unseen extents. This is noticeable everywhere in contemporary visual culture, in films and on TV, in fashion photography, advertising and video art. Digital techniques morph the body from one shape into another in front of our very eyes or suspend its natural boundaries in movements that defy gravity, as is evident in The Matrix films (1999, 2003, 2003), Ang Lee’s Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (2000) or Zhang Yimou’s House of Flying Daggers (2004). The digital morph, however, is only one way of sculpturing the body and providing it with extreme capacities in contemporary media culture. The posthuman cyborg in performance art and films is another (cf., Wamberg 2002, Beebe, 2000), and a third way is the invitation backstage to witness the working of the “cosmetic morph”, transformations of the “real” body via plastic surgery both in a fiction drama series like Nip/Tuck (FX) and reality series like Extreme Makeover (ABC) and The Swan (Fox). Finally, the body is modified and manipulated digitally in fashion photography and advertisements. Every imaginable bodily transformation seems to be possible in “the Culture of Quick-Change”, to paraphrase film researcher Vivian Sobchack in her book...
Meta-Morphing from 2000. The mediated body seems to have no limits, and there are also no limits to the graphical details of the surgeons’ gory work on bodily surfaces.

The challenges to the body and its boundaries from the avant-garde of the past four decades seem to have been displaced in different ways to popular culture in the new millennium. Australian avant-garde artist Stelarc’s 1990s cyborg performances have their popular cultural counterpart in Dr. Octopus in Spiderman 2, even though, in the latter, the mechanical extensions of the body are unintentional and a curse that transforms the scientist into a monster, whereas Stelarc was interested in situating and discussing the body in a field between nature and technology, between exerting control and being controlled by technology (cf., Høholt 2000). The close-ups of mouths forced wide open by the dentist’s tools in Extreme Makeover are reminiscent of frames from Bruce Naumann’s short experimental film Pulling Mouth from 1969. And representations of French performance artist Orlan’s mediated “carnal art” performances in the 1990s bear similarities to both the staging of cosmetic makeovers in popular culture’s reality shows and a drama series like Nip/Tuck, whose main protagonists are male plastic surgeons. But whereas the staging of bodily transformations in Orlan’s performance art is part of a feminist, critical project, Nip/Tuck is inscribed in a popular cultural field where sex scenes and scenes from the operation room are constructed in identical aesthetic ways and have arousal and the production of affect as their primary end. And yet, the events are constructed as performances in both cases; both in Orlan’s artistic surgery – with her own flesh as material, to paraphrase Danish art historian Anders Troelsen (2002) – and in the aesthetic surgery in Extreme Makeover, The Swan and Nip/Tuck, the body is modified unhesitatingly and as naturally as if it were a living sculpture.

Reality TV programmes, in particular, play a part in a discourse of normalizing or naturalizing plastic surgery and other operations on the “natural” body. These TV programmes partake as much as the scientific and philosophical debate in today’s challenging of the idea of the body as an essential given; they contribute to as well as mirror the rising interest in cosmetic surgery. This article is about mainstream – as opposed to avant-garde – works in which the material body and cosmetic surgery procedures are at the visual centre. My study takes a closer look at the visual construction of the body as a site of transformation, modification and improvement in both television, film and fashion photography. I want to discuss the mediated idea of the body as a form seemingly endlessly capable of transcending its own boundaries in the two reality programmes Extreme Makeover (ABC) and The Swan (FOX), the American drama series Nip/Tuck and an extended series of fashion photographs from Italian Vogue July 2005 taken by American photographer Steven Meisel. In all these works, aesthetic surgery or what Anne Balsamo (1996) names “fashion surgery” takes centre stage almost literally. Thus, I shall focus on the mediated performance of the body as a site of transformation, modification and re-sculpturing. Related, but no less interesting and relevant questions about gender and the construction of the gendered body, and the relationship between body, identity and age will be left aside in this article.

The Morph as Digital Technique and Metaphor
Following Sobchack (2000a), I have found it fruitful and inspiring to work with the concepts of morphing and the morph as both technical terms and metaphors in my discussion of the different visual constructions of the modifiable body. Inspired by Victoria Duckett’s article in Meta-Morphing (Duckett 2000), I use the notion of the
cosmetic morph both as a way of understanding the temporal and narrative structure of the works and their implied idea of the body’s capacity for what Vivian Sobchack calls “marvellous transformation” (Sobchack 2000a: xv). Accordingly, the cosmetic morph is my term for the mediated body constructed by the works. As for the television programmes, we may talk about body narratives of marvellous (and sometimes not so marvellous) transformation from a miserable and ugly ‘before’ to a wonderful and beautiful ‘now’. Although they do so in different ways, both Extreme Makeover and The Swan regard cosmetic surgery as a supermarket in which it is possible to choose anything and to easily and quickly have those bodily modifications performed that secure a better future; very significantly, in one episode of Extreme Makeover, one of the surgeons put the following question to 32-year-old Kim just before she was going to have her first operation: “Anything else last minute?” At the same time, the reality shows and Nip/Tuck use the digital morph as a visual aid for the surgeons to inform their patients about the changes that will occur from ‘before’ to ‘after’. Finally, but not least, the digital morph, especially in Nip/Tuck, contributes to the construction of the impression that the visualized and surgically performed ‘after’ is always at the same time a new ‘before’, paving the way for a new ‘after’ – promising and compulsory at the same time. Thus, the use of digital morphing as a means to visualize the transformed body contributes to the overall sense of the body’s capacity for quick changes.

However, I use the morph in a wider sense, too. My point is that the cosmetic morph as a specific mediated construction of the body has the digital morph as its underlying media logic and cultural logic. The makeover programmes mimic the logic of the digital morph and thus the programmes’ mediated transformations of the material body in a sense presuppose digitalization as a development of media technology, but more importantly as a sort of “cultural imagery”, a pervasive cultural understanding that, as Vivian Sobchack puts it, “links a present digital practice to a much broader history and tropology of metamorphosis and its meanings” (Sobchack 2000a: xiv). Correspondingly, American multimedia producer and anthropologist Louise Krasniewicz regards the morph both as a digitally produced trope and as a metaphor, “a marker of our time, a time in which morphlike activities and events are overwhelming our sense of boundaries, space, direction, identity, and time” (Krasniewicz 2000: 54). No matter whether the surgeons in the programmes actually use digital morphing in order to visualize the proposed alterations to the patients (the surgeons do on some crucial occasions in Nip/Tuck), I use the morph and morphing as metaphors for a historically specific understanding of the body. In the programmes and photographs I am going to discuss in the following, this understanding is mediated in the form of the cosmetic morph.

Technically speaking, morphing is the transformation of one visual object into another by means of computer technology. Morphing is a visual process that is performed without the usual cinematographic techniques such as editing or other processes that mark the shift from one image to the next. Computer graphics make these transformations seamless, fluid and quick – like the fluid metal T-1000’s famous quick-changes in Terminator 2: Judgment Day from 1991 or the faces in the equally famous video to Michael Jackson’s Black or White, also from 1991. According to Krasniewicz, there is a difference between morphing and warping. In computer graphics, warping is the process whereby object ‘a’ is transformed into object ‘b’ (like in the before and after pictures in Extreme Makeover). Morphed images, on the other hand, multiply differences instead of eliminating them, says Krasniewicz (2000: 50); the morph fuses
image ‘a’ and image ‘b’ into a new image that is a combination of the two. Thus, morphing “provide(s) a more chilling sense of boundary manipulation” (ibid.); the warped images end with a new and different object, the morphed do not in the same definite manner.

It is true of computer generated figurations that there is always the possibility that one form can morph or warp into yet another form – or back into a former. The process is reversible and metamorphoses can continue ad infinitum. Paradoxically (or the uncanny paradox, one might say13), the logic precondition for talking about transformation is an idea of a whole, whereas, conversely, the possibility of transformation hinges on an object’s lack of boundaries and coherence (Sobchack 2000b: 136-37).

Thus, the morph is a figure of transformation defined by its physical and temporal impossibility. The morph questions established categories and is able to create new and otherwise unthinkable connections (Krasniewicz 200: 52). Morphing is endlessly reversible. It points to the non-hierarchical (Sobchack 2000a: xix) and questions “notions of coherence and self-identity in space and time” (Sobchack 2000a: xiv). The morph represents, says Sobchack (2000b: 151), “human transformation, metamorphoses, mutability outside of human time, labor, struggle, and power, seemingly transcending structures of hierarchy and succession”.

Both Extreme Makeover and The Swan seem to be founded on these general ideas, which they at once follow and contest. Even though the programmes repeatedly inform us that an extended amount of time passes from the first surgery to the revelation of the ‘brand new’ person, they nevertheless adhere to a notion of time and an aesthetics that emphasizes reversibility, metamorphosis and quick-change. Thus, a recurrent means of filming operations is in fast-motion, as if we were dealing with magic hocus-pocus,14 and after the ritualized post-surgery images of the more or less suffering, more or less bandaged participants wrapped up in their bathrobes, there are no further signs of the surgical interventions on the body. Scars seem to be non-existent in this universe of cosmetic body modifications – what counts is the present and the future. Thus the series contributes to the naturalizing of the body as a sculpture that can continuously be re-modelled, and it challenges the biological, ageing body as an essential given. But the makeover shows are also inscribed in the paradox that characterizes today’s notion of the body and that the rise in cosmetic surgery has elucidated as a continuous ambivalence in modernity: On the one hand, there is a persistent faith in the body as an essence in Western culture, the ultimate ontological refuge that reacts in accordance with untouchable and preconceived biological and temporal rules. Therefore, it is still a widespread practice that having undergone cosmetic surgery is kept a secret – this goes for stars and celebrities as well.15 At the same time, it becomes more and more archaic to insist that cosmetic surgery is unnatural per se and, consequently, that it would be possible to precisely define what constitutes a ‘natural’ unity of body and soul – and what does not.

Contrary to Nip/Tuck, both The Swan and Extreme Makeover establish a sense of closure, partly due to the series’ structure, in which each new episode has new participants and each episode ends by celebrating the fact that bodily flaws and dysfunctions have been made to disappear – like for example ugly teeth being pulled out and replaced by the implantation of a row of new and completely regular pearly whites. Each episode starts in a situation of need and incompleteness and ends in a situation of fulfilment constructed as a performative climax. In Extreme Makeover,
the finished ‘work’ is revealed to the invited group of friends and family who seem to be waiting in total excitement for the moment of disclosure, whereas, in The Swan, this thrilling moment of revelation is primarily addressed to the participant herself, who during the three months of makeover has had no access to mirrors and has only been allowed to be in touch with relatives and friends for a very short while – ten minutes over the telephone per week – this is why the middle part of each episode of The Swan focuses, more than Extreme Makeover does, on the fight against post-operational depressions and weight problems. Secondarily, the revelation is addressed to the makeover team and the host, who are also present in the luxuriously decorated room of revelation.

It seems that there is only improvement to look forward to from now on. This is the happy closure to each episode. Extreme Makeover constructs optimistically a kind of psychological irreversibility at the same time as it promises social irreversibility. The makeover team has functioned as a channel into the art of correction of deviance, as formulated by one of the surgeons who worked on Kim in Extreme Makeover. Just like physical scars on the body are non-existent, the ‘after’ situation, paradoxically, seems to come into existence without a ‘before’. The new person appears as a tabula rasa, without traces of the operation, without the heavy burden of the past and without traces of the passing of time imprinted on the body. The body is the body without traces in these makeover programmes. It is finished, forever situated in the here and now. The ageing body has been eliminated from the programmes, and, as a result, they construct closure in a much more effective way.

And yet, the completely made over body is also, in another sense, a fragile and paradoxical body. No matter how many quick-fixes, no matter how much the episodes are directed towards the closure’s unveiling of a finished body, the programmes are framed within – or they must suppress, as a kind of absent presence – another (nightmarish) narrative about bodily mortality and another sense of irreversibility: not concerning the ageing of the biological body, but the collapse of the modified body. Despite the optimistic closure, it seems that the programmes cannot evade the sceptical thought that, even though biology may no longer be the problem, we must address the collapse of the modified body. What about the development of new (non-)surgical techniques and materials to repair the made-over body? Closure may never provide complete and satisfactory fulfilment in these makeover programmes; a ‘bodily fix’, a surgical procedure is always inscribed in the logic of the morph. Thus, it is no wonder that ABC write on their website that the next season will provide the viewers with a more effective closure. Surgeons will now develop on the consequences of the makeover for the participant and there will be “more updates on some of last season’s most popular makeover participants”.

One the one hand, it seems that the warp would be a more adequate metaphor for the makeover programmes construction of bodily transformations; one bodily shape is transformed into a different other. Furthermore, the final ‘before’- ‘after’ pictures of participants are digitally warped and not morphed. That is true enough. But on the other hand, there is also a strong adherence to the morph’s notion of hybridity and reversibility in the programmes’ construction of the smoothly modifiable body. Hybridity, for example, guides the surgeons’ image of the transformed body: The surgeon who is going to perform the different procedures on 55-year-old Art in Extreme Makeover (second season’s episode 13) compares him to Russell Crowe and says that “that’ll be my target”; when he performs his surgical procedures on Art, he will use the
appearance of the Australian actor as his visual template. So Art will wake up from anaesthesia as a hybrid between his former outer ‘I’ and Russell Crowe, thus, in a sense, echoing Orlan whose operated appearance was to be a composite of female faces from art history’s famous painting and sculptures, the brow from da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa*, the cheek from Botticelli’s *Venus*, the eyes from Gerome’s *Psyche*, for example.

In her book *The Symptom of Beauty* (1994), art historian Francette Pacteau maintains that “[b]ehind the woman there is, always, the image to which the question of her beauty must be referred” (Pacteau 2000: 31). This applies to *Extreme Makeover*’s male participant, Art, too. His new appearance is a hybrid of how he looked like before and another image used by the surgeons to form his new look. Or, like the dentist states when he explains how he is going to improve on a set of extremely irregular and maltreated teeth – a quote that is repeated on other occasions in the series – “it’s like an artist looking at a canvas”. He is the artist and he has the gift to form the actual given bodily parts into a more attractive image; in this sense, he propagates an image of himself as an artist, which is also expressed by many of the famous cosmetic surgeons who are interviewed in Angela Taschen’s *Aesthetic Surgery* (2005).

But I think that the morph is the precise term in another way, too. Both reality programmes construct the body as a utopian figure, which can be re-sculptured according to any wish and fantasy and according to the skills of the surgical experts. And each new performance is always improving on the former morph. Consequently, the cosmetic morph is not monstrous. The performative numbers from the operation theatre may be so, but the modified body is never monstrous and cosmetic surgery has removed whatever monstrosity might have characterized the ‘before’ body. The mediated made-over body is the very proof that its owner has won a prize in the lottery (being chosen to participate in the programme and receiving the makeover for free). Not least, the body’s metamorphoses are made independently of biology. The irreversibility of time, and hence, of time’s imprint on the body, is countered by a fantasy of infinite reversibility. “Anything else?”

It is striking in both *Extreme Makeover* and *The Swan* (where one of each episode’s two contestants is chosen to participate in a beauty pageant and compete for the title as “The Swan”) that all participants end up resembling each other. This is probably somewhat unintentionally revealed as 32-year-old Kim in *Extreme Makeover* opens her mouth to admire her new teeth and kindly and politely tells the dentist that “they look like your teeth now”. She is absolutely right. The middle aged white male doctor and the younger, black woman end up having the same white regular teeth. This multiplication of sameness is especially striking in *The Swan*, and it inevitably brings to mind clones and artificial beings. But this fantasy of monstrosity is countered by having each participant tell his or her individual story about the reasons why they wanted a makeover. In this way, we are given different traumatic stories of how participants have experienced a lifetime of feelings of being ugly or otherwise bodily handicapped, of not being able to function socially, of being humiliated at school and in the community. The participants themselves tell these stories as well as their friends and family whom we meet in their private surroundings, and often private snapshots and images of participants posing in melancholic solitude or in private everyday situations illustrate their words.

The shows provide us with a story about the body and simultaneously with a psychological story. The latter frames the story of the body; fundamentally, the participants applied to be on the show out of necessity. Furthermore, the psychological
story frames the story of the makeover as a unique story that in a unique way unites a ‘before’ with an ‘after’ in a body with an untouched soul. However, this is a delicate argument that is not easily maintained. When one of the surgeons in The Swan (first season’s first episode) states that “We’re gonna maximize Rachel’s femininity” or explains that they will “open up her eyes and really let her prettiness come out”, this is countered by another remark by another doctor in the same episode who, when asked by the host what they are going to do, replies like an artist that they will “create beauty”. This last comment seems more like a slip of the tongue, though, considering the show’s thorough argument about the makeover’s ability to pave the way for personal development. As if Danish author Peter Seeberg anticipated one of the philosophical discussions intensified by the growth of plastic surgery procedures, he lets his protagonist, who has had most of his body replaced by new parts, ask the following question in his famous short story The Patient from 1962: “How far is it possible to reduce a human being without making it into something completely different?” Certainly, Seeberg chooses to say reduce instead of modify – but the point is that the two reality shows refrain from asking these kinds of questions or initiating these kinds of discussions at all. Instead they focus on positive stories about unhappy people whom Fox and ABC gives the gift of a bodily makeover and offers the promise of a new beginning in life.

The performance of the makeover is the point of no return in the two shows’ recurrent narratives, which both maintain that in order to develop a true harmonious identity, outer appearance and inner core must correspond. The outside must reflect the inside, but outer appearance and inner core may also have a stimulating effect on each other. The aim of the surgical procedures, training and so on is simply to harmonize the inner and outer self. On the one hand, the shows argue that there is an inner spirit and beauty in a person that remains untouched no matter how many operations are conducted on the flesh. On the other hand, it is not always possible for this inner core to make itself heard. Transformations of the outer appearance will help and thus pave the way for the necessary psychological and social changes (for the better, of course). “I lost my soul”, recounts one of the participants in The Swan in tears (first season’s first episode) at the same time as she confesses that she has always hated to show her body in public. The argument is that the lost soul can be found by means of a transformed body.

These two slightly different narratives are distributed onto each of the two participants in the episode of Extreme Makeover that I use as my example: dark-skinned Kim and Art who is a white male. As told by the Danish voice-over in the beginning of the episode, the story about Kim concerns “a girl whose appearance becomes a burden”; she never smiles because her teeth look so horrible. Kim has a cosmetic correction carried out on her teeth – but now that she’s at it, she decides to have her breasts ‘done’, she has a nose correction (rhinoplasty), and so on. In the end she says “I see a new person but I still see Kim. I know I’m not gonna change but on the outside it looks a lot better”; her outer appearance is made to correspond with her inner ‘I’ and she is ready to unfold her potentials. The story about Art concerns a widower whose wife died some years ago and now he is ready to have a social life again. One of his problems is, he says, that he has a young mind in an old man’s unattractive body, and the doctors can, as one of them said, do something “to prevent the sad appearance”. After the surgical procedures, a personal trainer helps him build up his self-confidence – “They’ve done so much on your outside that now we’re gonna work
on your inside” – and finally Art points out that “I am a different person now”. In his case, too, the outer and inner self are now in keeping with each other, and he concludes that it is up to him “what I make of these gifts”.

_Extreme Makeover_ inserts participants into a classical notion of identity whereby appearances are deceitful and even the ugliest person may have a beautiful and unique soul. But the programme also inconsistently states that outer appearance and inner core always correspond and that an unattractive outside may create a damaging lack of self-confidence. The cosmetic morph connects the two figures, and the makeover unites the social, the psychological and the aesthetic. You are as you appear, but nature does not necessarily provide you with the look that corresponds to the way you are. A beautiful facade may facilitate both self-confidence and the ability to function successfully, which are buried in even the most insecure person. In this way, both _The Swan_ and _Extreme Makeover_ are very optimistic shows in which each episode ends by placing the participants right at the gate to the land of golden opportunities. Furthermore, in _The Swan_ participants are given the opportunity to enter a beauty pageant and end up as a beauty queen, “The Swan”.

**The Swan and the Beautiful**

Whereas _Extreme Makeover_ is about the possibility of a better life, the goal for each participant in _The Swan_ is also to be the one chosen to enter the beauty pageant, which ends the season. When the women are assigned a personal fitness trainer who will aid them in rapid weight loss during the three months, they not only practice enhancing their personal well-being and retrieving inner self-confidence, but also living up to Western ideals of female beauty as much as possible. The makeover team, like in _Extreme Makeover_, consists of plastic surgeons, (cosmetic) dentists, eye surgeons, dermatologists, fitness trainers, dieticians specialized in rapid weight loss, a therapist, and a Life Coach whose job it is to keep up the participant’s spirit and energy. In the opening part of each episode, the host and the makeover team watch a video together in which the new participant tells her story. After having observed the woman on the short video, the host turns to the – obviously very emotionally affected – team members and asks how they are going to start on the woman, for example, “Where do you begin with Kelly?” (first season’s first episode), or “What are you gonna do with that nose Randall?” (first season’s eighth episode). At this point, Dr. Randall, the plastic surgeon, quickly lists the number of procedures it will take to transform the participant into a beauty. His answer to the question about Kelly is that “we do breast augmentation, we do liposuction, and with a lot of training, she’s a winner. We can really transform her.” (first season’s first episode).

The episodes’ climactic moments, which appear just before the final choice of the participant who will continue to the beauty pageant, are the ceremonial unveilings of the new appearance. The ceremony starts with the host reminding the viewers that the two participants have not had access to mirrors for three months, and then she turns to the team that “worked on them” and asks what they have done. In the programme about Rachel (first season’s first episode), the host reminds us that Rachel used to have a weight problem and asks how they handled that: “Dr Haworth, you worked your magic on her. What can we expect to see? What change can we expect to see when she comes out here?” And the plastic surgeon, Dr. Haworth, replies, “Well I did perform a whole host of strategic plastic surgical procedures upon Rachel and I think this is one great
example of how her spectacular end result is greater than the sum of her individual parts”. Again, they watch the videotape in which fragments of ‘before’ scenes are repeated, for example of a tear-stained Rachel who sobbingly confesses that she always felt “average”. Then the host summarizes by saying that Rachel has had a hard time and announces that we are now going to see how this “self-confessed average girl has blossomed into a bombshell”. The folding doors in the background of the long shot open as if a curtain rose and there stands “the brave new” Rachel, glamorously lit. She moves towards the foreground of the image and turns and twists for the benefit of both the viewers and the makeover team, who applaud her appearance and her effort.

The emotional climax occurs when the participant is asked to confront herself in a mirror. The host announces that there is a mirror behind a voluptuously draped velvet curtain, and that it will be drawn when she is ready. After a series of dramatic tracking shots accompanied by dramatic music, the camera stops behind the mirror so that viewers can get a privileged look at the participant’s immediate emotional reaction when she confronts her new self for the first time; the makeover team is seen gazing fascinated at her reaction in the background of the image. We have different shots of the deeply moved participant, who in all episodes characterizes her mirror image as beautiful and expresses her deep astonishment that the person she is looking at in the mirror is actually her. Finally, the host walks over to her, embraces her and tells her how happy she is for her. Thus, the sense of disturbed identity and embarrassment, even shock that might be part of the participant’s highly emotional reaction to the revelation of her new appearance is elegantly eliminated by the host’s interference and the show’s construction of closure.

The ritualistic revelation scenes end with a couple of statements from the makeover team, for example from Rachel’s trainer, who claims that “Rachel’s transformation is the epitome of a person who has just gone from being average to being a fully confident beautiful woman”. The surgeon claims in a similar manner that he “was frankly shocked and proud and emotional over seeing her and I could not have done this without the whole Swan-team”. These statements typify the show’s understanding of the relationship between body, self and cosmetic surgery. Firstly, the makeover transforms average women who are not fond of their looks into beautiful and self-confident women. Secondly, this transformation is not least the result of an expert team’s work on participants’ material bodies.

The women are given the same appearance, more or less, but this – in a sense monstrous – serialized performance of a generalized idea of beauty is countered by 1) letting all the participants tell their individual, painful stories about self-hating and how their lack of self-esteem has cast shadows on their family life and 2) setting a beauty pageant as the goal for the whole transformation. Accordingly, the programme subscribes to a mainstream beauty ideal that favours harmony, balance and symmetry and that forms the women according to a Western – American – female ideal, in which long hair, slenderness and a certain accentuation of hips and breasts top the list. Beauty is a commodity in these shows. Plastic surgery and training programmes combined with psychological coaching can transform any woman from ugly duckling into swan. As a consequence, the show’s overall argument is, perhaps not surprisingly, that surgically produced beauty is the means to a better life. But the show’s fabrication of one beauty after the other runs in a way counter to its own argumentation. German writer Barbara Sichtermann reminds us in her clever article “Beauty, democracy and death” that “beauty is as rare as a black swan” (Sichtermann 1984: 59). Regarded from this point of
view and also bearing in mind the ritualized stagings of the climactic revelations, the women are involuntarily made to look like beauty clones, mass-produced embodiments of an idea of female beauty.

According to Sichtermann, beauty is the exceptional. Beauty is a unique imprint of a historically given ideal of beauty. However, it seems as though the makeover team actually describe their work on the women as the opposite: Their aim is to sculpt the women so close to the average version of the ideal as possible. The show mirrors Sichtermann’s presumption that we all desire beauty, but, paradoxically enough, it also seems to demonstrate that the essence of beauty is precisely that it is not an obtainable acquisition for everyone. The women in the show are sculptured in the image of each other, and as such, their made-over bodies, which the show insistently calls “beautiful”, have more in common with the obscene in Baudrillard’s sense of the word: sameness, indifference.

Barbara Sichtermann asserts that beauty is characterized by being a rare occurrence. Beauty resists democratization, she says, and this is the way it should be. If beauty were accessible for everyone, no one would notice the truly beautiful anymore. Thus, she states that the desire for beauty and the sadness over never having possessed it, not having been able to keep it or regretting having been denied it belong together. She underlines, in an interesting and original critique of beauty ads, that “the promise of beauty to any women becomes a rude lie only if you remember that beauty as well as the power that it confers upon the one who owns it can only be given a general form at the cost of its very substance” (ibid.). The Swan abandons the women in a state of powerlessness in front of the mirror, where they must confront themselves for the first time in three months and thereafter be measured, the host says, according to “beauty, poise, and overall transformation”. The show does not allow them the joy of performing the power of beauty in their everyday life situations; there is no ‘at home later’ sequence in the show. The impossible paradox in The Swan is the idea that the average woman can be transformed into a ‘beauty’. It ends by unintentionally revealing that it is impossible to produce beauty in accordance with the general ideas of beauty, because beauty has nothing to do with the general.

The female body is constructed as a sculpture in the closing ceremony. We are invited to take a look at it from all angles as the participants turn around for the makeover team and the viewers and as the camera turns gazingly, as if embodied, around the women. The woman’s body is constructed as an almost classical work of art, a neo-classical marble figure: round, well-balanced, smooth, impenetrable – immortal – without cracks or scars, “completely free of the mortal body’s openings, wounds, broken veins” (Gade & Jespersen 2000: 12), “a blinding sight of perfection”, to quote the way Danish art historian Anders Troelsen denotes the marble sculpture’s sublime “shining and impenetrable surface” (Troelsen 2002: 11). The show points out that there is a life outside the ceremonial studio setting and the recovery facilities, though: The host asks each participant what they think of their husband’s reaction to their new selves, and the family is invited to greet the participant who will not enter the beauty pageant. But the women are first and foremost constructed by the show as timeless and elegant creatures – or works – the finished result of the team’s work on their bodies with markers, scalpels, implants and training machines.

In the introductory passage to Troelsen’s article about approaches to sculpture, where he touches upon Orlan’s carnal art, he argues that the French artist performs the opposite task to what is usually undertaken by an artist. She imitates art with her operations on her
real body, whereas art usually imitates reality. To a certain extent, what goes on in The Swan is similar to what takes place in Orlan’s operation room. In both cases, the female body is constructed as a “walking sculpture” (ibid.). Also in both cases, the body is regarded as raw material that can be modelled and remodelled infinitely. The difference is that The Swan’s team performs their makeovers according to measurements of mainstream beauty, and neither femininity nor beauty is at any point a debatable issue in the show. In contrast, it is the very idea of Orlan’s performances to question the relationship between femininity and beauty and she underlines that she is not against plastic surgery. Furthermore, Orlan is at once the artist and the work of art in her operation theatre, whereas the women in both The Swan and Extreme Makeover are inserted in a kind of double Pygmalion narrative; they are being designed by the surgeon who, like the artist, blows life into his material, but they are also inscribed in a kind of reverse movement whereby the female body is stiffened into the marble’s dead form.

The Cosmetic Morph in Fashion Photography
As my second example of the pervasive construction of the body as infinitely transformable, I will look at the body as placed somewhere in-between Orlan and The Swan’s cosmetic morphs in contemporary fashion photography. Fashion photography harbours the ideal plastic body – the body as an easily shaped material in the hands and in front of the lens of the fashion photographer (cf., Jerslev 1998). The fashionable body is an obedient body that may be chiselled or bent into any shape, beautiful or not, meaningful or without any meaning at all, as long as the clothes and the overall aesthetic design make sense. The body in contemporary fashion photography is often neither well-proportioned nor trained; owing to digital image manipulation, it looks like a ‘genetically modified’ body with, for example, extremely long legs or an extremely slender waist. Fashion photographers working for advanced magazines like Nylon, Arena, Dazed & Confused, The Face, i-D Magazine (and sometimes (especially Italian) Vogue) are not primarily interested in the beautiful body; their aim is to create conspicuous image narratives, and the digital morph provides the model’s body with proportions and capacities that fulfil the photographer’s vision.

Digital image manipulation makes the creation of artificial bodies possible; however, these modified and aestheticized photographic bodies do not deny the existence of a unique and ‘natural’ beautiful model behind the frozen pose or photographically sculptured and manipulated ‘marble’ body. They only deny an immediate relationship between photography and reality. The digital morph makes the body’s “marvellous transformation” possible in fashion photography, whereas the cosmetic morph and the body as a material morph are absent, to a certain extent, in the world of fashion.

In a paradoxical move, Italian Vogue inscribed cosmetic surgery into fashion in a 70-page fashion spread titled “Makeover Madness” in July 2005. American photographer Steven Meisel directed the series, which opened with the statement: “There is much too little discussion – for or against cosmetic surgery: aesthetics, ‘obsession’ or a tendency between art, realism, and irony?” In the fashion spread which thematizes “morphlike activities”, the fashionable body and the cosmetic morph unite in a paradoxical performance in an extended and almost surreal series of highly stylized backstage tableaux from operating rooms and luxurious hotel suites in which the postoperative healing and caring take place. The series includes typical ‘before’ and ‘after’ mug-shot-like images, scenarios from operating rooms, in which the model poses in expensive designer clothes.
on the operating table surrounded by surgeons and nurses, operating tools, syringes and bloodstained cloths and with markings for surgery or bloody stitches on their bodies. Furthermore, there are photographs taken in corridors and suites in an extremely luxurious hotel, where the models pose either on their way to surgery or after the operations. In the tableaux from the suites, the models are again surrounded by doctors, nurses and piles of medical supplies; they are heavily bandaged (as if after face lifts or other facial corrections), suffering and wrapped up in blankets and thick hotel dressing gowns, lazily loafing in their beds watching television or eating breakfast from a shiny silver tray, talking or, more likely, negotiating over their cell phones, discussing with other similarly bandaged women what personal shoppers have brought them or giving business instructions to fashionably dressed, male employees.

Meisel’s fashion spreads from the new millennium have typically been narrative and filmic, borrowing their aesthetics from many different film genres. In the “Makeover Madness” narrative, plastic surgery is performed as the quick pastime of busy and rich female business executives. Quick changes with as little loss of valuable work-time as possible, with a cell phone in one hand – in the operating room as well – and a bunch of employees around. Thus “Makeover Madness” may be regarded as an ironic commentary on female executives’ busy life in the fast lane of big business, where plastic surgery is a common part of their self-centred way of life, not an exception to it. No matter how ironic and surreal the photographs may be, the series’ extended staging of cosmetic surgery as an everyday upper class luxury reflects the spreading of plastic surgery to wider parts of the population during the past decade – both as an actual practice and cultural knowledge. The photographs comment self-consciously on the discussion about plastic surgery as an intervention into an otherwise ‘natural’ body: we see on one of the photographs an open magazine with pictures of Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes under the headline “Are They Faking It?” But, basically, they do not question the ‘natural’ uniqueness of the body of the models whose names are included in the credit information. The printed information on the before-after photographs, where the models’ seemingly ordinary black-and-white ‘before’ face is placed side by side with a glamorous colour ‘after’ photograph, refers not only to the barely visible clothes but also to make-up brands; thus the brief commodity information anchors, not least, fashion photography as a field of (digital) image manipulation. In “Makeover Madness”, the cosmetic morph is therefore constructed solely as a mediated idea of the body. Despite the traces of blood after lip enhancements or bloody stitches after eyelid corrections, the photographs leave no traces of cosmetic surgery on the real model body. The models in fashion and, by extension, fashion per se remain untouched by the world of cosmetic surgery that inhabits Steven Meisel’s fashion photographs. Meisel’s photographs of cosmetic surgery confirm rather than deny that the model remains exceptional and that the fashion world is still filled with exceptionally beautiful women. Thus, the fashion world itself remains exclusively fashionable, filled with the rare basis for ‘real’ beauty.28

**Nip/Tuck and the Operation Room as Attraction**

“Tell me what you don’t like about yourself” is a recurrent question in the bleak and dark-humoured (melodrama series *Nip/Tuck*. The question is asked to each new patient by one of the two male plastic surgeons, Sean and Christian, and like in the reality shows, the doctors believe that performing cosmetic surgery and improving on
patients’ looks may provide them with an opportunity for a better life. However, the series anchors the surgeon’s professional beliefs in a wider field of tension, as patients in several cases do not get a better life. Likewise, money is very often a decisive issue for the two men. The genre – a bleak version of the soap-inspired drama serial – and the morph as a metaphor mirror each other; there is no closure, a fact that is already pointed out in the title sequence. Here we see close-ups of naked chalk-white mannequins’ bodies and a similarly chalk-coloured (gloved) hand drawing red lines on the mannequins with a marker. Sometimes a mannequin moves a tiny bit (a finger twitches almost invisibly, an eye moves a millimetre), as if it were situated in some impossible place between human flesh and inorganic material; in the last shot, the lower part of a female mannequin’s face morphs smoothly into a human face.

Sean and Christian are friends and have, over some years, developed a profitable business as well as a reputation for being the best (and most handsome) plastic surgeons in the Miami area. Sean is married and tries to administer a complicated family life; he is the more conscientious one, who keeps arguing that they should do more reconstructive pro bono work. Christian is single; he is less occupied with the moral aspects of their work and more interested in sex, beautiful women and fast cars – even though he is also a good person at heart and longs for a family like his partner’s. *Nip/Tuck* is about the clinic and the patients, their desire for aesthetic and – sometimes – reconstructive – surgery, the reasons why they consult the two surgeons, Sean’s and Christian’s discussions about the reasonableness of their patient’s requests, the surgery and the more or less successful aftermath of the successfully performed operations. Partly, it is about Sean’s and Christian’s private life – which is often indistinguishable from their relations to their patients – Sean’s ups and downs in his relationship with his wife who, in the fourth episode, goes back to medical school and his loving but no less problematic relationship to his troubled and sensitive teenage son, whose biological father, we learn in the second season, is not Sean but Christian. Finally, “performative numbers”, sex scenes and operation scenes, which are constructed more or less alike, punctuate the episodes.

There is an abundance of discussions about cosmetic surgery in the show – a necessary reconstructive procedure (a child with large burns on his body (pilot episode), a model who has had her face cut up by a serial rapist (episode 20) or a black woman who was circumcised as a child and wants a new clitoris (episode 16)), a purely aesthetic procedure (an older and very rich woman who wants to have “her eyes refreshed” before her daughter’s wedding (the pilot) and ends up having a “plastic surgery addiction problem” (as one of the surgeons put it in episode 17) or Sean’s mother-in-law, a psychologist, who wants a facelift because she is going to have her picture taken for her new book (episode 14)) – or something in between – a cancer patient who had a breast removed and wants a new breast because she has fallen in love (episode 6) or a blind woman who wants to have her eyes look like she is not blind (episode 24). The two friends are constantly forced to face moral issues and this often gets them into trouble, partly because they are not able to see through their patients’ more or less problematic or sinister motives for wanting surgery, partly because they in some cases end up going after the money. “We’re in the vanity business”, Christian remarks at one point, but the show also places them in a business (too) close to mentally disturbed persons, to criminals, to the porno industry and to prostitution, to situations in which cosmetic surgery could, for example, remove significant birth marks.
that might reveal a paedophile priest (episode 8) or alter a face in order to help a criminal to hide himself (pilot episode and episode 13). 31

Especially Christian, who is obsessed with perfection, thinks that they really improve their patients’ lives, whereas Sean pessimistically objects that they more rightly “externalize the hate they feel towards themselves”. Despite Christian’s aspirations to create beauty and perfection, the show connects cosmetic surgery and deviations over and over again. And, at the same time, it seems to take great pains to place Sean’s wife Julia outside this rather suspect world as if she were the innocent virgin in contrast to the more or less prostituted world of cosmetic surgery – the real woman as opposed to the many gender-bendings that populate the show. As if there were one world of truth and a different and shady world of complicated ambiguities in *Nip/Tuck*.

*Nip/Tuck* takes a much more ambiguous stance towards cosmetic surgery than do the two reality shows. The drama series is much more provocative and interested in discussing cultural issues and is the only work, among those I have discussed in this article, that points out that the growing business of cosmetic surgery is about hiding the body’s inevitable ageing – even though *Nip/Tuck* can only embody this discussion in pathetic female characters: One of the recurrent characters in the first two seasons is Mrs. Grubman, a rich widow, who wants a younger body, and who is represented as a pathetic “scalpel slave” to borrow one of Anne Balsamo’s phrases (Balsamo 1997: 70), a lonely and miserable woman who ends up in a wheelchair (episode 17) because she did not inform the surgeons, prior to an operation, that she took antidepressants in fear that they would deny her the operation.

On the one hand, the series shows that fantasies about quick fixes flourish, no matter how young, how thin or how pretty the patient is. On the other hand, it also wishes to maintain through the main characters, the two “flesh sculptors” (episode 23) with their piercing gaze for bodily flaws and their preference for symmetry, a trained body and firm breasts, that there is a realm of ‘natural’ bodily beauty in which quick changes are not necessary. For both men, Sean’s wife belongs to this world. “I don’t want my family infected by what we do here”, Sean states in the pilot – which is of course an impossible task. Conversely, Christian points without hesitation to the slight irregularities in his sexy model-girlfriend’s appearance, and he marks with her lipstick the areas on her curvaceous body he thinks she has to have done in order to achieve what he regards as physical perfection. When she looks at herself in the mirror and sees the red lines which designate “your problem areas” as Christian puts it, she desperately asks him if she is that ugly, hereby not referring to the scarily outlined body she is looking at, but to the imperfect body his gaze has pointed out to her.

Victoria Duckett suggests, in her article about Orlan, that what makes it such a disturbing experience to watch the performance artist’s operations on her body is the difficulty “in watching the construction of the product rather than its fetishistic display” (Duckett 2000: 211). The same could actually be said of *Nip/Tuck, The Swan* and *Extreme Makeover*. The body burdened with the stigmata of the surgeons’ marker brutally announces the verdict of bodily incompleteness. It points out that the body does not belong to the one that inhabits it but to another person’s objectifying gaze, and it says that the material body is never a finished, singular entity, but a modifiable mass of organic matter. But, contrary to Orlan’s operating theatre, the surgery scenes in *Nip/Tuck* are constructed as entertaining acts meant to provide the audience with an arousal similar to the show’s explicit sex scenes. They appear as spectacular attractions, filled with flesh and blood and often a grim humour which adds a comic twist to the
scenes, excessive “performative numbers” as Marsha Kinder characterizes violent sequences in action films, filled with “visceral pleasures” (Kinder 2001: 70) – and the show seems self-conscious in showing its awareness of this construction by letting Sean and Christian perform their operations to the accompaniment of music coming from the CD player that is turned on at the beginning of each operation.

To take a typical example, in the second surgery ‘number’ in the pilot episode, we see that Sean signals ‘go’ by saying “let’s do it” and then there is a close-up of the CD player hanging on the wall. It starts spinning and Rolling Stones’ *Paint it Black* fills the operating room and simultaneously blocks out all natural sound. A slow-motion shot of a scalpel being handed to Sean sets off the operation, which stages the surgical procedures by means of different image speeds, camera angles and camera focus and different editing strategies. As the song is coming to an end, there are close-ups of bloody surgery tools and gloves landing in metal bowls and glasses and then there is a cut to a close-up of a post-surgery image of the patient. The first sex scene between Christian and his model girlfriend Kimber is constructed and inserted in the narrative in a similar manner. So the operating scenes are not meant to point to the two surgeons’ undoubted skills. Rather, they stage the cosmetic morph as a visual attraction, in which flesh and blood are sexualized, just like when the perfect bodies rub against each other in the sex scenes. Both the operating room and the anaesthetized bodies, the nipping and tucking, the lifting and sucking appear as aesthetic fragments. As such, the scenes emphasize the narrative construction of the universe of plastic surgery as a twilight zone and they underline the two surgeons’ idea of the body – a fragmentary unit with separate parts, each modifiable independent of the other. Finally, these scenes bring into focus the fact that the televisual operating theatre, here as well as in the reality shows, offers unique and uncannily fascinating visual pleasure.

**Concluding Remarks**

The recurrent line in *Nip/Tuck*, “Tell me what you don’t like about yourself”, indicates the exact focus of the television shows that I have discussed in this article. The need and the wish for a beautiful body. The line also highlights what the shows are not about: death, bodily decay – plastic surgical interventions in order to escape the final closure. *The Swan* and *Extreme Makeover* argue that the average person will definitely live a better life after a makeover, not least because the transformation will liberate the nobility of the soul. The body is infinitely modifiable – a material morph that can be sculptured and re-sculptured. As so vividly shown in the fashion photographs as well, this modifiable body is today’s *natural body*. A form that we do not have to inhabit if we want to look different, a body that digital image manipulation can alter in fashion photography, a mediated body that, in the form of the cosmetic morph, can change quickly and marvellously in television shows, a body whose transformations – as shown in the reality programmes – will in no time make a negative self-image disappear. It may be said of all the works discussed above that they, in a more or less ambiguous way, touch upon the field of artificiality and the body – most ambiguously in *Nip/Tuck*, which is also the most daring in its willingness to address the many moral and psychological issues surrounding cosmetic surgery. *Nip/Tuck* discusses ethical questions on several occasions and at the same time stops at nothing to stage its operating scenes as marketable attractions.
The cosmetic morph is just like the digital, “a marker of our time”, to quote Louise Krasniewics once more. It is, not least, a marker of the things our present culture wishes to deny.

Notes
1. From the 1960's and 1970’s body art and performance art, including such names as Bruce Nauman, Hermann Nitch, Chris Burden and Vico Acciconi.
3. Orlan names her performances Carnal Art on her web site www.orlan.net. By Carnal Art she understands “an inscription on the flesh, as our age now makes possible”, a time when “the body has become an ’modified ready-made’”. Orlan’s carnal art is not founded on the notion of an essential body, on the contrary. Her message is much more sophisticated; thus she underlines that “Carnal Art is not against cosmetic surgery but, rather against the conventions carried by it and their subsequent inscription”. For an introduction to Orlan’s body art, see Rose (1993), and for an excellent discussion of the morph in relation to Orlan, see Duckett 2000.
4. The series premiered July 2003 on the cable channel FX; the third season started September 2005. Nip/Tuck has been the most successful show on cable television ever and has had especially high ratings in the 18 to 49 group. In the following I refer to the first two seasons released on DVD.
5. “This show is about skin on every level”, says series creator Ryan Murphy in the New York Times, August 2, 2003 (Udovitch 2003).
6. This goes for Denmark, too, according to the relative success of the magazine Plastique. According to Bock (2005), the first issue sold 15,000 out of 20,000 copies. The magazine has 500 subscribers (summer 2005), of which half are men. It is estimated that 10,000 plastic surgeries are performed in Denmark annually (according to Bock 2005). In the US, the number of cosmetic plastic treatments has risen by 24 per cent during the past four years (cf., La Ferla & Singer 2005), in England the same percentage is as high as 83, according to Moore (2005).
7. Anne Balsamo (1996) among others distinguishes between reconstructive surgery and cosmetic or aesthetic surgery. Even though she underlines that there is no unambiguous distinction between the two terms, in the sense that all plastic surgery involves aesthetic considerations, she underlines that reconstructive surgery heals “catastrophic, congenital, or cancer-damage deformities” whereas aesthetic surgery is elective to a much larger extent (Balsamo 1996: 58).
8. The present article is written within a wider research context, a project about “Morphing and Extreme Makeovers – Visuality and the Body in the Culture of Quick-Change”, which I am conducting as part of the larger research project High-tension Aesthetics. Ethics and Aesthetics in Contemporary Media financed by the Danish Research Council on a three-year grant. For further information about the project, see www.high-tension-aesthetics.com.
9. On Extreme Makeover’s homepage www.abc.go.com/primetime/extrememakeover, ABC writes that in the programme, “fairly tales fantasies come true”. The site contains summaries of all episodes from the three seasons.
10. Here, as elsewhere, I use Mike Featherstone’s term for a range of different practices that include “piercing, tattooing, branding, cutting, binding and inserting implants to alter the appearance and form of the body” (Featherstone 2000: 1) – contrary to slower practices like gymnastics and working out, which do not use instruments to cut or pierce for example. I think this definition will have to be reconsidered before long due to the development of surgical techniques. Many plastic surgeons have stated that future plastic surgery will use the scalpel to a much lesser extent.
11. Second season’s episode 13. I use examples from this episode, too, when I go into more detail discussing Extreme Makeover below.
In an article in the English magazine Red (Moore 2005), plastic surgeons criticize Extreme Makeover’s quick changes and its requirement that participants undergo maximum change. They argue that far too many procedures are performed at the same time and also that the participants are not given enough time to decide whether they want to undergo more changes. Finally, due to the multiple operative procedures in the course of one operation, the British specialists criticize the programme for keeping patients under anaesthetics too long. That multiple procedures take place at the same time in the mentioned episode of Extreme Make-
over is shown strikingly in close-ups of what seem like the surgeons notes. Each line on the list is marked after each new modification as if the note were some kind of shopping list.

12. For example, in the second season’s finale where Joan Rivers playing Joan Rivers comes to the two surgeons in order to have a makeover that will give her back her ‘natural’ look. When the surgeons morph an image of her present outer into an image of what she would look like had her face not been modified in any way, she is horrified.

13. No wonder that the morph as a figure of transformation belongs to the horror film genre. Noel Carroll (1990) specifically argues that the uncanny is connected to categorical incompleteness and the blurring of boundaries.

14. Even though fast-motion is also used in The Swan in order to diminish the graphic revelation of blood and the bodily inner – contrary to Extreme Makeover and, not least, Nip/Tuck. The Swan also uses blurring of parts of the image during surgery sequences.

15. Sharon Stone, for example, filed suit against a plastic surgeon for having disclosed that he had performed a face-lift on the actress. According to Dargis (2005), the legal proceedings emphasized the actress’ natural beauty. A gossip website like www.awfulplasticsurgery.com seemingly reveals celebrities plastic surgery by opposing before and after pictures.

16. According to the show’s website, a fourth season has not yet been scheduled.

17. Surgeons in the programmes often refer to actors and actresses when they try to explain the result of the makeover to the participants – we never see them use digital morphing as information channels. The MTV show I Want a Famous Face (www.mtv.com/onair/dyni_i_want_a_famous_face_2/series.jhtml) takes this comparison between star and the average person a step further. Here we follow young people who go through a makeover with the specific goal of coming to resemble their idol – Brad Pitt for example. MTV underlines on the website that the channel is not paying for the hopeful wannabes’ surgical performances: “The subjects of this documentary series decided on their own to get plastic surgery. MTV then asked to document their journey”.


19. My examples are taken from the first season’s episode one and eight (broadcast in US in the spring of 2004). Until now The Swan has lasted for two seasons; the second season without very much attendance in the US.

20. Thus Extreme Makeover may partake of ABC’s positive self-branding. This becomes even more obvious in Extreme Makeover Home Edition, in which the family who has been given a complete home makeover praise the network with the words “thank you ABC, thank you ABC” in the final images.

21. In each Extreme Makeover episode, two participants get a makeover, and the programme crosscuts between them. A third participant gets a “Mini-Extreme Makeover”: New hairstyle, new make-up and new clothes. The person’s new appearance is always revealed to friends and family in the end of the first half of the episode.

22. On the Extreme Makeover web site, under Patient Bios, one can read that “Kim received a nose job, lower eyelid lift, upper lip reduction, breast augmentation, removal of a third nipple, liposuction of abdomen and inner thighs, PRK eye surgery, laser hair removal, extraction of 6 front teeth and 4 lower teeth, lip and gum repositioning, crown lengthening, 2 crowns, upper and lower bridges, partial dentures and 5 da Vinci porcelain veneers”. Art “received a brow lift, face lift, a neck lift with contouring of the jaw line & chin, a nose job, upper and lower eyelid lift, a cheek lift, liposuction of chest and flanks, a tummy tuck, a Foto facial, removal of moles on face, Botox for crows’ feet, Zoom whitening, 8 upper da Vinci porcelain veneers, a night guard, cataract surgery, a hair transplant and hair restoration”. Most ‘patient bios’ list a similar or even greater number of body modifications performed by “the Extreme Team”.

23. Extreme Makeover selects many men for a makeover. This may not mirror the actual share of men in the audience, but it does seem to mirror the fact that more and more men have plastic surgery. According to Angelika Taschen (2005), 15 per cent of all patients were male in 2002, and this percentage is growing. A Danish report about private plastic surgery clinics published by the National Board of Health in Denmark shows the same tendency (cf., Bock (2005)). Angelika Taschen shows, by the way, that not until the end of the Nineteenth century did the number of women having plastic surgery surpass the number of men.


25. These ideals are also emphasized by the group of plastic surgeons who are interviewed in Aesthetic Surgery (Taschen 2005) when asked the question “What is your concept of beauty?”
26. In the 1990s, a leading and much-discussed trend in advanced fashion photography was realism (cf., for example Arnold (2001)). Realism seems today to have been replaced by a more narrative and filmic tendency, illustrated for example in Steven Meisel’s often multi-paged spreads for Italian Vogue. Meisel has for example been inspired by film noir, science fiction or paparazzi aesthetics or he has just made photo series that connote filmicity in general. Steven Meisel and Italian Vogue have on several occasions collaborated with the American digital design firm EyeballNYC. For an excellent study of the history of fashion photography in Danish, see Andersen (2006).

27. The original text is:
   se ne parla
troppopoco-pro-contra
chirurgia
estetica
ossessione o
tendenza?
tra arte, realismo
e ironia

28. For an extended discussion of Steven Meisel’s fashion photography see Jerslev 2006.

29. The music score is Engine Room’s “A perfect lie” and the lyrics are: “make me – beautiful/make me/ a perfect soul/ a perfect face/ a per-fect lie.

30. The show has quite rightly been called a “surreal soap opera” (Aurthur 2005).

31. The show’s bleak humour is shown in episode 13, when Sean goes to kill a villain who has threatened the two men to do surgery on prostitutes on several occasions. Escobar offers Sean a deal; if he gets a new face, he will stop pursuing them. The doctors accept, but it turns out that they give Escobar the face of a most wanted criminal named Ortiz. The episode ends with Ortiz/escobar being arrested in the airport.

32. This insistent placing of Julia outside the world of cosmetic surgery was radically altered in season two, when she first got a ‘boob job’ and then had the implants removed again at the same time as she had reconstructive surgery on her face after an accident.

References


The Empire and the Egyptians

A Multi-disciplinary Approach to Global Journalism Studies

ELISABETH EIDE

Abstract
This article explores how three different analytical approaches to texts may work together to a certain extent in a critical approach to journalistic representation, in this case of the “non-western” world. Focusing on short news items dealing with the nationalist uprising in Egypt in 1919, the texts are analysed using critical discourse analysis, but also inspired by Said’s Orientalism critique, Bourdieu’s field theory including the notion of journalism as an autonomous field, albeit with a weak autonomy.

Key Words: Bourdieu, discourse analysis, empire, Fairclough, field theory, journalism, orientalism, othering, Said

Introduction

Yesterday’s newspaper read: "Brunette stabbed to Death” and “10 000 Iranians died in an Earthquake”. I wonder what color hair they had.

Abbie Hoffman

The history of journalism could well be in large part the story of an impossible autonomy – or the unending story of an autonomy that must always be re-won because it is always threatened.

Patrick Champagne

In the first half of the 20th century, people from the Nordic countries did not travel very far. Their knowledge of the non-western world came largely through radio and newspapers, and most often as very short news items. This “world in a nutshell” format illustrates how the world was often represented.

This article will explore how some short news items from the Middle East may be well suited for analysis from various angles: Orientalism critique, because the stories often are cross-continental representations (of the Orient); field theory, because it helps us to better understand the structures influencing journalism and the struggles within the profession at a particular time; and discourse analysis, because it allows us to study the text both at the micro level and in its professional and societal context. Three texts about a national uprising in Egypt will be examined below, and in the end some parallels to the present will be suggested.
Media and the Other

The expressions *Other* and *othering* have been “a la mode” in post-colonial theory for the past three decades, and have been integrated into international studies of both literature and media output to highlight linkages between international (colonial, neo-colonial, etc.) power relations and discourses (re)produced in texts.

In elementary psychology, the *other* is anyone who is separate from one’s self, starting out with a child’s separation from the mother. It is a normal psychological reaction, crucial for locating one’s place in the world, but also for defining what is “normal”, and thus for situating one’s particular self inside a perceived “normalcy” – or, for that matter, outside or on the fringes of that normalcy. However, what is spontaneously experienced as “a distant Other”, whether as gender, class or ethnicity, may vary substantially within a culture – and within subcultures – and these often spontaneous reactions may be subtly influenced by the relations of the powerful versus the disempowered in a given society, or on a global scale.

Postcolonial Other

The *media’s role* in constituting a national identity – and in defining the *nation* (whether “blood-related” or citizen-based) via difference from Others – is of special importance. This is particularly emphasized in the history of empires. The colonized subject was treated and characterized as the Other, linked to savagery and primitivism, represented as childlike and undeveloped (Said 1978, 1994, Nandy 1990). Imperial discourse provides the terms in which the colonized subject gains a sense of his or her identity as Other (dependent and different) and offers three main alternative strategies for the colonial subjects: Passive adaptation/resignation, active mimicry (through alliance and identification with the Empire) or resistance. This process of colonial *Othering* provided the rulers with an ideological framework for understanding the world and for their own self-esteem. In this light, we may also see the concept *development* as being charged with presuppositions of hierarchies, be they of an economic, religious or cultural nature. In such a context, the modern West most often serves as a yardstick.

The question arises as to whether the frequent application of the term *Other* has made academics partially blind to changes in a given society (both local and global) and too eager to search for *difference* and *hierarchy* in media representations of marginalized groups and regions, instead of documenting new versions of “normalcy” and “third space occupancy”. Homi Bhabha highlights a non-static in-between-ness, claiming that migrants occupy a *third space* of sorts, which neither corresponds to the country of origin nor to the present country of settlement (1991). A related notion is that of trans-nationality, differing from globalization in the sense that it is rooted in, but also transcends, one or several nation-states (Fuglerud 2004), a reality that in the 21st century seems to be better understood and accepted by both journalists and audiences. We may also envisage people belonging to the majority in a country of settlement, entering and feeling (more) at home in such an open space.

Micro-versions of the World

A deeper understanding of the history of media representation of marginalized groups (and continents) is at best very incomplete in Nordic media studies – and improved analytical models and concepts would also be helpful in historical studies of journalism.
From a historical study of Norwegian press and representation of the world at large, I have selected three texts representing Egypt in 1919 to – at least partly – demonstrate how an analysis may benefit from various perspectives. They all belong to the genre of small news items, constituting around fifty per cent of the news coverage of the non-western world in our study. These texts offer micro-versions of world events, sometimes in a very “neutral” language, but still – as we shall see – containing value-laden expressions.

Gunilla Byrman defines the short news item (“notis”) as a “short everyday text strongly imbued with conventions [of the time and culture]” (Byrman 1995). One does not expect this genre to contribute to analysis of a situation, but one may still trace editorial choice, interpretation and analysis between and ahead of the lines. According to Byrman, this kind of news item also contributes to confirming the existing power relations, but the (implied) reader takes part in the interpretation by supplying the short text with the missing information (from her own existing knowledge and world outlook) through inference.

The three texts all refer to the national uprising in Egypt in 1919, which had started the year before in November, when a delegation lead by Sa’d Zaghlul Pasha demanded autonomy for Egypt and wanted to travel to England to express their demands. The British refused this, and arrested Zaghlul. A widespread revolt supporting independence for Egypt followed.

### A Serious Situation in Egypt (Text 1)

[[... London, 22. March. To Reuter’s Agency it is reported from Cairo the 15th of March: The past two days have been quiet, except for a clash with an armoured vehicle yesterday, in which 13 demonstrators were killed and 27 wounded. The streetcar traffic is partly restored. [...] In the provinces some demonstrations have taken place, and of these some were peaceful while others required military interference. (Tidens Tegn 23rd of March 1919, my translation)]

The most striking feature of this text is what is missing, i.e. the lack of Empire agency. The left-out agency in this case (was the armoured vehicle unmanned?) contributes to transferring the responsibility for the tragedy to the people (dead and wounded) who happened to “clash” with the vehicle. From the last part of the text it is understood that the agents (again, the Egyptians) are responsible for the military action (presumably) taken by the British and their allies. This unequal emphasis of agency contributes to a lopsided dichotomy between the “unruly” Egyptians and the (presupposed) agents of order and peace. Furthermore, the way in which concerns about street communication is textually combined with reference to the dead and wounded Egyptians may serve as a diminishment or trivialization of the tragedy of lives lost – a hierarchical othering (they of lesser value) of sorts. An imagined readership seems presupposed to side with the (not mentioned, tacitly understood) Empire part of the conflict.

This short preliminary and sketchy analysis demonstrating Empire-inspired othering may serve as an appetizer to a more complex approach. In the following, an attempt is made to connect several critical approaches, such as Orientalism critique, discourse analysis and field theory, in order to enrich the studies of representation of the “traditionally distant Other” – and simultaneously take seriously the particularities of the struggles within the field of journalism – as well as the texts produced by actors in the field.
Orientalism and Journalism

Edward Said finds that the principal methodological devices for the study of authority (historical and personal) in Orientalism are strategic location and strategic formation. The first is a way of describing the position of the writer in a text “with regard to the Oriental material he writes about”, and the second one is:

[...]

Strategic location may correspond to the relation between the reporter and the reality she observes and may imply various positions from hierarchical to more symmetrical approaches to the Other. In the above news text, the reporter is unknown and is simultaneously constituted by several persons: at first, somebody who is on the spot (Cairo) reporting to Reuter’s, identifying with the colonial power; next, the reporter(s) in the editorial rooms of Reuter’s and; third, the newspaper Tidens Tegn, the latter supposedly handling the Reuter messages from Cairo routinely, the event in Cairo being just one of many in a large chaotic world.

Strategic formation may be interpreted as situating a text in its societal, discursive and generic context, which will be dealt with later in this essay. Said’s location and narrative voice is related to what in textual analysis is often called perspective and may link up with the gaze: through which eyes did the initial reporter observe the uprising?

In the final phrase of the above excerpt, Said refers to an important choice that is not limited to studies of the Orient: whether to represent (give voice) and/or to speak on someone’s behalf. And if the Other is allowed to speak, will it be merely as a “case” (handily illustrating a point) or as a person granted a degree of authority? This question is important in an analysis of the “representing intellectuals”, a privileged group to which journalists may be said to belong, even if media structures often put constraints on their practice.

Representation and Mis-representation

The critical studies of Orientalism and othering are useful to media researchers, in the sense that they have introduced alternative ways of reading texts produced in one culture but still representing cultures “outside”; i.e. cross-cultural encounters. In Orientalism, Said is preoccupied with the ways in which literature produced in a colonial situation often represents the colonial subject as being of lesser value, more primitive, emotional and less rational, less able to determine her own future – and simultaneously taking the unequal relationship (or indeed the Other rendered invisible) as the “natural order of things”.

Journalism may be studied in the light of these powerful colonial adaptations, as Said has suggested, but also in the post-colonial era. In a study of the coverage of the Iranian revolution, he registers a Western consensus behind the news, a consensus that, according to him, is the culture (Said 1981: 48-49). He expects journalists to take part in real (non-forced) encounters with the foreign cultures, and invites them to improve their professional self-reflections in the project of interpretation. In his opinion very few of them do so. Therefore, news journalism covering the Middle East is largely ethnocentric and focuses mainly on Oil and Islam (op. cit. 101, 142). Said has been criticized for determinism, in the sense that he writes of text (fiction or non-fiction) as being closely linked to the imperial powers. He admits, however, the existence of some exceptions to the ‘rule’, and mentions a few journalists who covered the revolution in a more comprehensive and less biased way, especially in Le Monde (Said 1981: 116-120). He, thus, demonstrates openness to alternative, non-Orientalist representations. In other words, where there is mis-representation, there may also be more correct and balanced representations, as critics like Swedish ethnologist Magnus Berg have suggested (Berg 1998). Thereby, both Said and one of his critical adherents seem to recognize the struggle (dis-course and counter-discourse) within journalism (also when covering the Orient), and thus the room for individual variation, albeit demonstrating a strong link between mainstream representation of the Other and the outlook of the powerful.

In other words, journalistic representation of the “Oriental Other” may be linked to the discourses of the powerful, but also to counter-discourses (often inspired by oppressed and marginalized groups and societies) challenging the notion of the Other as inferior, subject to neglect or denigration. We may conclude, thus, that Said in part of his work sees journalism – and the journalism profession – as being in possession of a certain degree of autonomy.

There is a need to study journalism both from the outside moving inwards and from the actual text moving outwards. Traditionally, most studies from the “outside” have been rooted in the social sciences.

Bourdieu’s Field Theory and Journalism
To think field theory is to think in terms of relations. Pierre Bourdieu’s field theory portrays modernity as a process of differentiation into semiautonomous and increasingly specialized spheres – or fields – of action. Individuals do not simply act to maximize their rational self-interest, but are woven into social relations in processes not always marked by this self-interest (Benson & Neveu 2005:3).

But how does journalism qualify? Bourdieu recognizes journalism as a field of its own, an autonomous field, but with a weak autonomy, a microcosmos in macrocosmos. By stating this, he challenges the notion that the media are simply part of a structurally determined ad-saturated, rating-driven culture. Simultaneously, he considers the journalistic field to be closely linked to the field of power, as it tends to engage agents who dispose large amounts of capital, that is, economic, political and cultural capital.

The field of journalism lives partly according its own “laws”: institutional logics (“this is news”, “this is not a story”), editorial room hierarchies, competition or cooperation among journalists and genre conventions. Being a field means sharing doxa; i.e. tacit presuppositions constituting a universe of thought accepted to a certain degree by all actors. New forces in the field opt either for transformation or preservation (chal-
lenge or adaptation), depending on institutional culture, individual capital and courage, etc.

In the field of journalism, economic capital may be said to represent circulation, advertising interests and rating, while cultural capital is connected to intelligent communication (columns, editorials), in-depth reporting and award-winning journalism – all markers of professional prestige.

Bourdieu and his adherents recognize the struggles within the field, and the individual deviances from what is (institutionally) expected. Counter-discursive critics underline this and have tried to represent other experiences, i.e., those of various marginalized groups. Critique from such groups will also challenge the relations of power, often central to journalistic attention.

Bourdieu distances himself from Neil Postman (who sees the media (TV) as the main obstacle to public enlightenment and participation), Habermas (who sees the public sphere as fundamentally commercialized) and Chomsky (who emphasizes the crucial role of media ownership) (Benson & Neveu 2005: 8-9). Thus, he underlines the relative autonomy of the journalistic field. But as Patrick Champagne also states, this autonomy is fragile, and those who struggle to retain it seem to be in a defensive position.

Erik Neveu, one of the editors of a recent volume discussing Bourdieu’s field theory and its impact for journalism studies (Neveu 2005: 208 ff), suggests a three-step field analysis in journalism. The first step is an analysis of a room of production, a structural system of institutions (ownership, etc.), organizations and social roles. This also entails recognizing this as a room of struggle, one of the struggles being to define good journalism6. This is where different kinds of prestige come into play: prestige linked to the (traditionally relatively high) cultural capital of prestigious journalism or to the market parameters (which stories “sell”). Important is also the field’s relation to other fields: for example business papers’ strong links to business life, newspapers tied to certain cultural or religious traditions, others relying on readership in agricultural and fisheries communities in some regions, etc.

The second step is entering the production within the field. This is where professional experience comes into play, such as the ongoing development of professional codes, the tacit presuppositions found in newsrooms, ethics and generic capacity. Journalism constitutes discursive production, but actors in the field also represent an interpretative society7. Interpretation, such as that taking place in literature and science, is almost always done on behalf of – or with reference to – somebody, but is simultaneously a product of one’s own societal role and imagination.

Neveu’s third step is reception, audience studies. In this endeavour, one needs to analyse the various productions of meaning in different subcultures of audiences, searching both for likeness and difference8.

Altogether this is a rather comprehensive model for analysing media production and consumption. But others may still enrich it.

Critical Discourse Analysis and Journalism

In journalism, as in the study of other fields of discursive practice, discourse analysis means a set of approaches that have to be tailored to a certain extent to a specific mass of texts. For the analysis of journalistic texts, generic competence and knowledge of the development of the profession are relevant. In trans-continental media analysis, for ex-
ample studies of Nordic media representation of the so-called non-west, the analysis may work at several levels and also negotiate between the levels in a multi-disciplinary approach.

Norman Fairclough offers the following definition of discourse: “an element of social practices which constitutes other elements as well as being shaped by them” (Fairclough 1999: ix). The combination ‘being shaped by’ and ‘constitute’ offers a useful, dialectical approach, constitute seen as being largely synonymous with represent. The latter may be exemplified by dominant groups in society constituting their ‘truths’ by imposing specific knowledge, disciplines and values upon dominated groups, as in war propaganda (‘good versus evil’). What preserves power is the way in which discourse penetrates and produces things, luring us into pleasure and various forms of knowledge (Winther Jørgensen & Philips 1999: 22). In history, colonial discourse may be seen as a complex of signs and practices that organize social existence and social reproduction within colonial relationships – thereby causing people to accept these relationships more easily.

Creating Links

Fairclough further sees discourse analysis as “an attempt to show systematic links between texts, discourse practices and sociocultural practices” (Fairclough 1995: 16-17). Discourse practice mediates between the textual and the sociocultural practice, as an indirect link between text and sociocultural practice (Fairclough 1995: 59-60). Fairclough sees discourse as a way of facilitating analysis of a text’s relation to society: both as a way of ‘explaining’ aspects of the text and as a way of studying the impact of texts on the reader(s).

Three levels: Fairclough emphasizes his concern at three levels: Media texts as texts (linguistic practice), as discourse practices: “the ways in which texts are produced by media workers in media institutions and the ways in which texts are received by audiences” and sociocultural practices: “constituting parts of the context of discourse practice”9 (Fairclough 1995: 16). As we may observe, these steps correspond to a certain degree to Neveu’s steps, which are inspired by Bourdieu’s field theory.

Thus, Fairclough offers a model for studying the communicative event, moving from the text outward, while scholars in the Bourdieu tradition seem to start from the “outside” and move inward. Said’s approach has mainly been literary studies with colonial history as a backcloth. A central perspective of his is “contrapuntal reading10”, that is, reading a text from the perspective of the colonized subject, related to “the subaltern view” (Spivak 1988), and comparing this reading to the more conventional (power-related) approaches.

Fairclough’s model is figuratively not unlike a set of Chinese boxes. Fairclough suggests that an analysis of media texts (and other texts) can highlight three groups of questions concerning media output: The representational level: How is the world – that is, events, relations etc., represented? The identity level: What identities are established for those involved in the programme or story, i.e. the reporter, the audience, the politician and the audience, the sources and the audience? And last, but not least, the relational level: What relations are established between the involved parts: reporter/source, reporter/public, expert/public, politician/public, and source/public? By suggesting such specific questions he contributes to the richness of the approach.
Restoring Order in Cairo and Alexandria

To investigate the feasibility of the multi-disciplinary approach, I have selected two additional texts, covering the same events in Egypt, but not from the same newspaper as Text 1.

**Quiet in Cairo and Alexandria** (Text 2)

London, 22nd of March

Reuter’s Agency telegraphs, that is, telegrams from Egypt, dated 21st of March, show that the situation is definitely better. Order has been restored in several cities, and in Cairo and Alexandria it is absolutely quiet. The telegraph connection with Tantah has been restored. It is reported that the better classes of the natives in certain provinces are doing their best to restore order. The only factor which can create unrest is, as is reported, that the Bedouins are gathering in significant numbers, but their only aim is plundering. *(Aftenposten 23.03.1919, Dagbladet 22.03.1919)*

**Colonial and Class Affiliation**

Just as in Text 1, this text has left out – apart from the headline – one main agent (invisible agency): the British Empire, with its representatives and allies: “Order has been restored…” A tacit presupposition is that when the British gain the upper hand, it is “definitely better” for Egypt. The resistance, here represented as “the Bedouins”, are referred to in a somewhat reductionist manner, as “plunderers”, i.e. criminals, not as a political opposition. On the other hand, the “better [here supposedly applied synonymously with upper] classes” are represented as being on “our” side, helping to restore order.

Seen from an Orientalism critic’s point of view, this is a classical piece of representation via binary opposites: The orderly Us (Empire-oriented) versus the disorderly and irrational Them, Oriental Others (the Bedouin criminals). The implied reader seems here expected to side with the British Empire. The “neutral” source of information, represented by the “it is reported”, may also contribute to the authority of the text. Thus, it can be read as an example of agency-transmitted on-the-surface “neutral” information, but laden with the ideology of the main Empire of the time.

The above text was printed in the (then) conservative newspaper Aftenposten. The text in liberal Dagbladet is almost identical, but has another headline: **The English seem to be gradually becoming the rulers of Egypt**, in other words a more explicit way of presenting the events – and also a headline containing more explicit Imperial agency. In addition, their reference is that “Reuter’s agency “experiences” that telegrams from Egypt … “

The almost identical versions may indicate that when it comes to foreign coverage of “remote” events early in the 20th century, editorial political differences come into play to a lesser degree – overshadowed by a shared acceptance of the colonial order – or more pragmatically that the usual dependence on international agencies for foreign news often minimized differences.

In 1919, Norway had been an independent nation for fourteen years. From this historical perspective, one might suggest that this newly won independence would cause sympathy for colonized nations struggling for national independence, but such sympathy is rarely demonstrated in the press.
Furthermore, at that time, the journalism profession was less developed and journalists far less educated than today. A “natural” suggestion in the aftermath of World War I may be that the press would be more closely linked to the interests of the nation and its foreign policy. These links were probably strengthened by a common-sensical political acceptance of colonialism and the larger European nations’ scramble for world hegemony.

To answer Fairclough’s three questions: In this text, a world is represented in which Empire is the natural order of things, albeit threatened by criminals. Second, the identities traced are four: (1) The invisible, neutral voice (the agency and its sources); (2) the “good ones” (our guys), i.e. the “better classes” with which the reader is supposed to identify; and (3) the “bad ones”, i.e. the Bedouins, whose only aim is to harm society; and last (4) the readership, presupposed to be sympathetically inclined towards the British. Third, the relations observed are largely invisible in such a short news text, but one senses the initial reporter’s sympathies for the “better classes”, and the opposite feeling for the rebel-like (bandit) Bedouins.

Genre-wise, the way in which the agency (Reuter’s) news is presented looks rather clumsy with today’s eyes, as contemporary newspapers present their agency sources in a more brief and discrete way. A question to be further investigated is why reporters construct the short news in this particular style, historical facts and political allegiances being only part of the answer. Fairclough is often concerned with how discourse from one field permeates language and representation in another field, as when commercial language is applied in academic institutions to better “sell” their services. A degree of interdiscursivity may be observed in the text, as “order” and “plundering” are concepts often applied in the discourse of crime. The concepts applied when representing a national uprising serve the purpose of criminalizing the opponents of the “natural order”.

**Exposing Double Standards**

Another text seems to be more preoccupied with Imperial agency and its interpretation of nationalism.

**In Egypt** *(Text 3)*

the situation has deteriorated. The British dismissal of the nationalist leaders has of course enraged the people. The idea of nationalism, as we know, is not as fully accepted in practice within the British Empire as it is in theory among the British leaders. *(Stavanger Aftenblad 22.03. 1919)*

The liberal paper *Stavanger Aftenblad* is published in south-western Norway, an area with a strong and often radical lay Christian tradition. This is one of the explanations why the paper has a larger coverage of missionary activities than do most others *(and gives higher priority to coverage of the non-west (Eide 2002)), thereby also opening up to a universe of sources “out there”, sought out and quoted in the foreign news articles from non-western countries. This may also at times have led to a more developed empathy for the ordinary people inhabiting the colonies.*

The above is a short text dated one day ahead of Text 2, but states that the situation in Egypt is “deteriorating” – contrary to the conclusion of the two newspapers from the capital. This text does not refer to any telegrams from agencies, and genre-wise may be labelled as something in-between short news and comment, but its spatial context
within the paper is a row of small international news stories (similar to the contexts of Texts 1 and 2). Today, it might generically have served as a “sub-editorial”, a smaller text printed below the main editorial of a newspaper.

In writing that the British act of dismissal has “of course” enraged “the people”, the author of the text implies that revolt is a justified action, more justified than the acts of the Empire to provide law and order.

In this text, this “natural world order” is challenged, as the text exposes the double standard of the British Empire by highlighting their non-acceptance of Egypt’s nationalists and their demands. We find a different kind of binary opposite – often applied in political journalism – the position of theory (the lofty ideals) versus practice (the grim realities). Could this be an example of the field of journalism being inspired by the religious field (or the subfield of lay Christians), and could the statement of double standards be interpreted as a practice-as-you-preach Christian morality inspired by the politically radical lay Christian tradition in this newspaper’s main area? Or is the breach of genre (a non-agency short news item bordering on comment) of more decisive importance, allowing for more individual journalistic judgement?

The identities set up in the text are five: (1-2) Two of them may be partially merged, as the usage of the word we in “as we know”, may be addressed to an enlightened reader who is as fully aware of the negative aspects of colonialism as the writer is, although it may also be read as the editorial “we”. Furthermore, (3) the nationalist leaders are posited partly as victims (as they are dismissed), and (4) the people sympathizing are represented as reacting with a justified rage (no mentioning of Bedouins here). The British leaders (5), on the other hand, are represented as untrustworthy and discriminatory bearers of double standards.

Thus, one may conclude that this text opposes the mainstream Orientalist representation of the Middle Eastern Other (of that historical period) and represents a rare16 counter-discursive example, opposed to the widespread acceptance of the colonial order, thereby deviating from the hegemonic discourses of the historical period.

Struggle and Individual Deviance

The two texts cited above also demonstrate Bourdieu’s reference to the struggle within the field of journalism, or as it were, both the autonomy of the field and the individual deviance permitted, in this case by a liberal regional newspaper (and its individual reporter/editor), from the mainstream political support to one of Norway’s closest allies and trading partners, and to the ideology of colonialism as a taken-for-granted civilizational endeavour. One may also suggest that while a traditional Orientalist (Empire-inspired) approach to the crisis in Egypt seems to be the rule, a certain space was left for counter-discursive newspaper texts, but a stronger conclusion of course requires a broader investigation17.

In the recently published volume on Bourdieu’s journalism critique, there is not a single reference to Fairclough and critical discourse analysis – or to Said’s Orientalism critique. This is an attempt to show how the three approaches may enrich analysis of journalism if applied together, also recognizing their correspondence to each other.

What do these three approaches share? (See also Appendix 1)

First and foremost they all adhere to an anti-hegemonic media critique, but also distance themselves from a determinist mode of analysis, thereby admitting to a certain degree of journalistic autonomy. They see the journalistic field as an important, power-
ful one, but simultaneously weak, in the sense that journalism is being greatly influenced by other powerful fields. They recognize both the need to reject media centrisim (an analysis that does not take exterior, societal influence into account) and the importance of a specific analysis of the production going on in the field, taking the particularities of the journalistic field (and profession) into consideration.

For example, can one not see a connection of sorts between Fairclough’s interdiscursivity and Bourdieu’s heteronomy (i.e., a field being influenced by or to a degree intertwined with other fields, i.e. a field with a weak autonomy), as when the anti-colonial Egyptians are represented using terms normally applied to criminals? Fairclough himself suggests that identification in discourse analysis brings Bourdieu’s habitus into consideration (Fairclough 2004: 29). Can one not also see the correspondence between Spivak’s Othering and Fairclough’s action (as the professional’s relation to sources, objects and audience), in the above case exemplified by the (invisible) writer who is treating the colonial subjects as irresponsible, unruly and in need of military intervention? Or between this Othering imbued with the marks of Empire and Said’s analysis of the way in which colonial power is reflected in texts produced under colonialism – and Bourdieu’s analysis of the journalistic field as strongly influenced by the field of power – such as when the mainstream messages about the Egyptian uprising do not challenge the British Empire?

I think there is a need for further investigation of the common ground between these three directions – all of which refer somehow to the relationship between knowledge and power. In a period of increased emphasis on globalization (albeit not a new phenomenon), this kind of analysis may be more in demand and could represent a challenge for media scholars engaged in inter-continental studies of journalism.

Students and researchers in the journalistic field have to face a world in which part of the journalistic practice as well as media use is becoming more trans-national and may feel the need for a more multi-disciplinary approach to the field. In today’s world “the Empire talks back”, as seen, for example, by TV channels such as Al Jazeera going global and other regional plans for worldwide distribution of both news (for example Telesur, based in Venezuela) and serials. Myths and stereotypes will increasingly be scrutinized whether they occur in the traditional “West” or elsewhere.

The struggle for representation in today’s globalized world is more important than ever, and an essentialist or marginalizing representation of the non-western Other may contribute to bipolar thinking that triggers conflict and ignores the universal experiences shared by all humankind as well as the universal value of a human life.

Notes

1. In a larger ongoing research project Norway from half-colony to humanitarian superpower – a hundred years with the Other in the Norwegian Press (Simonsen and Eide 2003-), we have observed that the genre most frequently represented is precisely this short news story, usually a limited one-column article, sometimes a picture with a very short text.

2. E. Eide and A.H. Simonsen: Norway from half-colony to humanitarian superpower: a hundred years with the Others in the Norwegian Press (2003-). Non-western is a problematic concept – as both the “non-west” and the “west” are everywhere in today’s world (historically less so). In the non-west, we have included Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Oceania (minus Australia and New Zealand) and Latin America.

3. Our material consists of two synthetick weeks per year (1902, 1919, 1928, 1935, 1947, 1953, 1967, 1976, 1982, 1991, 2002) from seven daily newspapers, starting each year in February. Therefore, much of the coverage of this uprising is (so far) not included in our material.
4. What does “power” and “the powerful” imply? In this context it is a concept mainly associated with people who possess large amounts of economic or political – and to a certain extent – also cultural capital.

5. For a more thorough elaboration of this perspective, see Eide 2002.

6. “Is this award-winning journalism or journalism that helps sell more subscriptions or copies?” is one of the questions posed.

7. Corresponding to Said’s communities of interpretation: Everyone shapes his Others and different ‘communities of interpretation’ continuously interpret and reinterpret. The interpretation may be linked to political and economic power (or lack of such power), but also to fear of external enemies, as Said suggests in his studies of Orientalism and the coverage of Islam (Said 1981, 1995).

8. I shall not dwell on this step here, as my main point is to link the three approaches in general, and because my field of study is historical texts from 1902 to 2002 – which makes audience studies rather difficult.

9. The various ways this comes forward are: situational: “the specific social goings-on which the discourse is part of”; institutional: “the institutional framework(s) that the discourse occurs within and societal: “the wider social matrix of the discourse

10. Contrapuntal reading: “simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominant discourse acts” (Said 1994: 59-60).

11. Really three, as two variations of the same are printed in two different newspapers.

12. Not a rare presupposition. Norway, albeit officially “neutral” in World War I, was in practice recognised as England’s “neutral ally” (Riste 1965).

13. Both newspapers are published from the capital, Oslo.

14. The two Social Democratic newspapers in our sample sometimes deviate from this acceptance, the year 1919 being one of the most radical years of Norwegian Social Democracy – and the newspapers’ party affiliation being considerably stronger than today.

15. About half of all texts treating missionary activities (from 7 newspapers in the ongoing research project) originate from this newspaper.

16. In this historical period, in our material (Simonsen & Eide, op.cit) this text represents an exception.

17. The majority of the Egypt texts from 1919 support this suggestion.

18. Identification: unlike action, which is to do with relations to others, “is to do with relations with oneself, ethics and the “moral subject” (Fairclough 2004: 28)

19. Habitus: A person’s embodied dispositions to see and act in certain ways based upon socialization and experience, according to Fairclough partly their dispositions to talk and write in certain ways (Fairclough 2004:29)

Literature
Appendix 1.

Three Approaches, Inspiring Analysis of Journalistic Texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientational critique, post-colonial theories, othering (Said, Spivak, etc.)</th>
<th>Field theory (Bourdieu, Neveu and Benson, etc.)</th>
<th>Critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, Bhatia)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Othering as journalist's relation to source or object. Linked to Empire: imperial/colonial power, thus incorporating history. Inspired by literature studies. Representation (hierarchical, symmetrical, reflective, “third space” (difference blurred) or non-representation, Eide 2002). Reflecting power relations (mainstream).</td>
<td>Heteronomy (weak autonomy), struggle within the field. Incorporates history in the heart of media analysis. Journalism linked to the field of power (e.g. capital). A school of sociology. History: Semi-autonomous institutional logic. Tool for relational and spatial analysis. Journalism as micro cosmos in macro cosmos. Moving from field inwards.</td>
<td>Fairclough: Discourse as text, as discursive practice and social practice (seen as text in context). Roots in linguistic studies and social science. Intercursivity as sign of field influence (e.g., from political or economical to journalistic field). Moving from text (linguistic practice) outwards.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Location: Habitus

Identification
Appendix 2.

A House with Four Rooms (a place to explore journalistic texts)

Vijay Bhatia (building on Fairclough) offers an analytical model for textual analysis that may be visualized as “four rooms” – with open doors between them. The first room is the textual one, inviting the guest to engage with the text at the micro-level. The next one is devoted to genre, and there generic knowledge (for example of the convention of short news stories) comes into play. Third: the professional room, in which one investigates the text, considering how professional and institutional values (like reflexivity, news priorities, relation to sources) come into play. And fourth: the societal room, in which the text is seen as a particular kind of societal practice, and where the historical context of a text is of great importance. In the model below, I have added a fifth room, that of the audience, as the audience is always at stake in the editorial room, either in the shape of a person who should be able to understand the message, in the shape of someone who is supposed to share the values of the media institution, in the shape of a new “target group” triggered by media competition or a combination of all three.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Textual room</th>
<th>Generic room</th>
<th>Professional room</th>
<th>Audience room</th>
<th>Societal room</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content and questions</td>
<td>Linguistic level, metaphors. Style, figures of speech, attributions, chains of referents, agency, voice. Intertextuality, interdiscursivity</td>
<td>Generic particularities. The text seen in light of conventions of the genre, eventual hybrids. Composition, dramaturgy.</td>
<td>Media institution, the struggle within the field. Who is allowed to speak? Who is assigned which roles? How does the reporter relate to the sources?</td>
<td>The implied reader. The tacitly presupposed “we”. How are the readers addressed?</td>
<td>Text in historical context. The media’s relation to the powerful and disempowered of the time. Which facts are represented?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Constructing Karl Popper

How does Science Journalism Employ Literary Devices?

HARALD HORNMOEN

Abstract

In the US, a new generation of science journalists are employing narrative techniques in their writing. What are the characteristics of this journalism? Why does it employ narrative techniques?

This article attempts to give some answers to these questions by drawing on studies of science and the media. I argue that literary science journalism is predominantly cast in a characteristic semi-narrative, coinciding with what has been regarded as the main aim of this journalism: a skilled translation of abstract knowledge assumed to have been developed by scientist sources.

In a comparative analysis of profiles of scientists written by the journalist John Horgan, I contrast his texts as they first appeared in the magazine Scientific American with later versions in his book The End of Science. The analysis sheds some light on how the different media provide different frames for the journalist’s literary portrayals of the scientists as well as different possibilities with regard to expressing a subjective and critical view on their scientific achievements.

Key Words: science journalism, literary journalism, narrative techniques, genre, the profile

Introduction

Is science journalism inspired by fictional literature? Are literary devices used when reporting on scientific matters? It may seem a peculiar combination, but the fact is that quite a few journalists covering scientific issues employ techniques that we normally associate with fictional literature (Anton & McCourt 1995).

However, given the relatively widespread practice of literary science journalism, scholarly attention to the form has been rather modest. In general, literary nonfiction remains, as Barbara Lounsberry has noted, “the great unexplored territory of contemporary criticism” (Lounsberry 1990: xi). The communication scholar John Hartsock (1998) asserts that the study of journalism has historically excluded literary journalism from serious scholarly consideration. According to him, the form has existed largely outside the dominant critical paradigms of scholarship and criticism. He particularly points to how the study of journalism has moved from being a humanistic and rhetorical enterprise to being one shaped by social sciences that mimic the quantification of the natural sciences, motivated by a desire for scientific respectability. Such a scholarly paradigm is not ideal for the study of literary journalism, as it tends to exclude analysis and critical interpretation that makes no claim to being empirical.
As to literary science journalism in particular, it is difficult to find any scholarly work on the form. Recently, some attention has been paid to the development of courses in science writing as literature, forming a part of science communication programmes (see Littmann 2005). However, I have not found many serious attempts to describe and understand the form, nor any examples of close analysis and interpretation of texts in science journalism that apply literary techniques. There is indeed a need for a closer examination of this form, as there is a need for an examination of literary journalism in general. As Lounsberry (1990) suggests, literary journalism has emerged as one of our contemporary literatures, its practice doing justice to the journalistic enterprise because it compellingly examines issues – philosophical, aesthetic and social – that are of profound concern to society and the individual.

Theoretical Frame/Analytical Approach
This article addresses questions such as: What are the characteristics of literary science journalism? What is it trying to achieve? How is the use of literary devices by science journalists enabled or constrained by different media formats and journalistic genres?

The article attempts to give some tentative answers to these questions by drawing on studies in “science and the media” and by examining excerpts from journalistic texts that apply literary devices. I concentrate on American science journalism, as I do in my doctoral thesis (Hornmoen 2003), because it is above all this area of journalism in this country that has been influenced by the literary, so-called “new journalism” of the 1960s and 70s.

My approach is not situated within the scholarly paradigm of social science as sketched out above. Rather, it is inspired by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as practiced by Norman Fairclough (1992, 1995a, 1995b, 2001). According to Fairclough, discourse analysis is “an analysis of how texts work within sociocultural space” (1995b:7), and it may be regarded as “an attempt to show systematic links between texts, discourse practices, and sociocultural practices” (1995a: 17). Critical discourse analysis of journalism, thus, will try to understand how journalistic texts contribute to maintaining or changing institutional norms and practices, and how journalism is shaped by different social factors (whether wider sociocultural factors such as political pressures, or institutional factors such as professional ethics or genre codes). When studying science journalism, central questions will be: How do texts in science journalism create meaning? Which ideologies and power relations do the texts reflect (for instance between scientist sources, journalists and the audience)?

Rather than providing a formula for textual analysis, CDA may be regarded as a way of reflecting upon texts and their context and upon how meaning and different “ways of seeing” are constructed, reproduced and maintained in texts. In this preliminary article on literary science journalism, I must limit the scope of an analysis that ideally describes, interprets and explains different dimensions of discourse such as texts, discourse practice, sociocultural practice – and the relationship between them. Thus, my ambition is more modest. In the first part of the article, I wish to outline the characteristics of how literary science journalism articles are composed, and reflect on how these characteristics express and maintain a dominant role conception within the institution of science journalism.

Having outlined a dominant practice and ideological pattern, I analyse sample texts that may be indicative of how a different view of the science journalist’s duties is emerging within the institution. However, the aim of such an analysis of a small number of
discourse examples is certainly not to lay a foundation for generalizing about the functions, ideologies or possibilities of literary science journalism. Rather, the objective is to examine how the production of meaning in these texts is related to the type of media and the formats they are presented within.

In selecting the samples for the comparative analysis in the second part, I have been inspired by a strategy Fairclough recommends, namely to focus on “cruces” or critical features in texts. According to Fairclough, such cruces may be “sudden shifts of style” (1992: 230), and this applies to the samples I have chosen. When comparing the texts, I focus on some of the linguistic categories often studied in CDA, such as genre, discourse representation and modality.

Characteristics of Literary Journalism
What is literary journalism? For John Hartsock (1998), “literary journalism” refers to narrative nonfiction texts written largely by professional journalists who employ rhetorical techniques commonly associated with the realistic novel or short story. Historically, literary journalism is not a new phenomenon. Journalists such as Stephen Crane and Huchins Hapgood cultivated a literary form already during the 1890s. In the 20th century, writers such as Ernest Hemingway, James Agee, John Hersey and Norman Mailer have contributed to shaping literary journalism.

But it was with the so-called New Journalism of the 1960s that writing inspired by literature expanded in parts of the press. The powerlessness that many journalists felt towards the events they were sent to report on within the rigid objective norm of the press was part of what gave rise to a form of journalism that experimented more with modes of presentation and did not hesitate to bring personal experiences into its accounts of reality. Widely circulated magazines such as Playboy, Esquire and The New Yorker now also allowed journalists sufficient time to try out literary techniques in their stories (Klit 1983, Hornmoen 1990).

For Tom Wolfe, commonly referred to as the leading spokesman for New Journalism, it is above all the use of literary techniques from realism that distinguishes the form from what roughly may be termed “conventional” journalism. The four techniques of the fictional literature of realism (applied by authors such as Honoré de Balzac and Gustave Flaubert in the 19th century) that Wolfe (1975) – in a normative manner – identifies as the hallmark of the New Journalism are (in brief):

Scene-on-scene Construction
The writer is to compose the story by moving from scene to scene. The idea is to display events, settings and persons for the reader.

Representation of Dialogue
One is preferably to report dialogue in direct speech, literally and in as complete and revealing a fashion as possible.

Representation of Characteristic Details
The writer may, for instance, represent everyday gestures, habits, ways of dressing, interiors, different glances and ways of posing or walking.
**Third-Person Point of View**

The technique is to present scenes through the eyes of a portrayed person, attempting to give the reader the feeling of experiencing “the emotional reality of the scene” in the way the depicted person did.¹

One should emphasize that new journalists did not employ literary techniques in order to fictionalize journalism. On the contrary, the intent was to give a more complete account of reality than “conventional” journalism is able to provide. Application of literary devices requires a detailed and careful preliminary work. “Saturation reporting” is the expression Wolfe (1975:35) uses, referring to in-depth reporting that not only seeks to capture what is said and done, but also what is thought and felt, so that readers have access to the “inside” of the persons and events depicted. It is also termed “intensive reporting” (Murphy 1974), an activity that includes participant observation, in-depth interviews and extensive note taking.

Subjectivity is commonly considered a characteristic of this literary journalism (Murphy 1974). Some see its goal as an attempt to narrow the gap between subjectivity and a world reduced to a distant object by mainstream objectified journalism (Hartsock 1998). For a literary journalist, subjectivity implies a more active role in the composition of a report as compared to the more submerged role implicit in objective journalism, which emphasizes such values as neutrality and a balance between sources representing different opinions. Through the detailed characterization of persons and the composition of scenes and dialogues, the journalist makes her distinctive shaping consciousness known (see Weber 1974, Hartsock 1998). At the same time, the writer exposes her presence in the articles and stresses the importance of her own involvement in the subject being written about. This may be manifested by more frequent use of the personal pronoun “I” than in mainstream objective journalism.

Now, the editorial status of literary journalism in the US has been swinging, and it has not established itself as a dominant form in the American press since its heyday in the 1960s. Certainly, it is practiced by a great number of journalists in different types of publications. But it has also been accused of wavering between fantasy and fact, between fiction and a truthful representation of reality (see, e.g., Murphy 1974). Such a sceptical attitude towards the form is relatively widespread in an institution where the norm of objectivity is still “the key legitimating professional ethic” (McNair 1998:65).

**Literary Science Journalism – The Dominant Discourse**

However, it is worth noting how, towards the end of the previous century, different voices remark that it is in science journalism that the use of literary techniques now flourishes. The journalist and Pulitzer Prize winner John Franklin expresses this in the following way in an article from 1986:

We have to take readers into science the way John Steinbeck took them into Oklahoma.

Only by using emotion, and literary structure, can we send our truths in through the blind eye of the hurricane and calm it.

Science writers are moving in that direction, now, through dramatic non-fiction. (Franklin 1986)
Less of a proclamation of a programme and more of a documentation of an existing trend is Ted Anton and Rick McCourt’s collection of journalistic articles, *The New Science Journalists* (1995). According to the two editors, a new kind of science coverage emerged in American journalism in the late 1980s onwards into the 90s – both in magazines, daily newspapers and in books. This journalism is practiced by journalists who are more investigative and interpretive than they traditionally have been with regard to scientific matters, and some of them employ the narrative techniques characteristic of New Journalism.

Some of the compiled articles in the book testify to an extensive and thorough use of narrative devices, whether through a story structure based on models such as “the detective story”, “a race against the clock”, or something more closely resembling streams-of-consciousness. But one may question how representative a book that claims to gather “the best of science writing” is with respect to the use of literary techniques in science journalism. Furthermore, it is striking that some of the contributions in *The New Science Journalists* are excerpts from *books*, a medium that presumably provides different frames and possibilities of excelling in literary devices than what articles in the daily press – or even in popular science magazines – normally do.

What function does the use of literary devices in science journalism have? What purpose do they serve? Anton and McCourt speak emphatically about a new, insistent science journalism that explores scientific cultures, reveals dramatic conflicts between scientists and exposes not only successes, but also the failures of scientific research. But although some journalists have such goals and may realize them by applying narrative techniques in their stories, the function of literary techniques in science journalism thus far has mainly been pedagogical (see also Bennett 1986, Dornan 1990). Narrative devices are used to capture public attention and ultimately their purpose is to contribute to explaining and informing the public about science.

Statements by science journalists suggest that they can consider a literary form as appropriate for advancing the learning process – that is, an understanding of science in the public – without risking that readers will become bored or lose interest in the subject. Thus, according to Nathalie Angier, a merited science journalist in *The New York Times*:

> You must teach without being didactic, that’s where story comes in. (Angier in Anton & McCourt 1995: 16-17)

Playing closer attention to the actual use of literary devices in this journalism, one notes that the magazine editor William Bennett, already in the 1980s, observed a characteristic structure in magazine stories about science. He registered the frequent occurrence of formulaic narrative leads in the articles, emphasizing action and a certain theatricality. In one magazine (*Science 83*), four articles begin in the following way:

Jim Curran is making one last phone call. His voice cracks...

Hans Goedicke is angry at George Michanowsky, but in a bemused way.

In the early afternoon on January 11, 1982, four Hopi Indian men walk into the Smithsonian’s Museum of Natural History, a golden-domed science building...

Jim Anderson stands at the edge of a graveled hilltop with his eyes lifted and the fingers of one hand resting against his lower lip...

(from Bennett 1986: 125)

Similar dramatic leads may also be found in the feature articles of well-reputed popular science magazines today (e.g. *Scientific American*), as well as article leads in the
science articles of the daily press. For instance, a clear line of relationship seems to connect the following leads, the first from a Pulitzer-Prize-winning article by Jon Franklin, the second one from a Pulitzer-Prize-winning article by Robert Capers and Eric Lipton. The last one is from the first article of a Pulitzer-Prize-winning series by Deborah Blum. In the leads of this journalism, there are quite a few chilly autumn and winter mornings, and scientists facing some crucial challenges.

In the cold hours of a winter morning Dr. Thomas Barbee Ducker, chief brain surgeon at the University of Maryland Hospital, rises before dawn. His wife serves him waffles but no coffee. Coffee makes his hands shake. (Franklin 1994: 28)

On a chilly autumn day in 1978, in an upstate New York factory town, Ronald R. Rigby Jr. stared at the glass that would dominate his life for the next three years. (In Anton & McCourt 1995: 215)

On the days when he is scheduled to kill, Allen Merritt summons up his ghosts. They come to him from the shadows of a 20-year-old memory. Eleven human babies, from his first year out of medical school. All born prematurely. All lost within one week when their lungs failed. (In Anton & McCourt 1995: 170)

These are openings that – despite their stereotypical form – have certain functions. By immediately attempting to draw the reader “into the middle of a plot”, in medias res, the aim is apparently to create reader involvement in topics and subject matters commonly considered too complex to hold the reader’s attention in the absence of such a narrative device. By concentrating on one or more persons, the journalist-narrator gives what is perceived as complex material a human face and enables reader identification with that which is being portrayed.

But it is characteristic of many articles covering science that the narrative is not continued throughout the article. As Bennett observes, what follows after the leads is not a sustained narrative: “Rather, the little story gets the reader into the tent; thereafter the exposition begins” (Bennett 1986: 125). One need not search long through the feature articles of a magazine like Scientific American, or the science section of The New York Times, before observing a typical structure in articles that employ narrative techniques. It is rather common to open with a narrative scene, which is followed by a more extensive part devoted to exposition. Characteristic of this part are attempts to describe and explain current research and its findings, before the article in some cases returns to the narrative towards the end, resulting in a circular composition.

When science journalism that applies literary devices appears in this way, it is reasonable to assume that this is partly due to the way in which quite a few science journalists view their own duties.

Now, there are clear indications of a markedly different role conception among American science journalists in the 1990s, as compared to what has been the dominant view since science journalism emerged as a profession in the 1930s. Some of the most qualified science journalists express the necessity of placing science in a broad societal context and of exploring how politics, ideology and culture influence perspectives and practice in research. In my doctoral thesis’ critical discourse analysis of the central handbook A Field Guide for Science Writers (Blum & Knudson 1997), I indicate how a “criti-
cal” role conception is more pronounced among journalists who delimit their area of coverage roughly as “problems in society” (e.g., “toxics and risk reporting”, “environmental writing”, “public health and government”, “infectious diseases”) than it is among journalists who frame their area of coverage according to traditional disciplinary boundaries in the scientific institution (e.g., “physics”, “astronomy”) (Hornmoen 2003).

Still, a traditionally “dominant view of popularization” (see also Hilgartner 1990) has demonstrated a strong ability to survive within the institution of science journalism. According to this view, the journalist is a disseminator of scientific knowledge, engaged in improving the public understanding of an institution and activity in society that is considered to be poorly understood and appreciated. The scientific institution’s efforts to improve the public understanding of science has traditionally been discernible in the role conception of science journalists (see Nelkin 1995). Journalists have willingly written – and still write – their articles in accordance with a model of communication whereby the scientist is viewed as the original and sole source of knowledge, the journalists as disseminators and the audience as receivers of this knowledge. The goal of the journalist’s efforts in this perspective is maximum fidelity to the observations and exposition of the source, in other words, as little distortion as possible of what is viewed as the genuine first-hand knowledge of the scientist.

Add to this that on the science pages of the daily press “scientific findings at the frontier of research” have traditionally been considered selling news elements, with the latest publications of scientific journals viewed as the main reservoir for stories. “The most commonly understood duty of the science reporter is to keep readers abreast of important advances in scientific research,” writes the veteran reporter and editor Boyce Rensberger (in Blum & Knudson 1997: 9) in an article about covering science for newspapers.

Such frames and role conceptions set different conditions for the use of literary techniques than do articles commonly categorized as “literary journalism” or “new journalism”. In articles about New Journalism (e.g., Murphy 1974, Wolfe 1975), it is emphasized how this journalism uses the techniques of literary realism to depict and document different persons, social settings and groups, their everyday experiences and behaviour, their lifestyles, gestures, habits and status symbols. For Tom Wolfe, the basic unit of a reported narrative is not a collection of “facts” or “data” or a piece of information as such, but rather scenes involving people, groups or social settings (see Murphy 1974). More or less dramatic scenes, dense with action, are the main focus of much new journalism. Here a central role for the journalist is to be an active, participant observer of “the whole business of ‘the way we live now’”, as Wolfe expresses it (1975: 43).

The picture is not quite the same within the conventional frame for science journalists, as it is sketched out above. When a scientist’s studies are the main focus, it is not primarily the journalists who are in a position that enables fundamental observations, or so-called eyewitness accounts. One may say that the real reporters of science are the scientists, or at least: they are in a position of being the reporters. The journalists are rather relegated to a role as referents of others’ observations and studies, or arrangers of another person’s work for the readers. This distribution of roles does not exactly create ideal conditions for absorbing literary journalism.

One solution for the journalist appears to be to try to enliven the story by observing the researcher or the researcher’s object in different situations in order to create a narrative frame surrounding her pedagogical project. Some go even further in their attempt to create engaging prose and hide any traces of attempts to teach the public. Using narrative
schemes such as “a scientist struggling with a puzzle”, “a race against time” or “a race against another scientific institution” (see Hornmoen 2003), the journalist tries to create a more thorough narrative, emphasizing the research process. This is a narrative form that is seemingly true to the characteristic feature of science as a process whereby theories are continually modified. But in practice, this form rather tends to create an exaggeratedly heroic picture of science. Such stories preferably require a solution, for instance that something is discovered or revealed, if the reader is not to feel cheated (see Dornan 1990). And some specialist science journalists, who readily have adopted views and values that are common in the scientific community, may be reluctant to use a narrative form that creates an unrealistic picture of what science is able to achieve.

Thus, many of them stick to the semi-narrative and less absorbing form, a form that shows more restraint than a great deal of New Journalism. This science journalism does not demonstrate an equally intensive form of “saturation reporting”. It is not characterized to the same degree by a subjective presence, and it does not use literary techniques to the same extent. In a journalism form that gives exposition substantial space, literary techniques often amount to use of metaphors, analogies and comparisons in order to improve the public understanding of science. There is nothing wrong with this, but it has a tendency to result in what Bennett described as a “stylistic monotony, a shallowness in the reporting, a lack of texture” (1986: 124).

Version of Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn and Stephen Jay Gould

Is there no alternative to semi-narrative, educational prose? As suggested, some of the contributions to Anton and McCourt (1995) show that there is. And although it barely represents science journalism in the mainstream, a more pronounced literary journalism is emerging and practiced among writers who seem to understand their task as something other than teaching and knowledge transmission and who may choose to work within media formats that to a larger extent allow for thorough literary science journalism. I shall shed some light on this by discussing extracts from the work of John Horgan, one of the science journalists who use literary techniques most extensively. Horgan is interesting for several reasons. His most subjective, literary and critical work was originally presented within the profile genre in a popular science magazine. Furthermore, he has adapted material from these profiles in the chapters of his book The End of Science (Horgan 1996). This enables a comparative analysis of excerpts from the original magazine versions and from the book versions.

Horgan is particularly well-known – and widely criticized – for his book The End of Science. In it he fosters and argues for his thesis that science has already generated the revolutions and made all the great discoveries that human technology and cognitive limitations will allow:

(...) science is unlikely to make any significant additions to the knowledge it already has generated (Horgan 1996: 16).

Horgan’s thesis and book have provoked many scientists and sparked controversy, but it is not my intent to discuss these reactions or to assess his theory. Rather I wish to draw attention to some rather striking disparities in his literary journalism as it is practised in the magazine, on the one hand, and the book, on the other.

In his book, Horgan builds his arguments around interviews – or more precisely profiles – that were originally published in the profile pages of the popular science maga-
zine Scientific American (hereafter SA). One should immediately emphasize that Horgan also in his magazine profiles uses literary techniques to a larger extent than what is common in the aforementioned, characteristic semi-narrative science journalism. As in the following excerpt from his profile of Karl Popper, the philosopher of science:

During one of his brief pauses for breath, I mention his assertion that a theory must be falsifiable to be considered scientific. Is this falsifiability theory, I ask him, falsifiable? Popper places his hand over mine and transfixes me with a radiant smile. “I don’t want to hurt you,” he says, his voice softening, “but it’s a silly question.”

Still smiling, he gently explains that “the function of falsifiability is to say whether a theory is scientific or not. My theory of falsifiability is certainly not scientific. It belongs to metascience.” Popper used to banish students from his seminar for asking such an “idiotic” question, but he doesn’t blame me for doing so; some other philosopher, he suggests, probably put me up to it. “Yes”, I lie. (Horgan 1992: 20-21)

In the many scenes of his magazine profiles, Horgan allows space for dialogue and the recording of details (e.g., “places his hand over mine”), details that contribute to characterizing the person being portrayed. The writer’s subjectivity is discernible through his presence and engagement in his subject matter. In this sense, the excerpt will supposedly look more like the dramatic non-fiction that Jon Franklin envisioned in the 1980s than the semi-narrative and educational reports typical of science journalism. Rather than rhetorically optimizing a one-way lecture made by a scientist – or in this case a philosopher of science – the literary techniques here contribute to a different kind of reader involvement. We are brought more closely in touch with the scientist behind the rational façade, catching a glimpse of him as a human being, a person with feelings, one who may even be represented as adopting a somewhat defensive stance in relation to his own theories.

It may seem paradoxical that Horgan sows the seeds of his subjective, literary and critical profiles in a magazine that in many ways is devoted to demonstrating the value of science and new developments in research and technology (see Lewenstein 1992). Now, one should note that SA is oriented towards an audience interested in science and that the journalist may assume that readers have some knowledge of basic scientific concepts, so that informing about and defining such concepts does not characterize the writing here as much as in the science articles of daily newspapers. But when Horgan presents journalism in SA that is markedly more literary and critical than the science journalism typical of the daily press, it is reasonable to assume that this involves his experimenting with the possibilities the profile genre offers.

What characterizes the profile as a journalistic genre? Melvin Mencher’s influential textbook News Reporting and Writing (1991) proposes that the profile should be seen as a...:

...mini-drama, blending description, action and dialogue. Through the words and actions of the source, with some help from the reporter’s insertion of background and explanatory matter, the character is illuminated. (Mencher 1991: 303)

Other textbooks to a larger degree accentuate the journalist’s subjective involvement when writing within this genre. They point out how the task of the profile writer is not only to capture the characteristic traits and behaviour of a person, but also to actively
shape the portrayal by her own efforts as a narrator and stylist. Such views are expressed, for instance, in the Norwegian textbook *Portrett-intervju* (Lamark 1995). According to its author, one of the objectives of the profile may be to enter into a duel with a person who holds controversial standpoints on certain matters. Another goal may be to challenge a person who stands at the frontier of a field, testing the depth of her commitment. It is not a goal of the profile to draw a one-sided positive picture, that is, an embellished portrait of the person being written about.

In other words, this is a genre that conventionally allows the writer larger latitude to participate and employ a personal voice than do most other genres in journalism. It admits greater equality between the journalist and the portrayed. For journalists who write about science or scientists, the profile provides possibilities for focusing on other sides of the subject than a news report normally would. Writing within this genre, one need not be so fixated on what science journalists tend to consider as necessary news pegs in their work, namely a fresh scientific discovery or a “ground-breaking” research result (Hornmoen 2003).

But even though such factors may contribute to explaining the subjectivity and literary flair in Horgan’s magazine profiles, there is reason to point out that the adjusted profiles in the chapters of his book appear as even more dramatic, subjective and thoroughly literary. For instance, observe how he embroiders upon the episode with Popper:

It was time to launch my big question. Was his own falsification concept falsifiable? Popper glared at me. Then his expression softened, and he placed his hand on mine. “I don’t want to hurt you,” he said gently, “but it is a silly question.” Peering searchingly into my eyes, he inquired whether one of his critics had persuaded me to ask this question. Yes, I lied. “Exactly,” he said, looking pleased.

“The first thing you do in a philosophy seminar when somebody proposes an idea is to say it doesn’t satisfy its own criteria. It is one of the most idiotic criticisms one can imagine!” His falsification concept, he said, is a criterion for distinguishing between empirical modes of knowledge, namely, science, and nonempirical ones, such as philosophy. Falsification itself is “decidably unempirical”; it belongs not to science but to philosophy, or “metascience,” and it does not even apply to all of science. Popper was admitting, essentially, that his critics were right: falsification is a mere guideline, a rule of thumb, sometimes helpful and sometimes not.

Popper said he had never before responded to the question I had just posed. “I found it too stupid to be answered. You see the difference?” he asked, his voice gentle again. I nodded. The question seemed a bit silly to me, too, I said, but I just thought I should ask. He smiled and squeezed my hand, murmuring, “Yes, very good.”

(Horgan 1996: 38-39)

Whereas this scene is introduced early on in the magazine profile, in the book it is placed towards the end of the profile of Popper, as a part of what appears to be a carefully planned dramaturgy. In the book version, the scene is represented as more dramatic by an extensive use of direct speech (“quotations”) and dialogue. Greater attention is paid to details in Popper’s behaviour. Popper is portrayed as more hasty and biting in his comments than in the magazine version. The profile creates a picture of a less likeable, more aggressive and incalculable personality. At the same time, the narrator’s
presence is more distinct, to a larger degree appearing as a participating actor in the scenes of the text. After the extracted scene, the journalist-narrator in the book thus follows up by posing critical and ‘unpleasant’ questions to the interviewee. In the magazine profile, however, the equivalent scene is succeeded by words suggesting a far more humble narrator:

I should have known better than to try to trip up Karl Popper. For more than 70 years, he has been debating this century’s greatest ideas with this century’s greatest minds. (Horgan 1992:20)

Particularly striking is how the narrator emerges as a markedly more authoritative interpreter of Popper’s statements in the book version. Whereas the magazine version hardly includes any narrator comments evaluating Popper’s theories, the situation is different in the book. For instance, early on in the chapter, the narrator’s consideration of Popper’s views gives rather clear guidance on how one should understand Popper’s statements in this text:

As I began to question Popper about his views, it became apparent that his skeptical philosophy stemmed from a deeply romantic, idealized view of science. (Horgan 1996: 36)

Thus, the book chapter to a larger extent includes evaluations and uses literary techniques than does the magazine profile. Employment of these techniques also serves a somewhat different purpose than in the magazine article. The portraying of Popper as such is the main objective in the magazine profile: By using techniques typical of literary realism, the writer tries to expose him as he “really” is, capturing characteristic traits by observing and describing his gestures, his thoughts and ways of expressing himself. In the book version, the more extensive use of literary techniques has a supplementary function. Here, the portrayal above all serves to illustrate the paradoxes and shortcomings of Popper’s theory in a way that substantiates Horgan’s thesis about The End of Science, or more precisely in this case: The end of the philosophy of science.

Other profiles in the book chapters bear witness to how this medium provides the journalist with greater authority and possibility of playing out literary devices than does the magazine. A case in point is the profile of the historian/philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn. In it, space is provided for a different representation than in the magazine version (1991) of what Kuhn – in indirect discourse – describes as an epiphany, that is, a sudden experience of insight. At Harvard in 1947, he had an experience that he felt would shape his view of science. In the book, the narrator returns to this experience with an ironic attitude that does not appear to the same extent in the magazine profile:

Kuhn has tried, throughout his career, to remain true to that original epiphany he experienced in his dormitory at Harvard. During that moment Kuhn saw – he knew! – that reality is ultimately unknowable; any attempt to describe it obscures as much as it illuminates. (Horgan 1996:47)

Undoubtedly, the second sentence is an elegant formulation. It contains an element of so-called free indirect discourse by representing a person’s thoughts or speech without introducing or qualifying it by expressions such as “He said that...” The narrator’s report and direct speech are mixed in such a way that the boundaries between speech and thought are erased. In the case above, the representation of Kuhn’s exclamation – or rather, his sudden experience (he knew!) – serves to mimic his epiphany. This technique invites the
reader to see and experience reality through the person being portrayed. Writers considered to be new journalists have applied this technique, drawing on both the realism of the 19th century and the modernistic novels of the 20th century (see Wolfe 1975).

Worth noting is how the technique enables the narrator to express either a sympathizing or a mocking identification with the thoughts of the portrayed persons. Above, we have an example of what the narratologist Dorrit Cohn (1978) perceives as an ironic narration of a person’s thoughts. Horgan’s narration is somewhat more ridiculing here than in the magazine version, one main objective of his book apparently being to uncover paradoxes and flaws in the theories of his ‘victims’. The technique undoubtedly allows Horgan to express an attitude towards the thoughts of those portrayed and contributes in this way to the impression of a strongly subjective form of journalism.

Differences between the book and magazine representations may not only be traced when the people being portrayed are philosophers of science. They also distinctively emerge when the profiles are of researchers as such or, in other words, of scientists. One case in point: Both in the magazine profile and in the book, the biologist (or paleontologist) Stephen Jay Gould is confronted with a question concerning his theory of evolution as a random and discontinued process as opposed to a gradual one. The journalist has noticed that whereas Gould in 1972 had called his theory an “alternative” to Darwin’s theory of a gradual evolution, he later switched to using the term “a complement”. Horgan asks whether or not the change in vocabulary may be understood as conceding Darwin’s supremacy in the understanding of evolution. My point here is that Horgan’s different ways of representing Gould’s answers in the magazine profile and the book contribute to creating a somewhat different profile of the man.

In the magazine, Horgan writes:

He then proceeds to argue that alternative and complement do not have such different meanings. “If you claim something is an alternative, that doesn’t mean it operates exclusively,” he says. “I think punctuated equilibrium has an overwhelmingly dominant frequency in the fossil record, which means gradualism exists, but it’s not really important in the overall pattern of things.”

(Horgan 1995:27)

On the other hand, in the book’s more scenic composition, Gould is given more space to express his reactions to the question in direct speech:

(...) Gould proceeded to argue that alternative and complement do not really have such different meanings.

“Look, by saying it’s an alternative, that doesn’t mean that the old kind of gradualism doesn’t exist. See, that’s another thing I think people miss. The world is full of alternatives, right? I mean we’ve got men and women, which are alternative states of gender in Homo sapiens. I mean if you claim something is an alternative, that doesn’t mean it operates exclusively. Gradualism had pretty complete hegemony before we wrote. Here’s an alternative to test. I think punctuated equilibrium has an overwhelmingly dominant frequency in the fossil record, which means gradualism exists but it’s not really important in the overall pattern of things.” (Horgan 1996: 124)

More phrases typical of spoken language are included here than in the magazine profile. They contribute to representing Gould as less of a distanced authority figure and more of a present, emotionally involved person on the same level as “other human be-
ings”. Phrases such as “look”, “see”, “I mean”, and “right” can be understood as signs of so-called *expressive modality* (Fairclough 2001, Vagle 1995), that is, as expressions of how the speaker shows that he pledges himself to the truthfulness or probability of the referential content of his utterance. As I interpret the phrases in this context, they do not function so much to strengthen the authority of what the speaker is expressing, as they suggest the speaker’s personal involvement in the subject. They signal a more “human” reaction and may be interpreted as contributing to strengthening the authority of Horgan’s claims about the limitations of the theories of the person he is portraying.

**Concluding Remarks**

By comparing excerpts from John Horgan’s profiles as they are presented in “original” versions in a popular science magazine with reworked versions as presented in a book, I have indicated how the different media and formats provide different frames for the journalist’s portrayal of his subjects and his possibility of expressing a subjective and independent view on them. In the book version, Horgan to a greater extent displays a literary journalism.

The different persons portrayed by Horgan tend to exhibit some striking similarities in the book version, as figures with partly comical or ludicrous traits. One may question whether Horgan, with his writing style and use of literary techniques, tends to reflect the type of comical figures in a non-fictional, literary tradition to the same degree that he reflects the scientists he portrays. In any case, the book version evidently gives the journalist greater authority and power: In this medium and format, he is no longer “only” a reporter, he can act or pose in a role as an omniscient narrator or a philosopher. In this position, he uses his craft of journalistic reporting and portraying to confirm his theory that science has reached some kind of an end.

Now, the samples from Horgan’s work do not provide a ground for generalizations about the different conditions, functions and possibilities of literary science journalism in books as opposed to magazines. But when it is in the book medium that Horgan more thoroughly displays his literary journalism, marks a subjective and interpretive presence and covers his subject in depth, this is in accordance with a tendency in New Journalism. As James E. Murphy emphasizes in his critical discussion of New Journalism:

> The writer’s immersion of himself in his subject is more apparent in lengthier accounts, and that is why much New Journalism, especially when at book length, manifests this characteristic more clearly than most in-depth reporting. (Murphy 1974: 35)

As I have suggested, the genre “the magazine profile” also seems to allow the journalist greater freedom to express his views and use literary devices compared to other genres in popular science magazines or more pronounced news media such as the daily press. In the latter, I have suggested how literary journalism is commonly reduced to a semi-narrative form. The educational purpose of these semi-narratives is to improve public understanding of the scientific knowledge that scientist sources possess. This is in accordance with a traditionally dominant role conception among science journalists.

When the journalist John Horgan “restrains himself” and draws somewhat more sober and respectful scientist profiles in the magazine than in his book, this may be partly due to the frames or ideology of the magazine. After all, he is writing in a magazine that,
according to Lewenstein, has traditionally been viewed as “a monument to the vision of science as the saviour of the world” (1992:51).

Personally, I welcome all journalistic contributions that can provide nuances to a picture of science as the saviour of the world, whether in newspapers, magazines, books or television and radio. And as my discussion has suggested, journalists may also achieve this by using literary devices in their stories.

Notes
1. In discourse analysis, this way of representing discourse or speech is commonly referred to as “free indirect style” or “free indirect discourse/speech” (see, e.g., Fairclough 1995, Waugh 1995). Free indirect discourse typically combines elements of direct speech with elements of the narrator’s report and blurs the distinction between speech and thought.
2. In narrative theory and criticism, the term “omniscient narrator” commonly refers to fictional narrative in which the narrator knows more than the character (see, e.g., Genette 1980). The omniscient narrator knows “everything”, gives the reader information and may reveal the motivations, thoughts and feelings of the characters.

References


Abstract

In the article “Analyse inference – and ethos-implicature in particular” I discuss and define the notions of inference, presuppositions, premises and implicature as notions of what sort of information texts carry between the lines, i.e. beneath the surface level. Through this discussion I hope and think it may be possible to use the notions more precisely. By way of clarifying the concept I find it appropriate to distinguish between statistical, semantic, logical and pragmatic inference. I especially focus how inferred information contributes to the constitution of the author’s ethos. As an example, I analyse (and criticise) ethos-implicature in a commentary article in a Norwegian newspaper. Tools for the analysis are both from argumentation theory and stylistics.

Key Words: inference, implicature, presupposition, ethos, rhetoric, argumentation, stylistics, semantics, pragmatics

Introduction

Put simply, inference denotes that there is something that exists between the lines, something one is able to deduce. Both text and context work together when we deduce an inference. In this rhetorical analysis I focus in particular on how the credibility of what has been put down in the text is also part of the inference. What picture of himself does the writer reveal between the lines of the text? Moreover, how can we analyse this picture? Finally, I demonstrate this with a table that lays out the analysis of the text I use as an example.

I have chosen as my object of analysis a commentary article by the Norwegian editor/columnist Per Egil Hegge. This article appeared in the newspaper Aftenposten on February 13, 2004. Aftenposten is published in Oslo and is Norway’s largest subscription newspaper. The article is called “Fat Pork behind Closed Doors” and is a commentary on the Norwegian Language Council (which is a publicly appointed body charged with regulating the Norwegian language) on that particular day when it was about to implement its proposal for the Norwegian spelling of English words frequently used in the Norwegian language. Hegge is known to have a conservative outlook on language. He is particularly preoccupied with incorrect word use and faulty syntax, and feels that these areas indicate clear signs of language breakdown. In light of this, he finds immaterial the fact that philologists, working from the perspective of language politics, are
concerned with the manner in which words are spelled, as are the members of the Norwegian Language Council, where university-trained linguistics professors have distinguished themselves through the vehemence of their arguments in the debate about spelling. What is special about language politics in Norway is that the way of speaking of the average Norwegian has a higher status than does spoken language in most other countries. Consequently, this small country has two authorized written Norwegian languages and great variety within each of them.

Newspaper commentaries are traditionally written by editorial colleagues who have special insights into, and background knowledge of, the themes on which they comment. A newspaper commentary should be a competent and enlightening contribution to the social debate. The genre is discursive and argumentative.

The label “commentary” in this example article therefore signals and creates the expectation that we are about to take part in an insightful and fundamental point of view about aspects of the Norwegian Language Council’s annual general meeting. At the same time, the demand for documentation is not as strongly enforced in commentary journalism as it is in scholarly and scientific writing. Documentation in commentary articles is often found in news articles about the same theme.

I have often been struck by the fact that Hegge is somewhat cavalier when it comes to documentation in his articles. He confines himself to assertions, and these have a sarcastic sting that gives him authority as a writer. Thus, for many readers, he is considered to be a commentator worth reading. It is this relationship that I have wished to analyse for some time. Accordingly, I am interested in commentary as a genre and in Hegge’s authority as a commentary writer. Thus, I use the chosen text as an example for analysis. The question is: what kind of picture of himself does Hegge present – between the lines – that gives him this authority, when the documentation has been treated so loosely? Moreover, how can one develop a procedure to analyse such authority-building by inference? In other words, on what does the commentary writer base his attitude, and how does he try to instil confidence and present himself as credible?

In other commentary articles, and in texts written in genres other than this, the writer’s authority can certainly be constructed by other means – or the same means can be used differently. But the categories of inference function in a rather universal manner. Moreover, as I have previously used the approach of tabulating the analysis of the example text – on that occasion a news report (Roksvold 2003: 196ff) – I consider that the analysis I am demonstrating can be used to examine authority-building by inference in other texts and genres as well.

The analysed text is appended to this article. I have dealt with it thematically in sections numbered 1–17, which are used both by way of exemplification and in the analytical table. All the examples are taken from Hegge’s text.

The Types of Evidence in Rhetoric

The concept of ethos in rhetoric can be used in the analysis of authority-building in a text. Aristotle (Hastrup 1991) divided professional means of evidence into three types, which can be linked to three fundamental aspects of a communications model: the speaker, the listener and the text. The first professional type of evidence is called ethos, the second, pathos, and the third, logos. Trust and credibility – the authority of the speaker/writer – are linked to the rhetorical category ethos.

Thure Hastrup translates ethos as “character” and renders Aristotle as follows:
Conviction is created by means of the speaker’s character (ethos), when the speech is given in such a way, that it makes the speaker’s person credible. That is, we believe more and with greater willingness what decent people say, and this generally applies to all situations, but, wherever there is no certainty and room for doubt remains, credibility is entirely determined this way (Hastrup 1991: 34).

Thus ethos is especially important in places that are beyond the reach of logos – as in commentary articles with weak documentation. On the other hand, a person’s ethos is strengthened when he/she is perceived to be truthful. Following logos as far as possible strengthens a person’s ethos. This is consistent with the quality maxim of the American communications researcher H. Paul Grice regarding communicative cooperation: “Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence” (Grice 1975: 46).

There is a more durable evidentiary power in logos and ethos than in pathos. Logos pertains until the evidence is refuted logically. Ethos pertains as long as the writer is not exposed as dishonest or untrustworthy and thereby loses trust. Pathos arguments are supported by evidence that awakens feelings such as indignation, compassion, sorrow, joy, hate, contempt, envy, desire, disappointment, anger, rapture and so forth. Whereas pathos is perhaps the strongest momentary evidentiary basis, it is also the one that is easiest to refute. It appeals to the malicious pleasure of, in particular, uneducated journalists who maintain – as in Section 13 of the example article – that newly educated journalists “have only this one question as mental baggage, ‘What’s the big deal?’”. This assertion can be regarded as humorous, but it does not hold as a critical reflection.

Quintillian replaces pathos with “affectus” (Lindhardt 1987: 88), and pathos arguments do arouse affect – by means of exaggeration, bold assertions and tropes that create associations and emotions. Simplifications are frequently raised. Issues are not presented in all their complexity. One chooses and focuses on those aspects that can create the affects one desires. In pathos rhetoric, facts are either presented piecemeal, in a distorted fashion, or both. Anders Sigrell (2001: 155-158) distinguishes between proving and persuading. Proving is the end-product of a cognitive process. The results go deeper and are more comprehensive than what happens with persuasion. Logos arguments aim to convince; pathos arguments are suited to persuasion.

The Means of Inference of Enthymemes
According to Jørgen Fafner (1982: 63), Aristotle regarded speech particularly as logos and devised the system of circumstantiation, which we recognize from logic as syllogisms where durable arguments can be formed as valid relations between two true premises and a conclusion.

At the same time, we do not speak in syllogisms. That would break with Grice’s quantity maxim: “Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of exchange). Do not make your contribution more informative than is required” (Grice 1975: 45). When we speak (and write), we imply the parts of argumentation that we ourselves take as given and that we also assume our discussion partner takes as given. In this situation, that which is implied is redundant. The result would be ineffective communication if, on every occasion, we had to establish all the factors that our reasoning was built upon. Thus, we speak in what Aristotle called enthymemes, which are explained as incomplete syllogisms. The major premise, the minor premise or the conclusion may be omitted.
Deduction

The method of inference, in which we conclude on the basis of a major premise (‘propositio major’) and a minor premise (‘propositio minor’), is called deduction. We conclude something about a specific instance in the minor premise against the background of a common proposition in the major premise of which the specific instance is an example. This is the only method of inference that is beyond discussion:

- Major premise: *All those who have a good grasp of Southern Europe are aware that the Norwegian Language Council’s members are appointed on the basis of ideas that Benito Mussolini used to found the corporative state.
- Minor premise: Sylfest Lomheim has a good grasp of Southern Europe.
- Conclusion: Sylfest Lomheim knows that the Norwegian Language Council’s members are appointed on the basis of ideas that Benito Mussolini used to found the corporative state.

(See Section 14, the example article)

Given that the major premise and the minor premise are true, the conclusion is the only one possible. In Section 14 of the example article, the major premise must be implied (marked here with “*”). The truthfulness does not hold up in the face of critical contemplation if this major premise is made explicit. This may be the reason why it is not made explicit. In the text, the minor premise is made probable by the parenthetic clause “(the man is a Francophile)”. This information substantiates the commentary writer’s ethos: the commentary writer is well-informed.

Induction

The method of inference changes if the relationship between the major premise, the minor premise and the conclusion is changed. In such cases, we get an inference method that is less secure and therefore debatable. Charles S. Peirce called the common proposition the “rule” (Svennevig 2001a: 4). He called the specific instance the “case”, and the conclusion in the deductive syllogism he called the “result” (ibid.). The method of inference called induction is to conclude a common proposition on the background of examples, individual cases or individual observations. Thus, with induction, the case is used as the major premise, the result as the minor premise and the rule as the conclusion:

- Case: Sylfest Lomheim has a good grasp of Southern Europe.
- Result: Sylfest Lomheim knows that the Norwegian Language Council’s members are appointed on the basis of ideas that Benito Mussolini used to found the corporative state.
- Rule: *All those who have a good grasp of South Europe know that the Norwegian Language Council’s members are appointed on the basis of ideas that Benito Mussolini used to found the corporative state.

Induction is a debatable method of inference. Even if Sylfest Lomheim himself has a good grasp of Southern Europe and knows that the Norwegian Language Council’s members are appointed on the basis of ideas that Benito Mussolini used to found the corporative state, it is not therefore given that all who have a good grasp of Southern Europe know that the Norwegian Language Council’s members are appointed on the
basis of ideas that Benito Mussolini used to found the corporative state. Another issue is whether Lomheim knows that the Norwegian Language Council’s members are appointed on the basis of the ideas that Benito Mussolini used to found the corporative state. Perhaps this is not something one can know? Perhaps it is not true?

An example of the inductive method of inference in the example article is found in Section 7–8:

- Case: Helge Sandøy is a linguistic researcher who quantifies.
- Result: *Helge Sandøy is uninterested in and not knowledgeable about good Norwegian.
- Rule: *All research linguists who quantify are uninterested in and not knowledgeable about good Norwegian.

Here both the “result” and the “rule” are implied (marked with “*”), perhaps because the truthfulness does not stand up to critical consideration. Generalizations, which are a type of fallacy or wrongful thinking (Pirie 1987), are normally the result of inductive conclusions.

Both deduction and induction are known from Aristotle’s logic. In his book *The Problem of Inference* (1938), W. H. V. Reade refers to the concept “inference” as precisely the deductive and inductive methods of reaching a conclusion. When such inference involves logical methods of reaching a conclusion, we are dealing with what I will call logical inference. This refers to logical relations between sentences – accordingly in the text.

When one looks up inference in the BIBSYS database, one finds that most of the titles that come up have to do with statistical inference. Here the question is what one is able to conclude on the basis of numbers. Assessments of validity and representativity, tests for reliability and significance, as well as other calculations of probability express how securely one can make conclusions based on numerical data related to empirical material. If we are not talking about a total body of material, then such evaluations and expressions of measurement are brought to bear on partial materials, obtained by way of sampling or used as examples. When we arrive at generalized conclusions from examples, the method of inference is inductive. Statistical inference is an inductive method of arriving at a conclusion.

In Section 8 of the example article the commentary writer ridicules statistical inference. He asks how Sandøy has arrived at the number four – based on which data, which examples were chosen, and how? But the commentary writer’s objections are not made concrete. Perhaps Sandøy has good grounds to maintain that the tempo of Norwegianization ought to be quadrupled? Maybe he has performed controlled calculations that make this number probable? This is something we do not get to know. The commentary writer simply takes for granted that the number has been plucked out of thin air, and that such calculations are impossible. Consequently, he does not substantiate his critique of Sandøy, but gambles on the belief that the public has the same attitude as he has, that language issues cannot be expressed numerically. For readers who at the outset share this perception, ridicule is sufficient argument. They confirm their mutual understanding as a pragmatic presupposition. I think such readers consider this point of view as truth and not as ideology, and they know that people of the same persuasion also consider it as such. Pragmatic presuppositions constitute knowledge of the world (in the philosophical sense) that is supposed to be common and therefore implied. For these
readers, the commentary writer maintains his ethos by playing on prejudices. For readers who do not share the prejudice, he loses his ethos here precisely by refraining from substantiating his argument. Ridicule is a pathos argument. Ridicule also deprives others of their ethos. Sandøy has little in the way of ethos in the minds of readers who accept the commentary writer’s prejudices.

**Abduction**

In addition to induction and deduction, Peirce introduced a third logical method of inference that he called “abduction” (Svennevig 2001a: 4). Here, specific instances are concluded on the basis of “rule” and “result”:

- **Rule:** *All those who have a good grasp of Southern Europe know that the Norwegian Language Council’s members are appointed on the basis of ideas that Benito Mussolini used to found the corporative state.*

- **Result:** Sylfest Lomheim knows that the Norwegian Language Council’s members are appointed on the basis of ideas that Benito Mussolini used to found the corporative state.

- **Case:** Sylfest Lomheim has a good grasp of Southern Europe.

This method of coming to a conclusion is also dubious: even if Sylfest Lomheim knows that the Norwegian Language Council’s members are appointed on the basis of ideas that Benito Mussolini used to found the corporative state, this does not prove that he has a good grasp of Southern Europe. In a best-case scenario, this is only a hypothesis that can be investigated (op. cit.: 10, 17).

One example of abductive inference in the example article is found in the lead-in (Section 2) as well as in Section 11 and 12:

- **Rule:** *All professional circles that shut themselves away, because the real world becomes too hard and too difficult, and because they toil away with spelling, are odd, social anthropological isolates.*

- **Result:** Norwegian philological circles constitute an odd social anthropological isolate.

- **Case:** Norwegian philological circles shut themselves away, because the real world becomes too hard and too difficult, and because they toil away with spelling.

Here the “rule” is implied. The reason for this is not exactly that the claim is controversial, because it is not. Rather, the question is whether such professional circles are to be found. And if they are not to be found, the argument is rather uninteresting.

Both induction and abduction can yield correct conclusions, but it is not certain that these methods of inference actually make them correct.

In argumentation that rests upon logos, both the major and the minor premises must be true or at least probable, and the conclusion must be valid. Argumentation that rests on ethos and pathos assumes only that the premises and the conclusion function persuasively for the public (Sandvik 1995: 251). Margareth Sandvik (op. cit.) relates deductive and inductive syllogisms to the logos category, while she relates enthymemes, which she calls rhetorical deductive syllogisms, to ethos. She links rhetorical inductive syllogisms, which she calls examples, with pathos. This works both rationally and demon-
stratistically, as examples can certainly be effective for arousing emotions. Thus, she relates syllogisms, enthymemes and examples, respectively, to logos, ethos and pathos. Abductive syllogisms are not part of Sandvik’s overview.

**Implied Premises**

Therefore, when one is faced with exposing dubious argumentation, it can be particularly rewarding to investigate enthymemes and examples, where claims are based on implied premises and have to be reconstructed when one is evaluating the validity of the argumentation.

Sigrell refers to some implied premise-making as implicating argument (Sigrell 2001: 10). By this term he means enthymemes used where it is not evident that the speaker and the listener are in agreement that what is omitted is redundant in the sense that the content is self-evident and non-controversial: A persuasive effect can come about by means of communicating implied premises about which there is no prevailing agreement, pretending they are so self-evident that there is no need to express them in words (ibid.). In other words, implicating argument is that which runs the risk of challenge if the premise is not implied (op. cit.: 12). By means of such implied premises – precisely of the kind I have shown as examples from the article “Fat Pork behind Closed Doors” – a logical analysis is capable of diminishing the speaker’s ethos.

The basis for redundant implied premises usually lies in the process of verifying, realized by the speech act category called constatives (Searle 1969; Vagle et al. 1993:89); what Sigrell calls implicating implied premises are generally based on the speech act category of evaluations (Fabricius & Roksvold 2004: 101ff).

I choose to call this latter type of implied premise “non-redundant” instead of implicating, as both redundant and non-redundant implied premises must indeed be viewed as “implicating”.

In the example article (Sections 4 and 9), the major premise in the valid *modus ponens* argument (Sandvik 1995: 285) that follows, is a non-redundant implied premise:

- Major premise: *If a language council Norwegianizes the spelling of borrowed words, it ought to be closed down*
- Minor premise: The Norwegian Language Council Norwegianizes the spelling of borrowed words
- Conclusion: The Norwegian Language Council ought to be closed down

It is dubious whether the major premise would be able to arrive at a common conclusion, therefore this is not redundant. Those who do not wish to be easily taken in by the argumentation of others must be aware of non-redundant implied premises.

Redundant implied premises behave differently. In the example article, the major premise in the following reconstructed syllogism is a redundant implied premise:

- Major premise: *All soup councils should be closed down*
- Minor premise: The Norwegian Language Council is a soup council
- Conclusion: The Norwegian Language Council should be closed down

Nobody can be considered in disagreement with the statement that all soup councils should be closed down. The challenge in this argument is to achieve agreement upon the
minor premise. To make the minor premise probable is on the surface the main task set by the example article. In the article, the minor premise is supported by contentions that the Norwegian Language Council proposes to Norwegianize the spelling of some borrowed words. But in the article we do not get to know what is wrong with this proposal. That it is wrong, and how it is wrong are non-redundant implied premises. Roland Barthes calls situations in which ideology has not been problematized naturalized (Barthes 1969: 165, 173). Naturalization and non-ideologization can thus be understood as non-redundant implied premises.

**Sub-categories of Inference**

In addition to statistical and logical inference, we have what I will call semantic and pragmatic inference. The reason that it can be useful to divide inference into these four sub-categories is that the terminology regarding messages between the lines can thereby be made more clearly. For example, what is the difference between presuppositions and implied premises?

Presuppositions are generally explained as background information for what is expressed (Svennevig 2001b: 51). According to Sigrell (2001: 8), presuppositions comprise common background knowledge that is not included in the argumentation. Sigrell (ibid.) distinguishes between presuppositions and implied premises, the latter being assumptions that are involved in the argumentation – and thus, premises. On the other hand, Jan Svennevig argues that presuppositions also include non-redundant implied premises when he maintains that presuppositions sometimes can hide premises that are not equally obvious or acceptable to the parties in the communication (Svennevig 2001b: 52).

Up to this point, I have described implied premises as logical inference. Presuppositions are semantic or pragmatic inference (Saaed 1987: 101). Whenever presupposition is semantic inference, an implicated sentence will be linguistically encased in another sentence. In the sentence “The Norwegian Language Council (will) have pounded several more handfuls of nails into its own coffin” (example article, Section 5), the contention that “*The Norwegian Language Council has earlier pounded handfuls of nails into its own coffin*” is implied by the insertion of the words “several more”. I consider calling this a semantic presupposition. We endorse the presupposition on a semantic, rather than a logical, basis. Thus, I feel that Svennevig is mixing levels in the above citation. Premises and presuppositions belong to different types of inference.

Viewed as a presupposition, a pragmatic inference, which I consider calling pragmatic presupposition, is found, for instance, in theme/rheme sequences. The theme denotes what we say something about; the rheme denotes what we say about the theme. The theme is the content element that is mentioned first in a sentence. As a rule, the theme consists of known information while the rheme information is new (Frimann 2004: 204ff). In the example article, Section 4, what is presupposed is the possibility of finding a Norwegian Language Council, which has an annual meeting, and has appointed members who are dealing with something, and that has a professional committee that has made a proposal. This also presupposes what the Norwegian Language Council is, and what its committee is. This is background knowledge that is deduced pragmatically and semantically. The context in a broad sense determines whether the sentence “Today, for the second and final day of the annual general meeting of the Norwegian Language Council, delegates will be dealing with their committee’s proposal con-
cerning the Norwegian spelling of borrowed words, many of them from English” is the answer to the question “What is going to happen?”, “When will it happen?” or “Who is going to do it?” The way the sentence stands at the moment, time is focused as the theme. The rheme tells about what is going to happen. By using the abstruse word order – “The delegates of the Norwegian Language Council will be dealing with their professional committee’s proposal on Norwegian spelling of borrowed words, most of them from English, today, the second and final day of their annual general meeting” – the rheme would have explained when this would happen. The equally abstruse word order – “Their professional committee’s proposal for the spelling of borrowed words, most of them from English, will today, on the second and final day of the annual general meeting of the Norwegian Language Council, be dealt with by the appointed members” – would yield a rheme telling who was going to do this.

I have now established the implied premises and presuppositions as subcategories of inference. A third category is implicature.

Svennevig (1995: 108) describes implicature as an implicit message that we deduce. Sigrell writes: Implicature is an implied premise that acts in such a way that it almost suggests a logical character. It is what follows from an utterance, a relation between two statements where one cannot confirm the first and at the same time deny the truthfulness in the second without being guilty of self-contradiction (Sigrell 2001: 284). While presuppositions are implicit facts, implicature is implied correlation. Implicatures communicate what something implies.

Section 13 of the example article – “The teachers who count words and crunch numbers, but do not facilitate an understanding of levels of style, or emphasize that it is important to write well, become just as sour every time they come to hear that is they do and not do” – contains the implicature that the teachers do not achieve their goals. This is what I will call semantic inference – or semantic implicature. What we deduce from the implicature is linguistically constituted in the initial sentence. Anyone who is going to teach good language must communicate an understanding of style or maintain that it is important to write well, if this teacher is going to achieve his or her goal. (In parenthesis it is natural to mention here that redundancy is also a form of semantic inference. This is the reason that the elliptical formulation “come to hear that is they do and not do” can be seen to give meaning.)

For the commentary writer, it is of central importance to get across the implicature that the teachers do not achieve their goal, but in a manner such that it is the reader who makes this deduction. The discursive point in the commentary writer’s ethos is whether the contentions derived from the implicature are an adequate description of reality.

In addition, implicatures can constitute pragmatic inference. Here, the implicature is not constituted linguistically in the actual initial sentence, but arises from the context. We have already cited one example of this: simply by mentioning that Sylfest Lomheim is a Francophile the commentary writer demonstrates that he is well-informed. I would call this an example of implicature that emerges by means of pragmatic inference. We could very well use the expression pragmatic implicature. In fact, Stephen Levinson (2000: 168, 243) does distinguish between semantic and pragmatic implicature.

The limits of the genre and genre expectations are essential contextual elements that make implicatures about the ethos of the commentary writer particularly important in commentary articles. Such pragmatic implicatures are what I will call ethos-implicatures.
Thus, I wish to dissect the concept of inference as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inference</th>
<th>Statistical</th>
<th>Semantic</th>
<th>Logical</th>
<th>Pragmatic</th>
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<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Sentence</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of deriving a Conclusion</td>
<td>Induction</td>
<td>Testing</td>
<td>Deduction</td>
<td>Context</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Computing</td>
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<td>Abduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Premise</td>
<td>Presupposition</td>
<td>Implicature</td>
<td>Redundant premises and conclusions;</td>
<td>Presupposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Redundancy</td>
<td>Non-redundant premises and conclusions</td>
<td>Implicature</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Connotation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
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</table>

Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson (1995: 236) distinguish between strong and weak implicatures. This distinction corresponds to the division I have made between semantic and pragmatic implicatures, and it corresponds to Grice’s distinction between conventional and conversational implicatures (Grice 1975: 45). Sperber and Wilson maintain that the distinction is not absolute, but rather that they are speaking about a continuum. Implicatures can be anchored in both text and context at the same time – some most strongly in the text, and others most strongly in the context. Pragmaticians and semioticians who occupy themselves only with the strongest implicatures have a deficient understanding of verbal communication (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 201ff).

As a consequence of this view, Sperber and Wilson analyse both tropes and irony as implicature – indeed, the weaker the implicature, the richer the possibilities. In this manner, they depart from the normal way rhetoric handles tropes and irony as special speech categories. The focus is on communication in which the method of expression is both chosen and understood in light of the fact that, right from the beginning, communication is perceived to be relevant by both the sender and the receiver. This principle is called relevance theory and takes its point of departure from Grice’s relevance maxim: “Be relevant” (Grice 1975: 46ff). In order to evaluate whether ethos becomes stronger or weaker, one must therefore evaluate how relevant the thing being communicated is.

Sperber and Wilson’s approach should open the way, for example, to the fact that literary interpretation must only be understood as the analysis of more or less weak implicatures. However, the receiver must be competent: indeed, the greater the interpretation potential of the implicatures, the greater the responsibility the receiver assumes in order to interpret them, and the more poetic and creative the metaphor. A good creative metaphor with weak implicature opens up many possibilities of context. With the best metaphors the interpreter also transcends the context. Although interpreting metaphors as weak implicatures is initiated by the sender, they are the responsibility of the receiver. Interpretation arises from text and context, and presupposes competence and complicit interaction: “a single expression which has itself been loosely used will determine a very wide range of acceptable weak implicatures” (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 236ff). This point is worth bearing in mind now as we examine ethos-implicatures in the example article.
Establishing Ethos through Inference

The example article contains little in the way of logos argumentation. The following assertions in the example article belong to the category of speech acts called constatives (Searle 1969; Vagle et al. 1993:89):

It so happens that professional circles shut themselves away (Section 2).

Today, for the second and final day of the annual general meeting of the Norwegian Language Council, delegates will be dealing with their professional committee’s proposal concerning the Norwegian spelling of borrowed words, most of them from English. This time it is words with ‘c’, and among the recommendations are ‘køpp’ equated with ‘cup’ as in ‘cupfinal’, ‘beiken’ side by side with ‘bacon’, and ‘trøkk’ for ‘truck’ (Section 4).

The chairman of the aforementioned body, Professor Helge Sandøy at the University of Bergen, told Aftenposten yesterday that he has calculated that the Norwegianization, that is the introduction of Norwegian spelling for foreign words, ought to be functioning at a level four times higher than its present level […] This is an arithmetic problem we can look forward to seeing up on the blackboard […] In her role as Cultural Minister, Åse Kleveland jammed on the brakes when she heard the Norwegian Language Council’s proposal to write ‘pøbb’ for a place where you can get yourself a glass of beer, and the proposal was put on ice […] We still go on writing ‘pub’ (Section 8).

The Ministry has thought of closing down the Norwegian Language Council, in any case in its present form. We who sit there have had our mandate period extended until further notice (Section 9).

It has hired a director for the Norwegian Language Council, Sylfest Lomheim […] Lomheim revealed a glimpse of his thinking yesterday in Dagsnytt 18 [Daily News 18]: ‘Because we write chocolate as sjokolade we should write bacon as beiken’ (Section 14).

Per Egil Hegge has been appointed to the Norwegian Language Council as representative for the Norwegian Association of Editors and the Norwegian Press Federation (Section 16).

We find the speech act directives (ibid.) in the questions “Why and how is it precisely four? Why not five? Or four and a half?” (Section 8). The rest of the text is composed of evaluations and judgements – mainly realized as speech act evaluatives (Roksvold 2005: 25). Both irony and tropes are used in the evaluations. In the example article, the commentary writer’s strategy does not consist of substantiating the evaluative judgements by means of precise reasoning. Instead, by using humorous characterizations he tries to get the readers to laugh maliciously along with him at the bullying of someone who deserves it. By amusing and entertaining the public, one can attract this public to one’s own point of view, and thereby secure ethos for oneself. I mention here in passing that Cicero in Book I of De Oratore used the word “delectare (= to amuse, entertain) when speaking about ethos, but he used “conciliare” (= to unite, to win over to oneself) in Book II of De Oratore (Slaattelid 1993: 11-12). “Conciliare” corresponds best with Aristotle’s conception of ethos. In the example article, however, ethos-construction is associated with “delectare”.

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When the commentary writer explicitly mentions himself in the example article he generally employs self-irony. In Section 5, he stresses that he has no desire for an academic career; in Sections 6 and 8, he flirts with ignorance; in Section 8, he also portrays himself as naïve, and in Sections 13 and 14, he indicates that he is not intelligent. He activates a topos of modesty. By presenting himself as modest in relation to his own qualities he puts across, at least superficially, the impression that he does not have exaggerated lofty thoughts about his own intellectual capacity. This strengthens his ethos. But in its context the statement comes across as ironic. And with this, the message is grasped that indeed the commentary writer has a great intellectual capacity, and because he himself brings up the theme, it appears important for him to get the message across. For him at least it is relevant. In this sense he appears self-centred and intellectually vain, and this does not serve to strengthen ethos. At the same time, this message is softened somewhat by means of irony. And thus he comes across as humorous. He strengthens his ethos by arousing laughter through irony. To arouse laughter is to appeal to people’s feelings – consequently pathos.

Hyperbole – exaggeration – is a diagnostic of irony. In Section 14, the irony has been deposited in the hyperbole “mentally crippled”. In Section 15, the hyperbole “linguistic bacon soup” is not ironic. It is, however, humorous because it concentrates both the Language Council as a soup council and the activity of cooking up soup, not made from nothing, but rather from “beiken”, which is the proposed spelling of “bacon”. Thus, it is implied both that the Language Council is hopeless and that the commentary writer is creative and humorous. This can strengthen ethos. The debatable point is how the reader perceives the description in terms of relevance of communication, as the article does not present any grounds for what is so hopeless about the Language Council’s proposed spelling of “beiken”. With such a demonstration, this characterization would have played a stronger role in ethos-building.

Tropes appeal to pathos through the power of connotations: implications. In Section 5 of the example article, we have “pounded”, which in the first instance connotes a powerful noise, and next to that, a sense of dogged persistence. Toiling away persistently without understanding that one is hastening one’s own ruin implies stupidity. But this implicature in itself implies that he who exposes such stupidity is wise. Here this implies the commentary writer himself, who thus implicitly supports his ethos – provided that his description of the Language Council’s work is perceived as relevant. For readers who do not find the description relevant this is a fallacy of the loaded expression type (Pirie 1987: 112) – and thereby ethos-weakening. Fallacies break with Grice’s quality maxim about confining oneself to the truth and not maintaining anything one does not have evidence for (Grice 1975: 46).

In Section 7, we have the numbers trick (Fabricius & Roksvold 2004: 95) It has not been verified that as many as four million Norwegians are laughing at the Norwegian philologists, but if the commentary writer’s vision is shared by so many, then the pointing out of this great fellowship certainly supports his ethos.

The prestige trick (Andersson & Furberg 1970) is used in the discursive tail (Section 16) and in Section 6 (“I have been a member for four years”). Moreover the photograph of the commentary writer connotes authority.

The commentary writer is ironic over the fallacy of false precision (Pirie 1987: 82) in Section 8. This weakens Sandøy’s ethos in the article and strengthens his own.

The fallacy argumentum ad antiquitatem – the old is best – appears between the lines as long as reasonable argumentation, that the spelling of borrowed words ought not to
be Norwegianized, has not been advanced in an objective manner. It then seems the standpoint is that the spelling should not be changed, because it would then be permanent. This is a pathos argument.

In Section 13, “the teachers” is a generalizing argument (Fabricius & Roksvold 2004: 96). Here it is even unclear whether the description applies to all teachers of journalism or all the country’s teachers of Norwegian, or both the sum total of journalism and Norwegian teachers. On the other hand, it seems clear that the word “journalists” should read “*all journalists” and not “*some journalists”. “Young people” can also be read as “*all young people” instead of “*some young people”.

When the commentary writer does not make explicit what he refers to, Grice’s clarity maxim “Be perspicuous” (Grice 1975: 46) is violated.

All the bad-mouthing and running down of the Language Council, Sandøy, Norwegian philology’s professional circles and the teachers is an argumentum ad hominem (Pirie 1987: 94) – it is below the belt, or if you will, a kick in the balls —so long as the critique is not substantiated by factually-based argumentation, but rather is left as a loaded, biased and one-sided account (op. cit.: 112, 126). In Sections 8 and 10, we find comparatively clear examples of argumentum ad hominem: “This is an arithmetic problem we can look forward to seeing chalked up on the blackboard, and which will certainly occur with the cheerful good spirits that always mark the Norwegian Language Council’s discourses – at Lysebu this Friday” (Section 8) and “Let us hope that this prolongation is not too long – if I may express my feelings in a manner to which the Norwegian Language Council would have no objections” (Section 10).

We find irrelevant humour (op. cit.: 105) in Section 5 (“and such it is since I am not going to make a career in Norwegian philological circles”), in Section 8 (“Why not five? Or four and a half? […] the expression bannan was later politely approved as already ripe […] something in the vicinity of the normal alcohol content percentage for beer”) and in Section 14 (“Mussolini who guzzled kianti, for that is how chianti is to be spelled from today”).

When in Section 9 the commentary writer writes that the Ministry “has thought of closing down the Norwegian Language Council” ethos is strengthened with the addition “in any case in its present form”. Simply on the understanding that the Language Council is to be changed, the commentary writer has managed to keep his point of view intact. This trick is called enclosing or fencing in (op. cit.: 91).

The example article concludes (Section 15) with a quote from Chlorine Ballz: “This is total nonsense. All of it. It’s just something we invented.” For those who recall the comedy sketch it was taken from, the citation is humorous because the sketch itself was funny. As the conclusion to the example article, it is humorous because we draw the connection between the Soup Council and the Language Council and understand that the characterization of the former should be applied to the latter. But whatever it is that makes the Language Council’s proposal idiotic is not elucidated. The analogy is thus not established. The analogy is taken for granted as an argumentum ad populum (op. cit.: 133) – the voice of the people (vox populi). But it is possible that we have an analogically wrong conclusion (op. cit.: 19)
Ethos-Implicatures in the Example Article

In the foregoing, I have commented on only a few examples that come across as more or less problematic instances of ethos-building in the example article. In what follows below, I have completed the analysis section by section. In the second column of the following table, entitled “What We See”, the contents of various passages are reproduced. In the third column “What It Says”, I comment on how the content can be understood. The fourth column is devoted to ethos-implicatures. In the final column, I problematize the basis for ethos-establishing in the various passages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>What We See</th>
<th>What It Says</th>
<th>Ethos-Implicature</th>
<th>Possible Problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Deliberate contamination reveals poor language use. In its real sense, “bacon” is fat pork; “beiken” is fat pork in a transferred sense</td>
<td>Connotations: meaningless-ness</td>
<td>The commentary writer is humorous and sovereign</td>
<td>How is one meant to understand the title?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The point of entry stresses that Norwegian philologists are far distant from reality and thereby incompetent</td>
<td>Such is the correlation</td>
<td>The commentary writer is clear, analytical, well-informed and competent</td>
<td>Is the correlation actually such?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Editor Hegge – a strict and well-groomed commentator</td>
<td>The commentary writer is precise and serious</td>
<td>Believe the commentary writer!</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Factual information on the Language Council meeting</td>
<td>Such is the proposal. Prevailing impartiality</td>
<td>Believe the commentary writer</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Stupid Language Council proposal. Language Council does not understand it is digging its own grave</td>
<td>Commentary writer is humorous and plays on false modesty</td>
<td>The commentary writer understands more than the Language Council</td>
<td>Why is the proposal so hopeless? How can the commentary writer take it for granted that the Language Council understands little?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>There is something wrong with the Language Council. The Language Council believes it is important to be able to write “beiken”</td>
<td>Commentary writer uses self-irony. What the Language Council believes is important is unimportant</td>
<td>The commentary writer knows because he is a member</td>
<td>Does the commentary writer’s description hold true? Does this apply only to the commentary writer who knows because he is a member?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The Language Council = “the Norwegian”</td>
<td>The language Council is laughable</td>
<td>The commentary writer is the only member of the</td>
<td>Are the Norwegian philologists like this?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>What We See</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>philologists’ lofty, self-imposed solitary confinement”. 4 million are laughing at the Language Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandøy thinks the tempo of Norwegianization ought to be four times higher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Language Council should be closed down</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Language Council would have no objection to a “lengthy prolongation”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculties of Norwegian are odd social anthropological isolates</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Spelling is immaterial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because Norwegian faculties are simply toiling away, journalist students do not get proper instruction in Norwegian. The teachers are not disseminating an</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethos-Establishing (cont.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What It Says</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The commentary writer is humorous. Sandøy is laughable and non-serious. An intoxicated Language Council is out of its mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Language Council is not functioning because it advances non-serious proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Language Council approves of language misuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social anthropology is negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no dispute about language. Language planning is unnecessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalist education is disqualified. The teachers are incompetent</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethos-Implicature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Council who is not laughable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The far-sighted commentary writer is sharper than Professor Sandøy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The only one who bears arms in defence of good language use is the commentary writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What the commentary writer represents is positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The commentary writer knows what care of language should look like. Language variants other than those of the commentary writer should be ignored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The commentary writer does not have journalist education and is therefore qualified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why has Sandøy become professor and not the commentary writer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the ministry want to close down the Language Council on the basis of Sandøy’s arithmetic?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it true that the Language Council has nothing against poor use of language? Is a “short prolongation” inconceivable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there such things as “faculties of Norwegian”? How can something isolated have influence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the commentary writer’s concept of language adequate?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| How can the commentary writer know what he writes concerning journalist education and teachers? Which teachers? What is the meaning of “become equally
### Ethos-Establishing (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>What We See</th>
<th>What It Says</th>
<th>Ethos-Implicature</th>
<th>Possible Problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Newly appointed Francophile Language Council Director Lomheim will lead a corporative institution, and maintains that the spelling of “sjokolade” is relevant to the spelling “beiken”</td>
<td>Lomheim (all the same) will not achieve his goal</td>
<td>The commentary writer knows better than Lomheim</td>
<td>What makes the Language Council corporative when it is not a fascist institution? What is hopeless about Lomheim’s example? Does the Language Council propose “ought”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The Norwegian Language Council is to be dismantled 33 years after WesenSteen’s soup council comedy sketch</td>
<td>The Norwegian Language Council = The Norwegian Soup Council</td>
<td>By contrast, the commentary writer does not tolerate nonsense</td>
<td>Is it probable that the Norwegian Language Council = the Norwegian Soup Council? Is the analogy defensible? The commentary writer does not write “sketch”, but “sketsj” (in Norwegian)!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The commentary writer represents the Norwegian Association of Editors and the Norwegian Press Federation</td>
<td>The representation from the editorial and press organizations is corporativistic – but in the present context this is not relevant</td>
<td>The commentary writer is a unique representative of the press who (therefore) here stands for good sense</td>
<td>Does the commentary writer represent himself or the press?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Cartoon of Heide Steen Jr. madly flailing around in the Norwegian Language Council’s soupy stew</td>
<td>The Norwegian Language Council is non-serious and is preoccupied with nonsense</td>
<td>The commentary writer is serious. The commentary writer knows language</td>
<td>Is the analogy probable?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the most part, the columns “What We See” and “What It Says” exemplify semantic inference; the columns “Ethos-implicature” and “Possible Problem” in the main exemplify pragmatic inference. Logical inference in the column “What We See” is problematized in the column “Possible problem”.
The analysis of logical inference shows that the example article’s method of drawing conclusions is for the most part inductive and that the arguments do not stand up to critical consideration. The analysis of semantic and pragmatic inference shows that the commentary writer chooses pathos arguments in preference to logos arguments. He thus strengthens his ethos only among those who, from the outset, share his point of view. The analysis of ethos-implicature shows that perhaps, at its deepest level, the example article is above all about the commentary writer himself.

The example article breaks with the expectations of the genre that we will be given an insightful, reasoned view of the position taken. The fact that it breaks with the expectations of the genre does not imply that the genre definition is wrong, as my present angle of approach – like that of the commentary writer – has also been inductive. Rightly enough, I have laid stress on reasoning from logos, but I have analysed only one example article. It may be that the rest of the commentary writer’s articles resemble this one, but this is not certain. Still less certain is the contention that articles by other commentary writers break the genre expectations the same way this one does. And that, indeed, may be a point.

References
Svennevig, Jan (2001b) Språklig samhandling. Oslo: Cappelen.
Appendix

Aftenposten
Kommentar
(Commentary from the Oslo newspaper Aftenposten)

1

Fat Pork behind Closed Doors

2

It so happens that professional circles shut themselves away because the real world becomes too hard and too difficult. One example of this is the field of Norwegian philology.

3

Per Egil Hegge
COMMENTARY
Editor, Aftenposten

4

Today, for the second and final day of the annual general meeting of the Norwegian Language Council, delegates will be dealing with their professional committee’s proposal concerning the Norwegian spelling of borrowed words, most of them from English. This time it is words with ‘c’, and among the recommendations are ‘køpp’ equated with ‘cup’ as in ‘cupfinal’, ‘beiken’ side by side with ‘bacon’, and ‘trøkk’ [which has connotations of a punch or a blow – TR comm.] for ‘truck’.

5

If a personal comment were allowed, and it is since I am not going to make a career in Norwegian philological circles – this is nothing more than the preparation of fat pork behind closed doors, fat pork with its foot on the gas, or if you like, just trøkkin’ along. But this is actually being approved – and in the course of the day, Friday the 13th of February – the Norwegian Language Council will have pounded several more handfuls of nails into its own coffin, oblivious to what it is doing.

6

To tell you what is wrong with the Language Council – and I have been a member for four years, so for the first time in 44 years I know what I am writing about – is the fact that its trend-setting members believe that this is what is important, while it does not
matter if one writes a nuanced or a flat Norwegian, well or badly, elegantly or clumsily. In any case, these things are not important enough to engage the Council’s attention.

7

What has not trickled through the insulation to the Norwegian Language Council’s lofty, self-imposed solitary confinement is the fact that this is the way it is making itself a laughing stock for about four million people who are interested in the Norwegian language and in good Norwegian. But this does not affect them in the least. For what is much more important than superficial laughter is their ability to quantify, and accordingly, count up, the inner need:

8

The chairman of the aforementioned body, Professor Helge Sandøy at the University of Bergen told Aftenposten yesterday that he has calculated that this Norwegianization, that is the introduction of Norwegian spelling for foreign words, ought to be functioning at a level four times higher than its present level. Why and how is it precisely four? Why not five, or four and a half?

Pøbb and Ban[n]an[a]

This is an arithmetic problem we can look forward to seeing chalked up on the blackboard, and which will certainly occur with the cheerful good spirits that always mark the Norwegian Language Council’s discourses – at Lysebu this Friday. In her role as Cultural Minister, Åse Kleveland jammed on the brakes when she heard the Norwegian Language Council’s proposal to write ‘pøbb’[with the possible connotation of ‘pøbel’ {rabble} – TR comm.] for a place where you can get yourself a glass of beer, and the proposal was put on ice. (But the term ‘bannan’, instead of the standard ‘banan’ for ‘banana’ was politely approved as already ripe.)

We still go on writing ‘pub’. If we had written ‘pøbb’ the tempo of Norwegianization would presumably have been only 3.85 times too low. Or 3.92 perhaps. What do I know? In any case, it would be something in the vicinity of the normal alcohol content percentage for beer.

9

Shutting Down

Naturally the question that comes to the fore is this: what does the Ministry intend to do about this? Here we find encouraging messages from the field. The Ministry has thought of closing down the Norwegian Language Council, in any case in its present form. We who sit there have had our mandate period extended until further notice.

10

Let us hope that this prolongation is not too lengthy – if I may express my feelings in a manner to which the Norwegian Language Council would have no objections.

11

Because the thinking concerning what is important and not important in Norwegian and in Norwegian teaching takes on the colours of the ideas prevailing in this odd, social anthropological isolate located in faculties of Norwegian around the country.
One toils away at spelling, while what makes for good language is choosing the right and appropriate words and combining them well.

And the mentality of toiling away seeps through. Journalists get no decent teaching in Norwegian, at least not during their formal education. The teachers who count words and crunch figures, but do not facilitate an understanding of levels of style, or emphasize that it is important to write well, become equally sour every time they hear that is they do and not do. But they do not do anything about it. And young people, who are smarter than we were, come to the editors, but they have only this one question as mental baggage, ‘What’s the big deal?’

Corporativized
The Ministry has taken an important step. It has hired a director for the Norwegian Language Council, Sylfest Lomheim, and listeners to the National Radio Commission’s programme Språkteigen [The Language Ground] know that he is concerned with the issues raised here. He is also so familiar with Southern Europe (the man is a Francophile) that he knows the Norwegian Language Council’s appointments to membership are governed by ideas that Benito Mussolini – who guzzled kianti, for that is how chianti is to be spelled from today – used for founding the corporative state. But Lomheim revealed a glimpse of his thinking yesterday in Dagsnytt 18 [Daily News 18]: ‘Because we write chocolate as sjokolade we should write bacon as beiken.’ One could become a vegetarian for less.

Today of course there is no advice from any actual fascist institution. But the tolerance towards those of us who are so mentally crippled that we do not see any further than the view that the tempo of Norwegianization should be four times higher, is not great.

This accordingly goes towards leadership liquidation, camouflaged as restructuring, and this is happening about 33 years after Rolv Wesenlund and Harald Heide Steen Jr. broke through all the barriers with their immortal comedy sketch about the Norwegian Soup Council on its trøkk.

Today, that linguistic bacon soup is bubbling away at Lysebu. As Heide Steen Jr., alias Consultant Chlorine Ballz, so aptly puts it: “This is total nonsense. All of it. It’s just something we invented.”

Per Egil Hegge has been appointed to the Norwegian Language Council as representative for the Norwegian Association of Editors and the Norwegian Press Federation.

[The sketch where Harald Heide Steen Jr. as Chlorine Ballz (more correctly ‘Klorin’) is flailing around in a soupy stew called ‘Norwegian Language Council’.]
Interpreting and Explaining Historical Texts – Is it Possible?¹

WENCHE VAGLE

Abstract

With reference to particular problems of interpretations that radio listeners of today are likely to encounter when listening to a Norwegian radio reportage from the 1930s, this article discusses the question of whether it is possible for present-day readers/viewers/listeners or text analysts to understand texts from the past in the way that they were originally meant to be understood. It is argued that we need to gain some kind of access to the contexts that once engendered the texts if we are to arrive at historically acceptable interpretations and explanations of them. The article suggests a solution to the problem of historical text analysis, namely *historical context reconstruction*. This solution is concretised in terms of a specific methodology, which has here been used for research on the formation and first development of the genre system of Norwegian radio. This methodology involves the application of three different text-context models for discourse-analytical purposes:

1. Halliday’s structural correlation model
2. The multistratal realisation model developed within social semiotics
3. Goffman’s frame model.

**Key Words:** historical text analysis, historical context reconstruction, discourse-analytical methodologies, radio reportage, Norway

Introduction

Texts are invariably embedded in contexts. Processes of text production and reception rely, not only on “what is in the text”, but also on resources “between”, “behind” and “beyond” the text elements themselves. Contexts are historically specific. They exist in time and place at a particular “moment” in history. Once gone, they will never exist again. Given these conditions, the question that I shall raise in this article is whether it is possible for present-day readers/viewers/listeners (or text analysts, for that matter) to understand texts from the past in the way that they were originally meant to be understood. The problem is to be illustrated with reference to a particular radio reportage that was broadcast by the NRK in 1935.

Let us imagine that, one morning when turning on your radio, you are met with the following stream of words:²

---

¹ The title and author are incorrect in the image. The correct title is "Interpreting and Explaining Historical Texts – Is it Possible?" and the author is Wenche Vagle.

² The stream of words is not provided in the image.
The railway fr—
The new line starts at Neslandsvatn station on the Kragerø line so to say.

Neslandsvatn station is actually part of The southern line, but so far it has been a station on the Kragerø line so to speak.

It starts at Neslandsvatn station, which is situated at an altitude of 72 meters above sea level.

It runs in a south-westward direction through Kroken, an annex of Drangedal community in Telemark county, past Brødsjø station, mounts up Brødsjø hill, where it crosses the county border between Telemark and Austagder.

Then it has mounted to an altitude of 103 meters.

Then it descends again through rugged terrain, I think I shall call it, crosses the two largest bridges of the line: the Trollelv viaduct and the bridge over Gjerstad river, and reaches Gjerstad station.

Then eh- we have descended to an altitude of 36 meters above sea level.

Here at Gjerstad station there is going to be a connection to Risør.

Then the line rises again from Gjerstad station, in parts very steeply and through difficult terrain, and goes in a south-westward direction past Fonegrenden, where the line turns westward and passes Gyttingengrend station on its way towards Vegårdsheia.

It crosses Skårstøl intersection, where the construction of a branch line to Risør was originally planned, a plan that has been dropped.

Then it continues through forest terrain, a relatively smooth terrain actually, into Sønderled community, which it only just touches.

And then it enters Vegårdshei community and goes on to Bjorvatn station.

At this very moment the train stops at Bjorvatn station.
Against the rhythmic sounds of a train’s travel on joined rails, the radio voice goes on and on with its monotonous commentary about the train’s passage through the rugged landscape of Southern Norway – with explicit mentioning of the villages, stations, bridges, tunnels etc that can be seen from the radio reporter’s seat by the coach window as the train passes along. Both the voice itself and the technical production of it have the characteristics of a piece of public oratory delivered from a speaker’s platform at a public meeting. What sense would you make of this text? Of course, the answer depends on your background knowledge and life experience. My guess is that most Norwegians in the first decade of the 21st century, once they have got over the poor technical quality of the recording, would right away sense the foreignness of the text structure – a perceived foreignness that is very real, although not as overshadowing as in the case of a meeting with, say, a piece of writing in Sanskrit from the 10th century B.C. Since your radio happened to be tuned to NRK’s “culture channel” P2 and the programme that was on was Nostalgia, featuring old recordings from NRK’s programme archive, the kind of knowledge that you would need if you were to make a historically correct interpretation of this text is historical knowledge.

Exemplifying the Problem of Historical Text Analysis

Because people normally employ their own frames of reference when interpreting texts (and not the frames of someone else), few, if any, would be able to read the text cited above in the way that listeners from the original audience in the mid-1930s did. The attraction of such a programme item to present-day listeners does not depend on their ability to make out the historical meaning of the text. To people with a nostalgic hunch or interest in the exotic past of their own culture, a text like this is likely to appear fascinating because of its many connotations of a time that was and never will be again. We immediately recognise that the text is different from contemporary radio productions – although it clearly has affinities with certain kinds of modern programmes, for example, live sports reportage. We also appreciate that the difference derives from the fact that the text was originally produced and received within contexts diverging from the ones that frame radio production and consumption today. Speaking of my own anachronistic first meeting with this text, I was particularly puzzled as to what it could have been that had made the text appeal to its original audience. What did they make of it? How could such a long tirade of words defend its place on the schedule of a radio channel? Other questions also came up: What kind of text is this? Which genre are we dealing with? Why is the text structured the way it is? What is the speaker doing, really? Why doesn’t the text have any clear features of being meant for someone? How does the speaker manage to integrate such a large amount of exact information in a text that presents itself as a running commentary relating directly to states, relations and activities unfolding in real time?

Radio Reportage in the Year of 1935 (text samples)

To return to the imagined Nostalgia programme setting, the bewilderment of Norwegian radio listeners of today does not diminish when a couple of other items from the same radio reportage, get aired. Samples from the relevant texts are as follows:
jeg tror lytterne gjerne vil jeg skal spørre Dem *herr statsminister * om hva de mener om betydningen av å få jernbanen ført frem til målet.

målet for Sørlandsbanen det er Stavanger.

man venter nok på at dette målet skal blitt skal bli nådd.

og man synes kanskje det X= gått nokså sent.

og det er visst nokså riktig.

jeg for min del tror at den fulle og hele betydning av Sørlandsbanen kan man ikke vente å få før man når frem til Stavanger.

dermed vil – det rike jordbruksdistriktet i Rogaland for eksempel blir satt i forbindelse med la oss si det øvrige land.

og selve Stavanger vil dermed også komme i en bedre forbindelse med landet forovrigr.

jeg tror derfor at den største betydning Sørlandsbanen vil få det er når man først når frem til Rogaland til Stavanger.

I for my part think that the full significance of the Southern railway line cannot be realised until one reaches Stavanger.

In that way the rich rural districts in Rogaland, for example, will be connected to the rest of the country.

And Stavanger itself will thereby also improve its contact with the remainder of the country.

I therefore think that the greatest significance of the Southern railway will only be seen when one reaches Rogaland and Stavanger.

Can anything be said about when the Southern railway will be completed?

No.

What is important is naturally to secure the necessary financial funding.

But, as I said, it all depends on the amount of money that can be raised for the construction.

on our way through the train . we observe in a compartment the Vice Chairman of the joint committee of the Southern railway line Lieutenant-Colonel Gundersen from Kristiansand.

denne komité har hatt til oppgave å arbeide for Sørlandsbanens bygging frem til Kristiansand.

den task of this committee has been to promote the construction of the Southern railway line to Kristiansand.

. og det er tydelig å se på obersløytnantens ansikt at han glider seg idag over at den er kommet et langt steg videre frem mot det mål komitéen har arbeidet for nu gjennom en årrekke.
R74.4/TD . han har heller ikke hatt noe imot å uttale seg overfor. lytterne om banens betydning for distriktene.

R74.5/TD værsågod

R74.6/TD oberstløytnant

R75.1/G såvidt jeg forstår så vil andre uttale seg om banens historikk og dens kostende med videre.

R75.2 det man ønsker at jeg skal uttale meg om idag det er om de fordeler som jeg mener Sørlandsbanen vil skaffe sitt-sine distrikter.

R75.3 jeg skal da i korthet nevne følgende.

(OMISSION OF ABOUT 5 MINUTES OF TALK)

R75.29 jeg vil her etter hukommelsen sitere noen uttalelser av tidligere stortingspresident statsråd <X Aars X>.

R75.30 en arbeidssom og vindskelig befølknings har her på Sørlandet allerede skapt eiendommer og verdier som må avtvinge hvem som helst den største respekt.

R75.31 fordi Sørlandet fra naturens hånd er så velsignet godt og fordi folkerasen er så inderlig flittig og hjertens tålmodig har landsdelen tross manglende kommunikasjoner allikevel evnet å holde seg oppe.

R75.32 og ikke det alene.

R75.33 men den har maktet med glans å klare konkurransen med de øvrige landsdeler.

R75.34 ... idag er vi atter vidne til at den del av Sørlandets gamle ønske og håp av en ny avdeling av Sørlandets store drøm gå i oppfyllelse.

R75.35 derfor er der i dag jubel og glede overalt på Sørlandet og da ikke minst i den skjønne og stolte .e. by ved de fagre Tromøy og Xxsund Arndal Sørlandsbanens foreløpige vestligste endepunkt.

R75.36 vi Sørlandsfolk hilser vår jernbane i dag hjertelig velkommen idet vi hertil knytter vårt inderlige ønske om at banens videre fortsettelse og fullførelse må skje snarest mulig.

R75.37 ti først når Sørlandsbanen gjennemløper hele det sydlige Norge.

. he has had nothing against making a statement for the benefit of the listeners about the significance of the line for the districts.

please go ahead.

Lieutenant-Colonel as far as I have understood others are going to talk about the line’s history its costs etcetera.

what I am expected to speak about today are the advantages that I think the Southern railway line will bring about for its- ((GRAMMATICAL ERROR)) its districts.

I shall then mention the following.

I shall here from memory cite a-- some statements by the former President of Parliament Minister <X Aars X>.

the hard-working and conscientious population here in South Norway has already created properties and values which must command anybody’s greatest respect.

because nature has generously endowed Southern Norway and because the people are so sincerely conscientious and so marvellously patient the region has managed to do well despite the lack of communications and not only that.

but it has been brilliantly successful in the competition with the other regions.

... today we are once more witnessing that part of the old dream and hope of Southern Norway is being fulfilled.

therefore people all over Southern Norway are rejoicing today and especially in the beautiful and noble .e. village at the lovely Tromøy and Xxsund, so far the westernmost point of the Southern railway.

we Southerners heartily welcome our railway today and express our sincere wish that the continuation and completion of the railway might take place as soon as possible.

for it is not until the Southern railway traverses the whole southern region of...
The “Foreignness” of the 1935 Reportage

The sample indexed R17.7 (ff) is taken from a text that we ostensibly recognise as an interview, but a very weird one it is to modern ears. The conduct of both of the participants, the reporter/interviewer and the interviewee, is utterly constrained by manuscript dependency and by previous rehearsal. The “questions” (or rather: response-eliciting turns) are as polite and open as can be – allowing the interviewee to fill in pieces of information of his own choice. The answers are ever so long and wordy – there is obviously no need to rush in order to get in the final word before the next programme item is scheduled to be on. The interviewee is allowed to deliver his turns, which have evidently been scripted ahead of time, without fear of being interrupted by unforeseen follow-up questions. The interviewer obviously feels the situation to require of him that he explain his capacity of speaking on behalf of a third party, which he refers to as “the listeners”. To present-day radio consumers, who are used to being constantly drawn into the discourse by the radio presenter’s frequent you-addresses (as well as by his questions, instructions, side-remarks etc.), the most alien trait about this text is perhaps the very circumspect appreciation of the existence of an overhearing third party in the communicative event that is encoded in this third-person reference term that is syntactically integrated in a sentence addressed at the interviewee.

Let us look at the text excerpt starting with the index marker R74.1. This sample falls into two parts identifiable generically as (1) continuity talk performing the job of introducing the next speaker, and (2) a formal speech. As with the previous samples, it is probably the stiffness of the participants’ demeanour and the slow pace with which they conduct their interactional affairs that would strike present-day radio listeners as the most exotic features of this passage. The slow monotonous reading prosody, the occasional reading mistake, the paper-rustling syntax, the exceedingly circumstantial style of the text, all of this makes it evident that the spoken delivery is totally dependent on a word-by-word manuscript – a fact which is likely to make radio listeners of today characterise the text as artificial, affected and contrived.

Radio listeners of our times are immediately faced with a veritable problem of interpretation: Who is it that the reporter is referring to as we in first unit of the sample (R74.1)? Of course, it may be that our listeners do not even notice that this we repre-
sents a problem – in automatically interpreting the *we* in accordance with a widespread current practice of radio talk as an instance of the inclusive *we* referring jointly to the two parties in the communicative event, i.e. to the reporter and the listeners. The implication of such a reading would be that what the reporter is doing here is virtually to take the listener by the hand and lead her through the aisle of the railway wagon. Now, in many languages, Norwegian included, the word *we* is actually polysemous with two distinct meanings, which can be rendered as “*we*-inclusive-of-addressee” and “*we*-exclusive-of-addressee” respectively. In the “*we*-exclusive-of-addressee” sense, the pronoun encodes a reference to a *representative* of a party that consists of more than one individual. In many contexts, tokens of *we* are instantly recognizable as either one of the two lexical items. In other contexts, ambiguities, intended or not, may arise. If it is so that the reporter in the current programme extract is using the “*we*-exclusive-of-addressee”, what kind of party is it that he is talking on behalf of? Who, beside himself, is he referring to? Is he using only *one* of the two *we’s* or is the reference ambiguous? As with all deictic expressions, the answer does not reside in the text, but rather in the context – in the *historical* context, to be precise – which existed in 1935.

Although the remainder part of the sentence is semantically simpler, radio listeners of today may still raise an eyebrow when learning that *we* by coincidence, so it appears from the reporter’s choice of words, happen to spot “the Vice chairman of the joint committee of the Southern railway line, Lieutenant Colonel Gundersen from Kristiansand”, who is sitting in a compartment. The disagreement between the reporter’s representation of what is happening and the evidently pre-planned nature of the course of actions is bound to make our time traveller experience the reporting as inauthentic. The expression by which the coming speaker Gundersen is referred to for the first time may also produce a reaction. Whereas views are likely to vary as regards the use of Gundersen’s military title in this context, radio listeners of today would undoubtedly find the information about Gundersen’s role in the mentioned committee and his geographical affiliation with Southern Norway to be relevant to his coming business of stating his opinion on “the significance of the line for the districts”. Hence, it is probably not the many pieces of information building up Gundersen’s authority *per se* that are felt to be at odds with the dominating norm of modern radio talk. Rather, it is the *grammar* – the tight integration of information in exact words and expanded nominal groups – that stands out as marked to present-day listeners, although this style, which originally derives from academic and bureaucratic writing, certainly still exists on “traditional” broadcasting channels as a variety of continuity talk.

If listeners of today were to decide on a *single* linguistic construction that could function as an indicator of the old idiom of broadcast talk, my guess is that they would pick “the listeners” occurring in the kind of declarative syntactic-pragmatic context that segment R74.4 is an instance of. What kind of situation is it that a radio presenter encodes when talking *to* (or *about*) the intended recipients of the broadcast using this half-way third-person-mention/ half-way address form? The answer rings when we identify the third person description used for referring to a party in the communicative event as a stock member of the language of traditional genres of public speech such as the lecture, the sermon, the political speech, the ceremonial address, and the enlightenment talk.

One of the places where the stiffness and the explicitness in the radio speakers’ behaviour come through is in the way they carry out changes in the speaker role. The reporter actually uses a separate turn addressed at Gundersen for handing over the word and the microphone. It is as if he does not trust the broadcasting audience to understand
what is taking place without being explicitly told – perhaps because of the lacking visual input? Of course, both the choice of participant reference terms and the speaker switching procedure form part of the radio speakers’ methods for coping with the complicated broadcasting situation with its special configurations of time, space and participants.

Once given the word, Gundersen is allowed to keep it for as much as 6 minutes – an “eternity” to someone used to the short and varied items that make up the output on most radio channels today. Talking of variation, the out-of-date group of listeners put on stage for the current experiment are bound to be wondering at this stage where all the music has gone …

Back to Gundersen’s monologue. His voice is unmistakably the voice of an elderly man. Both his style and the linguistic norm that he uses are likely to make our time traveller hesitate. To take his linguistic norm first, Gundersen speaks “Riksmål” (the traditional Dano-Norwegian standard) with a southerner’s accent in a version dating from the turn of the century, which will be heard as oddly antiquated by present-day speakers of Norwegian. Except for the occasional reading mistake, his language is impeccably correct. The style is formal, not to say dignified, befitting the representational public role that the Lieutenant Colonel is enacting. The language is verbose and ornamented, brimming with rhetorical figures of speech like anaphora and coordinated pleonastic-formulaic epithets of the type void and empty.

An educated person familiar with the traditional forms of public speaking that have existed in the Western culture for millennia will immediately recognise the genre that Gundersen is giving vent to – or rather, the genres. For his monologue falls into two distinct parts, which are structured according to different generic norms. In the first part of his speech, extending to segment R75.28, Gundersen gives a talk in the popular enlightenment spirit about the advantages that the Southern railway line is expected to produce for the districts that it passes through. In other words, he acts in accordance with the mandate that he had just been given by the reporter. He apparently transgresses that mandate, however, when going on to praise the population of Southern Norway, to describe the region’s characteristics (using the words of a former Minister), and to direct an apostrophic greeting of welcome at the Southern railway (!), before he closes his address with a citation by a different Minister on the anticipated effects of the new railway for Norway as a whole. Generically, this part of Gundersen’s monologue is a celebration speech with traits both from the inaugural address and from the oration of tribute.

Even if the generic structures in use are likely to be known to present-day radio consumers, there is something in the situation that does not add up when judged by modern standards of broadcasting, at least not for the celebration speech. Now, formal speeches relating to specific occasions like the speech that Gundersen is voicing may of course be heard on the radio today also. But then the situation invariably is that the speech is being mediated from a “real-life” event of public speaking comprising an audience other than the radio listeners – a traditional audience, that is, who is sharing time and place with the speaker. Why did the programme makers in the mid-1930s choose a different solution with a direct rapport between the speaker and the radio listeners? What did this solution mean? Again, if the answer is to be found somewhere, it is in the original context.

As we have seen, there are many factors that contribute to the feeling of alienation that Gundersen’s talk is likely to produce in us as habitual consumers of broadcasts in the 21st century in case we eavesdrop on his long-dead words preserved by “stone age” recording technology (and transferred back to paper, as it were, for the present analytical
experiment). The strongest contributory factor is perhaps the fact that he speaks to his listeners as members of a collective and distant audience – not as individual persons. Actually, he barely speaks to his audience at all to judge by they way he carefully avoids addressing the recipient party in explicit terms. During his entire monologue, he refers to them only once. To add to the effect of circumspection, that reference does not appear in the initial part of the talk as the standing genre expectations would have required it do, preferably in the form of a summons (“Dear listeners!”). Rather, it is tucked away well into the talk in the sentence “I shall only bring into the memory of my listeners that…” (R75.10). The grammatical construction is as good as identical to the 3rd person “mention-address” form that was commented upon above. The question is what sense this form made to its original users in the mid-1930s. What reasons did a speaker like Gundersen have for choosing this particular form and placing it in such a belated position? There is no way of telling without inspecting the original contexts of radio talk in the 1930s, but is that feasible?

As for the other enunciative motions that Gundersen takes for anchoring his utterance in the coordinates of the speech event, they will probably be familiar to present-day members of Norwegian culture, since they are wholly in keeping with the genre conventions of public speaking that still exist. Gundersen marks himself as the deictic centre of the speech event by dropping a couple of pronominal self-references in the first few sentences. He also refers to himself by a sentence-initial I a bit further on in his talk in the sentence that contains a mentioning of the listeners (R75.10). Apart from the few references to the participants, Gundersen is entirely occupied with the informational topic of the talk in the first part of his monologue. The type of I that he is staging agrees with the norms of public oratory of the 19th and 20th centuries. It is a patently de-personalised I who is speaking solely in capacity of the authority and representational role with which he was called to the microphone by the reporter in the introductory continuity-talk passage. Incidentally, this is a very different I than the one that radio listeners of today are used to hearing in the monologue format that dominates on contemporary radio, the radio disc jockey talk (by which I in this context mean both the DJ-talk proper and the various forms of more traditional radio talk practices that the DJ-style has spread to). Gundersen’s I is as far as can be from the cautiously individualised studio hosts of today who, as part of their set repertoire of discursive routines, keep chatting about trivial facts from their own private lives. Gundersen, on his part, is consciously “doing being public”, as Scannell so succinctly has put it (Scannell 1996).

As we have seen already, Gundersen’s monologue distinctly changes character midway – i.e., between macrosyntagm R75.28 and macrosyntagm R75.29 in the transcript. Against the backdrop of the generally relaxed style of contemporary radio talk, the latter part of Gundersen’s monologue is bound to stand out as stylistically high-strung to modern radio listeners. The content is dressed up in a grand rhetorical style suitable for ceremonies and great achievements. The means of persuasion are not primarily logos ones, as in the first part of his speech, but rather emotional arguments of pathos. The speaker no longer makes do with his own authority. He also borrows the authority of other great men – more specifically, that of two former members of Parliament – by uttering longish quotations at the opening and closing of the celebration-speech passage. When it comes to the unmistakable nationalistic overtones of this passage, anachronistic interpretations will certainly arise unless one consciously tries to bracket the ideologies of our own time and put into play those of the years between the wars – to the extent that such a scheme is possible.
The pronouns *we* and *our* represent problems of interpretation in Gundersen’s speech just as they did in the reporter’s, although the tokens in R75.34 are fairly transparent since the speaker takes care to specify them referentially with the noun *southerners* (Norw. *sørlandsfolk*). To determine the reference of the *we* in R75.34, however, is not that simple. The text gives two clues: (1) the generic affiliation of the text, and (2) the *we*-token’s location immediately after the citation of the words of a parliamentary representative. The decisive clue to the interpretation, however, resides in the ideological climate that existed in the period between the wars.

As we have seen, Gundersen carefully fixes the speech event deictically in his own presence. He actually does so with the celebration-speech part also, not only with the talk part that was commented on above (see the *I*’s in R75.29 and R75.37). In the celebration-speech part, he also makes abundant references to the time coordinate of the speech event using the present tense and as many instances of the adverbs *today* and *in this moment* as the syntax allows him to integrate in the relatively few sentences that are of his own making. Of course, this insistence on the historical moment belongs to the conventions of the celebration speech. Today, a contingency of this focus on the present moment – that communicating parties who are separated in space still share the same *now* – is a fully naturalised part of the broadcasting situation. The challenge for the analyst attempting to read Gundersen’s text *historically* is to make out the original intentions and effects involved in the encoding of this configuration of time, space and participants. It is fairly evident that the original implication of this situation differs from the one that we put into it today. As a first verification of this claim, let me present the opening passage of the reportage, in drawing the reader’s attention to the careful description of the origo of the speech event with explicit mentioning of time, place and both communicating parties, as well as technical details about the transmission process:

R1.1 mikrofonen . er . i dag . med et stort utstyr . plassert i åpningstoget . på . Sørlandsbanens parsell Neslandsvatn . Nelaug

R1.2 ... vi har nu . overføring ... ved hjelp av kortbølgesender . fra toget . til mottager på Vegårdsheia ... og derfra på linje til kringkasterne <P (THROAT CLEARING) P>

R1.3 ... (3,3) forhåpentlig . vil dette ... tekniske eksperiment lykkes

R1.4 . og vi skal kunne gi Dem . inntrykk . fra denne høytidelige begivenhet . som virkelig her nede vi sitter <EMP e=r EMP> . en begivenhet

R1.5 åpningen . av den seksti kilometer lange . nye jernbane . fra Neslandsvatn til Nelaug

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*Today*. the microphone and other heavy equipment have been placed on board the opening train travelling the Southern railway line between Neslandsvatn and Nelaug. *We* are now having a transmission with the help of a short-wave transmitter from the train to a receiver on Vegårdsheia and thence by wire to the broadcasters. Hopefully, this technical experiment will be successful. And *we* shall be able to give you ((SG V-FORM)) impressions from this ceremonious occasion which really *down here* where *we* are <EMP is EMP> an occasion. The opening of the 60-kilometre-long new railway line from Neslandsvatn to Nelaug.
Looking Into the Problem

Text Analysis and the Need for Context Knowledge

Texts can only be described, interpreted and explained with reference to their contexts. When people make sense of texts, either as producers or interpreters, they invariably base their meaning-making on two or three factors: (1) the text and (2) the context of which the text is a part, including (3) their own cognitive resources. Interpretation processes are basically the same whether performed by discourse participants or by text analysts, despite differences in procedures. The implication of this insight from a text-analytical perspective is that analysts need access, not only to the particular texts under scrutiny, but also to the contexts that engendered them, if they are to arrive at valid interpretations and explanations of the texts.11

Since the interpreter herself is one of the factors that settle the meaning of a text and since it is principally impossible from an external perspective to determine the amount of input coming from this party, a disconcerting first conclusion to draw from the insight into interpretation processes just presented is that other people’s texts are inaccessible for analysis. As the reader will know, text or discourse analysis has a strong position within Academia today – a fact that in itself indicates that solutions to the problem must exist. Whether explicitly stated or not, the solution that most text-analytical traditions bring into play is to aim at uncovering and describing the underlying rules, conventions or norms that guide text production and interpretation within a given speech community, rather than the absolute values of specific encodings and decodings.12

Learning to Know Contexts of One’s Own Time

How, then, do text analysts gain access to the norms or conventions that underpin (groups of) specific texts – as well as to the contexts, or rather context types, that the text norms under study belong to? In a much-used textbook on genre analysis, which focuses on the use of language in professional settings, V.K. Bathia recommends the following procedure:

First, one needs to place the genre-text (i.e., a typical representative example of the genre) intuitively in a situational context by looking at one’s prior experience, the internal clues in the text and the encyclopaedic knowledge of the world that one already has. This will include the writer’s previous experience and background knowledge of the specialist discipline as well as that of the communicative conventions typically associated with it. The background knowledge of the discipline one gets from his/her association with, and training within, the professional community, whereas the knowledge of the communicative conventions one gets from his/her prior experience of similar texts. The user, therefore, gets the explanation of why the genre is conventionally written the way it is, from his or her understanding of the procedures used in the area of activity to which the genre belongs [my emphasis]. This kind of knowledge is greater in those people who professionally belong to the speech community which habitually makes use of that genre (Bhatia 1993:22).

The procedure suggested by Bhatia, which crucially involves applying the genre competence and familiarity with the situational context that one is assumed to have gained from prior experience with similar texts, is no doubt good advice for genre analysts studying genre-texts of their own time and culture. However, as I demonstrated above
by identifying a number of interpretation problems that a radio listener in 2002 is likely
to face when encountering what are actually essentially foreign radio texts from 1935,
Bhatia’s scheme will not do the job if applied to texts and genres that existed in bygone
contexts of time. When dealing with historical texts, the method described by Bhatia
only defends its place as an analytical point of departure, I shall claim. As a first ap-
proach to a text universe of an earlier period, however, the method undoubtedly has a
function, since it is intrinsically human to begin looking at “alien objects” with one’s
own frames of reference – only to discover that they do not do, at least not just like that.

Learning to Know Contexts of Former Times
What methods, then, are available for analysts seeking to interpret and explain textually
coded meanings from earlier periods if they are interested, not in the sense that people
of their own time and culture make of the text(s), but rather in how the text(s) worked
for people at the time? To interpret historical texts and to explain them are two related,
yet different, research objectives. Because of their differences, it is likely that the two
kinds of research purposes require somewhat different methods. Let us therefore con-
sider the methodical question in relation to the two research objectives separately.
As to historical text interpretation, it was established in the preceding chapter that
analysts are normally not interested in specific readings by specific readers, but rather
in the underlying text norm that generates the readings. The question, then, is whether
it is possible to acquire competence in text norms or “discursive grammars” that specify
– for speech communities that no longer exist – what people in the past were expected
to say in which situations and in which ways. The methodical recommendation that
genre analysts and historians with an interest in text history generally give is that one
should read extensively and attentively. Given that the analyst is exposed to an adequate
number of texts belonging to the target norm, she should be able to neutralise her own
first reactions to the texts and replace the reactions by an understanding of the norm that
resembles the competence of its original users, what Inez Rüppel has called a “reactive-
mimetic understanding” as opposed to the “functional understanding” that competent
real-time speech community members once possessed (Rüppel 2002:11).
Of course, extensive reading (or listening or viewing, depending on the medium) is
nothing but the best possible substitute for the unsurpassed genre-learning situation of
all times – the situation where learners are allowed to experience large amounts of per-
formance inside the relevant speech community and given the chance to interact directly
with skilled performers, a situation that for obvious reasons is an impossibility for learn-
ers of out-dated norms.
Analysts of genre apply a special kind of inference process when reading/listening/
viewing attentively – namely, abduction. With norms as research objects, there exists
a semiotic relation of instantiation between the research object and the observed data
or texts. Abduction is an interpretative inference procedure whereby the researcher
posits hypotheses about the functions and structures of the norm under scrutiny, and then
tests the hypotheses informally against actual texts held to have been generated by the
norm in the first place. This procedure must be kept distinct from inference procedures
characterised by other kinds of relations between phenomena and explanations such as
induction, deduction and empirical-analytical description (Berge 1993:88ff).13
One might ask whether this method of reading extensively and attentively is sufficient
for extracting the historical meaning of texts. The answer is “not quite”, as already in-
dicated in the preceding chapter. Since it is largely the world outside the text that provides it with reference, examining a historical text without prior knowledge of the world that it refers to is likely to go amiss at certain points. Take for example politically or religiously subversive texts that use non-literal ways of meaning like irony, allegory and periphrasis for reasons of censorship or threats of persecution. In such cases, knowledge about the society that engendered the texts is indispensable for determining the original meaning of the text (confer Kjeldstadli 1999: 184ff). Of course, if analysts follow the methodical recommendation and read large enough amounts of texts, they may manage to recover much of the needed encyclopaedic knowledge from clues in the texts themselves, since texts invariably contain indices of their original contexts. Still, it will normally be both more efficient and more reliable to exploit other kinds of historical sources for this part of the context reconstruction.

As a matter of fact, this is exactly what Bhatia suggests in the continuation to the paragraph quoted above:

For people who do not belong to the relevant speech community [my emphasis], this kind of knowledge [knowledge in genre conventions and their situated use, that is] is usually acquired by surveying available literature (loc cit).

Bhatia then goes on to list various types of sources that a researcher may consult in order to acquire the missing knowledge. There is much more to say about methods and methodologies. For the purpose of the current argument, the point is that discourse analysts aiming at determining the historical specificity of texts from the past need to reconstruct, not only the norm(s) of which the studied text(s) are instantiations, but also the contextual frames within which the texts were originally produced and received.

Without knowledge about the physical and social world that originally conditioned the production of the text and that the text points to and expresses, analysts will have unsolvable problems encircling the pool of significations that the text had the possibility of generating in members of the relevant speech community in the past – as we saw in the case of our imagined radio listeners who, equipped with cognitive schemata of today, were trying to determine the meaning of radio programmes from the 1930s. On the most elemental level, context-ignorant time or culture travellers may fail to identify the invoked referents in the text-external world that the text is referring to. Interpreters may also fail to grasp the full denotations of words and grammatical constructions that have either changed meaning or gone (more or less) out of use since the text was produced.14 On the level of higher-order meanings, historically misaligned interpreters are likely to miss or misunderstand the situational, cultural and ideological implications of the text. Furthermore, time travellers will have difficulties understanding the reasons why the text is structured the way it is, as well as why it is doing what it is doing. At worst, negligence of contextual factors may lead analysts to commit blatant anachronisms, e.g., to take certain features in a text at face value by the standards of their own time without realising this, to claim that a text is doing something that it could not possibly have done at the time of its production, or to misleadingly take certain features in the text to be the result of entities or relations that simply did not exist in the period of the text’s production.15

Now, what if the research objective is not only to interpret a particular text or group of texts, but also to explain it or them? Actually, by reconstructing the underlying genre norm, a researcher will de facto also provide much of an explanation of the text or group of texts. If the research objective also extends to explaining the formation and evolution of that norm, however, it becomes absolutely mandatory to reconstruct the historical
context within which the norm originally evolved. In other words, it is if one aims at fully answering the kind of why-questions that I posed in the first two sections of this article when staging an anachronistic meeting between radio listeners of today and radio texts from 1935.

The Answer: Historical Context Reconstruction

The conclusion to be drawn from the argumentation above is that historical text analysis, which amounts to the reconstruction of text norms from former times, actually presupposes another reconstructive endeavour – namely, historical context reconstruction. If the analytical goal is not restricted to interpretation but also includes explanation of historical texts and genres, context reconstruction is an absolute necessity, since genres are invariably formed in response to pragmatic forces in the context (Vagle 2002).

Having reached that conclusion, we are faced with new questions. How should such a research objective be formulated more precisely? What kind of approach should be used in pursuing it? In other words, which methods and methodologies are likely to produce context reconstructions that will enable people of today to make historically acceptable interpretations of historical texts, while also allowing text analysts to explain the functions and structures of the texts? Naturally, the answers to these questions depend on the empirical text universe in question, as well as on the available historical sources. Like most research objectives within the humanities and social sciences, they also vary with the analyst’s theoretical aims and preferences. Rather than trying to create a universal solution, I shall therefore sketch the solution that I have come up with for the purpose of my own research on the early text history of Norwegian radio.

As for the research objective, I have stated it in the following way:

- To reconstruct the changing contextual frames within which the discursive practices of Norwegian radio were embedded in the 1920s and 1930s.

The reason why the research objective should be defined in dynamic terms is that every context is dynamic and the result so far of a previous evolution. Contexts are evolutionary in nature. This insight implies a particular model of explanation, namely the temporal or processual one, which sees every action, happening or event situated at a particular point in time as the outcome of sequence(s) of processes ahead of it. Methodically, the insight gives preference to a diachronic approach, which combines historical techniques for producing chronological accounts of complex historical processes with a “reconstructing empirical-explicative method”. Like all kinds of historical research, the basic methodical procedure is to read, view and/or listen to historical sources dealing with the targeted empirical phenomena.

I have chosen to define the research problem using the complicating specification “contextual frames” rather than the more straightforward descriptions contexts or context types. There are at least two reasons for this decision. One is that the eventual context reconstruction is meant to function in relation to a whole universe of texts and genres rather than in relation to a particular text or genre. This calls for a level of generalisation attainable only through some sort of abstraction away from concrete contexts and context types.

The other reason is linked to the theoretical perspectives from which the analysis was to be carried out. Chronology invariably provides first clues to the nature of the relationships holding between historical states, events and processes. Still, it cannot do the
job of bringing order to the observations and relating them to each other. For this purpose, theoretical perspectives are also needed. For reasons to which I shall return, I found it necessary to combine three different, yet compatible, discourse-analytical perspectives in order to enable the upcoming context reconstruction to support the interpretation, as well as the explanation, of Norwegian radio texts from the interwar years. While a historical approach based on chronology invariably invokes a processual model of explanation, the selected theoretical perspectives suggest factorial-exploratory models, as well as causal, consequential, circumstantial and semiotic ones.

Let us take a closer look at the three perspectives, starting by listing them with some information on their origins:

4. Goffman’s laminated frame model (Goffman 1986 [1974]).

The tenet of Goffman’s frame model is that text (or talk, to use his term) should be analysed “from the outside in” – beginning with the ultimate determinant of the frame’s physical rim. The notion of the frame’s rim refers to his well-known metaphorical perception of the structural constraints conditioning social activities as a multi-layered frame – in my visualisation something like this:

*Figure 1. Focused Event Surrounded by Laminated Frame*

As can be seen from the figure, Goffman’s context model recognises that actual contexts surrounding social practices are complex with both physical and normative dimensions. Contexts are seen as frames with embedded laminations representing the different macro-factors that shape and constrain the social activities going on inside them. The model is deterministic. Yet, it represents determination as a stepwise process with each factor delimiting the possibilities on the lamination inside it. By maintaining that, in the last resort, the grounding factor (or, in Goffman’s wording, the “rim” of the frame) is the physical and biological world, the theory anchors the realms of social life in the natural order (Goffman 1986: 247ff). When applied to empirical questions implying diachronicity, I suggest that the model should be enhanced with a third dimension representing time. For reasons to do with the nature of broadcasting situations, I have also
found it revealing to split the “rim” of the frame in two, so as to expose the ways in which the special configurations of time, space and participants ultimately depend on natural, economic and technological resources (see Figure 4 further down).

The two other perspectives, or text-context models, are part of the same theory: the sociosemiotic theory of language, discourse and society. The overarching explanatory goal of the theory is to spell out the relations between social structure and the variation in semiotic practices. Like Goffman’s model, the structural correlation model is basically a determination model. It understands the text-context relation as one of determination. The multistratal realisation model, on the other hand, is an “expression model”, which interprets the text-context relation semiotically in terms of expression. In other words, it is a social-constructionist philosophy, according to which the social system is articulated through social practices.

Both these models need to be fleshed out before their use for context reconstruction purposes can be explained. Perhaps the most original contribution of sociosemiotic theory is that it attempts to explicate with some precision the way in which situational features condition the particulars of the text. This is where the structural correlation model comes in. To make the connection between text and context, the theory uses a bridging hypothesis whereby the situation (or more precisely: the situation type) is broken down into manageable components relatable to the linguistic system. What is more, it describes the situational components and their counterparts within the linguistic system in abstract terms that highlight the systematic relationship between them. While the linguistic correlates go by the names ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions, the corresponding contextual components are referred to as field, tenor, and mode (Halliday 1990: 128ff). The model can be represented in the following way:

**Figure 2. Halliday’s Structural Correlation Model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>FIELD (The social action)</th>
<th>TENOR (The role structure)</th>
<th>MODE (The symbolic organisation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Setting, contents, subject matters, activities (including communicative goals)</td>
<td>Participant identities and statuses, social and discursive roles, role relationships</td>
<td>Means of mediation (including channels of communication), the function to language in relation to the social action and the role structure, rhetorical mode, genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination</td>
<td>↓ ↑</td>
<td>↓ ↑</td>
<td>↓ ↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>The ideational metafunction</td>
<td>The interpersonal metafunction</td>
<td>The textual metafunction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the multistratal realisation model, its merit is that it explains the interrelationship between linguistic practices, higher-order semiotic systems (i.e. registers, genres and ideologies) and social structures. The model sees the articulation of language and society as organised into five levels with a realisation relationship holding between them – as displayed in Figure 3:
What this multi-levelled model of articulation achieves is to specify the way in which situations, socio-cultural structures, and ideologies are projected through semiotic practices. In other words, it anchors the level of ideology in the level of concrete semiotic practices. When applied for empirical research purposes, the model’s ability to uncover ideologies has a clear critical potential.

Let us look at the use of the three perspectives for discourse-analytical and methodological purposes. When it comes to the support that the context reconstruction is meant to perform in relation to the explanation of historical texts, both Halliday’s structural correlation model and Goffman’s frame model are applicable. The difference between them in this function is that the frame model has a bias in favour of the context and its organisation, whereas the structural correlation model focuses on the systematic relationship between contextual configurations and semantic choices in the text. This means that Goffman’s model is suited for research interests that lie with the structuring agents of the context and their interrelationship, while Halliday’s model with its implicit text-centred viewpoint is tailored to do the job of helping analysts to find contextual explanations for such-and-such pattern(s) of meaning-making to be found in a specific text or genre.

As regards text interpretation, both model 2 and 3 are relevant – with Halliday’s structural correlation model functioning on the level of the context-of-situation and the multistratal realisation model functioning in the interpretation of higher-order connotative meanings on the levels of culture and society.

As for the methodical use of the perspectives in the creation of context reconstructions, their main function is that of guiding the exploration of historical data so as to identify the relevant situational features and explicate the various relationships holding between them. Goffman’s frame theory is sometimes represented by way of a different metaphor, either as a stack of layers or as a pyramid structure. If one takes the liberty to concretise that metaphor using generalised layers that correspond to the socio-semi-
otic strata displayed in Figure 3, while introducing the splitting in two of the bottom layer, the result can be represented as in Figure 4 below.

**Figure 4. The Multiple Layers of Radio Contexts Through Time à la Goffman**

Because of their inherent qualities, a particular division of labour between the two determination models comes naturally when they are to be used as methodical guidelines for the identification of context parameters. While Halliday’s correlation model ensures that the reconstruction will consist of context parameters on Factor 3 with explanatory power in relation to the characteristic patterns of meaning in radio texts from the period, Goffman’s model informs the selection of context parameters on the two bottom factors accommodating contextual parameters of natural origin (i.e., on factors 1 and 2).

**Summary and Conclusion**

This article took its point of departure in a set of central hypotheses within sociologically oriented theories of language: (1) Texts can only be described, interpreted and explained with reference to their contexts; (2) contexts are dynamic in nature; and (3) every context is the result so far of an ongoing process – both as type and as instance.

It was observed that texts may be preserved across time, while contexts may not. The question, then, is whether it is possible to interpret and explain texts that have originated in contexts belonging to the past. More precisely, the question is whether it is possible to avoid anachronistic readings based on one’s own frames of reference, so as to arrive at historically correct interpretations and explanations. According to the argument that was carried out in the first two chapters of this article, the only hope lies in gaining some kind of access to the contexts that once engendered the texts. The methodical recommendation that historians and genre analysts generally give – that one should read a large number of texts from the period attentively – was considered at this stage in the argumentation. It was figured out, however, that this method may possibly enable analysts...
to extract historical meanings from texts, but it will not yield the kind of support that is necessary in order to explain either the texts themselves, or the formation and evolution of the underlying text norm.

Against the background of that argumentation, I suggested that the solution should be historical context reconstruction, and provided an overview of the specific methodology that I have used for my own research on the texts and contexts of early Norwegian radio. Whether this solution lives up to its promises is an empirical question that can only be answered by using the methodology to create an actual context reconstruction and then testing whether this context reconstruction is doing its job or not. As far as I can see from my results, the answer is positive (see further Vagle 2006).

Notes
1. This article is based on my dissertation with the title “I think the listeners would like me to ask you, Mr Prime Minister, ...”. The history of texts and contexts in Norwegian radio with emphasis on the early period (dissertation submitted for the degree of dr. philos., University of Oslo, Faculty of Arts, 2006).
2. For transcription conventions, see appendix.
3. The articulation is distinct, the natural voice level is relatively loud and the miking is half-total or total with the microphone placed at the distance of an arm’s length – to judge by the tonal frequency characteristics of the voice, the reverberation level, and the lack of mouth sounds.
4. It is far from obvious that this should be the goal of the reading of texts from the past. In fact, other goals – such as enlightenment – have a long history in Western culture. Yet, it appears that our times are witnessing a rise in the interest in the historicity of texts (confer Jordheim: 2001).
5. The reportage from which the three text samples are taken was originally broadcast in two portions during the day of November 9th 1935. The programme schedule of “Riksprogrammet” (NRK’s nationwide monopoly channel at the time) featured the following entries:
   At 1:15 p.m.: “Med åpningstoget over Vegårdsheia. Kortbølgeoverføring fra toget” (in English: “On board the opening train over Vegårdsheia. Short wave transmission from the train”). [Next programme at about 1:30 p.m.]
   At 5:00 p.m.: “Med åpningstoget på Sørlandsbanen. Reportasje tatt på grammofon underveis mellom Oslo og Arendal. Derefter grammofonmusikk” (in English: “On board the opening train on the Southern railway. Reportage recorded by gramophone between Oslo and Arendal. Followed by gramophone music” [next programme at 6:00 p.m.]. The programme schedule also featured a thematically related 30-minute-long talk at 7:30 p.m. with the title “Arendal og omliggende distrikt gjennom tidene” (in English: “Arendal and the surrounding district up through history”) and a so-called “microphone visit” at 10:15 p.m. with the title “Fra Vegårdshei. Mikrofonbesøk på jernbaneanlegget hos medaljbas Berg og hans arbeidskamerater” (in English: “From Vegårdshei. Microphone visit at the railway construction plant with gang foreman Berg and his fellow workers”).
   A collection of the original gramophone recordings from the two reportage broadcasts is to be found in NRK’s radio programme archive under the title “Åpningen av Sørlandsbanen frem til Arendal” (in English: “The opening of the Southern railway to Arendal”) in a document (magnetic tape) that is catalogued 53308 + 53309. The archive copy, it says on the archive card, was produced in April 1974.
7. The 1930 edition of Hvem er hvem (Who is who) verifies that Edward August Gundersen was born in Kristiansand in 1869.
8. Rhetorical anaphora (also called epanaphora) is a figure of speech that involves repetition of the same word at the beginning of successive clauses, sentences or verses (Wales 1989: 23).
10. In the Norwegian original: “jeg skal bare bringe i mine tilhøreres erindring at ...”.
11. The distinction between text interpretation and text explanation introduced in this paragraph draws on the methodology and practical procedure of discourse analysis that Norman Fairclough has developed in various books and articles up through the 1990s. Fairclough distinguishes between three
stages of critical discourse analysis, which he labels text description, text interpretation and text explanation, and describes in the following way:

“Description is the stage which is concerned with formal properties of the text.

Interpretation is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction – with seeing the text as the product of a process of production, and as a resource in the process of interpretation; notice that I use the term interpretation for both the interactional process and a stage of analysis [...].

Explanation is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context – with the social determination of the processes of production and interpretation, and their social effects” (Fairclough 1989:26, confer also Vagle 1995).

12. Of course, exceptions to this rule exist – notably within the tradition of reception studies, reception history included, where the research interest may lie with specific readings by particular interpreters.

13. Abduction has been extensively discussed by the semiotician Charles S. Pierce, as well as by the philosopher of science Esa Ilkonen (Ilkonen 1978).

14. Take the adjective “vindskibelig”, which Gundersen uses when describing the population of Southern Norway (R75.30). My guess is that the majority of Norwegians today have never heard the word before.

15. The argument that I have built up in the paragraphs above has been inspired by a conference paper presented by Inez Rüppel at a seminar on text history in Oslo in October 2001. The paper, entitled “Writing the History of Texts: A Historian’s Perspective”, has been published in a report by Prosjektmiljøet Norsk Sakprosa (Rüppel 2002 [Berge ed.]).

16. According to the basically semiotic understanding of context underpinning my research, contexts – like genres – are social norms. The type of method with which to examine research objects of this kind can be characterised as a “reconstructing empirical-explicative method” – “reconstructing” because the purpose of the method is to reconstruct the tacit normative basis of the participants’ actions, “empirical” because the method uses empirical data, and “explicative” because the functioning of the method is to externalise the unperceivable and hence not-observable norm(s) underpinning particular human practices (Berge 1993:78ff).

17. Detailed advice on procedures is to be found in many textbooks dealing with historical methods of investigation. See for instance Dahl’s introduction to the use of historical methods in media studies (Dahl 2005).

18. Sociosemiotic theory is the name used by the theory's first architect, Michael Halliday (see for instance: Halliday 1990 [1978]). Within media studies, the theory goes by the name social semiotics (see for instance: Kress & van Leeuwen 1996, van Leeuwen 1999, van Leeuwen 2005). Within linguistics, it is probably most widely known by the name systemic functional linguistics (or SFL for short). For a recent publication, which assembles Nordic contributions within the field, see Berge & Maagerø (eds.) 2005.

19. Neither in this case is determination to be understood as “direct causation”. Although the direction of determination is thought to go primarily from the situation to the text, it also has a backward path. A text is not only determined by the situation; it also contributes to the definition of that situation. In Figure 2 below, this reciprocity is represented in the form of double sets of arrows correlating the situational and semantic components.

20. The metafunctions, or classes of sign-functions, are not easy to describe in few words, but let me try. Language users employ ideational functions for presenting “states of affairs” – experiences with the “inner” and “outer” world, as well as experiences that have already been formulated in signs. In alluding to the binary “form/content” partitioning of the message that prevails in mass communication research, one could say that it is this metafunction, that infuses texts with “content”. Interpersonal functions enable actors to partake in social relationships and to mark them on the dimensions of social hierarchy and solidarity. A separate subgroup of interpersonal functions, sometimes referred to as expressive functions, holds means for expressing subjectivity and social identity. Textual functions are used for combining the different meanings of a message into a composite text and for anchoring the text to its context.

21. For a more comprehensive presentation and discussion of the three perspectives, see Vagle 2005.

22. The idea of “historically correct interpretations and explanations” was discussed under the heading “Exemplifying the Problem of Historical Text Analysis”. A simple way to rephrase the expression is to say that it refers to interpretations and explanations that members from the original historical contexts used to make.
Bibliography


Appendix

Transcription conventions

Units
- Turn [speaker identification]
- Macrosyntagm (MS) unit [separated by carriage return]
- Boundary within combined MS *
- Word [separated by space]
- Truncated intonation unit —
- Truncated word -

Speakers
- Speaker identity/turn beginning [speaker initials in CAPITALS]
- Interviewer IER
- Interviewee IEE
- TD Thorstein Diesen
- G Oberstløyntnant Gundersen
- Speech overlap [ ]

Pause
- Very long ... (N) [duration in 1/10 seconds]
- Long ...
- Short .
- Latching (0)

Music, sounds, sound effects and ambiance
- Sounds ((SHORT DESCRIPTION))
- Background sound ambiance ((X STARTS)) ((X ENDS))
- Production circumstances ((SHORT DESCRIPTION))

Transcriber’s perspective
- Transcriber’s/researcher’s comment ((COMMENT))
- Uncertain hearing <X ... X>
- Indecipherable syllable X
- Indecipherable stretch of speech X=
- Focus of analysis underline

INDEXING
- Programmes A, B, C, etc
- Turns 1, 2, 3, etc
- Macrosyntagm units within turns .1, .2, .3, etc
- Backchannels without turn status ~ b
- Aborted turns # [index number starting with #]

Notes
1. Most of the conventions are adopted from a discourse transcription system developed at the Linguistics Department and the Centre for the Study of Spoken Discourse at UCSB (University of California at Santa Barbara) (Du Bois 1991; Du Bois et al 1991; Du Bois et al 1993). A couple of conventions are taken from Crowdy 1991. The segmentation principle stems from the Nordic macrosyntagm model (Teleman 1974; Hanssen et al. 1978; Vagle 1990:110ff). The index system, the format codes, and the speech production symbols have been devised for the purpose of the present study.
2. Macrosyntagms are sentence-like text units.
3. Example: ((MUSIC STARTS)) ((MUSIC ENDS)).
4. Circumstances demanding descriptions can be audible shifts in setting, microphone trouble, unwarranted long pauses, noticeable editing, etc.
5. Index numbers based on this system look like this: A2.3, K2.3, ~M4.b1, etc. The text segment with index number A2.3 is identified as macrosyntagm 3 within turn 2 in programme A.
Everyday Talk and the Conversational Patterns of the Soap Opera

Unni From

Abstract
The soap opera has been explored from many different angles. This article examines the relationship between one of the general characteristics of the genre, the fact that there is far more talk than action, and the ways people actually talk in the soap. The article uses Bakhtin’s concept of speech genre as its source of inspiration and as an analytical tool that has the potential to be used in respect to many other genres that, in various ways, are constituted in talk.

Key Words: soap, tv-drama, speech genre, Bakhtin, gossip

Introduction
“Good evening, this is the six o’clock news” or “Welcome – this evening we are going to meet …” The media are filled with interpersonal conversations and various kinds of talk that are adapted in different ways to the medium and the genre in which they unfold. TV in particular is characterized by a good deal of talk and jargon (e.g., Hjarvard 1999: 238f), so the audience experiences a sort of simulated conversation with hosts and other players (Horton & Wohl 1997 (1956)). Much TV fiction also enacts and represents everyday conversation. In this article, I will examine how the relationship functions between program genres, regarded as a unique mode of communication, and oral conversations related to everyday life in order to propose a method for qualifying our analysis of talk. My starting point is the soap opera, where, as studies have shown, talk is plentiful. International research has repeatedly pointed out (e.g., Gledhill 1992) that, as a genre, the soap opera is characterized by far more talk than action. Some of the particularly popular themes are personal dilemmas, love and relationships, a circumstance related to several factors including the soap opera’s overriding interest in the personal and the universally human. At the same time, the soap opera also exemplifies the many different kinds of small talk that also characterize everyday life. This is related to the fact that the soap opera takes place precisely in an arena that most people are somewhat familiar with: a hospital, an office, a police station and so forth. In this respect, it appears obvious to make use of the soap opera in a sociolinguistic analysis of the relationship between concrete conversations (micro-level) and more general genres (macro-level), as an organizing principle of conversations. In addition, I will emphasize in particular two constitutive features of the soap that are also significant for the spe-
cific conversations within the series in question. First of all, the soap is typically based on some sort of community. It is the order and disorder of the community that generate the narratives, and the soap deals with the human, shared and personal conflicts that arise when people live or work together. One Danish soap opera by the name of *Hotellet* (“the hotel,” TV2, 60 episodes, 2000-2002), which is the case to be analyzed here, is based on a family-owned hotel in a provincial town. Together, the family and staff must make their daily life work, and it may be said that the hotel is a shared project that must be kept free from outside “threats” of various kinds: dissatisfied guests who create negative publicity or bigger hotel chains that would like to buy up the hotel. The threat can also be of a more internal nature, such as when Erik Faber commits suicide, bringing to life secrets about financial difficulties and the story that he could not have been the biological father of Adam, Julie and Nikolaj, due to his sterility. The idyll is broken, and together the characters must build up a new order. Hence, the soap reflects a number of topical and typical – albeit caricatured – conflicts that concern our social universe.

**On Hotellet, 2000-2002**

Hotell, 60 episodes of approx. 45 minutes. Aired Thursdays at 8 p.m./various times. Aired the last season, autumn 2002, Wednesdays at 8:35 pm

The series was created by Morten Arnfred, Søren Sveistrup and Peter Nyrén.


The series had an average of 700,000 viewers and 37% of the total number of viewers.

Produced by Jarowskij for TV2.

Budget: approx. 1 million DKK per episode. An episode was recorded in 2.5 days with two directors (corresponds to 5 playing days).

The plot: *Hotellet* depicts life in a family-owned provincial hotel. The family consists of Erik and Alice Faber and their three adult children: Adam, Julie, and Nikolaj. In the first episode, Erik Faber commits suicide during Adam and Maria’s wedding party, effectively launching the plot and the 60 episodes. In the kitchen, the head cook Lasse, the cook Jimmy, and the waitress Anette are regular characters in the first seasons. Later, a new head cook, Dorte, is introduced. At the reception desk the focal point is Adam’s wife, Maria, and the receptionist Louise, while Aminah functions as the maid. Last but not least, there is the rather mystical handyman, John, who knows a lot about the hotel and its inhabitants’ secrets, but who is rarely very talkative. In this sense, the serial is structured as a traditional soap with intertwining storylines. But each episode also typically contains an episodic and finished storyline, where the story of one or more guests is in focus. Quite a few love relationships, friendships and hostilities take place at the hotel, and in this context one of the issues that I will deal with is the relationship between Adam and Maria, which is shaky because Maria has been with the cook Lasse, who himself has had a relationship with Anette.

Finally, the soap is characterized by what could be called an operationalization of parallel action and open endings. The staging of ten-twelve characters, each with their own history, means that there are always many stories taking place at once – often five or six stories in a single episode. The stories become intertwined like an arabesque, and while conflicts are being solved in various ways, new characters and new conflicts appear.

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Generally speaking, the textual analysis part of the research has dealt particularly with the narrative structure of the soap and with the community as the thematic focal point, while there are fewer suggestions as to how to characterize the essential function of the conversations and how to analytically identify the conversation. This article, therefore, primarily sets out to propose how to theoretically and analytically identify how the conversations function on a micro-level as well as in respect to the soap as the overriding framework. This analytical identification draws on theory introduced by the Russian theorist on language and discourse M. M. Bakhtin in the shape of his concept of the speech act (Bakhtin 2002 (1986)). Methodically, this article is based on a single episode, illustrating how the various levels of the speech genre are related. It is, thus, a question of condensations and exemplifications, especially as regards how the speech genre functions on a structural level. At the same time, one of the points is that the work on genres in fact makes it possible to work across very large quantities of text, because the genre analysis crystallizes relatively fixed and stable patterns. In this connection, I will argue that the kind of gossip or inside talk among the staff, which characterizes Hotellet, is also present in other soaps, and that the mediating conversation characterizing the episode analyzed here is also found in the other episodes.

Speech Act Theory and Microsociology

In his essay “The Problem of Speech Genres,” Bakhtin distinguishes between primary (typically oral) and secondary (typically written) speech genres. In respect to what we will be examining more closely here – the speech genres in the soap (primary speech genres) and the soap as a speech genre (secondary speech genre) – one of the points is that the primary speech genres and the ways in which the characters’ conversations reflect everyday conversations are related to the secondary genre, the soap. Overall, this means that the conversations are contextualized as regards the other generic features of the soap: its emphasis on parallel action and community themes. This also means that the interplay between the secondary genre, the soap, and the particular arena of the individual production is decisive for which conversations are started and how they develop. The everyday conversation typically characterizes the overall linguistic expression of the soap, in that it is the quotidian as a context, as a theme, and often as a composition (an episode typically begins on a working day while the end of a single episode typically corresponds with the end of the day) that constitutes its framework. The everyday conversation is, of course, a highly complex entity, but in this context I will argue that the everyday conversations that unfold in the soap are characterized by containing elements of small talk and/or gossip, which is connected with the fact that gossip, as a speech genre, has a quality in respect to linking the many instances of parallel action together and focusing on the subject of community.

Bakhtin furthermore argues that every expression, whether primary or secondary speech genres, has an individual style that is linked to the entity or subject that transmits the expression. In other words, this is a dynamic concept of genre in which what is framed and formal is united with the individual style. Thus, genres are defined as general stylistic expressions that are “inseparably linked to particular thematic unities: to particular types of construction of the whole, types of its completion, and types of relations between the speaker and other participants in speech communication” (Bakhtin 2002 (1986): 64). The style of the individual production is tied up with the
angle taken on the material, the particular composition, and the unique arena in the series. The special concentration and linguistic style can be explored by means of linguistic analysis, insofar as the analysis, contrary to more traditional linguistic analyses, works with the overall linguistic expression that it has built up in relation to theme, style, and composition and especially context. In this respect, Bakhtin’s theory shares many points of similarity with John Austin and John Searle’s argumentation theory (Andersen & Lundquist 2003: 107), which is why the concepts from this field are sporadically present in my analysis. What is special about Bakhtin’s reflections is, however, the concept of speech genre, which in an exemplary way makes it possible to speak systematically about various kinds of jargons and not least about the relation between primary and secondary genres. Bakhtin criticizes traditional linguistics for not being interested in real, social subjects communicating from and in concrete situations and contexts. In this context, all conversations are the product of the specific sphere, the speaker’s and the addressee’s mutual relation, the theme, and so forth. The utterance “Is anything available?” will thus be conceived of differently according to whether it is said at a hotel reception desk or at a public employment agency and would be considered odd if it was the hotel receptionist addressing the client. This means that utterances cannot be considered neutral; rather they always relate to the interaction between the context, sender, and receiver. Bakhtin views the utterance as delimited by the speaking subject, but the delimitation does not necessarily correspond to the concept of turn-taking in conversational analysis, which marks shifts between speakers in a dialogue (see also, e.g., Wiese 2003). According to Bakhtin, the utterance may thus consist of a single word, but also of an entire work. In addition, every utterance will refer to other utterances in an intertextual structure, and this means that the analytical work on the concept of the utterance will emphasize the very process of speech, other utterances, and cultural communication, in which will be embedded viewpoints, approaches, and philosophies of life. Dialogue is therefore a key concept in Bakhtin’s theory of speech acts, inasmuch as for Bakhtin every utterance can be understood in relation to previously made utterances, and in continuation of this, the speech genres function as general yet dynamic frameworks for how we can speak about certain topics. This is true for both everyday genres (e.g., greetings or small talk about the weather) and various sorts of conversations, lectures, and official speeches. The transition between the various genres normally goes unnoticed because speech genres are conceived of as natural, almost as part of the mother tongue (Bakhtin 2002 (1986): 78), but in an analytical perspective, these very transitions can make visible the relations between the content of the dialogue and the relationship between speaker and addressee, situation and space. For example, we will see how a conversation between a guest and a receptionist changes from a formal conversation to a more private conversation.

The analytical focus on the function of everyday conversation in the soap in relation to theme, context, fundamental dialogical principles, and composition may benefit theoretically and methodically from the support of microsociological theory and speech act theory. Bakhtin’s speech act theory is compatible with, for instance, Erving Goffman’s face theory and theories of interaction (see, for instance, Andersen & Lundquist 2003), and a combination of these theoretical directions enables us to examine how utterances and dialogue play through and contradict norms and conventions for human action, which constitute such a central part of the world of the soap. Thus, in Goffman’s analyses, it is a question of cooperation between “senders” and “receivers” who jointly maintain a number of conventional sets of norms for inter-
action. In respect to the following analyses, Goffman’s analyses of social interaction – which take a dramaturgical perspective on everyday life, viewing humans as organized in teams, front region and backstage – is interesting. Our way of understanding, acting, and speaking is determined by our situation, and the soap establishes spaces in which examples of these different situations can unfold. Above all, Goffman says that all human performance takes place both on stage and backstage. There are eyes that observe the front, and this lays an essential role in the way humans stage themselves. Backstage, a calculated presentation of the self is not as necessary, but this also means that it would seem “wrong” if a person acted as if he were in front – for instance, at a hotel reception desk when he was really in the living room with a good friend. The metaphorical reading of human exchange as being organized in well-defined teams that can either be regarded as “performers” or “observers/audience” is thus key. One team serves as actors – another as observers: “I do not know of any general reason why interaction in natural settings usually takes the form of two-team interplay, or is resolvable into this form, instead of involving a larger number, but empirically this seems to be the case” (1959: 91f). However, at the same time, it is a clear and important point in Goffman’s work that the distribution of roles regarding who performs and who observes often changes position in the course of a given situation. It is clear, therefore, that the characters and themes in, for instance, Hotellet are created by means of the interaction between the manners of speaking in relation to a front region and a backstage. When the characters are at work, they have “guests,” which means that there are a number of very specific sets of norms that apply to the “right etiquette.” There is a general and reigning definition of a given situation that the two groups normally maintain.

I will return to the transitions and the relationship between arena and conversational form after first analyzing the role of gossip in the soap, which at a general level has often been characterized as a particularly important speech genre, and then taking a look at how it interacts with a number of generic and fundamental features in the secondary genre.

“You don’t Say!” Gossip as a Speech Genre
To begin with, it seems appropriate to specify what is meant by gossip in the context of the soap. In this context, gossip is considered a kind of small talk that concerns people who are not present. Gossip can be directed toward many different themes and news of both a positive and negative character, but is typically characterized by someone having done something or acted in a way that diverges from “normal behavior.” Thus, gossip may be considered a ritualized negotiation of norms for what we can and cannot allow ourselves to do (see, e.g., Coupland 2000). At the same time, gossip is typically driven by a kind of secrecy that, do not involve significant costs for those involved, even though they are exposed. As a communicative tool, gossip serves the purpose of creating coherence and relationships between people. In other words, it is directed toward relational connections rather than, for instance, being action or goal oriented.

In the soap, gossip serves several functions, and the soap research that has focused on the significance of dialogue has relevantly pointed out that gossip and rumors play a key role in respect to “binding together the various plots and the different characters and making them coherent” (Geragthy 1981: 24) and repeating points to the viewer who follows the series more sporadically. A more concrete analysis might contribute to further qualifying this point. In, for example, Hotellet, there are obviously two sorts of
gossip and rumors: an internal kind, which concerns the main characters of the series, and a more external kind, when, for instance, the staff intercept various pieces of information that they share among themselves or vice versa, when two guests gossip about the staff. Both offer insight into what is going on backstage in the hotel, but it is particularly the internal gossip that ties together the action and spaces. Episode 25 in the series (13 September 2001, the opening episode in the third season) offers an illustrative example of the internal function of gossip in the narrative, showing how gossip can serve as a speech genre in the soap. The viewer's knowledge remains status quo throughout the entire episode, so that the gossip and the story about Lasse’s and Maria’s affair forms a repetitive and annotating pattern in the slight variations of the story, while the story circulates from person to person – from situation to situation.

Summary of episode 25: Maria has had an affair. She has cheated on her husband, Adam, who is the hotel director, with the hotel’s head chef, Lasse. Both Lasse and Maria feel very bad about the affair, and now Maria is pregnant and does not know which of the two is the father of the child. Adam has moved home to his brother, Nikolaj, and tells him about Maria’s affair. Anette, who is a waitress at the hotel, and her husband, Claes, have problems, and Louise, who is the receptionist, comes to serve as a go-between between two guests: a dominating mother and her daughter, who has bulimia. The office girl, Aminah, who used to be Nikolaj’s girlfriend, has started flirting with Said, who is a cleaner at Hotel Faber and of Turkish descent. The episode covers a single day, which is typical of many soap episodes.

The scene that introduces the story about Maria and Lasse takes place in the hotel kitchen, where Lasse misunderstands a conversation between Louise and the chef Jimmy. Lasse thinks they are talking about him – before they actually do so. Between the lines, it is clear that Lasse has a guilty conscience and sees his two colleagues’ conversation as a “clique formation”. The example, thus, exposes the common and certainly familiar situation in which something that does not need to be embarrassing becomes so because the context is embarrassing.

Louise enters the kitchen with an order:
Louise: Hi, here you are
Jimmy: Hi – no way, who in the hell orders duck and pancakes?
Louise: Yeah, someone who’s really hungry. You can pass it on to Lasse, you know.
Jimmy: No, I’d damn well rather ride a rodeo bull!
Louise: The worst thing about a hotel is the staff!

Lasse comes out of the small office. A crosscut is done between Lasse and Jimmy. Both are filmed in medium close shots, with Jimmy in a close-up in between.

Lasse: What the hell are you talking about?
Jimmy: Pancakes.
Lasse: You’re talking about me, you’re pointing over here.
Jimmy: What are you talking about?
Lasse: You’re talking about me.
Jimmy: (Ironically) We’re talking about you, we ONLY talk about you, Lasse.
Lasse: Damn it. People just can’t keep their mouths shut.
Jimmy: It would probably help if you gave us your own version of it.
Lasse: What are they saying about us?
Jimmy: Whew! It's pretty big, it's ...
Lasse: What the hell, why can't women keep their mouth shut!
Jimmy: Which one of them are you thinking about?
Lasse: Yeah, Maria, that's damn well the only one I slept with.
Jimmy: Did you sleep with Maria?
Lasse: Yeah. Keep your mouth shut!

As mentioned above, it is characteristic of the conversation that Lasse presumes that they have already spoken about him. In this way, the series imitates a universe in which people talk about each other at workplaces and a situation in which one is afraid of being exposed. The viewer knows, however, that they have not gossiped about Lasse and Maria, and one of the points of the episode is that, on a metalevel, the scene thematizes the gossip through phrases such as “What are you talking about?”, “We’re talking about you, Lasse…”, “… people can’t keep their mouths shut”. “… your own version.” Even though the affair is still a secret, the dialogue points out the possibility of slips of the tongue and revelation in respect to an obvious topic of gossip: infidelity and sex between co-workers, which thematically speaking are important focal points in the soap.

In addition, the conversation is typical that it is between co-workers/friends. The reciprocal relation between the speakers is reflected in a jargon with many swear words, irony and honesty. Lasse, thus, clearly finds himself in a dilemma where he would rather they did not talk about him, on the one hand, but wants to let off steam and tell Jimmy about the affair, on the other.

In the next scene, Lasse wants to know whether Maria has told anyone anything, so he goes to see her in the office behind the reception desk. Again, the scene provides no new information and no real action, and again it is the potential of the affair to develop into gossip that is key. In its slowness, the situation illustrates how embarrassing the whole thing is for all of them. The scene is composed around a series of crosscuts focusing on the person speaking (or attempting to) and captures the atmosphere by showing their wandering eyes, rapid speech and hesitant questions. The sluggishness characterizing the scene establishes a situation in which what cannot be said becomes just as important as what is actually put into discourse.

Lasse: Maria… I’d just like to talk to you for a second. I have a … um… maybe it’s me… a feeling that people are talking about us.
A receptionist enters and leaves again.
Maria: Who would know something about it?
Lasse: No, that’s just it. Yeah, so I’d just like to ask you if you’ve told anyone?
Maria: No, I haven’t, Lasse. Yeah, Adam knows, but you know that.
Lasse: Has he told anyone?
Maria: No, I don’t think so.
Lasse: So maybe it’s just me.
Maria: Have you told anyone?
Lasse: No, no.

In the third follow-up on the situation, it is two “interlopers” – Adam’s brother and sister, Nikolaj and Julie – who use the story as a topic of conversation, and on a certain level, it is not until this point that Lasse and Maria’s affair can be said to end up as “real” gossip, where the people involved are not there themselves.
Julie: What’s going on with Adam these days?
Nikolaj: Yeah, that’s a good question.
Julie: What is it, Nikolaj?
Nikolaj: How the hell should I know?
Julie: Oh stop, I’m not dense, you know. What’s he done?
Nikolaj: He hasn’t done a damn thing.
Julie: Usually you can’t keep your mouth shut about this kind of thing. Come on, Nikolaj….I’m his sister, you can tell me.
Nikolaj: No, I can’t…
Julie: I won’t tell anyone.
Nikolaj: Promise?
Julie: Mmm….
Nikolaj: Maria, she slept with Lasse.
Julie: What…?
Nikolaj: You heard me…
Julie: (Giggles)
Nikolaj: Is that funny?
Julie: No. Lasse and Maria???
They break out in laughter.

The example illustrates how the gossip stems from a genuine interest in a family member’s well-being and surprise about his behavior. In addition, it is natural for Nikolaj to withhold the secret, which seems to reflect a generally valid convention in respect to this kind of gossip. When a story refers to something hidden and relates to someone we care about, we consider whether we can take the liberty of passing it on. And maybe we just can’t refrain from doing so: “Usually you can’t keep your mouth shut about this kind of thing.”

Again, it is characteristic that, beyond having a repetitive and binding function, the gossip reflects the relationship of the speakers. In this context, it is siblings talking together, and because Adam is their brother and she is Nikolaj’s sister, she feels entitled to know what is going on.

The repetition of the rumor four times helps create a reference back to a conflict presented earlier that concerns Julie and Jimmy, who have a classic conflict underneath the surface of their relationship. Julie does not want to have children. Jimmy does.

Julie: Well, you can ask Louise yourself… yeah, or Maria, she was there too.
Jimmy: Yeah, Maria, she certainly gets around.
Julie: What do you mean?
Jimmy: Nothing.
Julie: I don’t think she’s doing too well these days.
Jimmy: Have you talked to her?
Julie: Well, what do you mean by talk?
Jimmy: Since you say that she’s not doing too well.
Julie: No, not like that, I mean I talked to Nikolaj after we had been up at my mom’s
Jimmy: About the thing with Lasse.
Julie: With Lasse?
Jimmy: I promised not to say anything.
Julie: Has Lasse told you everything?
Jimmy: I think so.
Julie: I just don’t understand why she told Adam.
Jimmy: You wouldn’t have?
Julie: But seriously, to say it, it just makes it worse for both of them...
Jimmy: This means that if you had gotten pregnant with someone else, you wouldn’t have said anything?
Julie: But that’s different, they were a couple once, and it’s pretty unlikely that Lasse’s going to be a father.
Jimmy: That doesn’t matter a damn bit, it’s the principle of the thing.
Julie: Well, yeah. I can’t really see that it’s a problem for us.
Julie tries to kiss Jimmy, but he pulls away.
Jimmy: No, you don’t want to have children.

In the dialogue, the two individuals need to find out how much the other person knows, which they do by making statements that are somehow ambiguous: “Yeah, Maria, she certainly gets around” and “I don’t think she’s doing too well these days.” When Jimmy is certain that Julie also knows what he knows, he says it directly and Julie wonders out loud why Maria told about her infidelity. The story then acquires two new functions. It initiates a conversation about the conventions for what one should do in the case of infidelity to one’s partner and it instigates a crisis in Jimmy and Julie’s relationship on which the subsequent episodes build. In this way, one can say that the gossip, as a constitutive feature of the soap opera, has both a synchronous function in the individual episode and a more diachronic function as concerns linking the various episodes together.

In the individual episode, it is characteristic that the rumor circulates among the seven main characters and from the kitchen through the office to Alice’s apartment at the hotel, ending in Jimmy’s private apartment. The many rooms of the hotel are linked together by means of the story and provide insight into everything that is happening backstage. As a speech genre, the gossip thus manifests a conversational form essentially different from the way in which one speaks, for instance, with guests at the reception desk or the restaurant – the front region of the hotel arena in Goffman’s terminology. This also means that the gossip manifests private space and “private” or intimate conversation, which is key to the way in which the world of the soap opera deals with the everyday and emotional aspects of life. This speech genre, among others, illustrates the norms existing in our emotional and private life for how, for instance, love and friendship can be handled. In this connection, one can clearly argue that the reason there is so much talk in the soap opera is that, on the thematic level, the genre deals with private and universal human relations (see, e.g., Mumford 1995). On the other hand, the various ways of expressing oneself constitute independent reflexive spaces whose frameworks are determined by the particular arena of the individual production. Thus, in the following analysis, we will take a closer look at how the specific arena of the hotel generates specific conversational forms, but also how the soap opera’s unique thematic orientation toward the intimate and private at the same time undermines conversations typically taking place in a front region, causing them to become private conversations. In this way, it may be argued that the distinction between front region and backstage loses its force. Instead, a radical “middle region” emerges, which is the concept that Joshua Meyrowitz uses to describe the situations and transitions in which players must redefine a certain situation because one of the parties has inadvertently, for instance, acquired insight into the intimate organization of the backstage region (Meyrowitz 1985).
“I don’t Want to Interfere, but…”
The Mediating Conversation as a Speech Genre

The arena, and in this case perhaps the reception desk and the restaurant in particular, gives direct insight into well-known situations such as checking into a hotel. But while reality’s maintenance of roles and stages shields us from knowing what happens backstage, the medium, and in this case the fiction, gives us the possibility of witnessing conversations in the back room when the guest is out of earshot. From a kind of Olympian position, we can take in both rooms in a way that reality never allows. The arena and the almost simultaneous gaze toward the front region and the backstage reveal that our conversations change character according to our situation. The conversations in Hotellet endlessly present a series of implicit rules for social behavior, and the lines between “right” and “wrong” are drawn by means of, for instance, humor and irony. Occasionally, we experience a series of breaks with the prevalent norms, which means that the rules come to appear precisely as active and unavoidable. For instance, in the final season, Aminah’s gum-chewing sister is hired as an office assistant, and she clearly has no sense of the etiquette of Hotel Faber. As a case in point, Aminah overhears her sister making fun of a German tourist without him understanding what is going on. Through his cheerful gestures he keeps trying to communicate, while what she does is effectively to make him and, in a sense, all the rules of the trade look ridiculous. Quite typical of such a situation, Aminah pulls her sister into the back room to reprimand her. As Goffman writes, “[w]hen a member of the team makes a mistake in the presence of the audience, the other team members often must suppress their immediate desire to punish and instruct the offender until, that is, the audience is no longer present. After all, immediate corrective sanctioning would often only disturb the interaction further and, as previously suggested, make the audience privy to a view that ought to be reserved for teammates” (Goffman 1959: 89). So a point is being made when Aminah takes her sister away to reproach her; otherwise the situation would have been even more embarrassing. We do what we can to preserve the roles and the situation. The exaggerated character of the story demonstrates how humor and irony can show how the exception confirms the rule about the nature of a desirable relationship between receptionists and hotel guests. And whereas it does not have a major function as far as the action is concerned, it has a function in relation to establishing small episodic sequences as unique to the arena and thus to Hotellet. The point becomes clearer below, where the general argument is that, while one can say that as a speech genre gossip is characteristic of the soap opera as a secondary genre, in relation to the specific arena the individual production establishes a dominant speech genre that becomes the special stylistic mark of the particular production. As regards Hotellet, the speech genre is what can be called the mediating conversation.

The examples to be analyzed stem from the same episode (25) and are based on storylines resolved and closed within the specifics of the episode in which the receptionist Louise gains insight into a guest’s private sphere. In establishing the relationship between Louise and Beate, for the first time we see a reproduction of the prevalent norms and conventions for how a receptionist receives a customer. However, it is noteworthy that Louise uses the more informal Danish “hej” (hi) rather than “goddag” (hello) or “velkommen” (welcome), because she’s talking to a young person.

A young gum-chewing teenager approaches the desk.

Louise: Hi. What can I do for you?
Girl: My mom’s reserved a room.

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Louise: Yes, what’s your mom’s name?
Girl: Helle Bramsvig.
Louise: Helle Bramsvig… Yes, it’s a double room, 202.
Girl: Yeah, but that needs to be changed. I want my own room.
Louise: Yes, okay, but do you want two single rooms then?
Girl: I just want my own room!
Louise: I think we’ll just wait till your mom arrives.
Girl: Why?
Louise: Well… you’re welcome to sit out here and wait, or inside the restaurant.

In the middle of the conversation a shift occurs from the girl, as a customer, having the right to give orders, to Louise deciding that she cannot have the room that she is asking for and closing the conversation with a professional phrase: “you’re welcome to sit out here and wait, or inside the restaurant.” The closure is just firm enough that the girl does not protest and just professional and polite enough that the girl does not lose face. When the mother arrives at the reception desk, the conversation progresses as follows:

Louise: Yes, I gathered from your daughter that you wanted to have your own room?
Mother (directed toward the daughter): That was very kind of you dear, but I don’t mind us sleeping together. (Directed toward Louise):
My daughter just came home from England.
The daughter turns on her heels demonstratively.
Louise: Well, I’ll just change that again, then?
Mother: That’s very kind of you. (Looks casually at Julie walking by, says to Louise):
Where have I seen that face before?
Louise: It’s from a commercial.
Mother: Soap?
Louise: Sanitary napkins.
Mother: Pretty face. She could make better use of it. Yes, all of you young girls could! Come on, dear!

As in the example with the office assistant and the German man above, the scene focuses – albeit in a different, more common manner – on the theme of small-talk at a reception desk, but in this case the story develops into a characteristic episodic or closed storyline within the episode (opposite the parallel and open-ended storylines), for one thing because we follow the characters in a series of different situations and in particular in the restaurant, for instance, where the daughter is also repeatedly impolite and domineering. It may be considered a characteristic closed storyline – not just a characteristic description of the arena – largely because Louise interferes in the relationship between the daughter and mother. In this way, the episodic or closed storyline of the episode is defined as a story that has an effect on or relates very directly to the main characters in the series without continuing over several episodes. Later, Louise has to enter the girl’s room to turn off a noisy television. She can see that the girl has eaten too much and is throwing up.

The girl: What are you doing here?
Louise: Well, you turned the TV up full blast, so the neighbors complained.
Is that something you do often, what you’re doing there?
The girl nods.
The girl indicates that Louise has encroached on her “private” sphere and attempts to mark a distance to Louise, while Louise’s very direct tone and approach breaks down the distance in the concrete exposure of the girl’s actions. The girl’s insolent and provocative tone and expression at the reception desk (gum, no smile, “that needs to be changed. I want my own room”) have a cause and conceal an unhappy teenage girl.

After a scene that takes place in Aminah’s apartment, the conversation continues between Beate and Louise, and Beate clarifies her personal problem. In the middle of the conversation the mother enters the room:

Louise: Why haven’t you ever talked to your mom about this?
The girl: How the hell could I talk to her?
Louise: It’s not that bad, is it? She’s a little bit nice, isn’t she?
The girl: She’s so nice that she lets me sit and rot in some horrible boarding school in England.
Louise: She must come and visit you once in a while?
The girl: How many times do you think she’s been to visit me?
Louise: ... I don’t know.
The girl makes a zero sign with her fingers.
The girl: She’s been to England several times, only not to visit me. It doesn’t make a damn difference anyway.
The mother knocks and enters.
Mother: Why in the world have you changed rooms? Oh no – Beate, but my dear, you shouldn’t eat that all that garbage if you’ve got a stomachache. Now pack your things, and this has got to stop.
Louise: I’m afraid that it’s not going to. Your daughter doesn’t want to go back to her school.
Mother: Tell me, what is that you two have been up to?
Louise: May I speak with you out in the hallway?
Mother: Beate doesn’t know how privileged she is.
Louise: Beate needs you to listen to her. I don’t think you are. You’re losing your daughter.
Louise leaves. The mother looks after her thoughtfully.

The dialogue demonstrates that a potential antipathy for the girl turns into sympathy – that, in other words, the scene reverses the relationship to the girl from negative to positive. This reversal in the scene is a characteristic feature of the construction of the episodic chain of events in Hotellet, a fundamental philosophy of which seems to be that a hotel is a place where a great number of people whose personal stories are all worthy of being told go in and out of the revolving doors. The reversal and the knowledge that Louise gains results in Louise playing the role of go-between (Goffman 1959: 149), which also means that she steps out of the role of receptionist. In other words, the language of the stage and that of the backstage region are being negotiated, and the conversational form and the situation have to be redefined (Meyrowitz 1985).

The first disintegration of the distinction occurs, as mentioned, when Louise enters the room without the guest behind the door having said “come in.” The confidences are motivated by Louise posing some (naive) questions that the upset Beate answers aggressively and ironically: “She’s so nice that she lets me sit and rot in some horrible boarding school in England.” Louise poses the questions that are necessary (for the viewer) to understand why the girl acts and speaks as she does. When the mother comes in, the characters and the viewers know that the mother has misunderstood the
daughter – consciously or unconsciously – by not knowing why she changed rooms and stating, “you shouldn’t eat that all that garbage if you’ve got a stomachache.”

Louise asks if she can speak with the mother, and when they are alone she adopts a direct form of address, using the Danish informal second-person singular pronoun “du”. While the mother and daughter are both present, Louise maintains the “etiquette”, which for one thing is evident from her language: “Your daughter” (“Deres” in Danish, the formal second-person singular/plural possessive pronoun), and so on. When she is alone with one or the other, however, she moves onto a more private platform, which in Goffman’s terminology is backstage, but which for Meyrowitz is precisely an example of the emergence of an entirely different situation. The mediating conversation usually plays a role in respect to episodic storylines and continuously represents how situations are redefined, with a bias towards the more intimate and private spheres of life (Meyrowitz 1985: 48). In continuation of this, Laura Mumford operates with a thesis on the collapse of the public and private spheres in the soap opera:

… soap operas actually redefine both the public and the private spheres, specifically through their treatment of the concept of privacy. Soap opera characters conduct their lives in physical settings whose public and communal nature ultimately makes privacy impossible, and this in turn works to conduct a fictional community whose members have an unrestricted right of access to each other’s most personal experiences and feelings. In effect, there is no private sphere in the soap opera community because there is no privacy. (Mumford 1995: 49)

The paradoxical point is, thus, that the various speech genres are constantly moving into the intimate and private conversational forms and thereby undermining the distinction between the private and public sphere, but instead of everything becoming private, the private sphere becomes shared by so many people that it does not make sense to say that something is private.

The Potential of the Concept of Speech Genre
We have seen how, by means of Bakhtin’s theory, it is possible to point out a dynamic relation between primary and secondary speech genres and their particular compositional structures. At the same time, Bakhtin’s theory involves certain operational difficulties; therefore, in conclusion I will focus on how the analyses also disclose elements that can further illuminate and systematize the variations within the speech genres. The analyses disclose that variations, for example, can be further described by bringing situationally defined and spatial factors into the foreground (McCarthy 2000: 85). The analysis has already outlined the spatial element as essential insofar as the hotel arena as a particular sphere establishes certain kinds of interaction and roles, some people serving as hosts – others as guests. It is also natural to point out that, for instance, the scene in which Lasse experiences that Jimmy and Louise are talking about him is elaborated and experienced in its own special way because it unfolds in a kitchen. The kitchen is a workplace, and with its bias toward backstage language, the concrete jargon serves as a probable result of the interplay between space and, for instance, the characters’ relationships. I have also argued that it is relevant to expose the situations in which, for example, a formal conversation between a guest and a receptionist changes to a private conversation and servicing is replaced
with mediation or giving advise. In this sense, I will argue that we need to systematically categorize the current activities in an attempt to better understand speech genres. Furthermore, it is natural for the analysis to systematically work with the attitudes that characters bring with them into conversations (McCarthy 2000: 85). If we compare, for instance, the behavior of the mother and daughter at the reception desk, it stands to reason that, in spite of the fact that the sphere (the reception desk) and the activity (the servicing) are the same, specific situations and modulations of conversational forms are in fact played out. Based on this, it may be argued that the analysis can clearly make use of additional sociological theories, if it manages at the same time to maintain the general perspective on the speech patterns creating the particular style of the production and the genre. Even though we view the speech genres as condensations existing parallel to a number of other speech genres, this particular analytical perspective offers the possibility of pointing out how the many conversations and the almost endless talk function as fundamental techniques in the genre. Together and independently, the gossip and the mediating conversation contribute to concentrating the sense of a “middle region” and a collapse of the public and private spheres.

The experience of this insight as something other and more than a perspective on backstage conversational patterns is not unique to the soap opera; if anything it is characteristic of the sum of genres, formats and programs that, via the media, deal with and represent everyday life and its many conversational forms in new ways. It is, therefore, possible to use the concept to shed light on conversations in other genres – for instance, reality shows that use a number of different speech genres to create various kinds of reflective spaces, and where gossip, among other things, is particularly prominent in the structural organization of the programs.

In any case, it may be argued that the fundamental conversational mode in these genres ought to be an analytical focus, because on a number of different levels, it is central to the story being told. Conversation, thus, functions on a thematic level as a representation of everyday life in such a way that it is the (private) problems of everyday life that are dealt with. In addition, conversation reflects the everyday colloquialisms through which everyday life is dealt with. In the soap opera, conversation and in particular gossip furthermore constitute a key compositional technique that, along with the theme of community and the parallel action, firmly anchors the genre and its special attraction, which is all in all also a meta-commentary on the many speech patterns and various reflexive spaces of everyday life.

Notes

1. The following definition is highly simplified, in that I do not discuss the historical development of the genre, the various sub-genres, and existing and very different interpretations of the concept of the soap. I do not, for instance, differentiate between community soaps and workplace soaps, daytime soaps and prime-time soaps, the luxury soap as opposed to the everyday soap, and so on. It is necessary to use this simplified definition due to the limited scope of this article; it is based on supporting generic principles that I have developed in my work in light of the existing research in the area (From 2003).

2. Bennedikte Hammershøy Nielsen (1999) introduces the genre category of “character-based dramas” for series combining episodic and serial stories. I do not deny that we need new terminology to describe this kind of series, but in this context I would merely like to point out that the series can be described on the basis of the essential features of the soap.

3. Rather than dealing with empirical and receiver-oriented research, which has focused in particular on the ways in which women experience soaps, I will consider the soap solely from the perspective of textual analysis.
4. The analysis is independent and theoretically developed but is based on ideas outlined in my doctoral dissertation, “What do they talk about – what do we talk about?” “A Genre Analysis of Danish Soap Operas” (From 2003).
5. In earlier work (From 2003), I have dealt systematically with all 60 episodes and found these speech genres relevant.
6. Bakhtin criticizes Saussure, for example, for carrying out this more traditional kind of analysis (Bakhtin 2002 (1986): 68).
7. Another dimension is that the audience also uses the soap as an object of conversation in various ways, and various chat fora and weekly magazines help reinforce the soap as a topic of conversation (see, e.g., Riegel 1996).

Bibliography

City Branding – All Smoke, No Fire?

JØRGEN STIGEL & SØREN FRIMANN

Abstract
Successful corporate branding requires that questions related to communication, publicity, and organizational structures are addressed. An uncritical adoption of approaches known from traditional product branding will inevitably give problems as the properties of tangible commodities and services with their relatively concrete dimensions are absent when the main question is one of values.

Furthermore, when the relatively straightforward identification and power structures of corporations and consumers are replaced by the more diversified structures of city government, their populations, and potential visitors, problems seem to multiply in what has become known as city branding.

This analysis of the communicational aspects of two Danish provincial towns’ branding efforts examines both their internally and externally directed communication. It demonstrates that an insufficient understanding of – or willingness to face – these differences will inevitably hamper such branding efforts because of the consequential inconsistencies.

Finally, paths to more effective city branding are indicated.

Key Words: branding, city branding, market communication, corporate communication, organizational communication, qualitative analysis

Introduction
The market is expanding. Since the 1980s essential parts of the infrastructure and communication sector of European nation states, such as railways, air transportation, telecommunication, postal services, TV and radio have been subjected to market laws. But not only is the market spreading into more and more fields; the thinking, the conventions and entire vocabulary and conceptual world underlying marketing and market communication are also gaining ground. It is symptomatic, for instance, that for every new edition, one of the central textbooks of the field, Philip Kotler’s Marketing Management, views the conception of marketing and developments of the field in new derived or extended connections. The central functional and symbolic category in marketing, viz. the brand (and branding) is being applied in new ways that would have been unthinkable 20 years ago. The corporate branding phenomenon is a vivid example in this respect, as modes of thought and conceptualisations from branding and marketing are being transferred to organisations and their symbolic and communicative manifestation. This application also subsumes their ‘inner life’ or ‘identity’ and the values that are being propounded. In a manner similar to the branding of consumer products, organisations
are being *shaped*, or designed, in linguistic and symbolic processes with its members, in a process in which its values, and thus the particular values of their members are being determined. The shaping of meaning and enactment in speech, and the accompanying processes thus become crucial in several ways in relation to corporate branding.

Below we shall investigate concepts such as *brand, branding* and *corporate branding*, and their associated value representation. Our aim is to examine what happens when a brand and the underlying corporate brand reasoning is extended to a field such as cities, in a so-called city branding. This will be done by a text and communication analysis of central textual and, to a lesser extent, visual manifestations of the branding activities of two Danish municipalities in North Jutland, viz. Aalborg and Hjørring, such as the activities are expressed in the two brochures which they have published as part of their branding, and also as first moves in relation to their inhabitants. The objective of our analyses are fourfold in that they will study: i) the way that the texts address their readers, and how they inscribe them in their project by activating them in the cause (including, obviously, the text as a sender or enunciation instantiation; ii) the designed slogan and its meaning(s); iii) the implementation and the representation of special (brand) values asserting the uniqueness of the locality; iv) the overall textual expression in regard to its inward and outward directionality. Some will say our method is discourse analytical, others that it is text and communication analytical, but this is inconsequential as our aim is to more specifically study partly how the texts handle some of the central problems in corporate brand thinking, especially with regard to its processually oriented dimensions: a) their formulation of identity and value determination must largely be based on a consensus among the interested parties. How is this brought about when a city is involved?, and b) the brand and branding activities are aimed at the organisation’s surrounding world while the process takes its point of departure in an entirely different world; viz. in the enspeechment of actors’ and interested parties within the organisation. How is it ensured that already existing conceptions and images, which may be crucial for the further communicative strategy, are taken into account? In sum, one might say that this paper and the underlying study pose the question: To what extent is it possible to apply the (corporate) branding philosophy where cities and towns are concerned?

**Brand & Branding**

The brand and the branding activity are not necessarily the same. The concept of branding is thus a later and rather recent arrival which is inspired by some of the characteristics and advantages of a brand, but it focuses primarily on the process and the activity itself in relation to establishing, maintaining and extending a brand – and, it should be noted, it does this in particular on the basis of ideas about a company’s or an organisation’s particular identity. Brand and branding are absolutely essential concepts in marketing and market communication. Based on Kotler (1984) and Aaker (1996), we shall below give brief definitions of cultural concepts within the field.

A brand is a registered trademark, designated ®. It protects and indicates a company’s ownership to a named, particularly identifiable product (*brand* and *branding* derive from the branding of cattle in order to establish ownership). The identifiability derives from the specially designed packaging, the name or logo, slogan, and other distinctive traits, which distinguish the trademark from both its product category, and from other, competing brands. The trademark simply aims at lifting the product out of its
product category, which is often designated as the generic product, in order that it may become the expected brand. If the branding process results in a (perceived) improvement of the product (making it the extended brand), then the goal will be to maintain its acquired and unique position. It may thus become the ultimate brand, privileged by customers as the only choice.

As distinct from the concept of the trademark product, the brand or branded product designates what the consumer transforms the trademark into when purchasing, consuming and living with it.

The trademark, or branded product offers a number of functional dimensions as well as rational, visible advantages, among which could be mentioned: i) a guaranteed price (according to lists), homogeneity in volume and quality, durability, excellent performance, servicing and replacement, the right to make complaints to the trademark holder, and ii) the ability to effect or achieve something, e.g. solve a problem (“Er De udkørt kl. 3? Medova The”) (see expected brand above). Thus an important feature of the branded product is that the consumer can address the manufacturer, company or originator, rather than be left to the good-will of the purchase point. Equally important, the producer is able to address the consumer directly without being dependent on the distributor or vendor’s willingness to act as a mediator. The interest created in consumers by marketing activities works as a pressure on vendors.

Thus, an important feature of a trademark’s branding activities is not only identity creation through the name, but also through differentiation, i.e. a clear distinctiveness vis-à-vis other brands and the entire product category. This may be achieved through a number of parameters, e.g. in the form of pledges to honour special expectations (“Forvent dig lidt mere af os.”; “Lidt bedre end andre gode oste.”; “Probably the best beer in the world.”)

All of the above factors contribute to the creation of forms of personification of a company’s products and, in addition, of the company itself (e.g. “Just do it.” and “We’re loving it.”)

As pointed out above, in the interaction with the consumer or buyer, the trademark transforms into a brand: in the consumer’s mind a distinct image or association is made or attributed to the brand. The brand holds a cognitive-emotional dimension, which to some degree causes the consumer to identify himself and his consumption with it and makes him view the brand, himself and his behaviour in the light of a special material/immaterial meaning ascription to that brand. Put in categorical terms, one could say the brand occupies a mental territory, while the product or trademark merely occupies a functional territory.

In the very last instance, the brand is an intangible, symbolic, and physically non-existing entity. In other words, the tangible product may become a secondary thing in relation to the intangible and symbolic product, as in H.C. Andersen’s The Emperor’s New Suit. The brand thus carries with it values, bondings and loyalisations in relation to the consumer. As a result, holders of branded products are extremely interested in the relation between their intended value ascription to the brand (the brand identity) and the brand image, i.e. the consumers’ conception of and his attitudes to the brand, and in how this matches and reflects the consumers’ need for (self)expression, identity and values. Ratings are also made of brand awareness, i.e. how easily the brand comes to the consumer’s mind. Measurements of brand position are also made, reflecting the brand’s position in relation to other brands along a number of parameters and values, including in which fields it possesses particular advantages. This is all summed up in a brand
personality; i.e. the traits that enable the consumer to immediately relate to the brand as if to some old acquaintance possessing a number of exemplary qualities: i) sincerity; ii) excitement; iii) competence; iv) sophistication; and v) ruggedness. Everything is summed up in the broader and more general brand value, i.e. the cognitive representations of central values and abstract goals that the consumer is demanding, such as it may be seen in e.g. LEGO brand values: a) creativity; b) imagination; c) learning; d) fun, e) quality – ethically, with regard to both the product, and trust. In conclusion, a measure of brand loyalty is obtained, expressing the sum of the consumers’ experiences with the brand, particularly in relation to its use.

In a historical perspective, the branding approach has primarily pertained to product branding, i.e. the branding of individual products, possibly trailing an already existing brand – also known as extension-line branding (e.g. Ajax cleaning materials). A large number of companies are still operating in this fashion; Proctor & Gamble is a case in point, backing a large number of trademarks in cosmetics, cleaning materials and detergents. They have thus become a house of brands, and product branding typically affects only marketing as such, and thus involves only the marketing department of the company. This makes branding a question that is primarily concerned with the company’s public relations activities.

However, corporate branding, i.e. branding of the company itself, has recently become more widespread, making it a branded house. The philosophy is to turn the company into a brand on the basis particularly of its internal organisational features, i.e. its distinguishing values with respect to employees and their qualification and competences; among these could be mentioned the particular methods and concepts used by the company. Corporate branding thus becomes extremely interesting to service and knowledge based firms as the company itself moves into focus as the carrier of identity, rather than individual products. It goes without saying that this branding activity will affect the whole management, the company strategy and organisation, not least its employees. Not only the company mission, but its entire vision, culture and values become central elements in the branding. As is the case with LEGO, communication of an aesthetically pleasing ‘universe’ can attract, appeal and capture the customer by its inherent qualities. Earlier the Danish furniture factory Fritz Hansen did not appear publicly as the manufacturer of Arne Jacobsen’s well-known designs the Swan, the Egg, the Ant, etc., but via its corporate branding as The Republic of Fritz Hansen, the company has moved from an almost anonymous position as manufacturer into taking the position of a guarantor of the coveted design.

The reasoning seems to be that it is possible to make the firm into a brand by expressing its special identity and the special values for which it stands, making these the basis of the entire communication effort towards all interested parties, i.e. not only in relation to customers. This would construct a unified framework for all company communication, something that may be a great advantage where the homogeneity of the signals communicated by the company and its employees is concerned. It may also be instrumental in the process of creating an intra-organisational consciousness of its mission, value basis, etc. as this would presuppose an ability within the company of ‘finding’ its own identity and its specific, unique values – and further that a credible, and thus durable, consensus on what these are can be created among employees. Although establishing the former may be hard enough, especially the latter aspect tends to prove very
difficult for corporations operating in a turbulent market where constant and increasingly costly readjustments are necessary.

It should be noted, though, that corporate branding is a reaction to changing market conditions as the entire project is aimed at establishing the company’s values as its guiding principles, and thus strengthen it in relation to both the swings and trends of the market and to the inner and outer worlds of the company, ensuring a safe anchoring to an organisation-internal fastening point. In this perspective, corporate branding makes sense as an attempt to achieve a steadfast basis, and mitigate the heaves and swings of the changing trends in market communication. But in order for this foundation to be operational, the values that are marshalled out as cornerstones are in risk of becoming watered down to the point of meaninglessness.

Nevertheless, branding is infectious, directly influencing the organisational level and the relationship between internal and external communication. It is now transferred to the personal level as personal branding, and it is contended that it is transferable to other, extremely complicated, demographic units, such as cities and towns. Thus, increasingly wider fields of activity are being subsumed under market communication thinking.

City Branding

Ever since the topographical literature of the 17th century, Danish towns have sought to attract attention to their special qualities and assets (Christensen, 2005:14). The first Danish advertising strategy with this target was launched in 1932 by Randers in Jutland. It was marketed by the slogan “Randers – hvor Søvejen møder 13 Landeveje” (Jensen, 2002:14). This spurred several other Danish towns and cities to start campaigns and invent slogans of their own, such as “København – Nordens Paris”. Since then, by far the majority of towns have published tourist brochures and promotional films, presenting their assets in text and image – in a manner that has demonstrated little variation. Most Danish towns have a town arms that illustrate its characteristics. Often the arms can be traced back to the medieval period, since when it has in effect served as the town logo. The marketing of towns is by no means a novel idea.

Cities and locations are increasingly being marketed as ‘trademarks’ along the lines known from numerous intensive and extremely costly company and product branding campaigns (Mollerup, 1995; Olins, 1999; Schulz and Hatch, 2000). This is done by using concepts such as ‘Nation Branding’, ‘Region Branding’, ‘Destination Branding’ and ‘City Branding’ (Morgan et al., 2002:4). As is generally observed in relation to branding, city branding creates a snowball effect, putting cities without a brand under pressure to develop one:

The mere fact that place ratings about the attractiveness of places for residents, tourists and investors are more and more common makes it difficult for politicians and public authorities not to join the brandwagon (Langer, 2001:7).

The branding of cities and places takes various forms. New York City is branded with the slogan “The world’s second home”, Bilbao exploits Gehry’s Guggenheim museum, whereas India “changes you”, Aalborg is “vild med Verden”, and Hjørring is simply “a brand”. Further examples of Danish towns are Horsens, which emphasises its musical and cultural efforts, while Slagelse tries to capitalise on its position in team handball.
Proponents of ‘City Branding’ (e.g. Morgan et al., 2002; Christgau and Jacobsen, 2004) argue that the concept of branding can be more or less directly transferred to city marketing. From the perspective of marketing logics, a city can, metaphorically speaking, be seen as a ‘business’, and the advantages boasted by the city as its ‘products’. They are for sale to internal as well as external target groups on a ‘glocal’ market where cities compete to burn themselves into the customers’ memories – and to burn a hole in the wallet of same. As most cities have quite similar services and infrastructures to offer their visitors, the contest is about creating a ‘unique position’ distinguishing one city from the next, so that customers are attracted. The city is metaphorically viewed as an organisation with an internal management of its ‘members’, the management acting in accordance with the city brand values so that they are kept happy and give good publicity for the ‘organisation’, acting as ‘ambassadors’ for the city (Christgau and Jacobsen, 2004:41). A town is furthermore seen as a ‘person’, to whom an ‘identity’ is ascribed, a ‘core’, or ‘soul’, or a ‘mentality’ with a set of stable values. In this perspective, the city is given ontological status as a ‘personality’ with identity and values. Those values are assumed to be open to internal exploration and ultimate condensation into an ‘identity’, which can be applied in the internal or external marketing of the city as a brand. The concept of identity has long been a contested and problematic issue within developmental and personality psychology (Erikson, 1971). The problem is that a person’s identity is dynamic and subject to constant change. Furthermore, identity will vary in relation to the social context and the situation in which an individual interacts. For these reasons, it would be more appropriate to speak of identities. The problem is not lessened when the identity concept is transferred to a city with its variegated gathering of individuals, groupings, institutions and businesses. The identity of a city is an abstract construct that cuts away concrete differences and contrasts while presupposing constancy and consensus. Below an example is given of how the mentalities and dominant lifestyles of the cities of Århus, Aalborg and Odense are interpreted on the basis of a compass analysis (see note 5 by Gallup). The segmental analysis resembles measurements on the position of a brand in relation to other brands. It should be noted, though, that a segmental analysis captures lifestyles whereas brand position measures one brand in relation to other brands.

Examples of Values in Århus, Aalborg and Odense
Gallup’s compass analysis divides cities into segments according to their prevalent lifestyles and mentalities. This is a result of combining two axes: a) the modern vs. the traditional, and b) the community-orientated vs. the individual-orientated.

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<tr>
<th>Modern</th>
<th>Community-oriented</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
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<td>Århus</td>
<td>Ålborg</td>
<td>Odense</td>
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Source: Duus, 2003:38.
On the basis of this analysis Duus (2003:37) noted significant differences between the three cities. The citizens of Århus are primarily modern and community-orientated in their values, reflecting a creative mentality, which is seen in their modern taste in clothing, their cafés and outdoor life, cultural activities and ethnic phenomena of various kinds (Duus, 2003:39). In contrast, the citizens of Aalborg were found to exhibit traditional and community-orientated values as reflected in the city’s rough and ready businessmindedness:

In Aalborg they do business – in the broadest sense of the word (...) Wherever you turn, a bargain is thrown at you. It’s a “what’s-the-price? culture” in the extreme form. (...) But this is where the popular strain becomes apparent. More action, more movement, more shouting (literally and as attested by the thousands of advertisement boards in front of shops and cafés); the city has this feel of the bargain, exercising its mercenary character with great pride. This is (private) enterprise – rough and ready (Duus, 2003:39, our translation).

Odense’s values are characterised as average for Denmark, which makes the city inconspicuous. Duus describes it as “white-collarish, i.e. nice, neat, soft-spoken and middle-of-the-road” (Ibid.:39).

City Branding: Internal and External Levels

A major point in the branding literature is that a correspondence must exist between externally presented brand values and internally experienced values, i.e. the marketing should reflect both the citizens’ conception of their city and what visitors experience (Christgau and Jacobsen, 2004:26). If this connection between the internal and the external level is not established, there is a great risk that the campaign will consist of rather lofty values and concepts that are incongruent with what can be experienced by citizens and visitors alike.

City branding thus comes down to uncovering and defining an ‘identity’ that can form the basis of communication to both internal and external target groups – be they citizens, customers, businesses, tourists, commuters, or potential newcomers, etc. The fact that these target groups are so diverse poses a presentation problem, as it is impossible to communicate effectively to several target groups at the same time. On the other hand, separate marketing for each target group is very costly. In general, cities have small marketing budgets in comparison with businesses. Japanese Sony spent a total of approximately $300,000,000 in 1997 while the entire membership of the World Tourism Organization had a similar amount at disposal for the same year (Morgan et al., 2002:13).

Proponents of city branding are usually aware that the product or organisation metaphor may not be completely valid. In general they make the reservation that cities are characterised by greater complexity and diversity than organisations, but that a comparison is nevertheless defensible (Ibid.:5). In spite of this concession, brand boards attempt to create a consensus on a city’s identity as the basis for its marketing. Critics object that it is futile to market cities as trademarks as they are not conceived as brands by the public. Furthermore, there is a crucial difference between cities and organisations as the former do not have the same possibilities of regulation and sanctioning in relation to their citizens as do organisations in relation to their employees. Therefore, citizen behaviour and communication cannot be directed, managed or streamlined. In contrast to
organisations, cities have a much larger number of interested parties, and hence, conflicts of interest need to be taken into account before any consensus on identity and basic values can be reached, if at all.

City Branding: Globalisation and Experience Economy

According to marketing logic cities should be presented as products to be sold on a global market with fierce competition to attract customers, be it via the Internet or other media. An important part of the argumentation for city branding derives from the perspectives of globalisation and the experience economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1999; Zukin, 2003:10-19). One of the arguments is that cities with a brand can win market shares from cities without a brand – with depopulation and economic decline as a consequence. However, the problem with cities is that is difficult to delimit marketable ‘articles’, and the way in which they are consumed (Kotler et al., 1993). The branding of cities and places is thus concerned with creating and profiling a commodity from something that is fundamentally intangible.

The experience economy has changed the focus of our economy away from its traditional emphasis on articles, industry and production to an economy in which consumers are willing to pay an extra price for products and services that hold qualities, feelings, values, meanings, identity and aesthetics. This is achieved by a collaboration of the cultural sector and the business communities in an effort to create experiences in relation to the products (Pine and Gilmour, 1999; The Danish Government, 2003). In this perspective, the branding of cities aims at:

(…) organising items in such a way that connections are created between entities as diverse as products, resources, values and strategies. (…) Places are no longer left to history, but are integrated in comprehensive strategies for how culture, trade, infra-structure and architecture, among other things, can be combined (Pedersen, 2005:15, our translation).

The aim of such extensive branding strategies is the construction, staging and communication of the city as a space for unique experiences that are saleable on a global market. Tourism organisations strive to market cities and places as ‘tourist trademarks’ making the tourist’s choice of holiday destination a lifestyle indicator with high emotional appeal or ‘celebrity’ value. Furthermore, when the tourist has returned home, the destination may have value as a topic of conversation (Morgan et al., 2002). Souvenirs, merchandise, logos and images can be used to signal that you have “been there, done that” to those wishing to notice this.

In commerce and services, the focus is on the competition among the larger towns of Denmark, the aim being to attract customers from the surrounding area and win market shares from competing towns. According to a report by the Retail Institute Scandinavia (2000:12), this is achieved by transforming the city centre into a combined space for experiences and consumption, phenomena that are situated between culture and retail trading. But the problem is that should all major cities transform their city centres into such spaces and erect landmark buildings designed by celebrities such as Koolhaas, Liebeskind, Gehry, or Mau, and brand themselves with slogans, logos and values with accessory merchandise pens, caps, badges, etc., the unique would end up becoming the standard, with little overall effect. This appears to be the general problem in branding.
Branding Hjørring

In June 2001, the city council of Hjørring decided to invite two advertising agencies to present proposals for a marketing plan for Hjørring, to be ready for the opening of a new stretch of motorway in the autumn of 2002. In August 2001 Dafol o Marketing A/S was chosen for the task, for which a total of DKR 750,000 was allocated. In January 2002 a public hearing was held, with contributions from the local business council, the chamber of commerce, the tourist association and Hjørring’s city council. A few months later, the branding campaign was launched, comprising a web site, a ‘profile’ brochure and accompanying manual, a TV spot, which was aired over a period of time on a regional commercial TV station. Furthermore, the council opened a brand shop selling various merchandise with the Hjørring logo printed on it. The campaign was primarily directed at the town’s own citizens, with the aim of making them ‘ambassadors’ of their home town. But beyond that the campaign had the objective of marketing Hjørring, both nationally and internationally. Based on the printed profile brochure, we present an analysis of its slogan and values, and their predication.

The Slogan

The slogan is found at the bottom of the front page, with six images placed above it, illustrating the values chosen as exemplary for Hjørring. To the left of the slogan, the logo is shown in a square in the bottom right corner.

Usually a slogan gives a condensed expression of the symbolic values emphasising the assets of a product or a company in relation to the consumer, e.g. its qualities, price, status, use value, newsworthiness, etc., as for example in: “Nokia. Connecting people.”, “You meet the nicest people on a Honda.”, or “Small Wonder – Volkswagen.” Aesthetical, rhetorical and stylistic effects borrowed from the lyrical register, such as rhyme, rhythm, alliteration and puns are often used, e.g. “M&M melt in your mouth, not in your hand.”, “Hvem ka’, Bilka.”, etc. Hjørring’s slogan, “Hjørring som mærkevare – Disse er ordene”, defies convention in that it neither expresses the merits of the place are, nor uses stylistic effects. It directly addresses the receiver with a straightforward message that Hjørring is to become a brand, the implicit meaning of “these are the words” being that no more needs to be said, which could be paraphrased in the words; “We know it may sound strange, but let’s put it straight: ‘This is about branding Hjørring – and that’s it.’” In this way the sender can be said to have made allowance for the possibility that some citizens of Hjørring would regard the branding endeavour as rather odd.

The conjunction ‘as’ (‘som’) establishes a property or role relation between the two units: “Hjørring in the capacity/role of a branded product.” In the utterance an equation is established, in which Hjørring is defined and categorised as a brand. In choosing the word a distinction is likewise made from the way in which makes or brands are traditionally marketed, which frequently takes the form of ‘company or product name + asset/value/quality’, as in “Seat – autoemoción” – or vice versa: “Lev livet friskere. Lev med Macs.” In Hjørring’s slogan no value is ascribed to the name. The word brand is a hyperonomy, i.e. an abstract superordinate whose subordinate instantiations are numerous: Coca-Cola, Audi, Levis, Dockers, Ray Ban, etc. This broad and abstract classification renders the meaning diffuse and void, as it is not made clear what is actually meant by brand. The word is also used as a technical term in the branding literature.
(Olins 1994; Mollerup, 1995), in which great importance is attached to it in relation to the positioning of a product or an organisation in the market. Therefore, the word could also be analysed as an intertextual reference to branding theory. Viewed from this angle, it would be a question of internal communication among professionals who wish to make Hjørring into a brand. This would in effect obstruct communication with citizens and external target groups for whom the concept of brand has no meaning (as they would hardly know the terminology). To those target groups the first part of the slogan would at best appear as a ‘clever’ piece of rhetoric, at worst it would fail to give any meaning at all. The second part of the slogan, “These are the words”, in no way contributes to elucidating meaning or message, as it merely consist in a meta-communicative reference to the preceding words. The phrase is known from oral interaction as a frame marker signalling the conclusion of a longer stream of speech.

‘[T]hese’ refers anaphorically to the words previously used; the function of the demonstrative pronoun usually being to ensure cohesion or point out an internal relationship between units of meaning in a text. In this specific case, however, the pronoun does not refer to the meaning of the preceding sentence as this was merely a meta-communicative reference to the words of the preceding sentence. Thus the last part of the slogan creates the tautology: “the words are the words” (i.e. X=X), which only makes sense if the implicit meanings are analysed.

Litotes
When the slogan is regarded as part of the general style of the material, it can be interpreted as an instance of litotes, i.e. an understatement, often used humorously. In the profile brochure (Hjørring Municipality, 2002a: pp.6-7) this variety of humour is exemplified by a picture of the ballad-singing critic of Danish and North Jutland hypocrisy and staidness Niels Hausgaard with a caption that describes the local sense of humour as “our favourite understated kind of humour”. It appears that litotes is the prevalent style code in the brochure, as is illustrated with a reference to one of the performer’s songs: “Niels Hausgaard is spot on when his lyrical alter ego punctures his neighbour’s Mrs Hyacinth-like attempts at keeping up appearances.” The inhabitants of Hjørring are attributed with modesty, and understatement is seen as their favourite mode of expression – characteristics which are also used in the material, the profile brochure thus reflects the mentality. Even if the slogan, on a first reading, were to be interpreted as an instance of litotes, this would not add any other meaning to it than that invoked by yet another use of the figure – albeit one unlikely to provoke a smile. In addition, as litotes is not yet established as a style code, the reader is unable to draw on this humorous frame in the first reading. The figure is first used on p. 5 in the brand board’s rather lengthy introduction to the campaign, where the colloquial turn of phrase “These are the words” recur to signal the conclusion.

The Logo
The logo is placed in extension of the slogan on the front page of the brochure. It consists of the proper noun Hjørring in a white type on a background of a square black field, resembling a film negative.

The font used is a simple sans serif with soft wavy lines, reminiscent of Art Nouveau fonts connoting the ‘artistic’, ‘aesthetics’ and ‘quality’. In particular, the last two letters,
ng, the modified o (ø), and the two rs are unconventional, the soft curves of n and g being connected. An unambiguous interpretation of this feature is not possible because of the abstract symbolic code. Does the bottom part of the g resemble a hook? Or could ng symbolise a person with the dot on the g as a nose, or perhaps a Viking symbol? The soft and exuberantly curving form may also allude to the ingenious, the frisky or the cunningly artful. The rounded lines form a contrast to the squarely functional expression in the streamlined letters H, j and i. The slash of the ø does not go all the way but ends midway into the letter, creating a centre-periphery symbolism that may cause the reader to associate to a board with a dart in the bull’s eye. As Hjørring is the theme, the ø could symbolise the town as a centre in relation to a periphery delimited by the circle, thus setting apart the town centre from the surrounding area, but no more so than that the slash indicates the possibility of travelling between the two spaces. This centre-periphery symbolism illustrates a contrasting relationship, or an antonymy between such pairs as ‘inside-outside’, ‘town-country’, ‘culture-nature’, which is echoed in the choice of the logo colouring displaying a light centre and dark periphery. The text takes up the same theme, with a clear delineation of the centre to Hjørring, while the outer limit of the periphery is left semantically undefined. The text thus describes the periphery vaguely as a space reaching from Hjørring’s vicinities to the entire Europe.

If not a capital, Hjørring is an extremely important centre in Vendsyssel (p. 11). Centrally located at the crossroads between Sweden, Norway and Denmark, Hjørring has a direct link to the European motorway net (…). As a European metropolis, Hjørring offers first performances of films in the new cinema centre (Hjørring Municipality, 2002a:2, our translations).

Litotes are used rhetorically to play down the status of the town by the use of negation and reservations such as “If not a capital, (…)”. At the same time the figure is exploited in exaggeration and boasting within the frames of negation and reservation by which the meaning is implied or presupposed. Ordinarily Hjørring is not regarded as a capital of anything, but rather as a provincial town in the Danish periphery.

In the logo the two rs show a reversed picture of each other, indicating a likeness to the logo of Hjem-Is, a door-to-door distributor of ice-cream products, although the mirrored image is hardly intended as symbol of an ice-cream cone. As the marketing campaign was scheduled for the opening of the new motorway, the idea suggests itself that the rs stand for the sliproads. They might also resemble two upraised, open arms expressing openness and accommodativeness.

A determination of the logo’s meanings is presented in the brand manual:

Depending on who the beholder is, it may give rise to associations to a variety of things: culture, nature, the past, an aspiring movement, open possibilities, a motorway, between two seas, the centre (Hjørring Municipality, 2002b:10).

The Hjørring logo is intended to function as a brand, “a unifying graphical symbol” (Ibid.:3), ensuring uniformity and direction in all communication within the framework
of the brand values. The abstract symbolism of the logo, which does not communicate a clear message in an unequivocal symbolic code, may easily cause the receiver to overlook the intended message. In fact, it is not unlikely that the receiver will ascribe unintended meanings, and associate to similar logos, such as the one discussed.

The logo was exposed at all bus stops and on police vehicles. Citizens showing the logo on their cars also participated in a competition to win a drive-yourself holiday with a local travel agency.

**Value Statements**

Work on the values to be associated with Hjørring was begun after the launching of the logo. According to the website each member of the brand board contributed ideas for the values that best describe Hjørring and set it apart from its competitors. After several meetings and brainstorms the board unanimously selected six values on which to concentrate. No surveys were conducted on citizens’ views in this regard, something that might have ensured that the ideas or values chosen actually reflected those of the citizens of Hjørring. A risk therefore existed that the campaign would not reach or appeal to its initial target group, the approximately 35,500 inhabitants of the municipality.

The profile brochure (Hjørring Municipality, 2002a) presents each value with a picture taking up two thirds of the page. Below the image the value is given in bold in a centred headline. Then follows an elaboration expounded in six lines of body text in which several meanings are ascribed to each value, as shown in condensed form below. The general style code used is litotes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value statement</th>
<th>Backing</th>
<th>Form and content</th>
<th>Antonym</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understated humour</td>
<td>Mentality is a function of locality, background and region (Montesquieu)</td>
<td>Assertions on solidarity, humour and modesty: “Our downplayed humour can be found nowhere else”; “Proud to be so damn modest”</td>
<td>Frigidity in social relations, stuck-up Copenhageners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original</td>
<td>Mentality is a function of locality, history and natural conditions (Montesquieu)</td>
<td>Assertions on originality, and openness: “We are not like the others; &quot;embracing hospitality&quot;</td>
<td>Ordinary, un-original, petty bourgeois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini-metropolis</td>
<td>Historically, its size and geographical position has placed Hjørring at the centre of Scandinavia and Europe</td>
<td>Exaggerations on size and centrality: “If not a capital, then an extremely important centre”; “at the crossroads between Sweden, Norway and Denmark”; “European metropolis”</td>
<td>Capital, metropolis, provincial town, provincialism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety in assets</td>
<td>Variety in choice is an advantage</td>
<td>Assertions on the town’s wealth of opportunities. “The countryside and the cultural activities (...) offer an unusual variety of opportunities.”</td>
<td>Harmony, uniformity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closeness</td>
<td>Physical proximity leads to social closeness and humaneness</td>
<td>Assertions on physical and social closeness. “In Hjørring you’re close to everything” &quot;You will get closer to the people around you, your fellow citizens, your family – and yourself.”</td>
<td>Physical and social distance, big city individualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>Mentality is a function of nature and locality (Montesquieu)</td>
<td>Assertions on the topography’s influence on the mentality. “The wealth of unspoiled countryside and beautiful scenery in and around Hjørring has an impact on the people who live here” &quot;The healthy and natural can be felt in both sentiment and manner.”</td>
<td>Artificial unhealthy unnatural stressful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The described values may be condensed into two themes:

1) The mentality of citizens, emphasising emotional and social merits.

2) The town’s facilities, emphasising functional, physical and practical assets.

What is striking about the survey is that the lexical choices, be it in headlines or text body, maintain such an abstract and general level that they give neither a unique nor a specific characterisation of the town and its inhabitants. The description of their mentality expresses general human traits, values, wants and needs such as closeness, sagacity, sincerity, authenticity, etc. The understated humour does not set Hjørring apart from other places, but is a feature that popular wisdom ascribes to Jutes in contrast to Copenhageners. Neither are Hjørring’s facilities unique. There is nothing extraordinary in provincial towns offering green spaces, educational institutions, commerce, business, cultural activities and easy transportation. It also seems to be an exaggeration to speak of the town as a mini-metropolis when considering the provincial scene that can be observed in a visit. Variety is an immanent trait of any town, evident in many areas: social and ethnic groups, associations, institutions, architecture, business, history, etc. Every town has its originals, and is unique in the sense that it is different from all others, so the value of originality is not specific for Hjørring. The assets emphasised for the vicinities are typical of provincial towns of Denmark: woodland, beaches, farming land and opportunities for outdoor activities. Being quite common rather than extraordinary, the values described would thus match most Jutland towns.

The slogan, logo and values presented by Hjørring are a far cry from the great idea of branding theory, which is to position a city as a unique brand with an identity tied to specific mental values, the propagation of which would make ambassadors of its citizens, and make it saleable to the external world as a commodity on a market, thus attracting customers, tourists, businesses, and new taxpayers. The reason that the brochure emphasises the ordinary rather than the specific can probably be found in the broad composition of the brand board and the thankless task of shaping an identity that might make “the town speak with one voice – across the local council, trade and industry, tourism and educational institutions” (Ibid.:3). According to the process description at www.hjoerringbranding.dk, far more than a hundred candidates for value statements were reduces to six. The choice was presumably made on the basis of the principle of the lowest common denominator so that the selected values were those general, commonplace statements about which the board was able to create a consensus. The result seems to be that the extraordinary and contradictory was jettisoned along the way. The tendency to strive for consensus is also apparent in the enunciation structures of the communication circuit of sender and receiver.

**Enunciation – We, We, and We**

The most prevalent form of address in the profile brochure is *we*, the first person plural form of the personal pronoun. It is used in both an exclusive sense; “the editorial or authoritative we”, and in an inclusive sense; “the collective we” (Allan et al., 1995:147).

The second person singular personal pronoun, *you*, is less used. Directly addressing the reader is used as a strategy to achieve closeness, which mimics face-to-face communication in this context.

Quite aptly, this is exemplified in the discussion of the value ‘closeness’:
In Hjørring closeness also means that you will get closer to the people around you, your fellow citizens, your family – and yourself” (Hjørring Municipality, 2002a:15, underlining added, our translation).

In the brochure, we is used much more frequently in the collective than in the editorial sense. Below, we shall see examples of both uses.

**The editorial we – exclusive use**

We shall try to say it in a few words (p. 5).
We have deliberately tried to find words that appeal to common sense, and (...) to the feelings (p. 5).
We hope that the campaign, with this publication (...) (p. 25).
(...) we have cut to the bone. We now have a clear picture of the values that reflect Hjørring (...) (p. 29).

**The collective we – inclusive use**

We all know what Hjørring stands for … or do we? (p. 3).
(...) nobody is as damn proud of their own modesty as we are (p. 6).
We are not like the others – we are something special – and we’re proud of it (p. 9).
(...) we have a lot to offer – and a lot of different things at that (p. 13).
We are surrounded by fields (...). We all live with nature (p. 17).
Speaking in all modesty – we actually have good reason to boast about our town and municipality (p. 29).

The editorial we is only found in the preface and epilogue to the profile brochure, in which the board collectively addresses its readers concerning the intentions and aims of the brochure and campaign. The use of the collective we is the general, most frequent form of address. The collective we, which includes the sender (I), the receiver (you), and the citizens of the municipality (all of us), thus indicates a deictic borderline (Dik, 1989:38) to a they that does not belong to Hjørring. Rhetorically the use of the collective we functions as a persuasion strategy intended to make the receiver endorse the attitudes, values and qualities emphasised by the sender in order that the receiver adopt his entire perspective and point of view in relation to Hjørring municipality.

**The Profile Brochure and the Context**

Persuasiveness in a text presupposes that words, sentences and images are relevant, have news value and broadly reflect the receiver’s mental conceptions and is in accordance with the context. As our analysis of the profile brochure has demonstrated, the slogan, logo and text express what is general and shared rather that what is unique and specific to Hjørring, with the result that the content has no real value or relevance for the target group. The stylistic use of litotes frequently lapses into exaggeration, as when Hjørring is characterised as a “capital”, “European metropolis”, or “powerhouse”. Such epithets hardly reflect the inhabitant’s conceptions, or the impression that one forms from observation. Without jumping to conclusions, it therefore seems justified to conjecture that such expressions will be regarded as ‘hot air’, i.e. part of a ‘clever’ advertising stunt that tries to play up the town to more than is justified.
Branding Aalborg

The branding process in Aalborg was commenced in 2004. Following a competition the task was given to Dafolo, who were also responsible for Hjørring’s campaign. Aalborg also set up a brand board consisting of representatives from the local authorities and relevant commercial and institutional interests.

At the time of writing (spring 2005) the accessible material consisted of a brochure, in which Aalborg’s four central values and their vision is presented in text and image, a corresponding website dedicated to Branding Aalborg with short video sequences, and an activity plan for the coming two years. It appears from the plan that a series of ‘scenario meetings’ or ‘future workshops’ will be held, and that businesses and corporations are to be given a central role as spearheads for the project. For their use, “a toolbox will be presented, enabling the companies to use Aalborg’s values, visions, film and logo in the branding of their own businesses and Aalborg”. In other words, the idea is that Aalborg businesses, or rather their employees, will be instrumental in the branding process, and that the branding of the company and the city is envisaged as a concerted effort for which the toolbox is intended. Its contents have not yet been disclosed, but it will presumably not be very different from Hjørring’s.

As of now, the brochure (with the website) makes up the essential material that presents Aalborg’s values and vision. The main predication is established on the front page by the slogan: “Aalborg – vild med verden.” This is identical to the logo, which consists of the name of the city printed in capital letters, with the o slightly enlarged, making it resemble a globe made up of multicoloured, slightly irregular squares in red, green, black, blue and orange, the topmost of which are on their way up into the universe. The logo thus gives an illustration of the statement’s predicate, “crazy about the world”, whose form gives an impression of a delicate but unruly handwriting. Dynamic forces seem to be at play; the globe or ‘the world’ is inscribed in ‘Aalborg’ in the shape of something that is ‘on the move’, and overall, an impression is given of the slightly wild and unruly, or even frisky and sparkling. For example, the copybook writing would not achieve a high mark from a school teacher (with its rightwards slant, for one thing), but it seems that the whole point is to strike a new chord.

While the graphic design of the slogan, which also functions as the logo, underlines and reinforces the content, the question is how the predication should be understood in a branding perspective. Is states explicitly that Aalborg, whose collective identity or ‘personality’ is to be accepted at face value, is crazy about everything outside the city itself. In a figurative sense, this can be understood to mean that Aalborg has a mind to tasting life, being extrovert and dynamic. This may be read as a statement that this city, as opposed to other cities, is not self-sufficient but sees itself in interplay with the surrounding world. Its identity is defined by its connectedness and attention to the (outside) world, rather than anything specific about itself. As opposed to e.g. Århus, it is not a “city of smiles”. In other words, what is both attractive and peculiar is that the essential characteristics of Aalborg do not reside in the city itself, but in its extrovertedness as it is expressed in its interacting with the outside world; in the fact that the city is reaching out of itself, being oriented towards the surrounding world rather than towards
itself. In this way something is said about the ‘outgoing’ qualities of the city, and perhaps also about a certain unprovincial mentality, but very little about the city itself. In saying that you are ‘crazy’ about someone or something, you are likewise saying that your identity, behaviour, or entire being, is guided by this other entity rather than by yourself.

The problem of fleshing out the identity crops up again in the text body, which is mainly found on the right hand opening of the brochure, while the left is taken up by a mosaic of high-quality photographs of various Aalborg motives.

In what may be called an introduction, “Aalborg – værdier og vision”¹⁴, we are told that:

Aalborg has no equal anywhere. Thanks to our geographical position, our history and natural resources, we have come to be who we are – for better or for worse. Mostly for the better, if we may say so. And why shouldn’t we? We are not like people in Århus, Odense or Copenhagen – which is OK with us.// We are different in a number of ways, having a mentality of our own, a special way of looking at the world. By means of a number of natural gifts and traditional values, we have developed our own distinctive character – and we intend to cultivate it together (Branding Aalborg, 2004: p.5, our translations).

This introduction to what is subsequently treated as Aalborg’s distinctive features gives an indication of what will prove to be one of the brochure’s characteristic problems. The slogan, “Aalborg – we’re crazy about the world”, could be seen as a forewarning of this. On the one hand the brochure speaks on behalf of someone while on the other hand it addresses the same group with claims characterising them, using argumentative and hortative language. This takes the form of a construction that slides from Aalborg to ours, repeatedly enforced by our, we and us into which the reader, who is presumed to live in Aalborg, is clearly sought to be inscribed. At the same time, it appears that the text is not clear on its we; the most glaring example of this confusion is witnessed in the conclusion where it is asserted that “we have developed our own distinctive character”, followed by “we intend to cultivate that together.” Here the use of we clearly demonstrates its limitations – if not a breakdown, in that the first we is the one that the text – without further ado – claims to share with its readers, and with which the reader may, at least partly, be assumed to consent. The next we is somewhat different in that it seems intent on actively doing something. This is the brochure’s authoritative we, which now, quite abruptly, introduces itself with an intent to “cultivate our distinctive character” in a community (“together”) – but with whom? The answer is presumably: with those with whom the text has already contended to form an unproblematic communality. The we that was previously addressed has now, all of a sudden, become a plural you. As we saw with Hjørring, a clash between the collective we and the editorial we becomes apparent. But whereas in Hjørring’s case there seems to be a carefree alternation between the two, it is significant that here the breakdown happens only once. It will be seen later why this does not necessarily stem from the writer’s incompetence, but rather from the problematic equivocality inherent in the purpose of the project from which the text takes its point of departure.

It is noteworthy that nothing substantial is said about the special merits of the our and the we. The initial sentence is a pure platitude, and even Montesquieu would have had reservations about the contention that his philosophy could explain why Aalborg should be different from three other Danish cities. The text’s construction of a we as against a
they hinges on this theory, but no indication as to what the differences might be is supplied. Their insubstantiality is apparently compensated for in the ensuing chopped-out sentence fragments. But the chiselled linguistic form, which emphasises each individual piece of information, contributes little of substance to the content. The chanting intonation adds merely to the formal aspects while giving no hint of factual information on the alleged differences.

Thus far the reader has been told no more than “we are not like the rest – we are something special”. From a rhetorical point of view, the statement may be intended to set the mood for what follows.

Without further introduction the text goes on in a rather authoritative tone to establish that “[t]he special assets of Aalborg can be summarised in four values”, viz. “Contrasts, A broad outlook, Cooperation, Drive”. Here it is spelled out what the we vows to collaborate on. In what may be an attempt to mitigate the authoritarian tone a more disarming chord is struck in the ensuing short-cadenced and chiselled-out sentence fragments at the top of page 7 (Ibid.):

First and foremost, Aalborg is the people who live here. This is manifested in what each of us thinks and does in our everyday lives – and in our view of each other and the world around us – our dreams and habits – our whole attitude to life. // Aalborg supplies the physical frame – offering a rich choice of spaces – giving us great opportunities for activity.

It appears that the text deems it necessary to reinstate the presupposed communal, or collective, we in extremely forceful repetitions of we and our, with a number of truisms added. The fleetingly introduced editorial and authoritative we is thus quickly and forcefully eradicated.

The problem is that the text assuredly grants itself the authority to inscribe the reader into a general we and speak both to and on behalf of this presupposed instance that has been established in contrast to certain others. But it soon becomes clear that the text cannot consistently assume this position. A we instance which expresses an underlying will or intention crops up here and there. This duplicity is presumably tied to the fact that the text cannot or will not appear before the reader using an explicit you, something which would make it apparent that the reader was seen as someone with a distinct role to play. This works seamlessly to a certain point, e.g. where general statements with no indication of action are concerned, but once the statements express a will or indicate action, the trick of inscribing the reader collapses and the attempt to speak on his behalf is revealed as unwarranted, clumsy and patronising.

The inscription of the reader in a we is closely connected to the tacitly assumed sympathy from the readers, which is taken so much for granted that nothing substantial about Aalborg seems to require explicitation. No reader is allowed to contradict or show offence at the straightforwardly assumed authoritarianism in the text’s all-embracing confessional enunciation of its statements. The assumed reader appears to be one who was born and bred in Aalborg, and a local patriot. This seems rather peculiar, not only in relation to the slogan, but also when considering that the text is intended to motivate and engage readers in relation to players who cannot be assumed to share background or beliefs with the text. In other words, they may not be part of the ‘congregation’, to use a word that comes to mind in reading the brochure. The word is used not only to polemicise, but as will be shown, the text as a whole is reminiscent of the communication used by a preacher in front of the congregation.
Values and Vision

Aalborg’s four values (see table below) are established by emphasising a number of assets and via positive (self)predication (“We are …”). They are structured according to certain underlying argumentation schema or types. They further exhibit certain stylistic characteristics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value statement</th>
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<th>Antonym</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>Having many choices is an asset</td>
<td>Having your cake and eating it too - with respect to choices on where to live and work</td>
<td>Harmony Uniformity Dreariness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A broad outlook</td>
<td>Mentality is a function of locality and landscape. Topographical basis → mental basis (Montesquieu)</td>
<td>Assertions on openness, authenticity, straightforwardness, unceremoniousness. Genial breaches of style: “You just say what’s on your mind”; “He/she’s one of us”</td>
<td>Petit bourgeois provincial restrictedness Bigotry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>External opposition and adaptation processes result in interdependence and solidarity (“let’s show ‘em”)</td>
<td>Contrasting of: Conjured professions of belief in “cooperation” and “serious antagonisms between segments of the population”, “cold individualism”, ”those few who only care about themselves”</td>
<td>Strife Selfishness Factionalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drive</td>
<td>Unbroken historical chain back to the Vikings and other enterprising heroes</td>
<td>Accumulation of historical moments which are contrasted to “but we don’t make a fuss about it”</td>
<td>Passivity Stagnation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This raises the question whether contrasts in themselves can express values. It is apparent that what is described are rather some contended contrasting qualities or assets, be it with regard to nature or the landscape, the urban space, cultural activities or in relation to transportation or business, such as in: “Right there, close to everything, is the Limfjord, which is Denmark’s only real river system. You can live by the sea, the fjord, or in the woods, and still work in the city – or vice versa – and have no more than a 20 minutes’ ride” (p. 9). The ‘contrasts’ turn out to represent choices and diversity rather than real alternatives. Everything can be had: both city life and landscapes, both gentle and tough, both “the roaring North Sea” and “the genial East Coast”, “cobbled streets” and “characteristic industrial monuments”, “peaceful oases” and “hectic night life”, “city buzz” and “rural atmosphere”, “fine arts” and “subculture”, “grand opera performances” and “fringe theatre”, both “down to earth, ready for a bargain” and “groundbreaking and international perspective” (p. 9). To call the Limfjord a proper “river system”, let alone “Denmark’s only real river system” can only be characterised as disingenuous or going over the top in the attempt to dress up Aalborg as more exotic than most other provincial towns situated in a Danish fjord.

‘A broad outlook’ is easier to understand as a value when the expression is read as an image of tolerance and broadmindedness. Once again, it is the natural geography with its “open spaces and wider horizons” which is called upon to supply the basis of arguing for a characteristic asset. Likewise, reference is made to the position by “the river”, which “has given us so many foreign impulses, promoting openness and unpretentiousness of mind. We have never had a problem with identifying ourselves with those qualities, as we Aalborg people are genuine and straightforward.” As we saw above, the text speaks not only on behalf of an indubitable communal we, but also on behalf of an external instance: “Everyone who has visited Aalborg will testify that from the minute you arrive, you’re ‘one of us’” (p. 9).
While the two previously considered values are deeply anchored in nature and geography, which are also contended to be transformable into a certain mentality, the value ‘cooperation’ exhibits a glide towards a contrast, e.g. by implying that Aalborg has been neglected in national politics: “We’re in this together” expresses a typical local attitude; likewise “If we want something, we have to make it happen ourselves”. The implication is that whereas Aalborg has had to rely on its own resources, other cities have just opened their mouths to let the plums fall. Another contrast is emphasised by stating that “historically, there were always serious antagonisms between segments of the population”, but this is contended to demonstrate a strength in that “we [have] seen the value of teamwork”, so that “Aalborg’s transition from an industrial to an information society has been exemplary”, which leads to a profession that “we swear by teamwork” (p.13).

The final value for discussion is ‘vigour’, or ‘drive’ 16. A connection to the past is created when it is contended that “[o]ur history carries the stamp of enterprising people who were not afraid of meeting the world, and who understood how to make the best of the town’s position by the river”. Characterisations such as “Vikings”, “leading commercial town in the Nordic region”, “biggest provincial town of Jutland, surpassed only by Copenhagen”, “we quickly saw” the possibilities in exploiting raw materials are all listed as historically defining moments on a par with the present-day accumulation of high-tech, information technology and space research activities in Aalborg. Also “the biggest carnival in Northern Europe”, the Tall Ships Race and a notorious Jean Michel Jarre concert are thrown in for good measure. None of this is “merely coincidental”, but “we don’t make a fuss about what we do – we just do it” (p.15). Modesty is claimed as a deed – the long list notwithstanding.

In the vision the four values and a number of the essential words are repeated in a new context of utterances of volition (“we will/want to”) and are now being contrasted to the big city as a concept:

Aalborg wants to be an antipole to the traditional big city. Bigger of heart, lesser of size – and with higher to the sky. We want to cultivate the contrasts and create a space for diversity. Seize the world. And through cooperation and initiative secure the frames for a life in development” (p.17). 17

This is subsequently turned into a form of support for being “crazy about the world” which is justified by contending:

“That we are open and tolerant and prefer cooperation to cold individualism. That we are alert and internationally orientated. That “local” and “global” for us has always rhymed. The world begins in front of our noses (…). We are crazy about the world in Aalborg – we’ve always been.// The world is a wide and wonderful concept. At once small and incredibly big. Just round the corner and behind the far horizons. (…) The world is yours. And the world is mine. We are all world citizens. That we will make use of (pp.19-21). 18

As we saw in the introductory paragraphs the text occupies the reader’s domain by the patronising embrace in which a breakdown between the editorial/authoritative we and the collective we becomes apparent. A rather pompous lyrical loop about the concept of “the world” is repeated. The trumps are played with a number of high-flown, chiselled pleas, such as “Let’s show the world (…); Let’s welcome (…); Let’s paint the town red (…)”, ending on the almost disconnected: “To give a voice to all those who have a message. To disregard those few who only care about themselves.” The preaching manner is reinforced by the final condemnation of possible dissidents and black sheep.
As pointed out earlier, features typical of congregational communication recur: the invocation of the congregation, the creed of faith, the indication of a communal fate and mission (in casu, the world), the conjuring exhortations to symbolic action, and the final excommunication and denial of Satan.

**City Branding Vanishing in Smoke?**

The brochure’s text is to be read as a first move in an extended process. As such its task is to act as an inspiring catalyst for players in the branding process. This is evident also in the final calls for action. One of the main problems inherent in the text lies in its sweeping presupposition of the reader as an already sympathetic instance on which it may count in its inscription of the textual we, as seen in the contentions about us and our. This problematic position encounters problems when it comes to authoritarian statements on what has apparently been established (one might ask by whom) as the true values shared by everyone in Aalborg. The other major problem concerns a more precise definition of the substance of Aalborg’s character. What is termed as contrasts turn out to be something rather different, viz. the variety offered by a city that, in a popular phrase, has ‘a bit of everything – and enough for everyone’. But this is something that could in principle be found in so many other places. Also where variety is an essential value, there will be many contenders. ‘A broad outlook’ is based on the natural resources, and may seem a more pertinent value, but it is rather problematic in that no argumentation or evidence is offered. Neither is credibility supported by the provincialsounding platitudes about visitors (“one of us”). On the whole, the text appears to have difficulty with mentioning anything truly original for Aalborg.

On the one hand, the overall problem is that the chosen form of address transgresses the boundaries of the reader’s domain by its inscription of him and her as indubitably sympathetic towards the enterprise. This is what we have termed congregational communication, and it soon reveals its own shortcomings. On the other hand, the authoritarian fashion turns out not to posit anything substantial when the values are spelled out. They seem to fizzle away into platitudes, and, perhaps revealingly, conclude in explicitly naming certain high-profiled events, some of which are likely to be recalled as rain-soaked and ill-planned fiascos, others that cannot truly be credited to Aalborg (e.g. the Tall Ships Race).

In short, the problem is that difficulties are bound to occur in the attempt to ‘enspeech’ or ‘invent’ values for a city with the intention of inscribing ‘everybody’ into them, because commonplaces will inevitably carry the day when support has to be mustered from almost all internal parties. This is generally the Achilles’ heel of corporate branding, but the weakness is exacerbated when a unit as complex as a city is involved. ‘The lowest common denominator’ will be used, even more than when a corporation or an organisation is involved. The result may appear well-meant, but the remarkable and catchy will elude the branding effort when things are seen from the insider’s perspective which obscures the outsider’s fresh outlook on the city. Being “crazy about the world” may in itself be a sympathetic attitude, but when seen from the outside, it will probably appear as rather uninteresting: “Who and what are you – and what can you do?”

“I’m the one who is crazy about the world!”

“Oh, that’s interesting to hear, but what am I supposed to do about your desires – and why are you entertaining me with that? Tell me something about what you can do, and what is special about you!”
Conclusion: Cities in the Perspective of (corporate) Branding

In this paper we have repeatedly suggested that it may be problematic to transfer the corporate branding philosophy to cities. A major problem lies in the belief that it is possible to uncover the special identity or mentality of a city. This assumption appears to be practically inevitable, being a deeply-rooted part of a traditional mode of thought going back to the patriotic culture of education of the mid-18th century, in particular as formulated by Montesquieu (1689-1755) and Herder (1744-1803).

The notion is that landscape, geography and climate, etc. shape the mentality of the population, thus explaining why the national characters of Danes and Italians differ, or why Copenhageners have a different mentality from that of people from Århus and Aalborg. This conception forms the basis on which both Hjørring and Aalborg’s branding materials rest, but the urban society of the (late) modernist era has struck a blow to ideas linking nature and mentality. Modern man is characterised by mobility, typically moving from place to place in the pursuit of individual goals and desires, rather than staying in one place. Consequently, the conception of a ‘popular character formed by nature’ does no longer hold true for present-day cities that are changing from a traditional industrial economy to the experience economy typical of the information age. The traditional mode of thought, as based on the sketched philosophies is thus no longer applicable to city-marketing efforts in relation to external target groups. For both Hjørring and Aalborg, the endeavours we have witnessed in regard to finding specific differences in mentality or identity have led to the exact opposite of what was intended, mainly because the formulation of an identity/mentality rests on the assumption that consensus can be reached. A more fruitful and less contradictory approach to the marketing of a city would involve a complete dismissal of the identity conception, in order to clear the stage for working on the creation of a specific profile in city marketing.

A city is a complex organisation made up of a large number of political, cultural, institutional and economic groupings, each with their own interests. This makes consensus on identity a serious problem for brand boards and their advertising agencies as they run a very real risk that it can be reached on only the most general and therefore most nondescript values. This leads to a contradiction in relation to the principal aim in branding a city, which is to emphasise its uniqueness. Furthermore, the problem in city branding (and branding as such) is that as more and more cities are being branded, the special will turn into the ordinary.

In our analyses the abovementioned problems are evident in both Hjørring’s and Aalborg’s profile brochures, particularly in the presentation of the logos, slogans and values, and in the chosen forms of address. Aalborg’s logo and slogan attempt to create an identity in which focus is directed away from Aalborg with the consequence that they say very little about the city, whereas Hjørring’s logo shroud the symbolic meaning in an abstract graphical code the intention of which only a few will be able to decipher. The slogan claims that Hjørring is a brand while it says nothing in particular about what makes Hjørring a distinct place or about its assets and identity. Our study has demonstrated that the values of both Aalborg and Hjørring were formulated in general, abstract and vague language with little concretisation of any specific or unique values. The values might apply to almost any other city or town in Denmark. The attempts at formulating the essence of what characterises Aalborg and Hjørring present a major problem in the analysed materials in that nothing noteworthy is being said. Another major problem is constituted by the forms of address. In the materials from Hjørring a clear distinction is made between a collective we and an editorial we repre-
senting an authoritative sender instance appearing in the preface and epilogue in which the brand board collectively addresses the reader concerning the intentions behind the materials. The collective we appears in particular in the description of those general values which we have demonstrated to be void of meaning. They contribute to a rhetorical strategy aiming at persuading the reader into endorsing the project, thereby overcoming any bad will against the project. The Hjørring materials reveal more clearly and explicitly that someone is being spoken to by some others – and thus that contradiction is possible. Branding Aalborg seeks to evade any form of dissent by consistently speaking in a tone of communal confession, as in and to a sympathetic congregation. The enunciation concludes in highly strung, but extremely general-sounding hortiations. In either case, it is peculiar to see that discussion or dialogue are not encouraged to a higher degree, something which is bound to egg on the receiver to contradiction, i.e. precisely the opposite of what was intended.

In conclusion it seems that in being transferred to cities the branding concept is bound to encounter opposition as it reinforces some of the contradictions inherent in corporate branding. The first contradiction stems from the fact that cities can neither control the processes leading to the building of the brand, nor ensure that consensus is reached; factors that are necessary conditions for successful corporate branding. Secondly, problems abound in the construction of the values, identity and unique qualities of the city. Unlike corporations, cities cannot claim uniformity in such areas, a fact which leads to truisms and watered-down generalities – clearly because the various parties involved all have their own axes to grind. Lastly there is an unresolved contradiction between this internal perspective and the fact that the branding process has to produce a result that appeals to outsiders. The external perspective is largely absent in the materials; thus, perhaps symptomatically, no image surveys seem to have been conducted. The Achilles’ heel of corporate branding is and will always be its obsession with identity, and the belief that once established, it is only of matter of communicating it to the world at large – even when that identity is a rather bland concoction with scant appeal. The response to the problem hinted at in the paper’s title must therefore be that, in regard to the analysed materials from both Hjørring and Aalborg, the smoke has so far obscured the fire.

Translation: Morten Berg Olesen

Notes
1. “Are you exhausted at 3 o’clock? Medova Tea.”
2. “Expect a little more from us”, “A bit better than other good cheeses.”
3. “Randers – where the seaways meet 13 highways.”
5. The compass analyses were conducted as quantitative survey studies on a representative section of the population. The subjects were given 42 questions which could be answered by six alternative responses, from ‘completely agree’ to ‘completely disagree’. The assumption underlying the division of the population into segments is that lifestyles and fundamental values can be uncovered by making a rough section through a large number of values, so that individuals, neighbourhoods and nations can be divided into a limited number of categories. The compass analysis has its parallel in sociological segmental analyses such as e.g. the Minerva model (Dahl, 1997) and Douglas’ ‘Thought Styles’ (Douglas, 1996). When a city’s ‘mentality’ and ‘identity’ has been analysed through a questionnaire survey, the identity is presented as a constant factor, which can be used in the marketing or branding of the city, internally as well as externally. In his examples Duus uses the quantitative analyses as the basis of his interpretation of city identities, mentalities and ‘brand essence’. It could be argued that in this, he
goes well beyond what the data can support. The interpretations are based on his experience of the cities, such as they presented themselves on his visits, and must consequently be viewed as rather subjective.

6. The name of the large discount store chain rhymes with can expressing ability: “Who can – Bilka.”
7. “Hjørring as a brand – these are the words.”
9. To ensure political backing from all interested parties, the board was given a broad composition.
10. Antonyms indicate implicit contrasts to value statements.
11. The conception underlying the idea that the prevalent mentality is a function of, and related to differences in natural environment and climate, has its source in the late natural rights philosophy of the 18th century. In his monumental *L’Esprit du Lois* (1748) Charles-Louis de Montesquieu (1689-1755) originated this cultural relativistic philosophy. In his writings it functioned primarily as a means of an objectively and scientifically based attack on the absolutist and autocratic rule of the day, and as an argument for republican rule. In its various manifestations the climate theory (e.g. that of Johann G. Herder), had far-reaching effects on the bourgeois revolutions – and henceforth – not least on the rise of the nation states in the 19th century. Over time the popular ideas on specific national identities and characteristics have attained the status of uncontested truisms that are immune to questioning.
12. The municipality of Aalborg in North Jutland has approximately 165,000 inhabitants.
13. “(We’re) crazy about the world.”
14. “Aalborg – values and vision.”
15. Antonyms indicate implicit contrasts to value statements.
16. The Danish term is ‘handlekraft’, expressing the power to act, with a touch of recklessness.
17. Two central quotes are given in back-translation, i.e. a literal translation, to show their syntactic and lexical style: “Aalborg vil være modpol til den traditionelle storby. Større af hjertet, mindre af omfang – og med højere til himlen.// Vi vil dyrke kontrasterne og skabe rum for mangfoldigheden. Grib verden. Og gennem samarbejde og handlekraft sikre rammerne for et liv i udvikling.”

**References**


Evaluation of Quality in Computer Games

Kjetil Sandvik

Abstract
Computer games play an important role in the cultural daily life of children, teenagers and adults. This has led to arguments both in the EU and the Nordic countries that computer games should be included in the culture political strategies for financial funding as well as the development of talents for the game industry. Still this has yet to result in culture political efforts and progressive strategies on a larger scale. On the contrary the political initiatives tend to result in restrictions more than efforts being made to encourage and develop the game industry. This article draws a picture of the current culture political situation and criticizes the media skeptical debate for making a poor starting point for formulating a progressive political strategy. It would be more fruitful to have a closer look at the specific characteristics of computer games and how computer games are being played and the role they are playing in the social life of different groups of player. The article outlines an analytical apparatus for evaluation of quality in computer games.

Key Words: computer games, cultural politics, game culture, game quality, game’s damaging effects, game addiction

Introduction
You can not judge a book by its cover. You can not evaluate the quality of computer games just by looking at its content. You need to examine how this content is structured in an interactive way which enables the computer player to engage in as well as to influence this content and the way it is played out. Computer games engage in dialogues with their players and also with the context of the gameplay situation. Having a concept of quality and an apparatus for performing this kind of evaluation is crucial when politicians design strategies for funding game development in order to encourage new game concepts and high quality content.

During the last decade or so computer games have grown into becoming a major player within the field of cultural production and consumption. Globally the game industry is larger than the film industry and consume of computer games exceeds that of both movies and television. Thus computer games have come to play an important role in the cultural daily life of both children, teenagers and adults. This has led to arguments in the Nordic countries that computer games should be included in the culture political strategies both in the sense of creating possibilities for financial funding of computer
game development especially when it comes to computer games for the European and Nordic markets as a counterweight to the massive overflow of games produced in the US and Japan and in the sense of developing talents for the game industry. Still this has yet to result in concrete culture political efforts and progressive strategies on a larger scale. On the contrary some of the political initiatives concerning computer games tend to result in restrictions rather than efforts being made to encourage and develop the game industry in the Nordic countries. To some degree political debates appear to deal mainly with the questions of whether games are damaging and addictive and are fueled by media skepticism and prejudice towards new media such as computer games even when the debate evolve around the possibilities for funding computer game development.

Taking the current culture political situation as its point of departure this article criticizes the media skeptical debate for being both founded on very little scientific evidence and making a poor starting point for formulating a progressive politics for computer game development as well as consume. The article proposes that it would be more fruitful to try to look deeper into the specific characteristics of computer games and into how computer games are being played and the role they play in the social life of e.g. children. Using a model for evaluation of quality in performance art and a set of concepts describing the nature of computer games, the article tries to transgress the media skeptical and prejudiced debate led by many politicians, organizations and the news media and seeks to formulate an understanding of computer games’ major characteristic. This may serve as a useful point of departure for a culture political strategy in the Nordic countries which aims at creating a Nordic market for developing computer games with high quality by strengthening the local game industry and making its potential grow by means of funding, creating incitements for venturing companies to invest and by means of education and research within the field of computer games.

My point will be that the main characteristics of computer games as a work of art as well as a type of communication are that computer games’ interactive plot-structure and fictional worlds facilitates new ways for the recipient to deal with the work or media message. There is no longer an interpretation at work distanced from the work or media message itself but an interpretation, which becomes an active participator and agent in the enunciation of the work. The work is so to speak engaging in a dialogue with its recipient. The work is thus open in the way described by Umberto Eco (1989): The work confronts its recipient as unfinished and is susceptible to influence, and the recipient’s interpretations and interaction with the work is what completes it.

**Developing ‘Hot Spots’**

There are several reasons why developing an analytical apparatus for evaluating the quality of computer games should be of interest not only in a Nordic context but in a global perspective. The game industry has not only grown to be one of the larger producers of cultural products, it has also matured in to a state where the marked to a high degree is controlled by large publishers (such as Electronic Arts) and to a greater extent by the game console producers (such as Sony, Nintedo and Microsoft) who play the role as gatekeepers controlling the content of new games distributed to the market and to the consoles (PS2, PSP, Xbox 360, GameCube, GameBoy, DS and so on). This is a quite natural situation:

Seen from a marketing viewpoint, there is little that is odious in this procedure, as the companies invest huge sums in placing these sophisticated, interactive
technologies in the home of the user. But seen from a content and user-oriented viewpoint, this highly centralized, top-down managed system inevitably leads to commercial interests being put above considerations of quality, multiplicity and innovation. (Fonnesbech 2002: 15)

So what we have is a global game market dominated by few but successful game concepts spawning both new games and sequels to old ones (with 53% of the titles released in 2003 falling into the action game category: 1st and 3rd person shooters, combat games, war games, racecar games and so on). Thus we got a situation where very little innovation is happening on a global scale as far as inventing new game concepts and content is concerned. This situation can also be explained by the fact that computer games (especially console games) are very expensive to produce and that the commercial game marked is extremely tough with a high degree of competition and short sales periods (even a blockbuster production can be sold at full prize for only a few months), which means that even well-established developers and publishers may risk bankruptcy if a game flops (as was the case with British publishing company Eidos who experienced a takeover by another British game company SCI in 2005 because the company (despite their commercial game successes like the Tomb Raider and Hitman series) had experienced that several of their titles failed to sell on the American market). So what is needed is to facilitate new game producing environments and conditions other than the ones found on the commercial market in order to help new companies and incite experiments and innovation needed to push game development on to ‘the next level’. This can not be done by the industry or by venture capital alone.

There is a need for a coordinated political strategy that includes research, education, funding, venture capital and new business models to create such a ‘hot spot’ for future game development. Alain Tascan, CEO at Electronic Arts, has pointed to Scandinavia as a possible future ‘hot spot’ in his “hot spot forecast” presented at the Game Developers Conference Europe in London (September 1st 2005). Tascan put forward a list of conditions which must be met in order for a ‘hot spot’ to develop, ranging from “relevant institutions of education”, “a high degree of IT infrastructure”, “a high degree of regional cultural activity (production of music, movies/TV, sports, fashion, design)” to a “proactive support by governments and local authorities” (Moos 2005). Looking at the Nordic countries as a whole and the Scandinavian countries in particular most of these conditions are fulfilled: Computer game research in the region has grown to become highly acknowledged on a global scale, computer game studies are emerging in both Norway and Sweden and especially in Denmark which has got a national game academy as a joint-venture between the universities, art schools and the game industry (http://www.dadiu.dk). And the Nordic countries are well-known for their cultural traditions especially when it comes to producing cultural products for children and young people. And over the last five years efforts have been made to develop a culture political strategy for computer games resulting in a lot of surveys (see list of references) that map the game industry and its conditions concluding (in different ways) that computer games no longer can be regarded as sub cultural artifacts, but have moved “from a niche stage to becoming a wide-ranging, culture-carrying phenomenon” which require “viewing them in a way that is similar to the other cultural spheres – in line with literature, music, theatre, film, and so on. This raises a number of questions within cultural politics – mainly regarding talent, creative competences and content development methods” (Fonnesbech 2002: 5). And I might add: Regarding how to evaluate the quality of new game concepts
and products, that is developing an analytical apparatus for judging computer games rooted in a profound understanding of the specific characteristics of computer games. This may make way for a political strategy aiming at “a more diverse and quality-oriented range of games in […] the Nordic countries as an alternative to the global marked” (Kulturministeriet 2005) and aiming at encouraging production of new games by means of funding “development and production of interactive fiction for both children and adults” (Kulturministeriet 2001: 6) or by means of establishing contact between the game industry and “the rest of the media industry, venture capital and the educational system” (Mediesekretariatet/Det Danske Filminstitut 2005: 25):

To achieve a richer, high-quality offering of Nordic computer games for children and youth, there is a need for improved information, both market data and consumer information. A better infrastructure is required, with improved distribution and better conditions for the producers to be paid for their efforts. A supply of labor with the appropriate skills is necessary. Improved financing with a selection of different forms for support and investment capital is also needed. (Robertson 2004: 6)

As prosperous as this may seem there is still a lot to be done before the region may evolve into a new ‘hot spot’ for computer game development. Venture companies tend to support well-established companies such as IO Interactive (Hitman-series) and Funcom (Anarchy Online) while being reluctant when it comes to investing in new companies (and new game concepts). And the possibilities for public funding both on a national and regional scale are rather limited compared to existing ‘hot spots’ such as Canada, England and Korea: In England research and development costs are refunded 150% by the state, which is public funding on much larger scale than the 11,5 million USD budget for game development support established by the Nordic Council for the period 2006-2012, and furthermore the English funding system aims directly at game production and not at improving export possibilities, distribution and versioning systems to make it easier to translate games into local languages as is the case with the Nordic fund: This implies that the Nordic support system will benefit the established game industry more than new companies “struggling to get their first production financed” (Moos 2005). Still it would be premature to be too critical: Efforts are being made, and both in the field of research and education and in the field of venture capital things are moving in the right direction. However, the main problem is the not yet fulfilled need for an analytical apparatus and an understanding of computer games characteristics which can create a basis for the development of a proactive culture political strategy on a larger scale.

The Major Obstacles: Prejudiced Debate on Dangerous Content and Computer Games’ Possible Damaging Effects

Even the most unrestrained, violent fiction is at its worst harmless because it takes place within something any normal person recognizes as pure fantasy, and at its best useful because it may produce a kind of catharsis which cleanses our system of our aggressions.

Eric Bentley: The Life of the Drama (1964)

Even though computer games have grown to be one of the largest fields within the so-called culture and experience economy, computer games are often regarded with
skepticism and debates on computer games often seem to evolve around questions about whether computer games have possible damaging effects on their users. This debate—led by politicians as well as parent organizations, religious organizations and so on and fueled by news media being eager to reproduce dubious scientific and psychological studies claiming that computer games create violent behavior and are as addictive as narcotics—often depicts computer games as trashy entertainment which is of no value at best and which may have damaging effects on its users at worst. This debate reproduces a hierarchy of values which is inherent in the traditional differentiation between art and popular culture which is expressed through “a series of dichotomies: authenticity/plagiarism, originality/copy, innovation/tradition […]” and which imperceptibly leads to a “social and psychological hierarchy of effects” (Drottner 1999:53).

The field of culture and media politics is still characterized by debates on whether computer games create addiction and antisocial behavior. In this respect the culture political debate in the Nordic countries bares striking similarities to the media skeptical—and often morally biased—campaigns against computer games which contains elements of sex and violence that have been executed especially in USA and Australia. Here games like Grand Theft Auto, Narc, and 50 Cent: Bulletproof have been banned. In the US the states of Florida and California (the latter ironically governed by Arnold Schwarzenegger, former actor in highly violent movies like Terminator and Conan—the Barbarian) have introduced non-violence acts against computer games and New York governor Hillary Clinton is working on a nation-wide prohibition against games containing sex and violence. And using very superficial ‘methods’ of evaluation strong organizations like the parent organization Family Media Group have put up warnings against “the ten most violent games in the world” (Oftebro 2005b).

If we search the archives containing debates on computer games in the Swedish and Norwegian parliaments over the last few years we find that these debates mainly focus on possible initiatives to protect children and young people against the possible damaging content of computer games. Even though such a debate in some ways is quite legitimate (studying children’s use of media and the media’s effect on them is an important field of research) and has led to a rating system for computer games which e.g. indicates which age group a certain computer game targets (and which e.g. indicates that highly criticized computer game like the Grand Theft Auto-series is not meant to be played by children), this debate is in danger of resulting in political strategies which will appear both restrictive and reactionary and thus will fail to support the development of new and qualitatively better content for interactive culture products. On the contrary it will just state that there are some types of content which are reprehensible no matter how these types of content are designed and displayed.

In this line of argument some of the culture political efforts made concerning computer games appear as a return to earlier days’ politics of restriction and censorship. Thus the computer game Grand Theft Auto 3 got reported to the police by the Norwegian children’s ombudsman due to its violent content, and in the following debate in the Norwegian parliament it was suggested to treat the game along the same lines as child pornography (http://www.stortinget/no/cgi-wif/wiftdles/doc/usr/-www/stortinget/stid/2002/s021218-01.html). And even though the public prosecutor found that the game’s degree of violence did not exceed that of many action movies and refused to press charges, the minister of children and family affairs decided to make the game object to censorship.
This kind of politics of restriction and censorship can be found even in established systems for support like e.g. the Norwegian system for funding development of new media which has been limited to funding only “non-violent computer games” (Kultur – og Kirkedepartementet 2003). And in Sweden a similar restriction can be found in the establishing of the semi-public organization Fair-Play which aim it is to encourage production of “clean games”, that is computer games without explicit violent content (http://www.fair-play.se). The problem here is that culture political strategies are determined by prejudice and incorrect information (e.g. that computer games are played by deranged boys who then go off and massacre their fellow high school students) and a misconception of what computer games really are and – even more important – how they are perceived.

Danish media researcher Carsten Jessen (2000) points to the fact that it is an illusion to believe that violent computer games exclusively are played by lonely boys in dark basements, which is also one of the conclusions made by the Norwegian survey A digital childhood? (Endestad et.al. 2004). The survey states that it does not seem to be the fact that children who got access to new media and spend a lot of time using them are spending less time on activities like sport, outdoor play and visiting friends. Children’s use of computer games is far more complex than usually anticipated and computer games thus play an extensive social role, as Carsten Jessen demonstrates in a survey of young boys’ use of action games, in which he states that playing games covers a variety of different activities all of which may evolve around the game even though playing the game itself is just one activity while others concerns competition, exploration, exchanging of knowledge and so on (Jessen 2000: 120-121). Thus the game experience – “playing the game” – contains much more than just the player’s interaction with the game universe, and in this light, Jessen regards computer games as “good tools for creating spheres in which social fellowship and play may emerge” (Jessen 2000: 121). As Danish drama teacher Klaus Thestrup explains, computer games are part of a larger media circuit: “Computer games encourage different types of play which again may encourage creative production or storytelling”, which is why it is useful when evaluating computer games and their impact on children and young people to regard them as “just a small part of a greater whole, and if we want to understand their importance, we need to consider the whole situation” (Thorhauge 2005: 110).

To differentiate the debate on computer game’s damaging potential it may be added that very few studies have been able to show any connection between the use of violent computer games and violent behavior, as concluded by a widely composed panel of experts assigned by the Danish Ministry of Culture to summarize the international research results concerning media and violence. The survey concludes:

As a whole the studies on which this survey is based do not bare any evidence that could indicate that representation of violence in moving pictures in itself should result in violent behavior in normally functioning children and young people. When children and young people commit acts of violence this must be seen a result of the interplay between many different social circumstances in which the experience of violence in moving picture may be a contributing factor (Kultur ministeriet 1995: 59).

The fact that playing violent computer games does not cause any damage or provoke violent behavior connects to the fact that “when it comes to violent play, children are usually better than adults at differentiating play from reality” (Egenfeldt-Nielsen and
Smith 2000: 120). We may point out that “adults often underestimate children’s and young people’s ability to see the difference between reality and fiction” (ibid.). One of the characteristics of children’s play is that it trains the child’s ability “to read fiction” (Krøgholt 2001: 186), that is to acknowledge fiction as separated from daily-life activities: It’s just something we are playing. And this ability to separate between fiction and reality is also at work when we engage in other types of fiction in which the amount of violence can be equally large. When the debate in the Norwegian parliament quoted above equals consuming child pornography and engaging in fictional acts of violence in Grand Theft Auto 3 this is an example of politicians not being able to maintain an equal differentiation. Here levels are blended and boundaries blurred: Pornography is not fiction and demands sexual exploitation of e.g. children while Grand Theft Auto is 100 per cent fiction: The action is played out by and by using absolute fictional game characters: No-one suffers for real.

Of course, when looking superficially at computer games from ‘the outside’, the amount of violence might be offensive. There is a lot of violence taking place in computer games; a lot of slaughtering various enemies or innocent bystanders (or both), a lot of blunt and murderous attacks, a lot of silent assassination, a lot of fighting and mutilation – and obviously it’s a lot of fun! The novelty of computer games though does not lie in the presence of often extreme violence, but in the fact that we can partake in the killings and beatings in a more tactile and interactive way than in other forms of fictional violence. We have always been fascinated by violence, and violence as aesthetic and dramatic effect has been an important ingredient literature, theatre, movies since the dawn of our culture. The amount of murders, rapes and immoral behavior in computer games does not exceed that of Greek tragedies, the baroque farce, the average action or horror movie or Tom & Jerry cartoon. Actually some of the most horrifying dramatic scenarios are yet to find their way into the computer game – even when it comes to games which evolve around immoral actions such as drive-by-shootings and killing off innocent bystanders or killing off opponents in sophisticated ways: Killing your own children – as Medea does in Sophocles’ tragedy – or the butchering of your enemies’ children and serving them as pie to their mother as in Shakespeare’s Titus Andronicus is yet to be seen in an interactive version. The widely criticized ‘secret sex-scenes’ in Grand Theft Auto – San Andreas appear rather innocent and childish compared to the ‘sleeping with your mother after having killed your father’-scenario of Oedipus Rex.

My point is that apart from the fact that in computer games we partake in violent action not only on the level of perception but also in a tactile way – that we don’t just read about e.g. king Theseus going into to labyrinth of Crete to kill the Minotaurus, but that we in a game like Doom use our mouse and keyboard to go monster hunting in the labyrinth ourselves – apart from that: When it comes to studying what’s so fascinating about violence in computer games, it is plausible to ask: What is so fascinating about fictional violence, violence in an aesthetical format as such? This means that when looking at how the use of violence functions in different types of computer games we can look at how violence functions in other works of fiction, e.g. in different dramatic genres.

In his book The Life of the Drama (1964) theatre theorist Eric Bentley deals with the use of violence in farce, melodrama, comedy and tragedy. His point is that violence as dramatic effect functions in different ways depending on the genre and depending on to what degree we identify our selves with the characters and the dramatic story. Do we feel sympathy for the protagonist or not, do we fear the antagonist or not – and so on.
I will give you one example: One of the dramatic genres containing a high degree of violence and a lot of aggression is the farce (Bentley 1964: 264ff.). Here we do not sympathize much with the protagonist, but more important: we certainly do no fear the antagonist (or antagonists, there are often quite a few). Here contempt for the enemy is crucial and the aggression this contempt produces is what creates the dramatic action. Its not possible – and certainly not useful – to feel any compassion with the victims of our (that is the protagonist with whom we identify) aggression, because there is too much fun and pleasure in sacrificing them. You do not run away, you attack. It’s a very physical form with little room for arguments and reasoning. You hit and you hit hard. No questions asked. And the execution of brutal violence with no consequence is the main characteristic. The farce challenges moral, ethics and any other system of law and order. It’s a safe haven from normality, moderation and safe-play of any kind. The farce is not only absurd, it presents a structure of absurdity, a universal and manic and most of all violent racing around which produces aesthetical satisfaction.

A lot of computer games resemble this dramatic genre. Various kinds of shoot’em ups with _Doom_ and _Quake_ series as some kind of archetypes can be seen as farces. Attacking is the major mode of action. It’s all about beating and shooting our way through a series of levels on which new enemies appear replacing the ones we already have had the pleasure of killing. You fight your way through the labyrinth blasting monsters with a wide range of lethal weapons at your disposal. Any compassion for these monsters is off course out of the question. And there is not much sympathy for the protagonist (that is the game character you are operating) either. The game character in games like _Doom_ and _Quake_ is reduced to mere functionality, to a set of skills and weapons: “Here, the “character” is better considered as a suite of characteristics or equipment utilized and embodied by the controlling player. The primary-player-character relationship is one of vehicular embodiment” (Newmann 2002). In fact your character is not much more than the barrel of a gun pointing into the screen and a display informing you about how much ammunition you’ve got left, the score, health situation, lives left on your account and so on: All important vehicles for the violent tour de force which is what makes these games so fascinating.

So, violence in computer games can be characterized as exaggerated in the same way as the farce, the comic book and the action movie in which violent and spectacular effects are part of the genre’s aesthetics. As Danish media researcher Anne Jerslev (1999) points out, the use of violence (in movies) is usually based on some kind of aesthetical idea and she differentiates between ‘cartoon violence’, ‘splatter violence’, and ‘realistic violence’, and the point is that only the latter is to be taken serious, while use of blood, gore and extreme violence in e.g. the ‘splatter’ movie or game works as some kind of “humoristic, ironic comment, which the genre initiates” (Sørensen and Jessen 1999: 15).

Instead of making superficial and prejudiced evaluations of violence in computer games what we should do is to ask: Which role does the violence play? It is beyond any discussion that Stanley Kubric’s _A Clockwork Orange_, Francis Ford Coppola’s _Apocalypse Now_ and the _Die Hard_-series all are highly violent movies. But at the same time it is also undisputable that the violence plays quite different roles in these movies. In the former two, violence is used respectively as society critique and warfare critique, whereas in the _Die Hard_-series the use of violence is embedded in an action movie tradition as well in the ironically aesthetics of violence of the 1990ties in which violence function as pure spectacular effect with an ironical twist. The violence in _Grand Theft_
Auto has the same characteristics as that of the Die Hard movies: We are in “Pulp Fiction-land where form comes before content and humor rarely can be suppressed by the brutal effects” (Smith 2003) and where the outrageous actions are placed in ironical brackets. Here violence is to be regarded as unreal and non-realistic: “It’s just so exaggerated!” as one of the children interviewed in Holm Sørensen and Jessen’s survey explains (1999: 35). But the main point here is that use of media containing violence (as well as use of media containing all other sorts of things) always is enclosed in a context in which the media is being used for different purposes like for instance a basis for personal reflections, creativity and, in the case of children, as a starting point for larger play communities and further play. When we wish to study how children and young people experience, reacts to and perceives computer games (whether we do that to survey their effect or to judge quality in a computer game) we have to look into the context of the game experience as well as the specific mode of reception at work in computer games:

The fact that children playing computer games are co-producers who control, act and choose have an impact on their fascination by computer games and on the games’ potential effects. Thus immersion in the fictional universe of computer games is of another type than immersion in movies and novels. While the absorption when reading novels or watching movies is about getting carried away or daydreaming, computer games demand that you are acting actively. (Holm Sørensen and Jessen 1999: 14)

Evaluating Quality in Computer Games: Understanding the Media

So what I have tried to outline so far is a situation where computer games often are subject to prejudice and misconception resulting in culture political efforts which engage in restrictions and censorship. This situation calls for a set of concepts and an analytical apparatus that can make a starting point for evaluation of quality in computer games and thus an progressive culture political strategy targeting innovation and experimentation as important issues: What is a computer game, how do various computer game genres function, how do different age groups use computer game? And how do we secure a higher quality in the new media and the new use of media? The key concept is off course ‘quality’.

Quality is a concept often used in culture political debates. The problem, however, is that the concept usually is being used in an unreflective and undefined way which enables crude differentiation as when politicians refuse to “label computer games as culture but labels them as entertainment, which must manage on their own”: Computer games are “obviously a commodity” that should not be included by a public culture political strategy (Hebsgaard 2004b). Here a vague and undefined use of the concept results in a differentiation between culture (that is worth funding) and commercial entertainment. Actually it is rather hard to find any clear-cut definition of ‘quality’ as it is being used in the culture political debate, even though the concept obviously has a great importance. The reason why I am making a point out of this is that it seems imperative to have some over-all thoughts on the very nature of ‘cultural quality’ in order to formulate a progressive culture political strategy. What is the meaning of the concept ‘quality’ when the Nordic Council decides to spend 11,5 million USD on “developing Nordic quality games” (Oftebro 2005a)? As I have indicated quality to some extent seems
to imply a certain type of content, which is first and foremost characterized by its non-violent character, and which more vaguely bare references to a certain Nordic “story-telling tradition within literature and movies and promotion of art and culture of high quality” (Mediesekretariatet/Det Danske Filminstitut 2005: 25).

I do not want to engage in a definition of quality as such, but want to focus on presenting a concrete quality concept which may be used not only to judge the content of a cultural product, but also to zoom in on communicational, craftsmanlike and socializing aspects. This concept of quality has been developed by Danish cultural scientists Karen Hannah, Charlotte Rørdam and Jørn Langsted, presented in their book The IAN-model. A handbook on evaluating Theatre, Dance, and Music (2005). Their model for evaluation of performance art will produce a useful starting point for my description of the uniqueness and special characteristics of computer games. Being a model developed for performance art makes it all the more useful because the characteristics of a performance, that is the artistic expression unfolding within a time-space continuum shared with its audience, resembles the real-time reception in computer games, that is the game unfolding as a result of the player’s interaction with the game. The IAN-model displays three parameters in which quality can be evaluated. Quality is regarded as interplay between a cultural product’s Intention, Ability and Necessity.

*Intention* is defined as consisting of “a will to express and communicate”:

The will to expression comes from within and is turned outwards. The artist shapes his or her visions, ideas and experiences of the world, of life, of human fellowship, and in this process of shaping thoughts and experiences and willingness to express oneself, ambitions, self-conceit and energy of expression are also at work. And this is so because an art work is not just a description of an outside world – it is a choice between all the world’s many elements combined with some kind of intention. Through art the world is processed. (Hannah et.al. 2005b)

In game design *intention* is connected to the developing of a game world and structure of possible actions and events inherent in this world. Computer games present themselves as fictional worlds which the player is invited to take part in as a major agent in the interactive plot structure. The fiction (and I use the word fiction to avoid the more biased word ‘narrative’) found in computer games presents itself as interactive and – to use a term coined by American computer game theorist Celia Pearce (2002) – as play-centric. It is interactive in that it is constituted by interactions between a fictitious world and a plot structure (how ever complex and multi-threaded) and a player’s action within and in relation to this world and structure. It is play-centric in that this interaction between game and player uses role-play as its primary mode. Here computer games differs from other types of fictions which are fixed entities and present them selves as ‘told’ – even when they unfold in real-time in front of its audience like in the theatre (Cf. Bordwell 1985).

Computer game fictions come in many shapes and forms – 1st person shooters (*Counter-Strike*), adventure games (*Myst*-series), strategy games (*Civilization*), sports games (from the almost abstract table tennis match found in *Pong* to the complex soccer-scenarios of the *Fifa*-series), war games (*Battlefield 1942*), combat games (*Tekken*-series), and vast fictional online-worlds, which work as arenas for improvisation with player-designed characters (*Ultima Online*), but their differences aside they all have one thing in common: role-play and participation in some kind of story-producing process
or “production of […] events” (Klastrup 2001). They may be described as spatial structures (Manovich 2002) or as emergent structures, i.e. fictions with a plot-line evolving and developing only due to the player’s actions (Jenkins 2001). Or they may be regarded as dramatic narratives with the player as main character. This is the case whether the player engages in playing the part of the space soldier in *Halo*, the assassin in *Hitman*, the adventuring heroine in *Tomb Raider* or she puts on the role as creator of systems; families, cities, empires in *The Sims*, *SimCity* or *Civilization*. And in a massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) like e.g. *Ultima Online* this role-playing mode has been extended to the degree that the player can create her own unique character using the creative tools the game has to offer and by using this character she can create her own story-lines together with other player-characters and non-player characters (NPCs) within the framework of the game’s fictional world.

Thus interactive and play-centric dramatic fictions imply a transformation of the recipient. From merely playing the role as a spectator to the dramatic story unfolding in front of her, she is offered a role within the fiction itself. Thus the interactive and play-centric fiction found in computer games dissolves the line between spectator and fiction, which is why it is not to correct, as claimed by Brenda Laurel (1991), that interactive systems (regarded “as theatre”) imply that the audience enters the stage and becomes actors. It makes little sense to talk about actors and audience in the traditional sense. There is no point outside the game from which an audience is intended to watch and therefore there is no-one for an actor to act to. A game is not meant to be watched like a theatre performance. The central issue in a game is to play. This involves different demands on the interactive and play-centric fiction than on traditional fictions, which are meant to be read or watched. Narrative contingency, psychological character development, depth in characters as well as story plays to some extent a minor role compared to possibilities for the recipient to play a role within the story. The point is not to discover, reveal and to read for the plot (Cf. Brooks 1984), but to play the plot. To evaluate the intension of a certain computer game design is to examine the quality of this special type of fictional universes and its interactive plot-structure and the game experience this produces.

The ability-parameter of the IAN-model is explained as follows

The artistic ability comprises specific skills that vary from one artistic field to another. These skills are trained and sharpened, partly through artistic schooling, a kind of apprenticeship, an partly through years of practice and experience. Artistic ability is a prerequisite for expressing and communicating, and the demands made on artistic ability are often highly specialized. Success is dependent upon mastering the artistic forms of expression and this applies to the arts in general. (Hannah et.al. 2205b)

In game design this parameter addresses the designers’ ability to create convincing and well-functioning graphical worlds and animated characters that can move around and interact with each other and with these worlds all embedded in an interactive structure which the player can influence. This structure of game universe and possible player actions is what we usually term a game’s gameplay. Game designer Richard Rouse (2001) defines gameplay as the one component in computer games, which can be found in no other art forms; that is interactivity: “A game’s gameplay is the degree and nature of the interactivity that the game includes, i.e. how the player is able to interact with the game-world and how that game-world reacts to the choices the player makes” (Rouse
In the context of this article, however, I will claim that gameplay cannot solely be linked to the game’s interactivity; gameplay is also connected to the game’s fiction. Computer games may be described as both a system of rules and as fiction in that “playing a [computer game] is to be engaged in the interaction with some real rules while imagining a fictional world” (Juul 2005: 2). However, rules are not only found in games and play-centric fictions. Even classic, closed and static non-interactive fictions set up rules for the reader or spectator concerning their conduct and how the fiction should be perceived. Umberto Eco (1979) labels the strategic rules governing the reading of a text Model Reader, which is not a particular real-life reader, but a set of reader-competences that the text anticipates and the reader must meet these anticipations in order to produce the best reading. In theatre performance such rules of reception are usually summed up in the concept contract of fiction, which determines the communication taking place between performance and spectator and includes a basic framework for understanding what is going on, for instance that what is taking place on stage is fiction and not reality, what genre this particular fiction belongs to and so on.

In computer games, however, this contract of fiction is not limited to regulating the possible interpretations made by the spectator, but includes rules governing how the player may interact with the game and its fiction and is as such imperative in order to make it possible for the player to play the game at all. The player must understand the gameplay in order to get a satisfactory game experience. And when looking at the game’s fiction and how it may be ‘read’, it is important to be aware of these rules because they are an implemented part of this ‘reading’. When we analyze a game’s interactive fiction we analyze a dynamic structure that evolves as we analyze and interpret it. We analyze our own actions according to the rules of the game and to our positions as players in the game universe and according to the game characters we operate as well as we analyze the story (or stories) emerging from our actions. And what makes this analysis all the more complex is that our interpretations constantly and recursively re-enter the game itself as new starting points for further gameplay action and development. So when it comes to evaluating quality in computer games the ability of game designers is all about how good and challenging the interaction design embedded in the concrete computer game is: A game of high quality produces possibilities for interesting and challenging interactions and interplay between game and player.

Finally the IAN-model defines necessity as:

the relation to the audience, to the surroundings, to the society in which the work of art is performed. […] This implies that a good work of art must consist of some kind of necessity which reaches beyond the artistic intention and ability. The art work – the artistic initiative – must evoke a response in a reality populated with smaller or larger groups of people, characterized by specific social and psychological traits. The work of art must be characterized by acting upon these people and their social and psychological situation in a way with appears revelational, believable and imparts a sense of immediacy. (Hannah et.al. 2005b)

When evaluating computer games, necessity will connect to the user-dimension, meaning the way in which the game approaches its player (user) and the way in which the game initiates different gameplay situations and different types of player communities. This off course is dependent on both game genre, game format and game platform. The social dimension of e.g. MMORPGs is constituted partly by working together within the fiction framework and partly by players who outside the fiction discuss the possibilities
for changes and new story-lines inside the game’s fiction and who exchange experiences and stories on the multitude of websites surrounding the game or by using the game’s chat channel. This kind of social player activity both in character and out of character is an important part of what makes the game fascinating and is encouraged by the game designers in the sense that great missions in the upper experience levels of the game necessitates that players make their characters join forces in clans and guilds. As Lisbeth Klastrup points out, “the characteristics of a given world may be defined respectively in the cross between aesthetics and structure (the world’s appearance, its design as fiction universe and game system) and the social dimension (the social text emerging from the encountering of the users of the world centered on the use of it)” (Klastrup 2004:.239).

_Necessity_ is a parameter for the designers’ ability to structure the game’s rules and fictional world in ways that engages the player and ways in which the player can make the game connect to a larger cultural and social context e.g. as a means for social interactions. Here the computer game may become part of different types of communities and also come to play an important role in the way players handle the modern world as such and in which media play a dominating role as something in relation to which modern people understand themselves (and by which they mirrors, mediates and stages themselves). Here computer games are an important part of the media picture alongside reality-tv, sit-coms, docu-soaps and so on: “Due to the absence of coherent dramatic narratives in connection to which we can understand our lives there is all the more need for drafts from which ideas can be drawn, and media is off course obvious reservoirs for doing so” (Jerselv 2002). As such computer games may be used as media matrices which present themselves as tools for developing identity and understanding of self in modern human beings as well as tools for coping with the complexity of the world. Thus the utility of media matrices is on the one hand expressed by being “simple and recognizable” and on the other “leaving room for the users to add aspects, associations and accents which evoke personal response and meaning” (Drottner 2002: 36-37).

At the same time media play a crucial role to the way in which modern human beings get information and communicate with each other: Modern, digital communication is due to its interactivity to high degree based on computer game formats and this is why playing computer games may be regarded as means to train general media competences as well as other competences needed in today’s hyper-complex society in which analyzing and acting according to complex structures of meaning is vital and in which the “ability to adapt, the ability to be part of mobile teams, to believe in oneself, the ability to communicate a strategy and to understand information” (Pedersen 2003), which are what characterize e.g. the players of online multiplayer games like _Counter-Strike_, are qualities demanded e.g. by the business community.

Thus computer games function as media training and rehearsals in handling complexity whether this takes place in the shape of violent play (when playing an action game like _Grand Theft Auto_) or in the shape of mastering complex structures of meaning (when solving complicated puzzles in an adventure game like _Myst_ or when building large systems in a strategy game like _Civilization_) or in the shape of experimentation on social structures (when playing the build-your-own-family game _The Sims_). To examine to what degree computer games enables these kinds of social learning processes would be one way of examining the quality of computer games’ _necessity._
Conclusion

An evaluation of quality in computer games may – as I have argued – take its beginning in an understanding of computer games as new structures of fiction, which uses interactivity as its distinctive mode of reception (which is why computer games in a profound way differ from other types of fiction). Using a concept of quality which enables an evaluation of computer games using intention, ability, and necessity as parameters it is possible to evaluate concrete computer games’ fictional universes and interactive structures of actions and events and the game experience these produces. It is possible to examine and pass judgments on the possibilities for interesting and challenging interactions and interplay between game and player utilized by the game design. And it becomes equally possible to examine how the computer game meets its player and the way the game may initiate different modes of use, different situation the game may be played in, and thus how the game creates a sphere for different kinds of communities.

My concluding remark is that this model for evaluation of quality in computer games may be used as a starting point for formulating a culture political strategy concerning computer games in which computer games are not merely exposed to superficial (and judgmental) ratings and subject to political initiatives which mostly expresses reactionary regulations, restrictions and censorship. On the contrary the model may initiate a political strategy for evaluating computer games on their own premises in the same way as e.g. movies are being evaluated. Using the suggested concept of quality and analytical apparatus a progressive cultural politics may be formulated which can support computer games development indirectly by making better channels for distribution and by joining forces with venture capital and directly by supporting development of competences as well as development of products and which objective will be to initiate and support the development of a Nordic ‘hot spot’, that is a setting for Nordic game development focusing on designing innovative and challenging computer games.

Note

1. All foreign quotations are translated into English by the author.

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What Is the Strategic Role of Online Newspapers?

ARNE H. KRUMSVIK

Abstract
The newspapers are in a pressed situation of circulation decline. This is partly a consequence of increased Internet usage, a development the papers themselves have helped push forward. This survey reveals that Norwegian newspapers executives do not approve fully of their own organizations’ online activities, and explores their rationale for online publishing: Is it marketing of the print product, the development of new business, or are the newspapers still in an explorative mode?

Key Words: newspaper, online newspaper, strategy, Internet, management, economics.

Introduction
This survey reveals that Norwegian newspapers executives do not approve fully of their own organizations’ online activities. In order to understand this lack of satisfaction with their new ventures, it is important to understand their rationale for online publishing: Is it marketing of the print product, the development of new business, or are the newspapers still in an explorative mode? These questions form the center of this article, which outlines the critical developments challenging this industry through the digitalization of news distribution and which explores Norwegian newspaper executives’ perceptions of the strategic role of their online newspapers. The discussion of the situation ten years after the occurrence of the online newspaper phenomenon is conducted within the theoretical framework of strategic management, applying Miles and Snow’s classic model for the analysis of the strategy, structure and processes of organizations.

From Experiment to Problematic Success: The First Online Newspapers
News has been online since the 1970s. The first newspaper service on America Online was launched by the Chicago Tribune in May 1992. But not until 1995 was the online newspaper concept of today developed, featuring among others CNN as a global news engine. Six years later, in April 2001, American trade journal Editor & Publisher Interactive had registered in its database 12,878 news media online (Deuze 2001; Rasmussen 2002:33).

1995 was the year in which public Internet usage had its breakthrough in the entire Western world, largely due to a simpler “point-and-click” interface for the World Wide
Web. In Norway, Telepost Communications⁴ and Oslonett⁵ provided Internet access to private users, and both had about 10,000 customers by the year’s end. The challenge to suppliers of Internet access was the lack of Norwegian content to be used in marketing the new service.

Telepost invited Dagbladet (single copy sales, nationally distributed tabloid) online at a very low cost, to provide attractive content for its own site. The web address testifies to the fact that it might not have been the purpose for users to type the entire URL directly: http://www.telepost.no/dagbl@det.no/.

“Electronic newspapers are so far no serious competition to print papers. But we are on the brink of an information revolution and we want to be part of it”, saïd Dagbladet’s Presentation Editor, Ove Monsen, to the business tabloid Dagens Næringsliv⁶.

The Oslo-based subscription newspaper Aftenposten had launched an unofficial test version online, but had it removed in connection with Dagbladet’s launch. The slogan “always ahead” (”alltid foran”) nevertheless had to be set aside as web-enthusiast and editor of Brønnøysunds Avis, Petter Stephan Krokaa, made sure the five-day local newspaper from the middle of Norway launched its online edition on 6 March 1995, just two days ahead of Dagbladet’s heavily advertised online debut.

Krokaa informed Dagens Næringsliv⁶ that the publication at http://www.nordnett.no/~ba/ cost him a mere half hour of work every day, and that the electronic version probably had more readers than the printed issue, which had a circulation of 5,000 copies.

VG (single copy sales, nationally distributed tabloid) brought forth its online edition on 10 October 1995. And even though Dagbladet relaunched a more news-focused issue the day before, it did not keep the country’s largest daily from taking the lead online as well. A solid brand and interactive services were its main weapons⁷.

### Ten Years of Norwegian Online Newspapers

Sigurd Høst has kept a register on the development in the number of online newspapers since 1996, and “following a certain amount of hesitation in 1995 (only 17 newspapers registered online by February 1996), a quick expansion came in 1996. Then came three years of relatively slow growth until activities boomed once more in 2000” (Høst 2001:18-19, my translation). This boom was also echoed in media coverage of this new area in the media landscape.

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<th>Year</th>
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<th>“Nettavis” in Atekst**</th>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>-</td>
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*Registration at the end of the year, except 1995, which has registration data from February 1996 (Høst 2004:26).

** Search for “nettavis” (online newspaper) in the Norwegian search database Atekst.
By the end of 2000, there were 157 newspapers online, and out of these 126 offered a news service as part of its output.

AS Avishuset Dagbladet started the new millennium by establishing DB Medialab AS, a sister company to AS Dagbladet, responsible for its activities in digital media. As early as 1999, The New York Times had already separated its online activities into a separate company. One of its intentions was to take advantage of the high value estimate and collect external capital to finance further growth.

Separating online activities into separate companies served to make visible its values to the market, increasing the value of the owners’ shares. And while print papers were marked by processes of efficiency improvement, the spirit of entrepreneurship was cultivated in new media.

The largest newspaper in Scandinavia, Aftonbladet (single copy sales, nationally distributed Swedish tabloid), also separated its online edition into Aftonbladet Nya Medier AB in 1999, with separate Editor-in-Chief and Managing Director. Shorter decision-making paths enabled the company to develop faster than what had been possible in the mother company.

Dagbladet chose an intermediate solution, with an Editor-in-Chief in common and shared locations for editorial resources. At the same time, increased risk could be taken within a separate corporation.

The trend of separation spread to other major Norwegian newspaper companies, such as VG, Aftenposten and Stavanger Aftenblad (a regional subscription-based newspaper).

Web optimism reached its peak in 2000, followed by a crack at the American NASDAQ stock exchange. The newspapers’ competence in downsizing was now made serviceable in their online companies as well. But even though investors got cold feet and advertising income temporarily decreased, it did not halt the growth in online newspaper usage. VG’s online edition surpassed the print editions of both Aftenposten and Dagbladet measured by readership in 2004. And in 2005, the online newspaper business received more demand for advertising space than they could offer.

The maturing of the online newspaper market measured by the number of print newspapers with their own respective online editions does not follow a classic diffusion curve, and Sigurd Høst emphasizes two explanatory variables:

If we compare the pattern of diffusion (...) with the ideal-typical S-curve for diffusion (...), it is most notably the fast growth in 1996 which does not fit. Instead of waiting to see what would happen, as many papers did in 1997-1999 (...), many were now anxious to get on early. The explanation is both that they were afraid of being surpassed by the technological development (‘being left on the platform as the train leaves’), and that it was possible to create a fairly decent Internet service at a low cost (Høst 2004:14, my translation).

In addition, the launch of Nettavisen.no in 1996 made a significant impact, contributing to changing the market structure.

The Change in the Role as News Provider

Newspapers were part of a world in which they could pull out the “Exclusive” heading every time they were reasonably certain they were the only ones who covered a specific story or interviewed a specific person. Citations in radio news worked as pure adver-
tising for the exclusive story, and this interplay continued until the story perhaps was picked up by the evening news on television.

This situation was dramatically changed with the introduction of Nettavisen.no. The entrepreneurs lacked proper funding to launch a new printed paper, and a central part of the business idea was to function as a meta medium in relation to newspapers. By systematically surveying and citing the most interesting stories published in the print media every day, Nettavisen, despite its limited resources and within a short period of time, was able to offer complete news coverage, previously only available through the largest newspapers. On top of that, Nettavisen spiced things up with a few self-produced stories, often quite elegantly developed to make the evening news. In this way, television played the same part in promoting Nettavisen that radio had played in relation to newspapers.

This is where the serious trouble began for the national newspapers. After some time, Nettavisen’s breadth constituted a substitute for the omnibus print paper, instead of promoting the original messenger of the particular piece of news. The newspapers responded by increasing efforts in their own online editions and thus reinforced the effect. The news battle was no longer about 24 hours, but about minutes. This was strengthened by the fact that editors publicized the exact time a story was made public. The news competition was given preference over experimenting with new forms of expression and developing the characteristics of the new medium. The new channel was also well suited to news transmission, given its ability to continuously combine the advantages of newspapers, radio and television through the use of multimedia.

In 1995, most newspapers had to ask themselves whether this was in fact a case of cannibalism, but the concerns had to be put aside in favor of looking at the realities of the competition on the market. A year after the birth of online newspapers, the proportions were still so comfortably on the side of the mother publications that the introduction of Nettavisen was perceived as no threat to their financial situation. But as usage of online publications has reached a critical mass, the large media companies have been busy developing their online editions as supplementary products and not substitutes.

VG announced hasty measures when publicizing a drop in circulation in 2004. Feature articles, consumer articles and columns were now to be withheld from online publication or granted exclusivity on paper for a period of time. Dagbladet also announced their policy not to publicize its cover story online, while DN’s online edition long had to be content with competing with Nettavisen over citations from its own print sister.

Now, all online papers cite each other, and the problem for print papers that wish to withhold stories from their online editions is that the readers may now find the story in its online rival, and not where it would be logical to start the search. It is precisely the good, exclusive stories that one wishes to withhold. The problem is that these are also the ones that will be cited.

In an attempt to address the dilemma that arises when new media grow from older ones, Dagbladet, at the end of the previous century, announced a strategy to shift attention “from occurrence to context” (“fra hendelse til sammenheng”). The problem of always being ahead on this occasion is that circulation took a fall due to a lower news temperature in the paper edition. And Editor-in-Chief Harald Stanghelle adjusted his rhetoric to: “occurrence and context” (“hendelse og sammenheng”). The newspapers’ strong standing online in Norway and Sweden is unique compared to most other markets in the world. The dynamics that followed the launch of Nettavisen, a peculiarly Norwegian phenomenon, is a partial explanation for the situation in Norway.
It follows that there are few international benchmarks in the search for answers to the questions that arise when the channels are equal in audience reach, but have very different earning capacities.

The exclusive piece of news no longer exists. And at the same time, the newspapers’ role as market place is being challenged. The question that newspaper makers have to find an answer to is: What are the qualities and characteristics of newspapers that will have to be developed and emphasized in order to maintain the strong position of the product in the everyday lives of readers?

The days of Nettavisen as an independent outsider are gone after it was acquired by the TV 2 Group and became part of TV 2’s website. But all those who dream of a joint effort to charge readers of online newspapers need to reconsider the potential that market players in the free newspapers, such as Swedish Metro, would see in such a situation. In Norway, people are awaiting one of the most digitally sophisticated markets in Europe, according to Jupiter Research. And here there is no paper edition to defend.

To the media corporations, which, according to Dagens Næringsliv’s figures in September 2004, have invested more than two billion NOK in accumulated online loss, the question is whether they have achieved their goals. Indeed, even more online operations can give rise to operating margins that their mother companies can only dream of, but because the money runs out fast at the other end, the joy over good online figures is only muted.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Companies’ adjustments to altered external conditions constitute complex and dynamic processes (Picard 2000, 2003; Kolo, C. & Vogt, P. 2004). In order to analyze such situations, Miles and Snow developed a model called “the adaptive cycle” (2003:21-28), an attempt to generalize the psychology at work in the behavior of organizations. Three main problems are identified: (1) The entrepreneurial problem (domain definition), (2) The engineering problem (technology), and (3) The administrative problem (structure-process and innovation).

*Figure 1. The Adaptive Cycle*
A process of adaptation is likely to work sequentially throughout the three phases, but processes of change may be triggered within all three. However, in the studies conducted by Miles and Snow, it appears that the fastest and most efficient adaptations occur when the right administrative changes are made.

By studying different industries, Miles and Snow identify four archetypes. Each of these has its own strategy in responding to changes in the surroundings, and its typical configuration for technology, structure and process consistent with its strategy. Three stable situations are named “Defender”, “Analyzer” and “Prospector”, where the company is competitive over time if organized according to its strategic type. The last category is called “Reactor” and represents an unstable situation (Miles & Snow 2003:29):

1. **Defenders** are organizations that have narrow product-margin domains. Top managers in this type of organization are highly expert in their organization’s limited area of operations, but do not tend to search outside their domain for new opportunities. As a result of this narrow focus, these organizations seldom make major adjustments in their technology, structure or methods of operation. Instead, they devote primary attention to improving the efficiency of their existing operations.

2. **Prospectors** are organizations that almost continually search for market opportunities, and they regularly experiment with potential responses to emerging environmental trends. Thus, these organizations often are the creators of change and uncertainty to which their competitors must respond. However, because of their strong concern for product and market innovation, these organizations are not completely efficient.

3. **Analyzers** are organizations that operate in two types of product-market domains, one relatively stable, the other changing. In their stable areas, these organizations operate routinely and efficiently through use of formalized structures and processes. In their more turbulent areas, top managers watch their competitors closely for new ideas, and then they rapidly adopt those ideas that appear to be most promising.

4. **Reactors** are organizations in which top managers frequently perceive change and uncertainty occurring in their organizational environments but are not able to respond effectively. Because this type of organization lacks a consistent strategy-structure relationship, it seldom makes adjustments of any sort until forced to do so by environmental pressures.

Miles and Snow’s model was an important contribution to the development of strategic management as a field of study, founded, inter alia, on the works of Alfred Chandler (1962). Chandler’s analyses of large American enterprises documented how changes in strategy are followed by changes in structure. Miles and Snow’s contribution has been vital in the formation/development of what is known as “the configurational view of strategy”, which explains that there is not an infinite number of alternative routes towards the goal, but rather a handful of fundamental alternatives to choose between in order to achieve what one wants. Porter (1980) is among those who, following the typologies developed by Miles and Snow, has presented his set of generic strategies (*cost leadership, differentiation and focus*) (Hambrick 2003).

The chosen model of analysis is developed to understand companies within an industry, and it might therefore be problematic to use it in analysis of the newspaper industry at large. In order to deal with this problem, I will attempt to identify some typical traits in this industry and regard newspapers as a player within the total media industry, that is, within a competitive market where different media compete for readers/users and advertisers.
The core activity of a newspaper company seems basically to correspond to the *Defenders* category. The focus is on publishing a newspaper, and the top executive is usually an expert on precisely that, besides having worked a long time in the business. The executives do not actively seek opportunities outside of their domain or line of business, and the main focus remains on improving management of the core activity. The large investments that have been made to digitalize the production process seem mostly to be about producing the same thing in a more efficient way.

However, the digitalization of production, storage and distribution of media content paves the way for a new understanding of the line of business within which one operates, and the competition ones partakes in. In this situation, the papers have an advantage because of their rich content and well-established channels for marketing new products and services.

The establishment of online newspapers can be seen as a shift towards the category *Analyzer*, with operations in one relatively stable part of the market and one rather unstable. In the traditional line of operations the focus is on routine and efficiency, whereas in the new line of business one seeks to adopt good and promising ideas.

Based on historical development and the typology designed by Miles and Snow, a hypothesis of *Analyzer* as the chosen main strategy would seem to be a reasonable supposition. The structure and processes of the organization are differentiated in order to account for both stable and dynamic spheres of activity. Hence, the survey is designed to give a preliminary assessment of such a hypothesis. First of all, it is vital to discover (1) whether executives see use of the Internet mainly as an opportunity for their organization, and (2) what the functions of online priorities are in the company’s strategy to make use of new opportunities. Also, to fit in a stable situation as *Analyzer*, (3) a clear formulation of the strategy and the necessary adjustment of structure and processes are decisive.

The survey was conducted in April 2005 in cooperation with Landslaget for Lokalaviser (LLA) and Mediebedriftenes Landsforening (MBL). 193 executives (editors, managing directors and publishers) in Norwegian print papers have responded to 24 questions in an e-mail/web-based questionnaire. The response rate was 68 per cent, after two rounds of e-mail reminders. The results are presented in the following section.

**The Results**

When Norwegian newspaper executives are asked whether they perceive use of the Internet as a threat or an opportunity, they are more optimistic with regard to their own paper than when asked about the newspaper business in general.
The Use of Internet Represents a Threat to My Newspaper

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N=192 Mean=3.01 STD=1.356

The Use of Internet Represents an Opportunity for My Newspaper

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N=192 Mean=4.57 STD=1.178

1 = totally disagree. 6 = totally agree

There are no significant differences between papers of different sizes in their view on the use of Internet in relation to their own operations.

Newspaper executives largely seek to use online newspapers to defend the print edition’s existing market position.

What are the Functions of the Newspaper’s Online Edition?14

1. Part of a strategy to provide readers and advertisers with a service in more channels (67%)
2. Marketing the print paper (62%)
3. Defending the market position among readers and advertisers (59%)
4. Providing the paper/company with a contemporary image (52%)
5. Using content from print edition in new channels (47%)
6. Providing the paper/company with new revenue sources (40%)
7. Exploring new opportunities in new media (31%)

Which Function Is the Most Important to the Online Edition?

1. Part of a strategy to provide readers and advertisers with a service in more channels (30%)
2. Defending the market position among readers and advertisers (23%)
3. Marketing the print paper (12%)
4. Providing the paper/company with a contemporary image (8%)
5. Using content from the print edition in new channels (5%)
6. Providing the company with new revenue sources (5%)
7. Exploring new opportunities in new media (3%)

Young readers are the most important target group.

Which Target Group Is the Most Important to the Paper’s Online Edition?*

1. Young readers (51%)
2. New readers (40%)
3. New advertisers (27%)
4. Existing readers (11%)
5. Existing advertisers (11%)
6. Elderly readers (5%)

* = the percentage that considers this target group to be especially important. Multiple answers permitted.

Top executives are only partly satisfied with the online operations of the newspaper. Most of them feel the online papers should charge users.
All in All, How Satisfied Are You with the Newspaper’s Online Activities Today? Should Charge Their Users

Executives of the largest newspaper (circulation 40,000+) are more satisfied with their online operations than executives of small newspapers (circulation up to 10,000).

Descriptives

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<td>3.22</td>
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Variable: All in all, how satisfied are you with the newspaper’s online activities today?

Discussion

Arguably, the newspapers perceive the use of the Internet as an opportunity, but it is not quite as clear whether they want to take this opportunity and use it to develop new business areas, or primarily to recruit new readers to the print edition.

An important indicator is that only 5% of the top executives respond that the primary role of the online commitment is to provide the company with new revenue sources, even though 40% see this as a secondary goal. But both as main and partial role, this factor is sixth and second to last in the ranking.

This may indicate that the role as Defender still has a strong hold in the newspaper organizations. Business development in this branch is often done at the corporate level or by constructing local superstructures in the forms of media houses where newspaper, local radio and local television are sister activities in a strategy to keep intruders off the dominant position that local newspapers have managed to establish in the advertising market. This is enhanced by advertising networks that enable them to compete on the national and regional market as well, and if necessary by establishing free newspapers to produce reach or prevent new start ups.

With a historical background such as this, it might not come as a surprise that online activities are largely considered a defensive strategy. Almost half of the respondents use the online editions primarily for the purpose of “defending the market position among readers and advertisers” (23%), “marketing the print paper (12%), or “providing the paper/company with a contemporary image” (8%).

Seen in relation to the results of the multiple-choice option, a clear image is forming of online editions as having many different and partly contradictory roles at the same time, thereby increasing the complexity when strategies are to be operationalized. The clear desire to be able to charge users is contrasted to the desire to use the Internet to recruit young target groups for the print paper.
This lack of clarity is, however, not new. “Fear, uncertainty and doubt” were, according to New York Times columnist Denise Caruso, the most important driving forces for the newspaper business when they plunged into the online adventure without established business models to which to refer. In an article in the Columbia Journalism Review in 1997, she congratulated the Silicon Valley strategists in succeeding in creating an image of reality in which media companies worldwide saw the need to hurl themselves onto a train which was about to leave the platform.

“Show me the money!” was her provocative title, making a reference to another contemporary cultural expression from Southern California (Caruso 1997). Now, increasing numbers of large newspapers can show that they make good money on online activities, but insecurity still marks the business.

A probable partial explanation for this is that circulation figures for print papers are a source of stress. In Norway, the total newspaper circulation has been down six years in a row, and nothing suggests that this decline will turn.

This may indicate that many papers, both today and ten years ago, act in a way that may fall into the Reactors category. When top executives are only partly content with online activities, this may suggest that the formula is yet to be found and that the balance between traditional and new activities in an Analyzer model has not been established in a satisfactory way.

Miles and Snow (2003:93) identify three main reasons why an organization acts as Reactor:

1. Top management may not have clearly articulated the organization’s strategy.
2. Management does not fully shape the organization’s structure and processes to fit a chosen strategy.
3. There is a tendency for management to maintain the organization’s strategy-structure relationship despite overwhelming changes in environmental conditions.

Top executives at the largest newspapers are more content with the situation, and a characteristic corroborating this is that they have taken structural moves to develop an Analyzer approach. The approach is realized by establishing separate daughter or sister companies to run and develop new media activities. At the previous turn of the century, some of these new companies had ambitions to go in the direction of Prospectors, but despite several attempts, it turned out to be the related online newspaper concept that received attention. In this sense, these companies also represent the mere partial establishment of an Analyzer position for the activities of the media house.

It is also necessary to problematize the role of journalism in a media channel that, in the opinion of many respondents, has the purpose of promoting the print paper (main function: 12 %, partial function 62 %), or providing the paper/company with a contemporary image (main function: 12 %, partial function 52 %). Is there room for original critical and investigative journalism in such a context, or is this to be considered advertising?

This survey represents a pre-analysis of this market, and additional research will further explore these circumstances by investigating individual companies’ choices of structure and processes.
Conclusion

The newspapers are in a pressed situation of circulation decline. This is partly a consequence of increased Internet usage, a development the papers themselves have helped push forward. Thus, they have influenced their environment in such a way as to challenge their own core activity, while at the same time being well positioned in new media. However, they have not succeeded in finding a balanced focus between traditional and new activities. It seems as though newspaper executives find it hard to respond efficiently to the insecurity created as a result of changes in the environment.

It is still not clear what may be the answer to the question: “What kind of strategic role do the online newspapers play?” Even though only 3 per cent answer that “exploring new opportunities in new media” is the primary function of the online newspaper, it nevertheless seems as though that description may best summarize the situation of many players after ten years. Fear, uncertainty and doubt are still part of the newspaper business.

Notes

2. The background overview is based on Krumsvik, Ottosen and Steensen: “Et historisk perspektiv på nettavispublisering og dens konsekvenser for endring av journalistrollen og redaksjonelle prosesser i en digital medieutvikling” (A historical perspective on online newspaper publishing and its repercussions on changing the role of the journalist and editorial processes in the development of digital media), paper presented at the KML Conference at Jæktvollen, Norway 25-26. May 2005.
3. A joint venture between Telenor and Posten.
8. Medieverden nr. 29/1999: ”Nettaviser går sine egne veier” (Online newspapers going their own ways) and nr. 9/2001: ”Nettavis-fokus på bunnlinjen” (Online newspapers focusing the bottom line).
9. TNS Gallup “Mediebarometer” 2004
10. Excerpts from the articles “Eksklusiv umulighet” (Exclusive impossibility) 11.03.05 and “Ferdig med eksperimentene” (Done with experimenting) 14.04.05 in Dagens Næringsliv.
13. The survey was conducted using the software tool Questback and analyzed using SPSS 12.0.1 for Windows.
14. The alternatives are developed based on the reasons given by participants throughout the ten-year-long duration of the online newspapers’ existence, recorded from my own experience from managerial positions in the period 1995-2001 (VG Online: Project Manager, Schibsted Nett: Editor, Scandinavia Online: Managing Editor, Dagbladet.no: Editor and Manager, DB Medialab: Publisher and CEO) and then as corporate strategist (A-pressen and TV 2 Group) and observer – with a few guest appearances as a consultant.
15. 30 % mention this as a partial function, but it is still the least important.

References


The Authors

*Johannes Andersen*, Cand.Mag., Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Politics and Public Administration, Aalborg University, johannes@socsci.aau.dk

*Stina Bengtsson*, B.A., Research Fellow, Media and Communication Studies, School of Culture and Communication, Södertörn University College, SE-141 89 Huddinge, stina.bengtsson@sh.se

*Thorbjörn Broddason*, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Iceland, Odda, Sturlugötu, IS-101 Reykjavík, tbrodd@hi.is

*Klaus Bruhn Jensen*, Dr.Phil., Professor, Department of Media, Cognition, and Communication, University of Copenhagen, Njalsgade 80, DK-2300 Copenhagen S, kbj@hum.ku.dk

*Leif Dahlberg*, Ph.D., Senior Researcher, School of Computer Science and Communication, Royal Institute of Technology, Lindstetsvägen 3, SE-100 44 Stockholm, dahlberg@nada.kth.se

*Elisabeth Eide*, Dr.Art., Associate Professor, Faculty of Journalism, Library and Information Science, Oslo University College, P.O. Box 4, St. Olavs plass, N-0130 Oslo, elisabeth.eide@jbi.hio.no

*Søren Frimann*, Ph.D., Senior Lecturer, Department of Communication and Psychology, Aalborg University, Kroghstræde 3, DK 9220 Aalborg Ø, frimann@hum.aau.dk

*Unni From*, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Information and Media Studies, University of Aarhus, Helsingforsgade 14, DK-8200 Århus N, unni@imv.au.dk

*Harald Hornmoen*, Dr.Art., Associate Professor; Faculty of Journalism, Library and Information Science, Oslo University College, P.O. Box 4, St. Olavs plass, N-0130 Oslo, harald.hornmoen@jbi.hio.no

*Anne Jerslev*, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Media, Cognition, and Communication, University of Copenhagen, Njalsgade 80, DK-2300 Copenhagen S, jerslev@hum.ku.dk

*Kari Karppinen*, M.Soc.Sc., Senior Researcher, Department of Communication, University of Helsinki, P.O. Box 54, FIN-00014 University of Helsinki, kari.karppinen@helsinki.fi

*Niels Nørgaard Kristensen*, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Politics and Public Administration, Aalborg University, nnk@socsci.aau.dk

*Arne H. Krumsvik*, Master of Management, Research Fellow, Faculty of Journalism, Library and Information Science, Oslo University College, P.O. Box 4, St. Olavs plass, N-0130 Oslo, arne.krumsvik@jbi.hio.no
Camilla Nordberg, M.Soc.Sc, Lecturer, Swedish School of Social Science, University of Helsinki, P.O. Box 16, FI-00014 University of Helsinki, camilla.nordberg@helsinki.fi

Thore Roksvold, Dr.Philos., Associate Professor, Faculty of Journalism, Library and Information Sciences, Oslo University College, P.O. Box 4 St. Olavs plass, N-0130 Oslo, thore.roksvold@jbi.hio.no

Kjetil Sandvik, Ph.D., Senior Lecturer, Department of Media, Cognition, and Communication, University of Copenhagen, Njalsgade 80, DK-2300 Copenhagen S, sandvik@hum.ku.dk

Jørgen Stigel, Cand.Phil., Senior Lecturer, Department of Communication and Psychology, Aalborg University, Kroghstræde 3, DK 9220 Aalborg Ø, stigel@hum.aau.dk

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Journal from the Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research

Editor
Ulla Carlsson
Nordicom
Göteborg University
Box 713
SE-405 30 Göteborg
Tel: +46 31 773 12 19
Fax: +46 31 773 46 55
e-mail: ulla.carlsson@nordicom.gu.se

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Ulla Carlsson
Nordicom
Göteborg University
Box 713
SE-405 30 Göteborg
ulla.carlsson@nordicom.gu.se

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Nordicom Review
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Nordicom Review provides a major forum for media and communication researchers in the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. The semiannual journal is addressed to the international scholarly community. It publishes the best of media and communication research in the region, as well as theoretical works in all its diversity; it seeks to reflect the great variety of intellectual traditions in the field and to facilitate a dialogue between them. As an interdisciplinary journal, Nordicom Review welcomes contributions from the best of the Nordic scholarship in relevant areas, and encourages contributions from senior researchers as well as younger scholars.

Nordicom Review offers reviews of Nordic publications, and publishes notes on a wide range of literature, thus enabling scholars all over the world to keep abreast of Nordic contributions in the field. Special thematic issues of interest are also published from time to time.

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