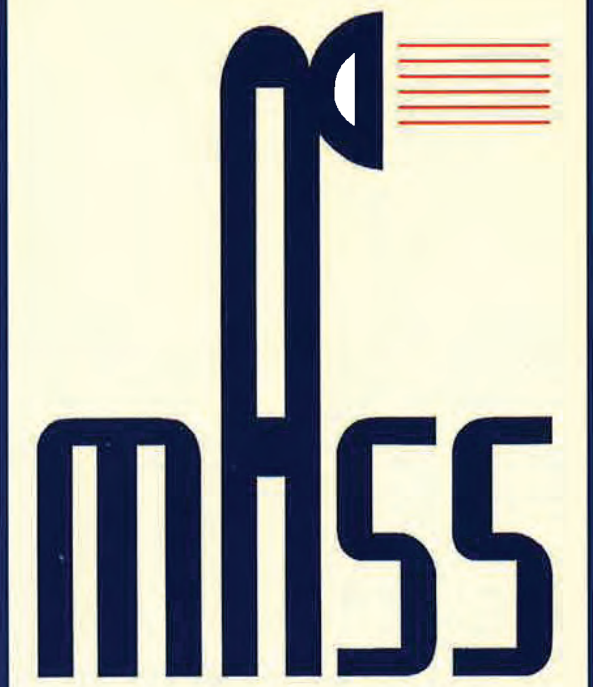
Special issue

Nordicom Review

Nordic Research on Media & Communication

The XIII Nordic Conference on Mass Communication Research



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Edited by Ulla Carlsson

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NORDICOM

NORDIC INFORMATION CENTRE FOR MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

NORDICOM'S overriding goal and purpose is to make the media and communication research efforts undertaken in the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden – known, both throughout and far beyond our part of the world. Toward this end we use a variety of channels to reach researchers, students, decision-makers, media practitioners, journalists, information officers, teachers, and interested members of the general public.

Nordicom works to establish and strengthen links between the Nordic research community and colleagues in all parts of the world, both by means of unilateral information flows and by linking individual researchers, research groups and institutions.

Nordicom documents media trends in the Nordic countries. Our joint Nordic information service addresses users throughout our region, in Europe and further afield. The production of comparative media statistics forms the core of this service.

Commissioned by UNESCO, Nordicom operates The International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen, whose aim it is to keep users abreast of current research findings and insights in this area.

Nordicom operates at both national and regional levels. Nordicom is an Institution within the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Journals, Books, Overviews

One of the prime purposes of Nordicom is to publicize Nordic research on journalism, media and communication. This is done on a continual basis through a variety of publications: journals, anthologies, overviews.

Nordicom-Information, a research journal in the Nordic languages, is published quarterly. (Subscriptions: SEK 200/ year).

Nordicom Review, a research journal in English, is published twice annually.

Communication Contents. Current Contents of Mass Communication Journals appears three times a year and lists the contents of some 60 international journals in the field of media and communication research. It is also available via Internet.

The national Nordicom centres publish *national newsletters and reports*. Nordicom-Sweden publishes a series of book-length publications on themes such as popular culture, journalism, media rhetoric, women and the media, the meeting of different research traditions and perspectives and media effects.

Bibliographies and Data Bases

NCOM is a bibliographic data base containing literature in the field of journalism, media and communication.

NCOM hosts roughly 27,000 references from 1975 onward which are available online. NCOM may also be accessed via Internet and CD-ROM.

The Nordicom Bibliography of Nordic Mass Communication Literature, carries references to books, periodicals, research reports, dissertations, theses, etc., compiled from NCOM.

The annual bibliography is published in CD-ROM form.

Nordicom also offers a data base, *NCPROJ*, which lists ongoing research projects.

Media Trends and Statistics

Recent years have seen far-reaching changes in Nordic media systems. Media scholars are continually consulted and asked to cast light on new and different phenomena.

Nordicom offers a *Nordic information service covering media developments*. A prime goal is the production of reliable comparative statistics.

Nordicom gathers and collates data on a variety of media in all the Nordic countries. These data are processed, analyzed and reported in a series entitled *Nordic Media Trends*.

Children and Media Violence

Nordicom has set up an international clearinghouse on children and violence on the screen. The Clearinghouse receives financial support from the Government of Sweden and UNESCO.

The Clearinghouse is to contribute to and effectivize knowledge on children, young people and media violence, seen in the perspective of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen informs various groups of users, researchers, policy-makers, media professionals, teachers, voluntary organizations and interested individuals, about

- research findings concerning children, young people and media violence,
- ongoing research on children and media violence,
- children's access to mass media and their media use,
- training and courses of study on children and the media,
- positive alternatives to media violence, and
- measures and activities which aim to limit gratuitous violence on television, in films, and in interactive media.

The Clearinghouse publishes a *yearbook* and a *newsletter*.

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EDITOR:
Ulla Carlsson, phone +46 31 773 12 19
e-mail: ulla.carlsson@nordicom.gu.se

SUBSCRIPTIONS & ADVERTISEMENTS:
Eva Gidsäter, phone +46 31 773 46 54
e-mail: eva.gidsater@nordicom.gu.se

ADDRESS:
Box 713,
SE 405 30 GÖTEBORG, SWEDEN
FAX: +46 31 773 46 55

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Nordicom Review
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The XIII Nordic Conference on Mass Communication Research

5 **Foreword**

Plenary Session I. Theory and Methodology in Media and Communication Research

7 **Ullamaija Kivikuru**
Communication Research.
Is There Such a Thing?

13 **Jan Ekecrantz**
Media, Communication and Social Critique

19 **Jostein Gripsrud**
Ten Years in the Field.
Past, Present and Future

Plenary Session II. The Media landscape in Transition. Research on New information Technology

27 **Johan Fornäs**
Digital Borderlands.
Identity and Interactivity in Culture, Media and Communications

39 **Jens F. Jensen**
Communication Research after the Mediasaurus?
Digital Convergence, Digital Divergence

53 **Eli Skogerbø**
Technology as Cause of Change

Papers (A Selection, Revised)

59 **Tapio Varis**
Media Culture and Communicative Competence in Europe

71 **Heikki Heikkilä & Risto Kunelius**
Access, Dialogue, Deliberation.
Experimenting with Three Concepts of Journalism Criticism

85 **Bo Mårtenson & Håkan Lindhoff**
State, Market, Crisis.
Swedish News Journalism on the Economy

101 **Göran Djupsund & Tom Carlson**
Trivial Stories and Fancy Pictures?
Tabloidization Tendencies in Finnish and Swedish Regional and National Newspapers 1982–1997

115 **Johann Roppen**
The Problem of No-Effects of Media Concentration

125 **Seija Ridell**
Beyond the Pendulum.
Critical Genre Analysis of Media-Audience Relations

135 **Bo Reimer**
Crisis? What Crisis? Analysing Audience Studies

143 **Barbara Gentikow**
The Contested Power of Persuation.
A Rhetorical Approach to Reception Theory and Analysis

159 **Preben Raunsbjerg & Henrik Sand**
TV Sport and Rhetoric.
The Mediated Event

175 **Pekka Isotalus**
Television Performance as Interaction

185 **Jens F. Jensen**
'Interactivity'.
Tracking a New Concept in Media and Communication Studies

205 **Rikke Schubart**
Woman with a Gun does not Signify Man with a Phallus.
Gender and Narrative Change in the Action Movie

215 **Hillevi Ganetz**
Her Voices.
Mediated Female Texts in a Cultural Perspective

225 **Anja Hirdman**
Male Norms and Female Forms.
The Visual Representation of Men and Women in Press Images in 1925, 1955 and 1987

255 **Wencke Mühleisen**
Direkte Lykke!
A Naivist Parody of Old-Time TV Hosted by a Transgressive Woman

271 **Anna Edin**
The Well-Organized Competition.
On the Development of Internal Competition in the Swedish Television Monopoly

277 **Sirkku Tuominen**
Making Media Visible in Teacher Education

285 **Jørgen Bang**
Multimedia in Distance Education.
Implication of Using CD-ROM

291 **The Authors**

293 **Working Groups Papers in English**

Foreword

The 13th Nordic Conference for Mass Communication Research was held in Jyväskylä, Finland, 9th-12th August 1997. The conference was hosted by the Association for Communication Research in Finland (TOY). Nearly 300 researchers from all five Nordic countries gathered to discuss current research and research findings. Roughly a dozen colleagues from the Baltic countries – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – participated, as well.

The conference comprised plenary sessions, working groups and a social-cultural programme. The plenaries had two themes: *Theory and Methodology in Media Research*, and *The New Media Landscape: Research on New Information Technology*. In their notice and invitation to the Conference, the arrangers described the dual focus in these words:

> The media landscape has changed these past fifteen years at an unprecedented pace. The broadcasting monopolies in all five Nordic countries have been broken. Technological advances have drastically expanded communication capacity. Internet is in the process of becoming a new medium which unites traditional print and audio-visual media. Or what is it all about?
>
> Questions of theory and methodology are eternal, but they gain new salience with every change and evolutionary step in our dynamic objects of research. What are the implications of the presence of an electronic network alongside print media and broadcasting? At the very least we can be sure that mass communication is no longer what it was. But do we have the tools to grasp and understand the new situation?

Working groups have been the meat of every Nordic conference to date, and the thirteenth conference is no exception. Papers were presented and discussed in twenty different working groups:

1. Media education (10 papers)
2. Local and regional media (4 papers)
3. Mass media images and visual rhetoric (7 papers)
4. Reception and audience studies (11 papers)
5. Media constructions of gender (13 papers)
6. Children, youth and the media (10 papers)
7. Public relations (4 papers)
8. Market communication: Information and aesthetics (2 papers)
9. The language and rhetoric of the media (12 papers)
10. Popular culture (10 papers)
11. The structure and economics of mass media (2 papers)
12. Historical perspectives on the media (11 papers)
13. Mediated interpersonal communication (2 papers)
14. The media's representation of reality: The aesthetics of realism (7 papers)
15. Media and political communication (7 papers)
16. Multi-media and new media technology (9 papers)
17. Public service broadcasting in transition (11 papers)
18. Media and global culture (3 papers)
19. Journalism research and critical analysis of journalism (7 papers)
20. The sociology and aesthetics of news reporting (6 papers)

This special issue of *Nordicom Review* presents all the keynote addresses presented to the plenary, plus a selection of papers presented and discussed at the conference which have been revised for publication in English as a demonstration of the breadth and depth of current Nordic media research.

The Nordic conferences for media and communication research play an important role in the development of the research field in the Nordic countries. It is our hope that the contents presented here will also be of interest to our colleagues abroad.

Göteborg in June 1998

Ulla Carlsson
Editor

Communication Research

Is There Such a Thing?

Ullamaija Kivikuru

Communication Research. Is there such a thing? And if there is, is it worth keeping up and developing further? Does it have anything to contribute? The grand old men asked questions like these thirty and forty years ago, but today hardly anyone bothers. Bernard Berelson gave us *'the end of the road'/ 'dead end'/ 'cul de sac'* metaphor, and Wilbur Schramm the *'intersection'/ 'crossroads'*.

Berelson administered last rites to the field as far back as 1959. Its time had passed, he said, the corpse was still, and it was only to commend it to the saints. His graveside obsequies pointed out four different orientations: Lasswell's political bent, Lazarsfeld's survey research, Lewin's studies of small groups, and Hovland's experiments. In Berelson's estimation, Lazarsfeld was the only one of the four who could be called a communication researcher, but even his line of inquiry had come to *'the end of the road'* fifteen to twenty years earlier. No, 'communication research' was no more, Berelson pronounced, and with that, he himself moved on to demography.

To Schramm's way of thinking, the communication researcher was situated at a *crossroads*, where different avenues lead out in different directions: from the social sciences to the humanities, from engineering to law, and so forth. Some scholars linger in the crossroads, most move on and follow one or another of the avenues. Those who remain at the intersection are the true communication researchers. But communication research has many forms, the opportunities are boundless.

Thus, Berelson was a pessimist, Schramm an optimist, who saw in pluralism fertile soil for new and creative thinking.

Even if the title of my speech may lean toward Berelson, I do think that Schramm's idea is the ideal – in general terms. Still, it feels strange to characterize the field of communication research in the Nordic countries today.

In all fairness, I should stress that my comments are primarily based on the Finnish research community. Nota bene.

Communication research was controversial back in the 'seventies. But hardly today. When did you last hear two communication scholars quarrel, vocally or in writing? Our field of study has been called 'broad', 'rich' – and that is true, if we consider all the various themes we look into. Still, I find contemporary communication research more conformist and minimalist than pluralist. Yes, there are lots of different areas of study in the field. But the basic ideology is quite the same in virtually all of them.

How is it that we have developed such a conformist mentality?

For one thing, we have come to adopt a comfortable role as spectators. We are not actors, heaven forbid, we simply observe. We are dispassionate, nonchalant; we are scholars. Still, we have a certain desire to study what we consider important – science must be free, unfettered. We tend to use our academic freedom to study television viewing habits.

But isn't it the proper role of research to analyze significant phenomena in society and culture? To analyze, evaluate and systematize such phenomena? We can hardly pretend that we do. For the most part, we have become nay-sayers. We spurn applied research. We say "no, thanks" to quantitative measurement, no to policy orientation, no to opinion surveys. We reserve our right to decide for ourselves. And so we declare we shall study 'everyday life'. But the 'life' we study is an artificial construction, tailored to our needs.

The strange thing about that 'life' is that it revolves to such an extent around communication! Who says real life is like that? Of course, we do know that people spend a good part of their days in the company of mass media, but that hardly means the media are focal, that they are the object of people's passions. The fact is, we don't know what people are passionate about, because we have chosen to concentrate on media 'froth' and some stray observations, which we like to call 'media ethnology'. We joke about the forests of percentage–signs in quantitative research and the 'emptiness' of statistics, but – I ask you – how much more do we know about the lives of our contemporaries, when it comes right down to it?

At this moment, an important task for communication research might be to try to dispel the mystique and temper the euphoria which surrounds communication today. But instead of taking on such basic tasks, we choose instead to busy ourselves with modern, sophisticated questions – like TV viewing. Once it was an act of audacity to study entertainment instead of the news; today we are all 'audacious' and hardly anyone cares about the news or current affairs any more. At the same time, we are anxious to emphasize the special nature of our discipline. We have something others don't, albeit it may not be so easy to put one's finger on what it is exactly. So, instead of dispelling the mystique, we tend to increase it. It confers status.

We can argue that Berelson was wrong and marshal the bibliographic statistics to prove it – the number of titles published has grown steadily year after year. It is harder, however, to make as light of Schramm's incitement to diversity and originality. Schramm may have been an overly optimistic, naive empiricist, but still he can give us pangs of conscience. Can we really claim that we have exploited all the possibilities open to us in our communication–oriented societies?

A slightly malicious outsider might be more blunt: Nordic communication research – internationally respected as it may be – may be ample, methodologically elegant and well-informed, but it is anemic and tediously repetitive. We are all participants in a process which is twisting communication research in a direction that brings us to prefer irrelevance and triviality. Of course, there are exceptions. But our eagerness to be politically correct has grown so strong that it threatens to paralyze our thinking, stunting both our erudition and our methodological repertoire.

A second motive for conformism is our preoccupation with method at the expense of thinking or theory.

It has been said that communication research has shifted from its former social science orientation to a humanities approach? Has it, really? Communication researchers have indeed exchanged quantitative methods and phrases for qualitative ones – the rhetoric has changed, but if what we are doing truly belongs to the humanities tradition, I'm not so sure. Eclectic, surely. As the parvenus we are, we are confident that we can pluck a couple of fascinating concepts out of the humanities tradition and use them as we like, without paying deference to the long history during which they evolved.

Once again, we have made ourselves an artificial construction which we call a 'humanities approach' – despite the fact that it consists of but a few delectable fruits we have gathered during a casual stroll through the gardens of literary criticism and linguistics. We are hardly familiar with the garden as such: the rich tradition of the humanities is terra incognita to most of us. It is quite possible that never before has Nordic communication research shown such methodological diversity. Still, we are all caught up in an era of cultural studies and text analysis. Some *crossroads* do exist, but the dissidents are kept far from the junction.

If we talk about theory and methods, we have to include the world – the object of our research. I say 'world', for it is best we avoid words like 'reality', lest we once again rekindle the Great Objectivity Debate, which ended in a sort of 'ceasefire agreement' some ten years ago. The point of the debate, the bone of contention, was important and interesting, but the debate was a miserable affair. Perhaps we Nordics simply aren't playful enough. Might that be the reason why so many academic debates degenerate into mean–minded quarrels over legitimacy?

To tell the truth, I am much more concerned about our relation to our object, the world around us, than I am about whether we manage to develop some measure of harmony between our theories and our methods. It is the world and its myriad phe-

nomena which should be the starting point for research; the theories are there, or may be developed, to help us understand those phenomena. Methods are means by which to gather and analyze material. In good research – whether qualitative or quantitative – theory and method are integrated. We have examples of such integration. But ideally, all three are consonant and tend to merge: the object of research, the theory we apply, and the method. We do not have so many examples of this latter case, and the ones we have are very small-scale. It is, of course, perfectly legitimate to study "small" themes and areas, but the prevailing tendency in communication research seems to be to operate in cameo format. Yet 'the world' and its phenomena haven't changed format, have they?

A third source of conformity is the fact that we generally read the same books. And despite all the praise of 'the Net', we are still essentially conservative about the sources we use.

We communication researchers are time-conscious in the extreme. I venture to say that we are more careful to follow the trends than researchers in general. Our work habits are highly routinized. First, we draw on our own expertise, tried and true, secondly, a couple of so-called 'classics' and, finally, a dozen or so 'modern', politically correct (usually foreign) references. We construct our theoretical frames of reference of these familiar ingredients. The world of knowledge is hypertextualized and globalized; there are any number of networks to get involved in, there are interesting latent actors behind all the jumble of contents Internet serves us. That is to say, even if most research libraries have less money than ever before, professional researchers have access to a greater variety of literature than ever before. But to be frank: either we are conservative or we are naive in our approach to literature, and via it, to theory. For the most part we use basically the same references as everybody else and the same ones we have used before. We talk a lot about the Net, but we use it sparingly.

There is one interesting thing about today's Finnish – and perhaps Nordic – research. We have become so conformistic and rigid with respect to our 'foreign policy'. Habermas and Luhmann are modern again, for their work has been translated into English and is discussed in Anglo-America these days. We of somewhat older vintage recall discussions of Habermas in the 1970s. But then we used to read his texts in German or Swedish. Now and then someone besides Tarmo Malmberg even struggled with books in French, too, when word reached us of something exciting on that horizon. Nowadays, English alone is the seal of legitimacy for foreign literature. Of course, it is good that we are reading our Habermas, Foucault and, say, Martín-Barbero. But it is a bit sad that we are doing it in English. Texts lose so much in translation – as anyone who uses foreign languages regularly is painfully aware.

Lately, we are sceptical of North American literature, too – whenever we can afford to be. British sources are to be preferred these last 10-15 years. The British do produce interesting work – but they are not alone.

We in the Nordic countries have been admired – especially by our American colleagues – for the breadth of our intellectual horizons, for being 'well read'. Nowadays we hardly even know what's going on in the other Nordic countries.

Americans sometimes (half-)joke that they don't have an opinion because they haven't had time to read the latest issue of Time. Aren't we showing similar symptoms? Haven't we become awfully Anglo-Americanized, even if the process was indirect? Are we any better than Wilbur Schramm, who truly believed that all the world's societies and cultures would, sooner or later, become 'Westernized'? We up here in the northern periphery ought to be sensitive to all forms of dominance, but instead we have chosen conformism and an Anglo–American interpretation of life and society.

Our monoglot state is more than linguistic; it also affects our ideas about legitimacy. Putting it bluntly, this might be taken for mental lethargy or perhaps exaggerated cautiousness. In order to 'qualify', to be accorded legitimacy, a writer has to be familiar, and the publisher, as well. As far as our reading habits are concerned, we aren't much for safaris. That is probably why so few of us are familiar with Martín-Barbero's fascinating book.

There are reasons, of course, and one reason may be that researchers these days are totally immersed in specialized projects and work under the pressure of tight deadlines. If you are forever in a hurry and have extremely specific criteria to fulfil, it is easy to lose your spirit of adventure and the pleasure of serendipitous experiences. And that is a shame. So many interesting and exciting impulses are ignored, whilst we at the same time become inured to repetition.

When did you last read a book by a non-European, non-North American author?

Yet another source of our conformism is our determination to avoid social issues and issues of morality whenever possible – and even when it isn't.

The world and the people living in it are at once globalized, localized and glocalized – they use mobile telephones, Internet and transnational television, yet live in a specific place, spend time with their friends, eat potatoes and buy clothes, just like they always have. Arjun Appadurai speaks of five different 'landscapes' which constitute the mental environment of mankind today: *mediascape, ideoscape, ethnoscape, financescape* and *technoscape*. Such a complicated organism seems a walking goldmine for a researcher. But what do we do? We study TV habits. Again, a quick comparison with the journalist: We often complain that journalists splinter the phenomena they report about. But are we not guilty of the same – in the name of academic freedom?

I will never forget the day a couple of years ago, when a journalist rang me up and asked what research we in communication research had done on unemployment. I checked our bibliographies and was forced to say that I found only two titles: an undergraduate thesis in Political Science and a research proposal from Tampere – in a country with more than 500,000 jobless [of a total population of 5.1 million, tr. note]. "You're ashamed, I hope," was his dry response. And he wrote a very sarcastic article – luckily in Swedish [spoken by a few hundred thousand in Finland, tr. note]. We communication researchers are often heard to complain that journalists have no patience, that they don't seem to understand that scholarly study takes time. When we finally get around to publishing the results of major projects, journalists aren't interested any more. Of course, our complaint is justified, but to be honest, journalists' news values aren't always that bad. Journalists sometimes lose sight of the big picture, but so do we.

To be sure, the Academy of Finland or the various research councils and what-all they are called in our respective countries, tend to keep a tight hold on their pursestrings when it comes to projects in the field of communication research. We have to choose 'selling' subjects and do the research we can get funding for. But that is only part of the explanation, isn't it. I think our reticence has more to do with the fact that it simply isn't *à la mode* these days to tackle large-scale social issues – except for the European Union. Identity formation is about as 'social' as most of us are willing to go. Political and normative issues are beyond the pale; they have no place on our agenda. Maybe this is simply some kind of 'righting the balance' after the 1970s, but it is interesting to hear colleagues outside the Nordic countries speak of the "strong Nordic tradition in communication policy and media ethics". Is that tradition still alive?

A last source of conformism is that we do what we can to avoid discussion and debate. Consequently, we are forever starting from scratch and (re)discovering the wheel – the hard way.

The time may soon be ripe to recognize that there are controversial phases, worthy of discussion, in the history of Nordic communication research. We live in the present and have a childish tendency to turn a blind eye to phenomena that don't fit into the current scheme of things. That is why the trends in communication research have been so sharply demarcated. We are forever starting afresh – without the benefit of our own or others' past experience. That is also why our relation to theory and methodology remains superficial – which, I feel, it is.

In the field of literary criticism in a number of countries just now there is a debate – even conflicts in some countries – concerning how cultural studies relates to older traditions in the field. I am quite confident that no such strife will break out in communication research; when the time comes, we will simply discard cultural studies and latch onto some new trend.

The coteries in our field used to be smaller and easier to grasp. We often quarreled: theorists vs. practitioners, academic scholars vs. teachers, who perhaps did a little applied research on the side. Practitioners didn't know much about theories of communication – at least not the theories the academics revered; they, for their part, had media production on their side. We couldn't totally ignore them or brush them aside, but neither have we taken advantage of the link to media and journalistic praxis.

The obvious link to praxis is what makes us unique in relation to fields like Sociology or Political Science. It is tragic that we are so intimately related with the apparatus of public communication, yet we have only barely tolerated it, let alone seen it as a stimulating challenge. We have happily accepted the research opportunities the media have offered, but the link to praxis has always – particularly this past decade – embarrassed us. Thus, theory and practice have proceeded more or less parallel; seldom have they met.

Today, the practical side looms tall on our horizon. Practitioners have become specialists, and we laymen. We are in even less of a position to ignore them. The situation is complicated by the fact that some specialists in communications technology have shown an interest in social theory and com-

munication theory – but their interest doesn't concide with ours now, either, because we are all busy analyzing texts. We have developed a sophisticated rhetoric concerning the so-called information society, but no one knows for sure what it means. We eagerly accept scholarships and research positions whenever they are offered, but, when it comes right down to it, what can a single communication researcher accomplish in a team with ten engineers? *We have the answers, but what about ethics?* I am sure that the wheel will be discovered several times again in these projects.

* * *

Now, what part do Schramm and Berelson play in this story?

Actually, they are essentially only metaphors – but not entirely. I don't agree with most of what they say, not at all. They wrote badly and superficially; they had peculiar political views. But they had something we don't have: they had the gumption to ask big questions. We, on the other hand, are careful to avoid such questions – often in the name of professionalism. I mean, after all, professional, specialized scholars can hardly be expected to know everything, or can they?

The 'big questions' vary over time. In Berelson's and Schramm's day, it was important to ask whether communication research existed and if so, what was it. For, communication research was something new, and the gentlemen saw the need to try to define it. Today, we would have to put the questions differently, but again it is time for major questions about existence, relevance, society and culture. If we don't ask them, we run the risk of trivializing ourselves into oblivion.

Well, now, is there such a thing as communication research? Do we have something others don't? The first question is easy: of course, there is. The second question is highly complex, and much more difficult than Schramm imagined. We still haven't found the essence of the field. The centre of the intersection is empty, but there are crowds lining the curbs. We used to discuss the problematics of how and why. The question is important – even though, to my way of thinking, 'how' and 'why' are interconnected; you can't discuss the one without considering the other. But the sad thing is that we generally set out to document how, but believe (or claim) that we have specified why, as well. We're not honest with ourselves. Is it because we can't be, or do we simply lack the courage?

What am I asking for? Some kind of Renaissance Scholar? A Leonardo da Vinci? No, not at all. I find Schramm's *crossroads* metaphor is useful, but I respect Berelson's passion. He must have had great hopes for communication research to hate it as much as he later did. That passion is missing from the communication research community of today.

What I am looking for are reasonable research institutions, a bit of daring, honesty, a broad orientation, common sense, and time for major projects. 'Projects'? Aren't 'projects, what we do most of the time nowadays? More and more, inasmuch as it is increasingly difficult to find funding for individual studies. But, what are our 'projects' more precisely, if not collections of individual studies which we clump together – more or less haphazardly – under a common heading? In the kind of projects I have in mind, the members of the team would collaborate in depth and dialectically – theorists, empiricists and practitioners together – toward a common goal. Such a team might in time achieve something that none of the members could have achieved alone. Goodbye, individualism!

But maybe I am just a starry-eyed idealist. We are, after all, individualists in our marrow. Each of us follows our own course – despite the fact that we happen to be sitting in the same canoe, paddling with the same professional phraseology and the same references.

Media, Communication and Social Critique

Jan Ekecrantz

Crisis Again?

The importance of mass media is steadily growing – on that we presumably can all agree. But the same can hardly be said of the research that deals with these media – media and mass communication research. (A more controversial proposition, I expect.) Indeed, as I see it, our field is becoming ever more marginal. This may be more the case in Sweden than in the other Nordic countries, I should add.

Our marginalization is dual: in relation to other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences and, secondly, in relation to contemporary currents of social and cultural critique. Our influence in both cases is negligible, but the reasons may differ. In the former case, one contributing factor may be the institutionalization of the subject as a discipline of its own, with a certain degree of 'alienation' from other disciplines as a natural result. As for our lack of influence in public discussion of the media and broader cultural and social issues, the problem may be that we have lost touch with reality, by which I mean a general failure to adjust to such major historical developments as the advances in communication and information technology, transnationalization, and the emergence of a new world (dis)order.

Now, we can approach this complex of problems in terms of how the field relates to other fields of inquiry, or we can treat our field in relation to its object of study, viz., the media, media professionals, and consumers of the media. Obviously, intricate questions are involved; what is more the factors all dovetail into one another. In the following I shall concentrate on the situation within the field, as I see it from my Swedish horizon. I do so inasmuch as our relative insignificance (relative to the media's roles in society) also has to do with the internal organization of our field and the figures of thought that it gives rise to.

We clearly show a tendency toward conformity which fully equals the conformity we observe in the media. Frequently, it leads to rigid, barren and often non-manifest polarizations. Perhaps this urge to conformity is some kind of desperate attempt to achieve harmony in a field which has split itself lengthwise and crosswise: social sciences vs. humanities, media and communication vs. journalism research, and so forth. Such taxonomies and the *dualisms* they invite may serve certain purposes in the domestic lives of institutions, but they have contributed to moving our field of inquiry off to the sidelines of both the public arena and academic playing fields.

The institutionalization of our discipline appears to have eroded the interface and interaction between us and our 'mother disciplines'. There is still some influx of intellectual imports via students, graduate students and teachers who come from other disciplines. The other side of the coin is that neither do we leave many traces in the theoretical and methodological development of kindred disciplines. What is in fact happening is that the media themselves alter the traditional objects of study of these disciplines, sometimes unbeknownst to our colleagues. For example, the media have changed not only the forms by which political

opinion-formation takes place, they have also changed the content of 'politics' itself. They have altered the spatial configuration of cultures and subcultures; various new interactive modes of communication have changed the meaning of 'social interaction', and they have changed the nature of such fundamental concepts as 'sources', 'documents' and 'text'. Despite all this, Media and Communication Research has not made any significant contributions to the theoretical corpus or conceptual apparatus of either Political Science, Anthropology, Sociology or Historiography. In short: the very far-reaching implications of new media have not been matched by any broadening of the scope of our research. Why is this? Do we choose not to deal with, to neglect significant problems simply because we prefer to specialize ourselves to death? All the while the media become ever more integrated into the society around us?

I say we need an open, responsive discipline, but one with a well-defined object of research and a theoretical core (or cores) which is both amenable and able to carry on a fruitful dialogue with other disciplines on a reasonably equal footing. This is to say, a situation in which interdiciplinary inquiry is pursued in collaboration with other disciplines and institutions. But such a situation will hardly come about until the various childhood ills interdisciplinary approaches still suffer within our departments – the rivalries and 'border skirmishes', the (mutual) suspicion – have been overcome.

Thus, I see our research horizons and fundamental conceptualizations as being dependent on the ways in which the research field is ordered – its internal taxonomies, its relations vis-à-vis other fields, and so forth. Horizons and conceptual apparatuses can ossify if a field is institutionalized and integrated into overarching academic structures in such a way that external influences – be they from other disciplines or from the outside world – are actively resisted, are simply not accorded priority, or are not allowed to influence the construction of research objects and the questions we ask about them.

'Multidisciplinary' institutions do not necessarily go free from such tendencies. There is always a risk that the communication models at hand – formulated as they are in specific historical contexts – cannot adequately describe and interpret events and processes that occur in a later context (post-colonial, post-communist and so forth). John Downing carries on a similar discussion in *Internationalizing Media Theory*, where he tests traditional theories of mass communication on the current situation in Eastern Europe and Russia.

But theories reflect more than their organizational preconditions, by which I mean the prevailing faculty system and its subdivision into the humanities and the social sciences. Despite intellectual resistance in some quarters, historical processes, too, can force themselves upon the academic community. The pressures militating against interdisciplinary approaches, and the enormous difficulties such undertakings inevitably must overcome, attest to this.

This leads us over into the question of the two cultures – the humanities and the social sciences – and the fleet of dualisms which help maintain and legitimize the differentiation. Text and Context is its flagship. This distinction, in turn, provokes an inventory of *counterstrategies* in the form of efforts to bridge over or deny strictly observed dichotomies. It is these counterstrategies which represent our only hope that media and communication research might attain a stature that is more proportionate to the role mediated communication plays in late-modern society.

One Academic Field?

It is only natural that institutional structures will greatly influence the breadth and depth of our intellectual horizons and how we formulate questions for research. We might start, for example, with the way our leading journals construe the world, as reflected in their titles: In Europe we have *Media, Culture & Society*, *Theory, Culture & Society*, *Discourse & Society* (*Theory & Society*, *Time & Society*...). Ever this ubiquitous "&"! One exception (there are others, of course) is *European Journal of Communication.* In the USA we have *Journal of Communication, Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, Journal of Communication Inquiry, Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, and so on. The European examples suggest a preoccupation with contexts – which have been neatly shepherded into the word "Society". Nordic journals, for their part, have names like *Mediekultur* (Denmark: ≈ Media Culture), *Tiedotustutkimus* (Finland: ≈ Communication Research) and *Norsk medietidsskrift* (Norway: ≈ Norwegian Journal of the Media). Sweden isn't on the charts, for we have no journal of our own, unless you count *Makt & Media* (≈ Power & the Media), a commercial, journalistic product.

If we consult the journals' statements of policy, or their de facto content, we seldom find any balance between the attention devoted to the phenomenon, 'society' or the concept, 'context', and what-

ever the other term may be, in terms of theory. Not in the respective articles or in the journals taken as a whole. Still, the "&" is an editorial signal. But what does it mean? Why this difference, if not between European and American research culture, then between our journals' manner of defining the field of research? The "and" must mean something. After all, there are no journals called "Media or Society", "Journalism or Culture", etc., inviting one to feel free to write about the one or the other.

I should like to take a few moments and probe into this "and" and why is it there, what it does, the research strategies it symbolizes or excludes, and conceivable alternative strategies.

We might, of course, simply delete the "and" (replacing it, for example, with a "/", as in Foucault's "power/knowledge"); or we might add more "ands", thereby dissolving the dichotomy (perhaps creating several more); we might replace it with "both ... and..." or "and/or" – each of which represents a fundamental epistemological stand within the field. Most more or less contemporary '-isms' and '-ists' are definable in terms of strategies like these. The "and" and its various stand-ins define the field: media and society, language and society, power and the media, and so forth. It is an "and" which both conjoins and separates, thereby producing a problem, perhaps as futile as the mind-body dualism.

Another common variety are the "as"-theses: language as society, society as language, and similar such propositions of identity. Then, we have the "in"-model, which suggests a logic of inclusion or envelopment: the media in society, journalism in the welfare society, communication in organizations, etc. "And", "or" and "in" are little words, which nevertheless say quite a lot about how we choose to construct our research objects.

Why is it that we communication researchers are so concerned with – at times totally preoccupied with – 'text and context' and similar distinctions? It may well have to do with the fact that we have imported the academic faculty structure – primarily the humanities and the social sciences – and placed it in the heart of our 'discipline', our field of interest. Some Nordic departments of communication research sort under the one faculty, others under the other; in some cases different parts of a given department sort under different faculties, in yet other cases the subject is housed within another discipline, in which case it may not have departmental status. The organizational arrangements may, in response to the vagaries of the Zeitgeist, privilege either Text or Context.

Any strategy for handling the problematics of text/context is at once a strategy vis-à-vis the structural – ultimately political – conditions which generated (and continue to generate) such deceptive (over-)simplifications. We fall all too easily into the sorts of *reductionisms* John B. Thompson (among others) discusses: textualism vs. sociologism, i.e., the fallacies of "internalism" and "externalism", respectively. The dichotomy leads to the systematic elimination of any perspective which implies a rejection of the dualism. In other words, "text and context" actually means "text or context". It is a question of two distinct cultures, whose potential for productive coexistence in one and the same field has been strongly overestimated.

Now, then. I have intentionally dramatized this wail of woe in order to provide an antidote to all the starry-eyed rhetoric we hear concerning collaboration between disciplines. In Sweden, in any case, interdisciplinary research is all too commonly looked upon as a matter of bureaucratic coordination (having no impact on what is to be coordinated) rather than an intellectual adventure, the results of which cannot be foreseen.

Two Cultures?

We always speak from a given point in time and space, and I should say a few words about the material structure which constitutes the point of departure for the metatheoretical reflections which follow. It is an environment in which I personally have been relatively privileged in terms of funding and so forth, so my comments are not a case of 'sour grapes', should such a suspicion arise. But it is a setting which has afforded a number of insights – for better or worse – concerning the veritable chasm which can open up and separate the humanities from the social sciences, a chasm which, in my experience, is widely underestimated. My description is drastic, just as reality sometimes is.

At Stockholm University the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication, known to most as 'JMK', was created through the fusion of the School of Journalism (which initially did not belong to any faculty, since the training was offered outside the university system), Information Studies (a main subject) and the Centre for Mass Communication Research. More or less by chance, the infant JMK was placed among the humanities, which implied some interesting practical consequences for its members. Suddenly, the social scientists among us had to submit their applications for postgraduate faculty grants, their syllabi and so forth to a com-

mittee of linguists and historians, etc. For the social scientists, this new collaboration with philologists and students of literature was a real learning experience.

But now clouds mounted on the horizon, as well. All the old, familiar problems of 'interdisciplinarism' and some more exotic ones, too. This was not just any handful of disciplines, but groupings who for a century or more had never ventured across the no-man's-land which separates two epistemological, theoretical, methodological, etc., etc., worlds. Two separate cultures whose very day-to-day routines differ – due to fundamentally different conceptions of what research is to begin with. The difference is apparent in such trivial details as how we cite our sources, how we formulate our research questions and much, much more. We often understand terms like 'theory', 'method', 'empirical', etc., differently. What may simply be bad or good 'sources' (of something else) to some of us are to others fascinating examples of discursive practices.

Such a structure creates all kinds of problems for administrative bodies, as well. Take, for example, the obligatory ranking of doctoral candidates whose merits differ in the extreme: some, to whom writing is a matter or reporting findings, and others, for whom writing itself constitutes a vital part of the research process. The one group may underestimate, the other exaggerate writing as an act of scientific creation.

In support of my contention that it truly is a question of an intellectual divide, let me submit some pairs of opposites having to do with "text/context". The challenge, of course, lies in finding a way to transcend the pairs, against the grain of all the rigid structures. Communication research should be pragmatic, i.e., tackle complex, social phenomena of a global nature, yet we carry on about distinctions like the *individual* versus *society*, *action* versus *structure*, *micro* as opposed to *macro*, *consciousness* as opposed to *media*, or *psychology* as opposed to *technique*, *abstract* not *concrete*. We operate in a *symbolic* universe or a *material* one; it is a choice between *information* or *force*, *diffusion* or *relation*; we address *consumption* or the *production* sphere, *culture* or *economics*.

Whenever one term is privileged to the exclusion of the other term and all it represents, cultural research is reduced to a pure *science of the spirit* (*Geisteswissenschaft*), and social research to a kind of systems analysis, to *social mechanics*. The narratives generated in these limited and limiting positions are about the world as an office or an amusement park, as a factory or a battlefield. That is to say, they represent (a certain kind of) *humaniora* in contradistinction from (a certain kind of) *social science*. They are grand narratives which privilege one or another aspect of a dualistic universe.

The figure on the next page shows a schematic map of 'the prison-yard of dichotomies'. In it, the segregating mechanisms of our science become visible. These mechanisms represent two different kinds of incarceration: First, the penchant for dualistic thinking as such. The other is the kind of reductionism which, in its most extreme form, denies the validity of 'the other side', thereby legitimizing epistemological bigotry, with varying degrees of sophistication

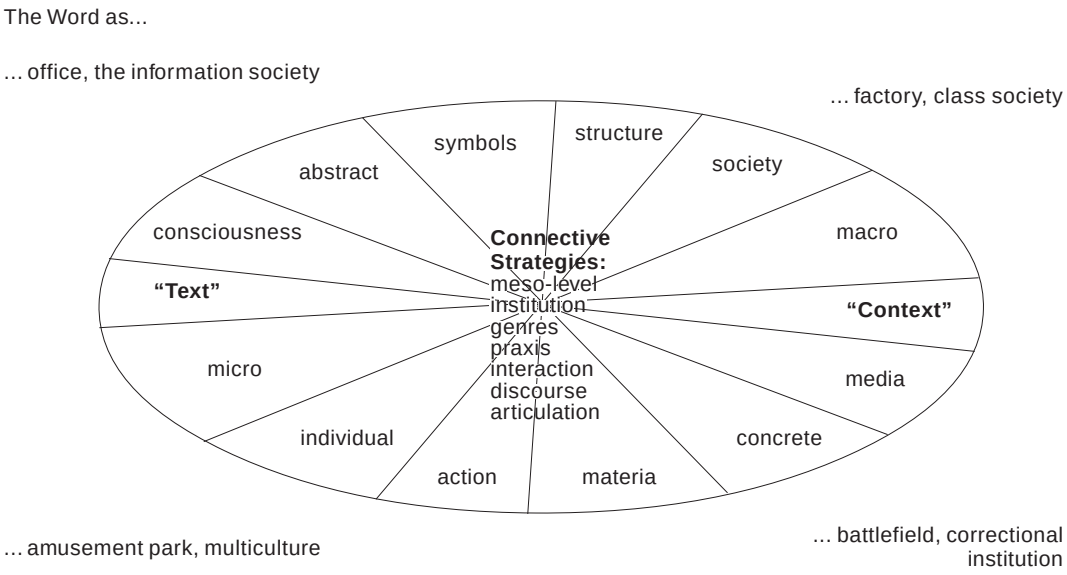
Lifeworld – systemworld, private sphere – public sphere, culture – nature ... To name but a few, but neither do I mean to be taxonomic, only to establish a starting point for a provisional analysis of empirical strategies in media and communication research. The diagram gives an indication of where the boundaries run and why, and of the institutional basis of intellectual structures. Given such a map or 'layout' we clearly see how some problematics are sanctioned, and others dismissed as 'unscientific' and/or uninteresting. In practice, the structure militates against all manner of interdisciplinary inquiry and theoretical integration.

The ambition to transcend or resolve one or another dualism is present in the many attempts to define 'third levels' or some other bridging device – an assortment of terms such as 'meso-level', 'institution', 'genre', 'praxis', 'articulation' and 'relationism'. In some cases 'discourse' – in the sense of 'discursive practice' or the 'articulation' of discursive and non-discursive phenomena – is used this way. Otherwise, of course, 'discourse' is a strictly textual phenomenon. Post-structuralism encompasses a broad array of positions.

One of the more widely known trichotimizations in this area is Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative acts, in which he, with the help of Popper's three world-theory, tries to understand communication as action which takes place in and between the subjective, social and objective worlds. Unfortunately, Habermas does not relate this micro-level conceptualization to his earlier theory of the public sphere, let alone to the realities of modern-day media systems and the new patterns of interaction these give rise to on both lesser and grander scales. He leaves a lot of work to be done here – as many before me have pointed out.

The distinction between micro and macro is very illustrative in that it allows any number of in-

Figure 1. The Prison-Yard of the Dichotomies and Corresponding Metaphors



terpretations, each representating a strategy, e.g., 'neutralizing' a dichotomy by turning it into a trichotomy: wedging a third meso-level in between the micro- and macro-levels. Here we are operating in a one-dimensional world, where everything can be assigned to its proper level. This third 'level' is assumed to negotiate a link between the other two, sometimes without these even having been specified.

Real interdisciplinary science, however, requires more than simple addition, and so we need to entertain ideas of kinds that for some reason have yet to gain acceptance in the academic pigeonholing apparatus. They may, in fact, seriously question it.

Other Strategies

In his *The Invention of Communication* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998:8) Armand Mattelart offers some reasons why the debates concerning current developments in the media sector have been so banal, caught up, as they are, in dualistic visions and hopeless dilemmas where one is forced to choose between, say, free will and social determinism, between local and global perspectives, between individual and collective, between abstraction and experience, between culture and nature. This shows without a doubt, Mattelart writes, a sad lack inability to discover subtle links and to see the various levels as dimensions of phenomena that, in the end, are all parts of a greater whole.

Mattelart does not discuss the historical, Cartesian roots to these rigid dualisms or the purposes they serve in present-day Academia. Nor does he point out their diversity. Taking a realistic, sociological view, Pierre Bourdieu, however, observes that the dualisms serve as instruments of social censorship, legitimizing the bounds of competency and blocking whatever insights might occur concerning relationships between artificially separated fields of action (cf. Bourdieu & Loîc, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992).

Many advocate an action-oriented, pragmatic, dialectically synthesis-creating and constructivist approach, albeit they operate with quite diverse concepts. Some authors are especially interesting for their refusal to grant ontological priority to either side in an thoroughly dualistic world. Some are monists like Bourdieu (reality is one and indivisible); others have chosen other strategies. We have, for example, Michail Bachtin, convinced of the essential unity of language and social formations, (loosely) relates genres to historical *social orders*. There are Michel Foucault's studies of *discourses* and *institutional contexts*, of power and knowledge, of the ultimate dovetailing of discursive and non-discursive realities. Again, Jürgen

Habermas and his building blocks, communication *acts* and Öffentlichkeit-*structures*, *systems* and *lifeworld* and, finally, Anthony Giddens' *action* and *structure* – a conception prefigured by Bourdieu and his habitus and field.

Even though none of them has treated actual conditions and modes of communication in the late-modern era, all these writers have been in vogue at one time or another. This bears witness to the magnetism of their perspectives. Perhaps we shall see more cross-fertilization with a less rigid field of media and communication studies.

The Social Centre of the Media

And so, I have arrived at an answer to the question posed to this panel before the conference: What is the status of theory and methodological development in the field in terms of text and context? The short answer is that the distinction, 'text and context', is theoretically uninteresting, but that is not to say it serves no purpose. Indeed, it, like other dualisms, does its part to maintain a social and intellectual structure which actually blocks the further development of both theory and method in the field. The 'and' in such dualisms legitimizes dichotomy, encourages false level-metaphors, and directs our attention to posited relationships between (often) incommensurable entities.

Media and communication studies could be an autonomous discipline in the no-man's-land between the humanities and the social sciences, a venue where 'texts' and 'contexts' meet – not as perpetual battle-cries, but as equally elaborated theoretical domains. Thus we might avoid both internalism and externalism. Such theoretical integration would enable us to make significant contributions to other disciplines. It would enable us to avoid reducing ourselves to merely one of the many 'hyphenated sociologies' or, alternatively, to no more than an application of existing theories of literature or language to less status- and prestige-conferring areas which have yet to gain acceptance as objects of research in more venerable disciplines. Only in this way can media and communication research hope to fill the gap which the social sciences and the humanities have created between themselves.

It might also give us an intellectual platform for a media critique which also functions as *social* and *cultural critique*. Above all, theoretical integration is necessary for interdisciplinary inquiry to be able to follow the metamorphoses in 'texts', 'media', 'politics', 'the economy', and 'culture', which are constantly losing old and gaining new meanings. More real-world problems are media-related than ever before: they have to do with post-communism and globalization, urban public spheres, cultural identities and new class structures, nationality and nationalism.... Often, the very presence of mass media and the extant opportunities for, and barriers to communication are part of the problem.

The marginalization of media and communication research within the scientific community is largely due to the marginalization of synthesizing strategies within the field itself. Synthesis is needed to heighten interest in our work and to increase its relevance to the broader and deeper currents of intellectual discourse in this age of sudden and profound changes. The situation calls for a trans-nationalization (not just internationalization) of communication research, which has remained surprisingly parochial and bound to the nation-state.

There are any number of theoretically transcendental problems for research. Here I can mention but a few: sociological genre theories and text analysis, ideological critique based on conversation analysis, techno-systems and structures of consciousness, social change and communicative acts, aesthetics and the public sphere, modes of reflexivity and modernization, mediated class discourses of post-communism, the conditions of production in the information society and its techno-culture, the political economy and self-legitimating strategies of journalism, the industrial mediation of emotions, global/local fictions, the culture of contemporaneity.... There is much to be done on the way toward an historical and comparative cultural-sociological theory of action relating to media communication.

Ten Years in the Field

Past, Present and Future

Jostein Gripsrud

1st August 1987, I assumed a position as Senior Lecturer at the newly formed Department of Mass Communication at the University of Bergen. I was the first representative of the humanities in the Department. In fact, I constituted a whole section, all by myself: the Humanities Section. With that, social scientific media research in Norway had formally acquired an institutional appendage which incorporated a token of the humanities tradition. One of the two whom Norwegian poet and Professor of Rhetoric Georg Johannesen some years earlier had called "misplaced sociologists" (the other was Helge Rønning) finally landed in the right pigeonhole: sharing space under a roof with a bunch of political scientists and sociologists.

Today, ten years later, there is no longer a Humanities Section in our Department. There is no Social Science Section either, for that matter. The Department itself has been rechristened the Department of Media Studies, and what once was the flagship of the Humanities Section over the years, viz. the Master's program entitled "Mass Communication and Cultural Mediation", is being converted into a set of modules in a joint humanities-social sciences M.A. called Media Studies.

Whereas the Department was plagued by a series of conflicts the first five to six years, nowadays we coexist in peace and harmony. The same harmony seems to prevail in Oslo – which never had separate sections or M.A.'s to begin with. Now, how has this come about?

An anecdote from the Spring Conference of the Norwegian Communication Research Association in 1986 is illustrative of the climate that prevailed roughly a decade ago. That meeting made a lasting impression on me.

There had been some discussion of forming a joint humanities and social science department of media studies at the University of Oslo, as well. The leader of the social sciences group had agreed to come only provided that the leader of the humanities did not. The latter did not attend, so the former did. The social scientist held a lecture on theory and methodology in media research. His main point was that media researchers were confronted with such a tremendous volume of texts, so that the strictures of time alone dictated the use of quantitative content analysis. I ventured the opinion that *both quantitative and so-called qualitative methods were needed*, that, surely, one's choice of methods should depend on the nature of the question or problem at hand. I am still of that conviction, and I shan't bother to elaborate my argument any further here. But in the discussion period following the lecture, I put the following question: "Suppose you were to select small samples of all the texts in newspapers, television and other media, and you had a certain amount of time at your disposal: might not other methods be acceptable?" The response was a short retort, which in its entirety went something like this: "If Gripsrud hasn't yet discovered that time is a scant resource, then he is in for a big surprise. Otherwise, I hardly find the comment worth responding to."

Now, all those present at that meeting have long since made peace and let bygones be bygones. But that was the prevailing tone in any number of fora

back then. It was a time of a great complex of power struggles and breaks with tradition. The latter were especially charged because so many levels were involved: theory and methods, even epistemological fundaments. They concerned the proper role and purpose of scholarship and scholarly inquiry as well as more general issues concerning the relation of science to broader ranges of intellectual activity – which in turn brought more general differences in orientation and personal disposition into play. Is research essentially like any other kind of office-work, or is it an integral and absolutely necessary aspect of our persons – like the work of a painter or sculptor, for example?

This was not a peculiarly Norwegian problem. It was part of a more general struggle which took place in the field worldwide a good part of the 1980s – a belated positivism struggle, if you like. As I noted in the introduction to my book, *The Dynasty Years*: The 'ferment in the field' which surfaced around 1980 in journals like *Journal of Communication* was a symptom of the theoretical and methodological backwardness of social scientific media and communication research, relative to other social science disciplines and fields of study. Media research was for that reason accorded relatively low status among social scientists, despite general agreement concerning the importance of media, communication, and so forth in the so-called 'information society'.

In countries like Great Britain and the USA the rebellion against simple positivism and empiricism was largely waged by social scientists, and especially sociologists. In Norway, Denmark and perhaps Sweden, the rebels were mainly 'misplaced sociologists' in the humanities, the kind who went in for studying the media. For it was they who were steeped in critical theory, which had experienced a revival in conjunction with the *Positivismusstreit*, '1968' and all that it stands for; *they* were the ones who had pored over the classics of sociology and the epistemological debates, which mainly involved and concerned the social sciences.

Social science media researchers in our countries were, as late as the mid-1980s, still caught up in American-style mainstream Sociology and Political Science. Their familiarity with cultural and text-analytical areas was hardly comparable to the familiarity researchers in the humanities with the social sciences. Whereas many of us quickly developed a rudimentary competence in social science traditions and approaches to the media – enough, at least, to be able to teach basic survey courses on the subejct – not a single established social science media scholar bothered to learn the basics of text theory, cultural history, film analysis or the like. They went on studying and teaching about newspapers, radio and television – obviously motivated by an interest in these media's content – but without the benefit of any theoretically founded analysis of how the texts in these media are structured or how the texts actually mean what they mean, what makes them entertaining, aesthetically appealing, exciting, relaxing or whatever.

This state of affairs changed only when younger social scientists picked up signals from the 'ferment' rumble in Great Britain and the USA and from the debate in humanities-influenced circles closer to home. These younger researchers – 'thirty-somethings' today – began to take an interest in *Öffentlichkeit* (public sphere) theory, an interest their elders in the humanities had had since 1970. They started working with reception theory, which had been 'hot stuff' in Nordic literary analysis since the mid-1970s. They showed a greater interest in qualitative methods of studying society and social interaction than quantitative methods, something which was new to Nordic media research, but had long roots in the social sciences since their beginnings in the nineteenth century, and with vital inputs during the interwar period. Bitter battles and exceedingly long, defensive litanies in dissertations were needed for qualitative audience/reception studies to be accorded legitimacy in social science institutions. These young people subsequently were seconded by sociologically oriented scholars of a variety of ages. Thanks to their abiding interest in European sociological theory, these latter came to represent a link between the 'old' social science institutions and the newcomers from the humanities, i.e. the 'misplaced sociologists'. A growing number of social scientists came to inhabit what, in my Department at least, was termed a 'grey zone' – a term which to Norwegian ears immediately brings to mind the vast sectors of the Barents Sea which Norway and the Soviet Union agreed to disagree about – a 'zone' which both regarded as territorial water, but which remained unbounded.

The 'misplaced sociologists' have always found themselves more or less in this grey zone. The humanities tradition in Scandinavian media research has been theoretically inclined, holistic and politically oriented from the outset. This, of course, is a function of its roots in critical theory and the re-reading of Marx which was epidemic in European universities in the years around 1970. A sociological reflection – directly inspired by, and in different respects kin with, the Frankfurt School as

a socially critical, interdisciplinary project – is the historical root out of which humanities-inspired media studies in Scandinavia spring. The work of the Frankfurt School spanned over Philosophy, Sociology, History, psychoanalysis, aesthetic studies and empirical studies of social conditions ranging from statistical inventories to 'soft' sociological methods. The thinking about what different knowledge-interests mean for research stems from the same source – Jürgen Habermas. And – as we all know – it was this same Habermas who produced the classic study of the structural transformation of *Öffentlichkeit*, a study which continues to inspire fundamental media and cultural criticism based in elementary democratic ideals.

The link to the Frankfurt School and, through it, to the broader sociological tradition is an important reason why so many Scandinavian media scholars from the humanities show such an interest in so many aspects of media research in the social science tradition and, even more so, continue to take active part in discussions of media and cultural policy. Most of us who came of age in the 1970s are political animals – by disposition, socialization or ingrained habit. Consequently, we thrive in the 'grey zone', which gradually has come to include most of contemporary Nordic media studies. But we should not lose sight of the fact that this seemingly so open 'zone' has its bounds and limitations.

While narrow-minded positivism has been marginalized in media studies today, social scientific approaches in a broader sense nonetheless dominate the field. They dominate, first, through the not necessarily explicit requirement, both at the graduate level and in the funding of post-graduate research, of relevance to current issues of media policy. Secondly, they dominate on a more fundamental level in prevailing ideas concerning the nature of media-scientific knowledge and the purpose of media research.

As for the policy orientation: It is fairly apparent to many of us that students of normal intelligence who are able to express themselves can do fairly well in introductory media studies courses, and even some more advanced level courses, simply by keeping abreast of what is in the newspapers and radio and television the months leading up to the exam. Of course, they will do even better if they are able to apply a few theoretical insights and specialized knowledge from the curriculum to the cases at hand. But the public discussion of the media, as reflected in the media, also cues them to what in the curriculum is important (and should be studied) and what they can skim through with little or no risk of penalty: they should these days know something about public service broadcasting and policy relating to televised and video violence; they should be familiar with the 'tabloidization' and commercialization of news media. If they in addition are able to define and apply three concepts in a perfunctory, preferably oral, analysis of advertisements in glossy magazines, they may do quite well.

This orientation toward 'current events' and policy aspects has a parallel in media research. Nordic media research in the social sciences has always had such leanings. It has for the most part, to use Paul F. Lazarsfeld's term, always had an 'administrative' character – rather than 'critical'. The same is true of mainstream postwar social research in our countries. The tendency has become even more pronounced in the last 15-20 years, and it has spilled over into the humanities in two main ways.

The general politicization of the humanities in the 1970s has had an impact on project proposals and research designs, which, too, were politicized in varying degrees and respects. That is to say, a criterion of 'policy relevance' or 'utility' was often applied in the evaluation of individual projects and in the funding of institutions. But 'policy relevance' was defined generously in loose, theoretical terms and in an historical perspective. Consequently, neither studies of theoretical fundaments nor historical studies were ruled out. This naturally had to do with the fact that the radical vogue which swept through Academia showed a strong interest in fundamental philosophical and theoretical issues.

In the 1980s, however, a number of research policy measures were introduced which smacked of a politically motivated desire to increase government influence over the universities and the rest of the research sector with a view to *bringing research more in line with policy objectives*. In both the humanities and the social sciences this has meant a favouring of *group projects* in research programmes of *topical relevance to current political issues and policy objectives.* Clearly, this can reduce the space available for different kinds of basic research and for inquiries in areas that seem more or less marginal in relation to the policy agenda of the day. Individual (non-programme related) studies in such 'marginal' areas, which lack a 'momentum' of their own, have meagre prospects in such a system.

This development has given Nordic media studies little cause for complaint. Especially since the field has acquired behavioural and cultural

components, topically oriented media research of the 'grey zone'-type is almost perfectly attuned to the these modern requirements. The media and communication revolution of recent years is of critical interest on many levels and in many sectors of society. In Norway and Denmark in any case, media research has done quite well for itself in competing for research funding since about 1990. It has been rather easy to demonstrate a basic congruence between our academic interests and the intentions set out in the terms of reference of various research programmes.

As everyone knows, fitting one's project proposal into the overall theme of a given research programme is largely a question of rhetorical skill – of 'creative writing', if you will. If you are interested in basic rhetorical questions, you choose material and include a couple of research questions which have obvious relevance to current political discourse. When you really are interested in theories of modernization, you make sure you point out their importance to an understanding of urban development anno 1997 and the problem of integration or assimilation of non-European immigrants. But what do you do if you are interested in the concept of "unlimited semiosis"? How do you make the case for a study of the role of lighting in French films of the 1930s and 1940s? What arguments can you marshal to get funding for a study of certain romantic poets' conceptions of the relation between rationality and emotion? I, for my part, have written enough research proposals in my time that I could probably offer my services as a consultant for colleagues with arcane interests like these, but inevitably, the necessary rhetoric will seem a bit forced now and again.

What I am asking, though, is whether these rhetorical acrobatics aren't equally necessary within the field of media studies itself. Does the kind of social science hegemony reflected in the general orientation to the present and to policy priorities block some lines of inquiry, some themes in teaching? And if it does, is there anything we can do about it?

Now, please don't think that I, 'misplaced sociologist' that I am, object to a political and contemporary orientation in research and teaching about the media. On the contrary, I firmly believe that we researchers and our students should be called upon to apply our expertise to focal issues in media and cultural policy at whatever level, as needed. A sober assessment is needed – in everyday life and in the public discourse – when unreflected 'moral panics' and equally unreflected media 'hype' alternately dominate the public eye as the media and communication sector becomes ever more commercialized. I personally have spent a good part of this past year working with policy relating to public service broadcasting. No, the question I am trying to raise is this: does this orientation to the present and to policy displace other important and equally legitimate research foci – unnecessarily and with adverse effects?

The areas I am most concerned about are what we might call History, Philosophy and Aesthetics – that is to say, the key constitutive subjects of the humanities, which for that matter are also fundamental to any theory of society worthy of the name. By the same token, they are obviously fundamental to solidly founded media studies, as well. Nonetheless, I find them sadly underrepresented in our field of study, both our teaching (curricula, teaching and exams) and our research.

The lack is particularly acute with respect to aesthetics and the historical and philosophical aspects of such studies. In Norway, media studies fall under the heading of 'aesthetic subjects'; the Norwegian social science and humanities research council, for example, groups it together with literature, dramatic arts and film. But the subject has a singular peculiarity compared to other aesthetic subjects: it lacks a list of 'required readings', a list of non-scholarly texts which students are expected to familiarize themselves with in addition to the theoretical and research-related literature we put before them.

At Bergen we do require our students to have seen three film classics and three television programmes; they are expected to have listened to one current radio programme and to have read two recent newspapers and two magazines. The films are 'canonized' classics. Otherwise, the material is more or less incidental and far from a comprehensive sampling. No documentary films or programmes are included, for example; likewise, no popular fiction, no pop music or lyrics. No dramatic texts from either stage, radio or visual media. Nor, for that matter, are computer and TV games or CD-ROM/hypertext represented.

Why is there no real sampler of media texts to match the amount of text-theory our students are exposed to? The first reason is that media studies embraces many different media. Among these only film has developed anything approaching a canon, a list of texts that are prerequisite to establishing cultural capital in the field. Newspapers, periodicals, radio and television are all decidedly ephemeral

media, whose texts have a life-span only somewhat longer than that of a fruit-fly. The texts in these media do not confer much in the way of cultural capital; they are not included in the 'cultural heritage' curriculum in our basic education. Consequently, university institutions which deal with the media lack the role institutions having to do with literature play, namely to update the contents of the 'cultural heritage' taught in school. Media education in the schools has no 'heritage' in mind; it is primarily conceived as a form of social-psychological prophylaxis – a way to keep our youth on the strait and narrow.

Aside from cinema, then, there is no established canon for media scholars to cultivate and keep up. But can we not establish canons in different fields where the rudiments of canon are beginning to emerge? After all, we have a history of popular music with Elvis and The Beatles and on down. We might easily extend it back in time to include blues and jazz. There is also a canon of popular literature, which – both nationally and internationally – may be extended back to around 1800. In the field of advertising there is a sort of 'hall of fame' of nationally and internationally renowned innovators – artists, photographers, copywriters and so forth. These 'criterion achievements' can form the basis of a chronicle of historically significant 'works'. Television has existed 40-50 years now, and we recognize 'peak achievements' in different genres and respect the work of certain journalists and writers. And what about photography – photojournalism, photographic art, commercial? Here, too, the ground for a canon has been prepared.

The question is, why haven't we followed through? Why don't we require ourselves and our students to be familiar with the various text traditions, which after all, in one respect or another, are predecessors to the texts we encounter in contemporary media. Even film canon is poorly represented. Why?

The reason, of course, is the hegemony the social sciences enjoy, which is expressed in an orientation toward what is current and toward policy issues – an orientation which many, including myself, find reasonable enough in many respects. It is easier to gain acceptance for 'theory' and 'methods' than for concrete familiarity with the historical material and analytical, interpretive praxis. As a consequence, our students are unsure of themselves when they are confronted with concrete texts, be it for analysis, interpretation or evaluation/review – for example, at the honours level. This is truly a shame inasmuch as they are likely to be dealing with real texts after they leave school – as critics, teachers, journalists or as filmmakers and broadcasters.

Moreover, without contact with vintage texts, concepts like history and tradition tend to remain diffuse abstractions, with the result that thinking about various historical periods, too, becomes diffuse, and the risk of confusion and misunderstanding of the past increases. Theoretical concepts relating to texts also become abstract, and students' grasp of the relationships between theory and phenomena remains underdeveloped.

In some cases, we can almost say that students are made dumber by their studies – they lose touch with their own experience and practical common sense while at university, where they instead struggle with an array of diffuse abstractions, unrelated to their own media consumption and everyday lives. Only at the honours and doctoral levels is the balance righted, and in my opinion that is far too late. Too much of undergraduate studies, of teaching and advising remains on an elementary, introductory level. In the long term, I fear this may impede the development of theory in our field – and therewith the level of reflection.

These fears are not only a concern for us in Bergen or in Norway, for that matter. Nor are they a concern to us in the humanities alone. In their student years, many social scientists, too, have devoted time to subjects like literary criticism and art history, and use that knowledge – not least the artistic material in those subjects – in their research. Nor is the concern limited to our field; it is a problem within research in general, here in the Nordic countries and far afield.

It is not exactly easy to localize Nordic media research in the variegated landscape of 'schools' or 'traditions' which are maintained within the international research community. We northerners tend to be more eclectic and less occupied with labels and lines of demarcation. This, despite a manifest British influence.

I say "despite" because British media research of the past twenty years or so has been highly segregated into various 'schools'. There is something called the political economy tradition, which for a decade now has carried on a polemic with the school or tradition known as 'cultural studies'. The conflict between the two has interested me for several reasons. For one thing, I have been involved in cultural studies since my student days in the 1970s; secondly, at the same time, in the 1970s, I read *Das Kapital* and other works in the context of some-

thing known as the Critique of Political Economy. I did not perceive any antagonism between these two interests of mine then, nor do I now. But in media research today we find an enduring polemics between the two schools which have grown up around them.

The vehemence in the conflict is partly due to the fact that both have their roots in the Marxist radicalism of the 1970s. Reading the polemical discourse between them conjures echoes of the academic disputes over political theory of those 'good old days'. Back then, one could taunt one's opponents with claims like "We are marxer than you are." – as Georg Johannesen put it. An ability 'to marx' – again Johannesen's expression – was de rigueur. The battle-cry in the dispute in contemporary British media research is probably something more on the order of "We are more critical than you are".

Roots in the 1970s are not the only thing the two schools have in common, however. They are also similar in that neither shows an interest in the arts or cultural expression in other respects than their ideological signifiance – as more or less false representations of reality or, possibly, as more or less useful to one or another cause or interest, be it "resistance", "pleasure" or even "revolution". One advantage of the "cultural studies" school is that they show at least some interest in how texts are put together, which is something the folks in political economy hardly ever do. This has been and remains a major fault in their research; if nothing else, their ideological sensitivity ought to have sparked some curiosity as to how – quite practically and precisely – media texts form and influence people's ideological frames of reference and, in extension, contribute to the tenacity of bourgeois society.

This is but one example which leads me to conclude that our traditionally strongest source of inspiration outside the Nordic region may not have too much to offer us in the way of theoretical and methodological guidance just now. As I see it, our greatest need is a stronger orientation toward, and a better understanding of aesthetics and philosophical aspects. I shall be brief, but I shall try to explain why I think we need to think more in these directions.

When most people settle down to watch a film or a TV programme, to read a paper or a book, or to look at pictures or listen to music, what are they looking for, what do they hope to experience? They want to be touched in one way or another, and they are interested in what the text at hand tells them, means to them, or does for them. That is to say, most people are oriented toward a particular text and its specific subject matter, its meaning, and the promise of pleasure it holds. They want to find out something they did not know before, they want to be amused or to experience beauty; they are hoping to get a new perspective on life or merely an escape from the drudgery of the daily 'grind'. Most people perceive a major difference between reading Dostoievski and, say, Stephen King, or between, say, Kieslowski's and Spielberg's films. We also experience a difference between reading a serious newspaper and the items in a sensational tabloid. People in general *respect the individual text*. They have certain genre expectations and any number of factors which, a priori, affect their meeting with the individual text, but they *partake of and evaluate each particular text individually:* "That was a good film!" "That article really gave me a lot to think about."

This has broader relevance than to reception studies alone.

A fundamentally *idiographic* approach to analyzing texts – i.e., a focus on the unique or particularly characteristic features of phenomena – is congruent with most readers', viewers', etc., approach. But in the field of media science an idiographic focus or interest tends to be regarded with suspicion. Even scholars with a background in the humanities now put forward views on media research to the effect that we should focus on texts solely as *elements* in social interaction, in broader social contexts, and that it is *these larger social contexts which are the 'proper' focus of our inquiry*. The tendency in media research today is, in other words, highly nomothetic, seeking to identify 'laws', regularities.

This emphasis on socal regularities hardly affords a basis for *critical evaluation,* which might offer guidance to both producers of texts and their audiences. *For, both producers and audiences have an 'idiographic' orientation*. The failure to focus on the individual text and its particular features and qualities clearly renders us media sholars incapable of performing a significant service to society. Can we be content to produce students and researchers who cannot put forward well founded judgements as to what is 'good' and 'bad' in media output? If not, we should make room – much more than we have to date – for theories of aesthetics and in-depth analysis of texts and their features. This also implies including the 'meaning-less' (the non meaning-laden) aspects of texts – from 'dance numbers' in musicals to the fascination of rhythms

in verbal, audiovisual and musical texts. To paraphrase Susan Sontag: Not only do we need a media-hermeneutics, we need a 'media-erotics', as well.

My second point concerns the need for historical and philosophical enrichment and reflection. It was not long ago that the social sciences were separated out from the humanities. In Bergen, Social Anthropology, for example, emerged from the Department of Philosophy as recently as the late 1960s. Partly for that reason perhaps, the collective memory of the social science disciplines is shorter than that in the humanities, where scholars are still mulling over insights of 2,500 years ago. A short memory entails the risk of our 'discovering the wheel' every ten years or so; it also implies a general superficiality of reflection. *Ad fontes*! – To the source! – is wise advice. It prevents innumerable misunderstandings. Let me give one example.

Pierre Bourdieu's work has become exceedingly popular in many circles in recent years. His famous distinction between "barbaric" and "pure" taste is cited in a wide range of scientific articles – and with good reason. But the distinction is explicitly based on the theory of aesthetics Immanual Kant set out in his Critique of Judgment. How many of us have read this source work? The same Immanuel Kant also wrote an elegant piece entitled Was ist Aufklarung?, "What Is Enlightenment?". How many media scholars have read this work before setting out to evaluate the ideal of popular enlightenment and public service broadcasting, or to take stock of the current state of the public sphere, *Öffentlichkeit*, in the light of the postmodern critique of the enlightenment project? Very few, I should say. We leave such things to other disciplines – to philosophers, students of literature and the more intellectually inclined among sociologists and political scientists. Doing so, we class Media Studies as a plebeian branch of science – an applied science, dependent on others for answers to the fundamental questions.

The far too general ignorance of aesthetics and philosophical fundaments in our field explains in large part how Bourdieu in the Nordic countries, the USA and Great Britain could be presented and perceived as a populist. Such a perception makes it difficult indeed to grasp how in recent years he has emerged as a champion of the autonomy of the arts, of serious public discourse, and of knowledge as the Public Good. Had we read our Kant, it might not have come as such a surprise.

To sum up. Ten years have passed since I officially and formally assumed a permanent position in media research, and very exciting years they have been. Looking back, we can see that many major, positive advances have been made and a vast number of findings have been reported. But precisely because of this rapid pace of development, it is high time we paused and took stock, to see if we possibly have neglected anything along the way. And here we have to ask some very basic questions.

It often happens that I regard myself as a 'misplaced sociologist' in humanities contexts. On the other hand, I also sometimes feel like a 'misplaced aestheticist with an interest in history and philosophy' in media studies contexts. I feel these latter subject areas have a lot to offer both social scientists and humanities media scholars, whether of nomothetic or idiographic orientation. Due to its highly interdisciplinary character, our field can be a laboratory for both epistemological and more operational, practical research exercises. No one can do everything; specialists on a variety of subjects, theories, and methodologies are absolutely necessary. But neither can we hope for our field to thrive and develop if we in some kind of misdirected spirit of liberalism see 'peaceful coexistence' as a goal in itself – like the old hippie motto, "You do your thing; I do mine". As the nineteenth-century Norwegian author and poet Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson once observed, "The best of all things is not peace, but rather the will to accomplish something." By which I mean to say: we should count on further confrontations, and we will make no progress at all unless we acknowledge our contradictions and differences.

For ten years now, the 'misplaced sociologists' have been able to give their sociological inclinations free rein, and this freedom has helped keep the peace in our little world. A good number of our friends and colleagues in the social sciences, as well as sociologized colleagues in the humanities should in the next decade or so be able to join us in examining the web of historical, philosophical and aesthetic threads that link us together.

Digital Borderlands

Identity and Interactivity in Culture, Media and Communications

Johan Fornäs

Culture and *Communication* are closely connected. Culture is constituted by meaning-making practices, i.e. by symbolic communication. Communication is the sharing and transmission of meanings between people, i.e. the process that constitutes culture. Culture as communication has double effects: it gathers people around a set of shared meanings, i.e. creates identity, but it simultaneously also connects selves to others, i.e. constructs difference.

Late modernity is an age of intensified communications, shaping new communities but also spreading diversities. This process makes culture opaque, i.e. less transparently self-evident and therefore more visible as something in and by itself. The semantic, generic, aesthetic, formal, pragmatic or discursive rules of symbolic systems appear more often and come into focus, when people increasingly often have to cross borders between interpretive communities. When it is no longer obvious why the neighbour makes a certain gesture, dances in a particular way, or uses a specific phrase, one has to step back and think about how bodies, images, music and words make meanings. The difference-within-unity (encounters with alterity in globalized communicative streams) called diversity problematizes communication itself, thereby drawing it to explicit attention. Cultural forms and processes get reflexively thematized by culture itself – in everyday practices and popular media genres as well as in academic disciplines. A cultural turn has made meaning and interpretation a key issue, in research as in society at large.

This ongoing reinforcement of *culturalization* and aestheticization is thus closely related to an accelerating societal *reflexivity*, which affects everyday self-understandings as well as those of research. Reflexivity intensifies the need to mirror one's identity in the concepts, images and responses of surrounding others, including using media texts in self-mirroring ways. The media also pose demands that speeds up the development of such a reflexivity. Digital media are no exception to this spiral movement. They also contribute to modify basic conceptions of authenticity and originality, presence and intensity, as they are always and necessarily broken by distancing mediations and cultural symbolizations.

Culturalization and reflexivization are therefore closely connected to *mediatization*. Various technological and more or less institutionalized systems for mediating communications have become focal in most cultural practices. Meanings and identities are produced when mediated texts and subjects meet within specific spatial, historical, institutional, social and cultural contexts. Each situated interaction between people, symbolic networks and technological hardware is a constellation of subjects, texts and contexts which shapes intersubjectively shared meanings, collective and individual identities, as well as the complex life worlds embedding them.

Cultural studies cor/respond to this process – they both answer to it and take part in it. They are not one, but a legion: I therefore stress the plural form of the term. Cultural studies are a very complex set of perspectives, currents and traditions, shifting from decade to decade and from country to country. They are studies of a cultural kind, scrutinizing how meanings and forms are constructed in all human spheres, analyzing culture as an aspect of all society and human life. But they are also studies of culture, with a special focus on those works, activities and institutions that are in our modern society marked as 'cultural', including the arts as well as popular culture and the aesthetical practices of everyday life. This is where cultural studies intersect with cultural politics.

Cultural studies are concerned with the *interpretation of meanings*, with two facets. On one hand, questions are answered, problems solved, meaningful but hidden patterns reconstructed behind that which appears chaotic, demystifying roots found to present symbolic forms. Cultural studies thereby reduce complexity in the service of the need for orientation in a confused and contingent era, thus in various levels and areas contributing to our sense of identity. 'Aha, that's the way raves/fundamentalisms/academics work!' On the other hand, cultural studies pose questions, problematize things by denaturalizing what seems self-evident, showing that simple everyday phenomena are really more complex, disclosing hidden contradictions and subtleties in the 'low' and profane, following and co-producing the routes of intricate meaning-making. They increase our capability of seeing things in a more complex manner and accept difference and otherness, in order to avoid false, reductionist totalizations or stereotypifying ideologies. 'Oh, so it wasn't quite as simple as I thought, then?' A hermeneutic spiral is developed, where a pendelum movement between distanciation and close studies, explanation and understanding, is utilized to gradually push cultural reflexivity further.

Cultural studies are intrinsically *critical*, from the Frankfurt school of 'critical theory' to the later French, British and American variants. They show how power and resistance interplay in culture, striving to take part in attacking and deconstructing all illegitimate forms of domination, whether related to state, market or the life-world, and whether connected to gender, sexuality, age, generation, class, race, ethnicity, nationality or religion. Critique in the service of emancipation has a crucial task to understand the other and to criticize the self. This double task is unfortunately too often reversed in actual research and debate, and therefore has to be repeatedly actualized in an ongoing struggle of interpretations.

In this late-modern age of millenary change, *computer-mediated communications* have posed new questions to cultural theory. I would like here to argue for the need to intensify cultural media studies in this area. One motive is to demystify the ideologies of digitality, by connecting these new machines and networks back to the established world of mediated communications, and by rejoining cyber-metaphorics to a less rootless virtual web of cultural theory traditions. However, my goal is not simply to reduce all the novelties to something old, but rather to make the creative impulses of new computer media discourses more effectively intellectually productive by pointing to ways in which they shed light on aspects of communication that have hitherto been underdeveloped in media studies. Thus, the critique is directed against some problematic limitations, blindnesses and contradictions within both digital and media studies. Cultural theory may balance the exaggerations of IT-debates by relating them to basic concepts of media studies, while using new digital ideas to activate well-needed revisions of the dominant media research paradigms.[1]

<0://change>

At first, the electronic networks seemed so magically *new* and exciting. Lots of previously unknown terms became fashionable, carrying ideas of a hitherto unimaginable resource for bodyless communication suddenly making all limits transcendable in the near future. This in turn made more conservative pessimists fear that this was the end of the human world, where all the age-old qualities of life and culture would erode and dissolve into streams of binary digits without soul.

These twin reactions were not unique. New media forms are mostly born into whirls of simplifying and mutually mirroring utopic and dystopic discourses, resulting from hopes and frustrations fed by earlier forms of communication. Most new media are much less revolutionizing than they first pretend to be. This was true for the telegraph and the telephone, film and records, radio and television, and definitely for the digital communication media that are often discussed under the somewhat misleading heading of 'information technologies' (or 'IT'). None of these are fully as different as is often supposed. Such misjudgement cuts both

ways, and in two distinct ways. First, it may sometimes be useful to exaggerate by pointedly polarizing old and new, in order to catch sight of important but not always clearly visible tendencies, but such exaggerations can in the next moment have a dangerously blinding effect that blocks a more reasonable understanding of what's going on. Second, these are ambivalent reactions vacillating between utopian and dystopian extremes, but where both the optimists and the pessimists grossly overestimate the newness of the new.

Some few years later, the digital utopianism has begun to wear out and feel painfully out-of-date, under the combined pressure of a growing critique of the new computer-based communication technologies and the disenchanting routines of everyday life. Old power-structures and inhibiting mechanisms remain firmly in seat, and having worked practically with a modem for a while, it is hard to remember the feel of that utopian spark which once was so enticing. This is also a general pattern. After an initial euphoric phase, a process of routinization integrates each new media form in the everyday web of practices. In this process, that which first seemed totally different is domesticized, whereby it becomes obvious that it has long prehistories and many preceding parallels, and that established institutions and habits are extraordinary well capable of disciplining and delimiting potential breaks against the ruling orders of traditional communication patterns. One example is the way dominating cultural industries and institutions have rather effectively managed to contain the threats to private property and the commodity form posed by digital copying and sampling of music and photos, by complex modifications and reinforcements of established copyright laws and practices.

However, new media technologies do certainly also transform everyday life, sometimes in ways that are not immediately perceived. Also, unfulfilled emancipatory potentials in the first euphoric discourses surrounding them may remain in a latent state, to be reactualized in yet later historical phases. For example, the utopian ideas around railroads and telephones seem to echo again in the recent digitality debates, where suddenly the hopes for crossing borders and moving freely everywhere in ever-increasing speeds again come to the fore, after having sounded terribly outdated for several decades, since they were disenchanted during the period of world crisis, fascism and war from c. 1930 onwards.

Interactivity, cyberspace, virtual realities and virtual communities do not emanate out of nowhere. There are several lines of predecessors both to these communication phenomena and to the theories which analyze them. Both are mixtures of new and old. Some established cultural theories are needed to better understand what happens in the computer networks. But new media have also made some hitherto neglected aspects of culture and mediated communication more visible, and new concepts shed new light upon older cultural and communicative forms like literature, music and broadcasting.

Hitherto, at least Swedish media researchers have had surprisingly little to say about digital communication. They have difficulties in abandoning the old but increasingly outdated focus on press, television and to some extent radio and film, and tend to view new, computer-based media forms either as subordinated tools for these old media or as threatening competitors to them. In fact, many fundamental issues long neglected by traditional media research in spite of a continual critique from culturally oriented positions have been restated by the inventive theorizing caused by the new communication technologies.[2]

A renewed cultural critique might now be able to win back some of the key concepts that have been previously attacked as being closely associated with a problematic kind of technocratic view of communication as unidirectional chains of transmission of fixed contents from encoding senders to passively decoding receivers. The Latin origin of 'communication' for instance implies an intersubjective sharing that 'makes common' to the participants a set of meanings and thus joins them in an interpretive community, without necessarily making them uniform. Mediated communication is not only about complex techniques for transmitting fixed and packaged meaning-contents fromsenders to receivers, but also about social interactions where people gather around meaning-inviting texts to develop interpretations, experiences and relations. This 'ritual' view on communication is therefore a quite as important aspect as the 'transmission' view that has dominated much conventional mass communication research, such as quantitative content analysis or studies of media effects.[3] A 'medium' is something that exists 'in between' and thus mediates two (or more) subjects, poles or worlds. It is thereby a kind of messenger between them, but also a uniting link between them.[4] 'Information' indicates 'giving form to' something in an active process that cannot be reduced to unidirectional transmission of discrete units of content. In both common conversation and television

broadcasting, much more than cognitive knowledge is sent, and it actually is no fixed message but a symbolic web whose meaning is continually developed in a to at least some extent potentially open process of interpretive media use, which creates both meanings, identities and communities. The model of linear transportation of significant packages from encoder to decoder is useful to catch some aspects of institutionalized mass communication, but tends to distort the picture of communication in general, and needs to be supplemented with a cultural view which is not in opposition to these old key concepts but rather in line with some of their significant roots.

These issues have been renewed in interesting ways by recent media developments that have made the reductive models even more obviously inadequate. In order to face the challenge of new computer-based communication technologies, media studies needs a series of transgressions and bridges between traditions and research fields. Some taken-for-granted borders have been problematized: they have hardly been erased, as some postmodernist utopians and dystopians have jointly imagined. Rather, these boundaries have been thematized and thus made more visible by, not least, the interactive moments of recent digital media, that often cross them and open up communicative borderlands. Let me mention some such borderfields, loosely grouped into five main sections.

<1://culture>

First, boundaries have been crossed between *genres and contexts of communication* having to do with *work and leisure*, usefulness and pleasure, seriosity and entertainment, instrumentality and play. New media forms cross over the borders between serious work and playful leisure. As computer technology fuses with mass media and popular culture, hybrid genres appear, like faction, infotainment or edutainment, uniting entertainment with education, work, politics and news, thus aestheticizing the serious while making pleasure more serious.

As already stated, *cultural studies* represent both a perspective and an area of research. On one hand, the growing interest in *cultural aspects* of modernity has put meanings and forms in focus, and asked how meanings, identities and relations are produced in various types of symbolic webs and interpretive communities. Even highly practical uses of information technologies at school or work presuppose and activate such aspects of design and interpretation, and can thus be studied culturally. On the other hand, the area of primarily *cultural practices* is particularly large and important in the digital world. The new technologies not only serve the distribution of information and news, education or (post-)industrial production, but have quite as much to do with entertainment and aesthetics. Such cultural activities are too often regarded as just a small special sector for fun and the arts in the margin of the more crucial issues of life – am embellishing appendix to the 'really essential' technical, economic, political and pedagogic activity areas.

But digital popular culture has a wide quantitative and economic spread, and plays an enormous political, ideological, social and psychological role for society and its individuals, by offering tools for the formation and reworking of individual and collective identities, for grasping the surrounding world, for democratic opinion formation and for the handling of conflicts. The whole initial development of information technologies have been motivated by technical, political and economic imperatives, but quite as much governed by factors within the area of culture: playful stylistic youth subcultures, aesthetic desires and intertextual influences from other genres within art, music and literature. Digital techniques are used within an expanding series of aesthetic practices, which have central positions in everyday life and in the media world, and are gradually strengthened by the ongoing 'culturalization' of late modern society.

The increased centrality of culture does not leave culture itself untouched. The cultural field is simultaneously affected by trends towards politicization, commercialization and technologization. If leading economists, state officials and scientists start to see culture as the societal basis of the fundamental goals of all human development, this culture is also increasingly often conceived in strategic, monetary or technocratic terms. Culture becomes regarded as a means of managing conflicts or enhancing integration, a form of capital to be accumulated, or a genetic resource to be breeded. The process of culturalization of society thus encounters another process of instrumentalization of culture, and each of the two affect the other. If culture becomes more central to leading international organizations, this culture has already been made more easy to accomodate into a goal-oriented world order.

In cultural theory, the work of the French cultural sociologist Pierre Bourdieu exemplifies this

duality.[5] On one hand, he has shown how taste and aesthetics are essential to societal power and status relations. On the other hand, his concept of cultural capital and taste competition to some extent reduce culture to economic terms, thereby focusing strategic action instead of communicative action, to apply terms derived from the German sociologist Jürgen Habermas.[6] This definitely makes important things about culture visible, but it can also hide other facets of aesthetic practices. Similar problems arise on the political level, where culture tends to be elevated (to a factor of key importance) only at the cost of being reduced (to strategic games of investment). To see cultural research mainly as an instrument for collecting cultural indicators to be used in global resource planning implies a problematic reductionism that might altogether miss the crucial dynamisms of meaning-production and symbolic communication. Such cultural mapping can certainly be fascinating enough, but it only catches the most reified aspects of the true flux of cultural processes, which have to be studied in much more multi-dimensional ways, including close case studies, detailed ethnographies and textual interpretations.

A critical answer to the general tendency of culturalization is not to deny it but to emphasize the complexity and unruliness of culture, including digital culture. There are plenty of reasons to seriously study the cultural areas of digital media, instead of falling into the trap set up by the one-sided fixation of media researchers on news-services in combination with many IT researchers' focus on computers as aids to problem-solving in business and school. To study how relations, identities and meanings are created in late modern cultural public spheres is a quite as important task. Aesthetic forms and genres frame much of the recent communications development, and entertainment should be taken quite seriously in its dangers as well as its promises. Interpretive studies of how identities, communities, values, norms and worldviews are formulated by popular cultural media genres, and formed in their use, should therefore be of great priority. I therefore ask for cultural studies of digital cultural phenomena, studies that unite hermeneutics and critical theory, understanding and explanation, knowing that the contradictions and complexities of late modern everyday life make necessary reflexivity, interpretive work and cultural theory. *Culture is no marginal addition to society, nor is it only a strategic field: culture is central and multidimensional*.

<2://communication>

Secondly, formerly well-established borders between *types of communication* are relativized by the intensified forms of *interactivity* that are evolving. Interactivity is a notoriously polysemic concept, that may either emphasize the social interaction between media users, the technical interaction between users and machines or the cultural interaction between users and texts. Every medium is to some extent technically and culturally 'interactive', by inviting its users to an activity that includes an interaction both between the medium (both the machine hardware and the textual software) and its users and between those different individuals who are connected by the mediation in question. That interactivity consists of a series of choices – of commodities, channels, programmes, genres, texts, times, places and reception modes. It implies a co-production – of knowledge, meaning, experience, identity and even new cultural expressions in those words, gestures or songs that might spring from this media use. It also includes the shaping of specific intersubjective social relations – of interpretive communities and other interactions between different media users.

Some recent digital technologies have radically enhanced these kinds of interactivity by explicitly emphasizing the user's response and active assistance in the formation of the media text itself and installing particular tools to facilitate this. The whole 'cyber'-metaphorics stresses that individual steering by the media user, and thus puts interactivity at the core of reception. The increasingly evident interactive moments in many forms of mass media should not conceal the fact that such explicit interactivity is far from new. An old fashion paint-book with fields to fill in, or a common song-book with melodies to perform, are both interactive in this immediate sense: the activity of the user is needed to realize their 'texts' not only as meaningful works ('signifieds') but also as material artefacts ('signifiers'). Recent digital techniques are thus not the only interactive ones, but this rather amplifies the problematization posed by interactivity of some habitual boundaries in media research.

Interactivity resides more in the relation between media and their users than in the media themselves. Computer media explicitly offer so many different potential use modes that they cannot be abstractly classified as interactive. Some common ways to use them do not differ much from or-

dinary mass media consumption, while other users and use forms intensely utilize their interactive potentials. According to any of the definitions of interactivity above mentioned, every medium and every text may or may not be used interactively. A book may be just read from beginning to end, or it may be worked through and filled with notes in the margins and across the printed text. A karaoke video may either be 'passively' consumed by a watching and listening audience or 'actively' used by a singer. Different technologies only have varying potentials for interactive use, just as different individuals are variously prone to be interactive in their use of media texts, or as different contexts are more or less inviting to such interactive practices.

The boundary between interactive and non-interactive media use is notoriously blurred. This makes the distinction between *production and reception* less sharp, both as communication moments, as institutionalized forms of practice and as research areas, in spite of the fact that some traditional media genres differentiate pretty strictly between them. Also, the transmission model of communication might fit communication in commodity form reasonably well, where production and consumption are separated by certain industrial apparatuses. But it is too limited to serve as a general model of communication, where reception cannot be reduced to consumption. Qualitative and ethnographic studies of how media users interpret the texts they encounter are necessary to explain how society is reproduced, with its democratic resources as well as its oppressive mechanisms. *Media reception is always productive, and media production always presupposes interpretative media reception.*

Another increasingly blurred distinction is between *mass media* and other (e.g. 'individual' or 'inter-personal') media. Mass reproduction exists to varying degrees and in varying forms in different media types. The Internet is a hybrid form that can some times function much like television or records, when home-page or 'netzine' producers distribute their texts to a wide, anonymous audience. In other ways, it much more resembles postal or telephone services, by offering MUD, on-line and e-mail tools for individual or small group communication. Its increasingly dominant existence makes it obvious that similar hybridity is true for many other media forms as well (including radio and telephone), so that this dichotomy is only a liminal case of a much more complex continuum. By a retroactive 'afterwardsness', IT studies can shed light on aspects of communication that were also valid for older media forms, but which media researchers have hitherto neglected.[7] Talking of media studies instead of mass communication research makes it possible to radically deconstruct the traditional hierarchy that prioritizes press, radio and television, and to open up for studies of a much wider media world where films, books, records, telephone, postcards and computers are equally important ingredients.

By 'narrowcasting', the cultural industries project media products to smaller consumer groups, answering to more differentiated and pluralized societal need structures. This interacts with the creation of new contexts for social and political discussion in more or less oppositional or alternative partial public spheres. Both these *fragmentizing* trends connect to an increasing societal *individualization*, where individual identities and lifestyles are in increasingly more cases and aspects experienced as one's own choice and responsibility.[8] With a growing amount of media channels and outputs, individuals are forced to more and more consumption choices. However, this does neither makes all individuals different, nor does it make everyone alike. Instead, the first step is generally that traditional social differences, for instance of gender and education, become visible as social patterns of media reception, when the mono-channel uniformity is shattered.[9] The intense interactivity and space for personal choice in digital networks will eventually also reconstruct similar dichotomies of high and low – legitimate art and vulgar popular culture – perhaps reserving the more advanced interactive genres for the educated elites while developing commercial game variants with considerably less social and aesthetic status.

Mediatization not only force consumers to choose (*selectivization*) but also to use media in conjunction with each other and with other acitivities, to which media are then an ever-present background, which may tend to make much media use more out of focus or distanced (*parallelization*). This has long been true for teenage music use or for the presence of TV in American homes, and it may be the case when new media technologies are stretched into already established everyday reception habits. In some cases, they might substitute certain older forms of communication, but they will most probably more often supplement these and thereby expanding most people's media repertoires.

Instead of a simple dichotomy of mass vs. individual media, it is thus more fruitful to operate with a continuum. On one pole, some 'macro media' are mainly based on the dissemination in com-

modity form of texts created by centralized producers among the cultural industries and then distributed to a wide and in principle open range of consumers, who use them to shape their own interpretations and experiences, and sometimes modify them interactively. In the middle, 'meso media' are niched products circulated locally or within alternative public spheres, with a less sharp separation of producers and consumers. The other pole is occupied by media forms where communicators not primarily read pre-fabricated texts but jointly create their own dialogues, for instance in e-mail, MUDs and Usenet discussion groups.

There are no sharp borders between these kinds, and the same communication technology can often be used in many different ways, dependent on its social organization. Studies combining several perspectives are needed to clarify the connections, similarities and differences between the various types of interactivity enabled by these forms. IT studies can thus help transgressing dated dichotomies between media studies (and studies of popular culture) and dialogic studies of personal communication. Mass mediated popular culture needs to be studied interpretively as a symbolic realm closely integrated in more delimited or interpersonal media practices. *Traditional mass media are only a very special case of communications media, and they are often not as simply 'mass' media as has often been believed.*

A strict division between *mediated and direct communication* is also relativized, as media are increasingly integrated in everyday discourses. In forms like karaoke (which is based on the digital technologies of television and the laser disc), mediated and direct moments can be interwoven in highly complex ways. Processes of mediatization also make media continuously present in even the apparently most 'direct' interpersonal dialogue.

In a certain sense, all communication is doubly mediated – by material signifiers such as artefacts, sound and light waves, but also by the intersubjective, socioculturally and conventionally based symbolic code systems of language, music, pictorial and other expressive forms necessary for each single communicative act to function. Critical cultural media studies can counter widespread naive ideas of unlimited immediacy and community in cyberspace, by pointing at those necessary symbolical mediations through which all communication has to make a detour. The hermeneutic philosopher Paul Ricoeur has consistently argued that this detour of interpretation of textualized meanings is the sine qua non of intersubjective communication and understanding of the world, the other and of oneself.[10] Written texts make the necessary mediation between subjects obvious that already exists in speech, only hidden under the appearance of immediate presence. Instead of falling back to beliefs in the Internet as a way beyond textual mediation, it should be used to better understand the complex distanciations involved in all communication. Interpretive conventions, generic frames and life-worldly preunderstanding is presupposed in each seemingly straightforward talk or image-use, and only the familiarity with a medium and the belonging to a certain culture can make people believe that understanding evolves naturally.

However, the term 'mediated communication' usually refers to those human interactions that utilize mediating apparatuses or linkage systems that are technologically produced within formally institutionalized social organizations. Communication can be more or less mediatized in this more narrow sense of the word, but there is in fact no quite sharp dichotomy between mediated and face-to-face interaction. Culture cannot be fully understood without accounting for the inherent 'textual' distanciation in all dialogue, in opposition to all ideologies of pure, unmediated presence. *Mediation is everywhere.*

Aspects of interactivity have implications for issues of democracy, power and freedom of expression. Computer media offer new means for different individuals and social groups to take active part in key issues for societal development, concerning politics and economy, human rights and obligations, ethics, norms and ideals, world-views, identities and cultural traditions crucial to people's well-being and self-esteem. But these new media may also become organized in such a way as to confine acting subjects in pre-programmed structures that block changes and consolidate hierarchies of domination. Critical cultural media studies are crucially interested in discerning such ambivalent complexities, by discerning both emancipatory and authoritarian potentials of various communicative forms.

<3://combination>

Thirdly, *communication elements* are mixed. Different symbolic modes of expression are not only added to each other but also fused into creative hybrids. E-mail letters problematize the assumedly fixed border between *speech and writing*, by combining characteristics of telephone talk and correspondence. Chatting becomes a strange brew of

formerly more sharply separated modes of verbality. Also, while digital media are still highly verbocentric and scriptural, words are here encountering several limits: towards graphic design and pictoriality as well as towards non-verbal sounds and musics. Unfortunately, many information technology studies have hitherto been quite as logo- or verbocentric as mass communication research used to be. Where media research forgot images and music in their focussing of printed or broadcasted words, studies of the Internet likewise are sadly silent about non-verbal sounds and visuals.[11]

Increasingly complex, multiple and interactive forms of hypertextual communication further make it even less clear than in broadcast media how the analyzed *text* is to be delimited. Distinctions between statements, works, flows and channels are not erased in the crossing streams of interaction in digital networks, but they have to be carefully rethought.

All in all, traditional borders between symbolic modes are often crossed. Cultural studies need to beware of the academia's inherent verbocentrism. *Digital communication forms combine speech, writing, music and image in ways that call for inter-aesthetic interpretations.*

<4://cyberspace>

Next, the distinction between *representation and reality* is made unstable, as it reappears in the polarity between *cyberspatial virtuality* and what exists *IRL* ('in real life'). Old 'realist' views of how language or media images represent or relate to the real world have long been challenged by hermeneutic and constructionist ideas, that emphasize how symbolic forms are always interfering in our interaction with the external as well as the internal world. Representations are in an important sense real, and we can only understand reality indirectly, through such representations. Media images can therefore not so easily or meaningfully be measured against real facts. Mediated constructs are as socially effective as are economic data, and statistics or any other presumably 'objective' measure of reality is also a result of symbolizing communicative mediations.

The net terminology is no less inconsistent. *Virtuality* denotes something artificial or simulated, which imitates a more genuine reality. Talking about something that is *almost like* something else further tends to imply that it is *not real*. A dichotomy of virtual vs. real is usually presupposed in net argot. This conflates several distinctions that ought to be kept carefully apart.

Often, the virtual is seen as in some way immaterial or at least inauthentic. However, computerized fantasy worlds have a fully physical and tangible basis: computer chips are as material as are recorder pickups, and while the electrons they process are not palpable, they are no less 'real' than book pages or sound-waves. The real world definitely consists of much more than can be seen or sensed. And that which is humanly created is not necessarily less 'real' than what is not.

At other times, 'virtual' just denotes 'computer-based'. But if it then still is conceived in polar opposition to 'real', that 'real' becomes computer-free, which seems problematic. Where then to place telephone calls or books and their 'contents'? Does the phone talk or the novel also construct a virtual world? Is a surface letter a virtual or an IRL contact? And what about the face-to-face dialogue? The border between communicative forms is in this respect again notoriously blurred.

I would argue that the signifying interpretive work of each use of a mediated text comprises a kind of *virtualization*, where phonems, letters or combinations of units of sound or light trigger off a creation of an imaginary world, shared between the involved actors. All media have always offered imagined spaces or 'virtual realities' to enter, opened up symbolic worlds for transgressive experiences. Any literary novel lets its readers reconstruct and temporarily 'inhabit' a whole world of its own – 'the world of the text' itself, interrelated to 'the world in front of the text' or, which it refigurates and points at.[12] Such imagined worlds are no more nor less virtual than the space a computer game lets its users experience. Hermeneutic reception theory has developed a series of relevant ideas about how readers, listeners and viewers by 'disappearing acts' (Tania Modleski) enter textual webs of meaning, filling out their open 'gaps' (Wolfgang Iser) and constructing 'virtual space' and 'virtual time' (Susanne K. Langer) within genre-related 'interpretive communities' (Stanley Fish and Janice Radway).[13] Even an effective critique of late modern media culture has to engage in interpreting the complex ways in which it is thus made sense of, including the utopian or dystopian symbolic worlds it invites us to experience. *Virtuality is not confined to computerized communication, but appears in all cultural genres.*

Gendered hierarchies may be active in the reluctance of digital discourses to accept the relevance of such older cultural models for computerized media use. Like the word 'virtuos', 'virtual' has an ethymological root in 'vir', signifying 'man'. Yet, all efforts to secure cyberspace as a male refuge from the often femally coded fantasies of other cultural forms need to be firmly opposed by feminist critics. A closer interrelation between IT research and theories of popular culture would also in this respect be fruitful for both sides.

In spite of all ideologies of the pure incorporeality of computer-mediated communication, *the body* remains an inescapable element. With tools and technologies, we can reach further away, but our physical bodies still remain the first and the last step of each communicative act.[14] Digital networks remain dependent upon human bodies, both in their practical functioning and in their symbolical metaphorics. Without a body, one cannot even reach the PC keyboard, the screen has to be seen by human eyes, and the virtual world created in cyberspace remain bound to bodily metaphors if it is to be at all intelligible and useful to us: even a cyborg or a robot is generally given some kind of limbs and sensory organs. An interesting example of this body-dependence is the film *Terminator 2*, where a robot is said to have unlimited capability of appearing in any arbitrary shape, but still repeatedly return to an easily recognizable human form. Had that not been the case, the robot would have lacked all identity which would have made impossible its narrative identification and thus collapsed the whole plot of the film. The same is true in the audial world: even synthesized music continues to incorporate human sounds recognizable as individual voices, even though their electronic manipulation just as well could have made them 'inhuman', just as most instrumental voices in modern pop continue to remind of familiar IRL-instruments, in spite of the fact that such sounds could as well have been made completely alien. Communication retains a bodily dependence, on all levels and contrary to a widespread belief in its disembodiment.

Digital communication thus repeatedly thematizes precisely that physical and sensory body that is so often said to be eliminated in cyberspace. It constructs 'mental bodies' and 'written voices', since all interaction and narration demands some kind of recognizable embodiment of its interacting (imagining and imagined) subjects. Intersubjective dialogicity may well be the primary ground of society and culture, but it cannot avoid reproducing some form of internally diversified and embodied subjectivity. Cultural media studies cannot escape theorizing the embodied subject of intersubjective communication, and psychoanalytical or other theories of subjectivity must therefore not be excluded from its field. Feminist gender studies and postcolonial ethnicity studies have made this particularly clear. *The body is never far away, and imagination respects no limits, while often playing with them.*

<5://communities>

The sliding between imagined and real world finally problematizes the concept of *virtual community*. Again, *all* text-users develop interpretive communities where they 'gather on distance' to share certain works, tastes and ways of understanding. This is true both for pen-friends and press readers, book lovers and pop fans. New technologies connect on to such older forms, offering more extensive, fast, intense and effective means, as well as a wider combination of different communicative options within the same technological framework. That communities do not presuppose physical simultaneity and co-presence has been known for ages: already the early civic public sphere in the late 18th century centred not only around bourgeois salons, but also around press and book publishing.[15]

It can again be asked if such scattered communities are not quite as 'real' as those that happen to placed in the same place. A married couple is no less a married couple if they happen to live in two separate towns. A subculture needs not be an imaginary community only because it is carried by individuals who never meet. Truly 'imagined communities' do only exist as such in the symbolic realm, and subcultures or interpretive communities surely might have such imagined aspects, but they can simultaneously be 'real' configurations of actual people sharing certain characteristics, tastes and self-understandings.[16] The social world of digital media users is inhabited by a range of differing communities that are not only virtual but also real, both imagined and existant. Some remind of alternative public spheres, building their own communicative networks outside of more established mass media and institutions. Others are more like subcultures, sharing certain stylistic traits and activities that distinguish them from other citizens. Some hacker groupings can even develop into countercultural movements aiming for societal change. By far the most of them are probably con-

siderably much looser webs of people, more like those found among fans or ordinary consumers of genres in other media forms.

Just like the object of textual analysis is becoming harder to delimit, the same goes for *media ethnography*. If the informants ordinarily use to interact only digitally, digitally mediated forms of participant observation and interviewing on the Internet might be as legitimate for ethnography as is face-to-face-interaction. This then further problematizes the distinction between *ethnography and textual analysis*, in that interpretions of on-line transcripts can be conceived in both ways.[17]

A clarification of the term 'virtual community' is thus needed, and I propose that it is used to denote not dispersed but imagined (or imaginary) communities. Both of these are in no way confined to the realm of computer media users. Cultural studies investigate how communities are formed in media use, through mechanisms of identification and differentiation, inclusion and exclusion. *As imagined or imaginary communities, virtual communities exist both on- and off-line, and so do the temporally or spatially dispersed communities that in fact may be quite real*.

<6://crossings>

In order to understand the ambivalent and often hybridizing communicative borderlands of digital media, a renewed crossing of communicative and cultural perspectives is needed. Just like new media always connect on to older ones, studies of computer media need to integrate media and cultural studies in order to catch what is really bravely new in this digital world. At the same time, analyses of new media phenomena can enrich cultural theories by elucidating aspects and elements of communication that are hitherto deficiently conceptualized. Through processes of digitalization and convergence, computer media have given rise to new hybrid forms, and renewed interdisciplinary crossings may likewise help us better understand both the old and the new.

Interdisciplinary cultural studies make critical interpretations of elsewhere neglected phenomena of popular culture, of aesthetic distinctions and transgressions, and of processes of cultural modernization. They ultimately aim to support the further development of an open and polyvocal public sphere, anchored in the lifeworld of civil society and relatively independent from both the market and the state system, but also critically reflexive towards its own hierarchies and limitations. Their critique thus runs in three directions: against commercialization, against bureaucratization, and against unjust social dominance along dimensions such as class, gender, sexuality, age, generation, race, ethnicity, nationality or religion. Studies of how meanings and identities are formed in the interactive and interpretive practices around combinations of digital communication media and traditional media types and cultural genres need to be developed in such a perspective, in order to elucidate and counteract the authoritarian potentials upheld by profit interests, institutional control and dominating social groups, while discerning and empowering the emancipatory potentials inherent in this widened and diversified communicative scope.

The crossings and dialogues I call for are therefore no smooth synthesizing integrations, but must make critical juxtapositions to highlight how opposing paradigms differ, in order to see in what way they might be able to be fruitfully brought together. Cultural studies – like this very study of digital borderlands – interpret concepts as they are used in discursive practices, searching for their meaning potentials, ambivalences and tendencies, thereby reaching for insights that cannot yet be rigidly measured but are needed to understand what is genuinely new and emergent in late modern culture.

This discussion of some central distinctions within mass media research and information technology discourse has been aimed at clarifying how cultural studies may explore those digital borderlands of media and communications where identities are interactively reborn. It is also an argument for the need of critical cultural studies to communicate with other research perspectives in order to retain and further develop their own interactive identity.

Notes

1. I am grateful for discussions with colleagues at the departments of journalism, media and communication at Stockholm University, communication studies at Linköping University, and ethnology at Lund University. In particular, these ideas have been developed with my co-researchers from Linköping (Jenny Sundén and Malin Sveningsson) and Stockholm (Göran Bolin and Martina Ladendorf) in our collective planning of a project called 'Digital Borderlands: Cultural identity and interactivity in new communication media'.
2. See Brenda Laurel: *Computers as Theatre*, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley 1991/1993; George P. Landow: *Hypertext. The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology*, Baltimore, MD / London: Johns Hopkins University Press 1992; Howard Rheingold: *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier*, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley 1993; Gretchen Bender & Timothy Druckrey (eds.): *Culture on the Brink: Ideologies of Technology*, Seattle: Bay Press 1994; Allucquère Rosanne Stone: *The War of Desire and Technology at the Close of the Mechanical Age*, Cambridge, MA / London, UK: MIT Press 1995; Steven G. Jones (ed.): *Cybersociety. Computer-Mediated Communication and Community*, Thousand Oaks: Sage 1995; Sherry Turkle: *Life on the Screen. Identity in the Age of the Internet*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson 1995/1996; Nicholas Negroponte: *Being Digital*, New York: Vintage Books 1995/1996; Rob Shields (ed.): *Cultures of Internet: Virtual Spaces, Real Histories, Living Bodies*, London: Sage 1996; Lance Strate, Ronald Jacobson & Stephanie B. Gibson (eds.): *Communication and Cyberspace: Social Interaction in an Electronic Environment*, Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press 1996; George E. Marcus (ed.): *Connected: Engagements with Media*, Chicago / London: University of Chicago Press 1996; Gunnar Langemark: "Computerspillet som tegn" in Kirsten Drotner & Anne Scott Sørensen (eds.): *Øjenåbnere. Unge, medier, modernitet*, København: Dansklærerforeningen 1996; Ture Schwebs (ed.): *Skjermtekster. Skriftkulturen og den elektroniske informasjonsteknologien*, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget 1994. Swedish IT-cultural research has been developed by research groups within the Departments of Ethnology at the universities of Lund and Gothenburg (cf. the special IT-issue of the journal *Kulturella perspektiv*, 6:2, 1997) as well as in the Departments of Communication Studies and of Technology and Social Change, both at Linköping University (cf. Magnus Karlsson & Lennart Sturesson (eds.): *Världens största maskin. Människan och det globala telekommunikationssystemet*, Stockholm: Carlssons 1996; Elisabeth Sundin & Boel Berner (eds.): *Från symaskin till cyborg. Genus, teknik och social förändring*, Stockholm: Nerenius & Santérus Förlag 1996).
3. James W. Carey in *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*, New York / London: Routledge 1989/1992, sets these two views as oppositional. Like many others, I prefer to see them as two co-existing aspects of what communication is, rather than to choose one and reject the other.
4. While 'message' is clearly something sent, the German 'Mit-teilung' and the Scandinavian 'med-delande' is ethymologically something 'shared with' others, and not only transported from producer to consumer.
5. E.g., Pierre Bourdieu: *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, London / New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1979/1984, or *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structre of the Literary Field*, Cambridge: Polity Press 1992/1996.
6. Cf. Jürgen Habermas: *The Theory of Communicative Action*, (2 volumes), Cambridge: Polity Press 1981/1984 and 1981/1988.
7. The concept of 'afterwardsness' ultimately derives from Freud's concept of *Nachträglichkeit*, which has been fruitfully discussed by the French psychoanalytic Jean Laplanche in *Seduction, Translation and the Drives*, London: ICA 1992.
8. Cf. Ulrich Beck: *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, London: Sage 1986/1992, Thomas Ziehe: *Zeitvergleiche: Jugend in kulturellen Modernisierungen*, Weinheim / Munich: Juventa 1991, or Anthony Giddens: *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Cambridge: Polity Press 1991.
9. This has happened when national broadcasting monopolies have been lifted and opened up the airwaves to commercial enterprises, as has been shown by Bo Reimer: *The Most Common of Practices: On Mass Media Use in Late Modernity*, Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International 1994.
10. Paul Ricoeur: *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*, Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press 1976; *Oneself as Another*, Chicago / London: The University of Chicago Press 1990/1992.
11. In the collective project 'Digital Borderlands', my contribution is to study musical interactivity in digital media like karaoke, CD-rom and the Internet. In these, the user not only directs her/his reception (speed, place, interpretation etc.), but also the sounds themselves, in dialogue with the mediated textual raw material (video, disk etc.) but also with other users/interpreters. This invites studies of how identity positions, social and intertextual relations are opened and used. Cf. Johan Fornäs: 'Karaoke. Subjectivity, Play and Interactive Media', in *Nordicom Review*, 1/1994; 'Meningsskapandets korsvägar. "My Way" i karaokeversion', in *Filmhäftet*, 88 (1994); 'Filling Voids Along the Byway: Identification and Interpretation in the (Swedish) Use of Karaoke (and other interactive music media)', in Tôru Mitsui & Shûhei Hosokawa (eds): *Karaoke Around the World: Singing Culture in the Era of Digital Technology*, London: Routledge 1997.
12. Cf. Paul Ricoeur: *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1981;

Time and Narrative, (3 volumes), Chicago / London: The University of Chicago Press 1983/1984, 1983/1987 and 1985/1988.

13. Tania Modleski: *Loving With a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women*, New York / London: Methuen 1982; Wolfgang Iser: *Der implizite Leser. Kommunikationsformen des Romans von Bunyan bis Beckett*, München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag 1972; Susanne K. Langer: *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art*, New York Charles Scribner's Sons 1953; Stanley Fish: *Is There a Text in this Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1980; Janice Radway: *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*, Chapel Hill / London: University of North Carolina Press 1984. Cf. also Johan Fornäs: *Cultural Theory and Late Modernity*, London: Sage 1995; 'Mirroring Meetings, Mirroring Media. The Microphysics of Reflexivity', in *Cultural Studies*, 8:2, 1994; 'Listen to Your Voice! Authenticity and Reflexivity in Rock, Rap and Techno Music', in *New Formations*, 24, 1994; 'Do You See Yourself? Reflected Subjectivities in Youthful Song Texts', in *Young. Nordic Journal of Youth Research*, 3:2, 1995.
14. Cf. Marshall McLuhan: *Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man*, London / New York: Ark / Routledge 1964/1987.
15. This is clear already when Jürgen Habermas in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press 1962/1989 emphasizes the crucial role of the post and the press in the genesis of the early civic ('bourgeois') public sphere. The presence of mediatizing processes is no late invention, though they have accelerated and multiplied in late modernity.
16. Benedict Anderson: *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (2nd edition), London: Verso 1983/1991.
17. The necessary interrelation between ethnography and textual analysis has already in the mid-1980s been emphasized by some anthropologists inspired by deconstructionism (e.g., James Clifford & George E. Marcus (eds.): *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1986), as well as by media researchers like Kirsten Drotner (e.g., "Ethnographic Enigmas: 'The Everyday' in Recent Media Studies", in *Cultural Studies*, 8:2, 1994).

Communication Research after the Mediasaurus?

Digital Convergence, Digital Divergence

JENS F. JENSEN

> Today's mass media is tomorrow's fossil fuel
> Michael Crichton

In an article entitled *Mediasaurus*, Michael Crichton, author of Jurassic Park, compares contemporary mass media with the dinosaurs (Crichton 1993). The mass media, he writes, have become gigantic, clumsy creatures, ill suited and unable to adapt to the demands of the new environment of information technology with its flexible mini-media and computer networks. Consequently, they are obsolete, in short, on their way toward extinction. Crichton's conclusion: "Today's mass media is tomorrow's fossil fuel."

If Crichton is right, the next question is: What are the implications for mass communication research? And where does that leave us media researchers?

George Gilder, another commentator with a gift for the drastic, speaks of "life after television" (Gilder 1994). Gilder's scenario resembles Crichton's in many respects. He claims, for example, that television, in technical terms is dead, that just as the 'centralistic mainframe computer' and IBM collapsed in the 1980s, superseded by the PC, the centralistic television structures will now collapse, so that "in coming years, the very words 'telephone' and 'television' will ring as quaintly as the words 'horseless carriage', 'icebox', 'talking telegraph' or 'picture radio' ring today" (1994:12).

Is there a life after television?, is Gilder's question. And, one is tempted to add, for the mass communication researcher? Gilder's answer to the first question is, Yes, it's the PC and 'telecomputer'. But what is the answer to the second question?

The editors of the trend-setting computer and lifestyle journal, *Wired*, do not predict the out-and-out demise of television as we know it today, but they expect broadcast television will be but one of many different channels in a new network of converging media: "As everything gets wired, media of all kinds are moving to the decentralized matrix known as the Net. While the traditional forms – broadcast, print – show few signs of vanishing, the Net is being invaded by new media species" (Kelly et al. 1997:12). The prime characteristic of this new fauna of network-based species of media is their diversity, ranging from mastodon media to micro-media. "The most revolutionary advance", *Wired* continues, "may be the creation of a whole universe of small-scale (and not-so-small-scale) broadcast networks.... Networked media... can create broadcasting networks of any size and shape, especially the intermediate size between TV and, say, personal mailing lists. You can push-pull broadcast to Llama keepers or home schoolers.... [The Net will be] a Net of push-laden networks, a world of nichecasting – thousands of mini-networks, ranging from micro-TV stations to totally customized personal programming. ... Let a thousand media types bloom" (Ibid.: 21-22).

Digital guru Nicholas Negroponte, finally, speaks of the changing media landscape in a similar vein: "The economic models of media today are

based almost exclusively on 'pushing' the information and entertainment out into the public. Tomorrow's will have as much or more to do with 'pulling', where you and I reach into the network and check out something the way we do in a library or video-rental store today" (1995:170). Thus, Negroponte expects the media to be "redefined by systems for transmitting and receiving personalized information and entertainment" (Ibid.:6). The critical factors in Negroponte's scenario are digitization and the 'great information superhighway': "Being digital will change the nature of mass media from a process of pushing bits at people to one of allowing people (or their computers) to pull at them. This is a radical change, because our entire concept of media is one of successive layers of filtering, which reduce information and entertainment to a collection of 'top stories' or 'best-sellers' to be thrown at different 'audiences'. As media companies go more and more toward narrowcasting, like the magazine business, they are still pushing bits at a special-interest group, like car fanatics, Alpine skiers, or wine enthusiasts. ... The information industry will become more of a boutique business. Its marketplace is the global information highway" (1995:84-85). The implications of what Negroponte says here for economic models and the radical changes that confront them may well have relevance for other scientific models of the sector, as well.

Each in his own way, all – Crichton, Gilder, the editors of *Wired* and Negroponte – are saying: "No dinosaurs on the information superhighway. No Dinos on the net!". But what, we may ask, is the role of mass communication research and the media scholar in this new media landscape, after the evolutionary quantum leap?

The foregoing is one possible elaboration on the theme, The changing media landscape: Research on new media technology". Put in more polemical terms: Communication research after the Mediasaurus?

'The Changing Media Landscape' and 'New Media Technology'

'The changing media landscape' and 'new media technology' are oft-heard phrases these days. Not infrequently they are used without much clarification as to what they stand for.

One might object that 'the changing media landscape' is nothing new in itself. The media landscape has always been changing, and will hardly stop now. Just consider the impact television has had on family life, leisure, entertainment and patterns of consumption these past 40 years. Or what the telephone has meant with regard to the establishment and maintenance of social relations and social interaction. Or, in a somewhat longer perspective, what print media have meant with respect to how information is distributed, stored and made accessible.

So there is nothing new about the media landscape changing. The novelty does not reside in 'new information technology'. Novelty is nothing new.

Therefore, I should like to start by saying a few words about what I mean when I use the words 'new information technology' and 'changes in the media landscape'. And about why it is important to consider these phenomena just now.

Digitization and Convergence

The keys to what is new about 'new information technology' and the significant changes in a constantly 'changing media landscape' are to be found in the terms 'digitization' and 'convergence', not only in their precise significations, but also as focal points, puzzle picture, which change appearance when viewed from different perspectives. What from one point of view looks like convergence may, viewed from another point of view, appear to be divergence. Hence the kaleidoscopic title of this article.

The term 'digital' is primarily a contrast to the term 'analogue'. Analogue media are – very simply put – based on signals which consist of continuously varying values. By measuring these values one can derive information. Digital media, on the other hand, are based on discrete information. They break down the real world's continuous and constant flow of data into a series of discrete 'samples', which are taken at even intervals (the more frequent the samples, the higher the quality). A digital signal can only have one of two possible values: 0/1, off/on, absent/present. This binary or digital code is the computer's language. 'Digitization' and 'the digital revolution' refer to the conversion from analogue to digital media and technologies: the translation of information in a variety of forms – letters, speech, sound, images – to a universal language of 0's and 1's, to a sequence of manipulable, computer-readable cyphers.

This very basic technological change in how signals are coded has a number of far-reaching consequences for the characteristics and character of media.

Digital information can represent many different forms of expression and underlying types of in-

formation, all of which are handled in essentially the same way. Consequently, it also becomes possible to transfer information from one medium to another, thus liberating it from dependence on any given medium. Digitization makes all media interchangeable, and the computer becomes a kind of universal medium or meta-medium, which can simulate other media, technologies and systems of expression (cf. Finnemann 1998). Moreover, the transport, processing, storage and retrieval of information – i.e., all of the vital aspects of communication and information processing – are currently being digitized.

Digital information is easier to process and manipulate; in principle, one can do almost anything with it. The information may be processed at any and all stages: in production, i.e., in the translation into digital form, in the transfer of information, or in the user's reception and use of the product.

Digital information can contain meta-information, information about information, bits about bits, which increases flexibility, the variety of ways in which information can be processed and the 'intelligence' in the information.

These last two features – the possibility of processing information in reception and use and the ability to contain information about information – give digital media a special capacity for interactivity.

Digital information offers a number of other advantages, as well: it can be copied and processed an infinite number of times; it is not as susceptible to 'noise' and misinterpretation; it is more robust in the face of malfunctions and lends itself better to error searches and corrections; it can be excerpted and exchanged between countless members of a network; it is amenable to encryption; it requires less space and is therefore easier and more economical to transport and store; and, in contrast to analogue information, it can be radically compressed. Thus, digitization makes it possible to deliver traditional, linear and non-interactive information and media more economically. In many cases digitization will be used to allow the established media industry to distribute conventional products and content (digital broadcasting) in new, more economical and efficient forms.

The term 'convergence' refers to several concurrent and partly interrelated developments in the media landscape today.

On the level of technology, it refers to the fact that – thanks to digitization – previously separate media (print, broadcasting, telephony, cable, etc.) have come to obey the same technological principles and share the same base; all converge in the computer. Thus, in terms of technology, convergence and digitization may be said to be two aspects of the same thing.

On the level of products, it signifies that previously separate modes of expression and kinds of information – text, sound, still and moving images, etc. – can now be readily combined and thus converge in multimedial expression, referred to as multimedia. In a similar fashion, then, convergence and multimedia may be seen to be two sides of the same floppy-disk.

Turning to distribution, convergence refers to the fact that formerly separate services and media systems can now be combined in the same distribution channels and integrated services or networks, so-called full service networks. Here, too, convergence means digital networking, and vice versa.[1]

Finally, on the level of the industry convergence means that previously separate branches within the media-information-entertainment sector now collaborate in a variety of ways – because medial, technological and product convergence imply corresponding multimedial knowledge and skills; because individual actors and businesses wish to secure themselves a place in an uncertain and hard-to-predict technological and commercial future; and, finally, because the branches are increasingly operating in each other's domains. The many fusions, strategic alliances, acquisitions and partnerships announced in recent years, particularly in the fields of telecom, computers and audio-visual media, are concrete expressions of this comprehensive industrial convergence. On this level, then, we find convergence and industrial alliances to be two sides of the same golden coin.

On this latter, macro-industrial level we find that Crichton's prediction misses the mark. There is not much evidence that mass media, seen as an industry or group of enterprises, are in any way nearing extinction. On the contrary. Never before have media companies been so vigorous and large – like mastodons (or dinosaurs?).

The term 'convergence', like 'digitization', has become a real buzzword lately. The question is, however, whether it really captures the whole of the dynamic in what we see happening before us today. If, that is, we take it to signify a tendency that takes the form of bringing together, limitation and concentration. Its opposite – divergence – is perhaps equally applicable as a descriptor.

Take, for example, the actors and output on the market. Here it is hardly a question of concentration or limits on the number of actors or products –

that is, on actual competition. On the contrary, individual companies and industries are expanding their operations into new fields and thus come to overlap one another. The result: a growing number of players and products, hence, a dramatic increase in competition.

We find that the same is true on the level of technology, as well. For, even if digitization means that media old and new melt together, and that many technologies and media converge in the computer, the result is far from a single, uniform technology or product. On the contrary, the result seems to be a broad spectrum of diverse media, technologies and products. Thus, on the one hand the media seem to converge; on the other, they are diverging into a wide array of new media and products. Meanwhile, individual media are adapting to be able to offer a growing number of diverse functions. Convergence and divergence.

And it applies, finally, when we consider services and distribution. For, even if the digital networks assemble many services in full service networks, the number and kinds of services seem to be multiplying. Nor does the much-touted 'information superhighway' look like it will be a single, integrated system, but rather a network of networks which can exchange information and services in a consistent fashion. Thus, on the one hand, distribution networks and services are fusing; on the other hand, these networks and services seem to be proliferating wildly.

Behind the convergence process on all these levels, there is a diversity of actors, technologies, products and services. What, seen from one point of view, appears to be convergence, seen from another angle looks more like divergence. Like a kind of puzzle picture, the situation changes according to one's perspective. Convergence and divergence in the same digital trend.

Media Revolution?

The significance of these events has been the subject of some controversy. People like Crichton and Gilder have perhaps overestimated the radicality of the change and, as we say in Scandinavia, 'sold the pelt before the animal (in this case a mediasaurus) was caught'. More cool-headed 'mediasaurologists' have, in the midst of all the technological turbulence, not seen anything really new at hand, and have cautioned us to 'hold our horses' – or paleohippuses, as the case may be.

At the moment, however, the danger of underestimating the change may be greater. The speed and depth of the changes are tremendous, and (mass) media researchers have – on the whole – been relatively slow to confront the challenges the changes pose.

Digitization is no longer something ahead of us. The so-called 'digital future' is already with us, and has been for some time. A great number of technologies and media have been, or are in the process of being digitized. Computer media, multimedia and network media like Internet have been digital from the start; they were born digital. The PC has only existed a little over fifteen years, and it is already to be found in a majority of Danish households. This makes the PC one of the fastest-growing media technologies in history. The growth of Internet has been unparalleled.

At the same time, it is not only 'new media' and 'new information technology' which represent the changes digitization brings with it. Conventional media, too, are 'going digital'.

The process is already completed in the case of print media with the advent of word processing, desktop publishing, on-line publishing, on-line services and on-line newspapers. It occurred astoundingly quickly in music distribution with the overnight conversion from the LP to the CD. Telephone and telecom networks have been digitized over the past few years. With the coming of voice-response systems, interactive telephone services, etc., this development may be expected to change our very idea of what the telephone is and can be. Digital images and digital video have become accepted as the standard of the future, which will affect the production of images profoundly. Finally, the major conventional media – radio, television and film – are at this moment facing and taking the step into their 'digital futures'.

What is more, new and old media are combining – converging – in digital versions: television and computers, newspapers and computers, telephone-based on-line services, computer and fax and e-mail and telephone. On the one hand, the media are becoming interlinked; on the other, we find individual media assuming a growing number of communication functions. Once again: convergence and divergence.

In addition, we find the computer, in the sense of the microprocessor (which we have known some 40 years now), everywhere in everyday technologies: wristwatches, washing machines, microwave ovens, toasters, telephone answering machines, thermostats, CD-players, toys, musical greeting cards, cars, etc., etc.

So, it is not only the new information technologies which constitute the 'revolution'. Old media and conventional consumer goods, too, are part of the change in the media landscape. We can in fact say that all the principal media which have been invented from the fifteenth century until today are now – on different levels and to varying degrees – in the process of being digitized. Digitization is omnipresent and omnipotent.

The changes have been surprisingly swift. As late as the first years of the decade, some European observers argued that digital video would become a reality some years into the new millennium. And one occasionally runs across 'future-oriented' research from the early 1990s which makes no mention whatsoever of digitization as a relevant factor in the 'next decade of development' of electronic media. Consequently, if the concepts 'media revolution' or 'communication revolution' have ever been justified, it must be in connection with the phenomena of computerization and digitization. This, relative to other profound changes in the media which have earned such status, such as the Gutenberg press or mechanization, a process of several centuries, or electrification or the advent of electronic media, which spans most of the present century.

Some has pointed to digitization as the central theme of the media developments of the 1990s. Some have claimed – perhaps exaggerating a bit – that the current digital revolution and emergence of network media are of fully the same magnitude as Gutenberg's invention of book printing. "The computer is a new kind of medium. Gutenberg has come, and we haven't recognized him yet," exclaims 'new media' guru Allan Kay. "Internet will have a greater impact on civilization than Gutenberg's invention of the press," says Bill Gates.

Whatever epoch-making points of comparison we choose, we have good reason, as scientists, to pay attention to these processes of change right now, as they are taking off. If it is true that the digital revolution will be as profound as Gutenberg's invention, posterity may well be able to say that we – like the monastic calligraphers in European scriptoria of Gutenberg's day – did not notice the revolution, as we were occupied with more pressing tasks.

Mediasaurus Research

The question, then, is what are the implications for media research? Does traditional mass communication (or mediasaurus) research have adequate concepts, theories and methods to deal with current changes in the media landscape, and to analyze new and upcoming varieties of media? Or will our science find itself increasingly ill equipped to understand and explain its objects of study? In short: Does the revolution in the media require a corresponding revolution in media research? And if so, what does such a 'new' – digital, convergent – media research look like? Post-mediasaurus.

So far, most media research has been mediasaurus research in the sense that it has derived its concepts, models, theories and insights from the study of 'broadcast' media – mainly television, radio, newspapers and film – i.e., one-way communication from one to many. This is mainly a consequence of the dominant role mass media have played in western societies this past half-century – and the consequent dominance of mass communication research among studies of the media and communication.[2] With this orientation comes a set of assumptions and basic concepts, like sender, receiver, intention, effect, channel, medium, etc., and implications regarding the relationships between active senders, passive receivers, information transport, etc. The current emergence of new digital, computer-based media is, however, more or less synonymous with a shift away from mass communication of the broadcast type toward other forms. In that sense, Crichton may be right in saying, "Today's mass media is tomorrow's fossil fuel."

The current developments and 'the changing media landscape' may be approached and described in a number of ways. In the following I shall present five sketches of a landscape in the process of change – of necessity painted in broad strokes.

Interpersonal Communication vs. Mass Communication

One way to characterize current developments in the media sector takes its point of departure in the way studies of communication traditionally have been organized.

One of the most fundamental and best patrolled frontiers in communication research is the distinction between mass communication and interpersonal communication. This line of demarcation – for reasons more historical-institutional than scientific – has assumed such a constitutive character that research in the respective areas has become divided between two separate sets of institutions and scientific traditions. The distinction is constitutive

in the sense that the respective traditions have largely defined themselves in contradistinction to one another. This is apparent when we consider how the two traditions define and construct their respective foci of interest.

- In mass communication research the object of study is defined as 'mediated communication', i.e., communication which takes place via technical distribution media, whereas in interpersonal communication the object of study is defined as 'unmediated communication', 'face-to-face communication', i.e., communication which takes place without technical distribution media.
- Mass communication researchers define their object of study as indirect communication, i.e., communication which involves distance in time or space between the communication partners, whereas students of interpersonal communication define their object as direct communication and interaction, i.e., coinciding in time and space.
- The object of mass communication research is 'one-way' communication, i.e., communication in which information flows in only one direction, with no opportunity for senders and receivers to exchange roles: the object of interpersonal communication research, on the other hand, is two-way communication with a relationship of mutuality between sender and receiver.
- Mass communication involves minimal feedback from the receiver to the sender, whereas interpersonal communication allows the greatest possible feedback.
- Mass communication is characterized by an absence of interaction (or only 'simulated' or 'parasocial' interaction) between sender and receiver, whereas interpersonal communication involves a high degree of interaction between the two parties.
- Mass communication is defined as communication which addresses a large, dispersed, heterogeneous, anonymous audience; interpersonal communication is defined as communication between two or several participants who are in immediate proximity to one another.
- Mass communication is defined as communication which is public, i.e., non-exclusive, open to participation, whereas interpersonal communication is private, taking place within personally defined circles.

Mass Communication	Interactive Communication	Interpersonal Communication
Mediated	mediated person-to-person	Unmediated
Indirect	indirect	Direct
One-way	one-and-two-way	Two-way
Minimal feedback	great feedback	Maximum feedback
Absence of interaction	interactivity	Interaction
One sender vs. large audience	many senders vs. many receivers	Few participants
Open	open/private	Private

The new information technologies and network media do not easily fall into either of these categories. In many respects their interactivity and capacity for dialogue constitute a mediation between or convergence of the two – a species of 'interpersonal mass media'. Thus, they appear to land alongside or in the no man's land between the two traditional fields of research. This may be one of the reasons why researchers in the two traditions have been so slow to take an interest in the new, interactive media and to respond to the challenge they present. In the longer term, however, the new media call for the re-integration of communication theory and thus a critical review of some fundamental lines of demarcation, assumptions and concepts. In other words, the only adequate response to convergence of the media is the convergence of media research traditions.

We see signs of such convergence in the recent and growing interest in applying theories developed in the field of interpersonal communication to mass media phenomena (cf. Gumpert & Cathcart 1986, i.a.), and in the growing interest in theories borrowed from the schools which grew up in reaction to Shannon's linear conception of communication, such as the circular and retroactive – and more complex – models proposed by Norbert Wiener (Bateson, Hall, Goffman)

Tomita's Grid and the 'Black Hole'

A second approach to visualizing current developments in the media is via 'Tomita's grid' (Tomita 1980). The media may be conceived of as attempts to conquer differences in time and space. Japanese communication researcher Tetsuro Tomita consequently localized the various media in a time-space grid. Here, time represents the time it takes for the sender's message to reach the receiver, and space represents the number of receivers the message can reach. Individual media will occupy a significant

part of this time-space grid, which says something about the special nature of the medium, its communicative function, content, and so forth.[3]

Tomita's grid revealed a 'media gap', an area where it has been impossible to communicate. A sort of 'black hole' in the communication universe, which had not previously been visible. Many of the new, computer-based media and computer networks – at the time of Tomita's article: e-mail, bulletin boards, databases; today also: Internet, intranets and www – fill this 'gap'. These media grow out of the grassroots. Tomita takes their current popularity and vigorous growth as a sign of the need for these modes of communication, a need conventional media have been unable to fulfill.

Meanwhile, most of these media are more flexible along the time dimension as well as the space dimension (the number of users). A bulletin board is almost instantaneously accessible, and, in contrast to broadcast media, it does not presume the coincidence in time of sender and receiver, but has a more lasting character. Media like this fill the grid's entire time (vertical) axis. Turning to the spatial dimension, a database can be accessible to one user (the person setting it up) or to, in principle, everyone on the planet. Thus, media like this can fill the entire spatial (horizontal) axis.

Thus, new, computer-based, digital media occupy not only the 'black hole', but in fact the entire time-space grid. Like a new gravitational field, the new media draw the entire grid to them; the grid implodes or explodes and tend to render dimensions like time and space irrelevant to the communication process.

Media Typology and Information Traffic Patterns

A third way to describe developments in the media is in terms of control or power. Bordewijk and Kaam have elaborated a matrix or typology where the variables are not time and space, but the power-relations represented in the communication. They ask two questions: Who produces and owns the information, and who controls its distribution in terms of time and selection. By cross-tabulating these two aspects in relation to whether ownership and selection are performed by a centralized information source or by a decentralized information user, Bordewijk and Kaam arrive at a four-field matrix of fundamentally distinct media or patterns of communication.

1) If the information is produced and owned by a central provider which also controls its distribution, we are dealing with a pattern of communication which Bordewijk and Kaam term transmission. It is one-way communication, where the principal mode of use is relatively passive reception. Typical of this category are the classic broadcast media. This is the habitat of the Mediasaurus.

2) If the information is produced and owned by a central provider, but control over what is distributed and when lies in the hands of the user, we have a pattern of communication known as consultation. Here, the user of the information sends a request or order to the center, whereupon the desired information is delivered. The characteristic mode of behavior on the part of the user is active choice among several alternatives. Typical of this field are various forms of on-demand services, on-line information resources, browsing, input to the medium to control or influence the course, content and duration of the media text, etc.

3) If the information is produced and controlled by the users, and control over distribution is also controlled by the users, we have a pattern which Bordewijk and Kaam term conversation. Here it is a matter of conventional two-way communication, dialogue, or mediated interpersonal communication (one-to-one, few-to-few) where a significant user mode is production of messages, and input in a dialogic structure. Typical examples are the telephone, e-mail, etc.

4) Finally, if information is produced by the user, but processing and use of the information is centrally controlled, we have a pattern termed registration. In this case a central body collects information from or about the users, and the characteristic mode is storage, processing and exploitation of the data about the users. One might call it a many-to-one pattern. Typical examples here are various kinds of monitoring and registration systems, but also various kinds of individual adaptation of media in the form of programmable software agents, intelligent interfaces, personalized and customized services, and so forth.

Of these four categories, only transmissions are characterized by one-way communication flows from an information central to users, that is to say,

only transmission lacks a return or feedback channel which allows input from users into the system. Up to the present, the vast majority of studies of communication and media have derived their models and insights from the transmission pattern and only to a lesser degree – and particularly in the field of interpersonal communication – from the conversation pattern. The other two patterns have been virtually ignored in communication research to date, as are combinations of the various patterns. (See the discussion of 'push-pull' media, below.)

When we consider current developments in the media sector as are related to digitization, telematics, computers, computer networks, etc., within the framework of this two-dimensional matrix, they may best be described as a shift away from the upper right-hand corner toward the other positions, i.e., from traditional transmitting patterns toward primarily consultative patterns, but conversational and registering patterns, as well[4] – not to mention the various combinations of these kinds of communication. This also implies a general shift away from highly asymmetrical, centralistic power structures in the direction of greater symmetry in, or wider distribution of power. In many ways these new media, which make various forms of input and information flows from the users to the system possible, represent the opposite of the Mediasauruses and the reasoning about mass communication and do not lend themselves to description in terms of one-way communication models and the terminology such models have generated. Seen in this perspective, one may advance the argument that existing media theory is becoming less and less able to grasp and explain current media phenomena. Or, conversely, one may argue that the new media constitute a looming challenge to traditional media and communication research – a challenge which calls for a thorough re-examination of our central models and concepts.

'Push-Pull' Media

The new media not only represent a shift in information traffic patterns, they also meannew combinations and convergences of familiar patterns. In recent years the new kinds of media have frequently been described in terms of the buzzwords, 'push media' and 'pull media'.

Kelly et al. (1997) describe 'push media', typical examples of which are radio, television and film, as follows: "Content is pushed to you. ... Push media arriveautomatically – on your desktop, in your email, via your pager. ... The distinguishing characteristic of the new push media is that it finds you, rather than you finding it" (14ff, 23). 'Pull media', on the other hand, get their name from "the invitational pull you make when you click on the Web" (14). In other words, pull media are media that you (interactively) steer; they correspond in many respects to what Bordewijk and Kaam call 'consultative' media.

Up to now, most of the new media – offered via 'the Net' (e.g., www) – have had the character of 'networked pull media' but in time, Kelly et al. Predict, these will be supplanted by 'networked push media'. The Web, as we know it today, is fading away and will be replaced by new point-to-point media. Under the heading, "The radical future of media beyond the Web" they write:"... a new medium is arising, surging across the Web in the preferred, many-to-many way: anything flows from anyone to anyone – from anywhere to anywhere – anytime. In other words, a true network like the telephone system, rather than a radiating system like radio or TV. This new medium doesn't wait for clicks. ... It means personalized experiences not bound by a page. ... It means information that cascades, not just through a PC, but across all forms of communication devices.... And it means content that will not hesitate to find you - whether you've clicked on something recently or not. It means, in short, a more full-bodied experience that combines many of the traits of networks with those of broadcast" (Kelly et al. 1997:14).

Although these new networked push media may resemble broadcast media in some respects, the similarities are deceptive: Until now, broadcast networks had to be huge to be ubiquitous. Smaller ones were proprietary and fixed. Really small ones were called mailing lists or videoconferences. Networked media, on the other hand, can create broadcasting networks of any size and shape, especially the intermediate size between TV and, say, personal mailing lists. You can push-pull broadcast to llama keepers or home schoolers, reconfiguring the shape of the network on the fly. Until now, the Net has been a place of pull-laden networks; now it will also be a Net of push-laden networks, a world of nichecasting – thousands of mini-networks, ranging from micro-TV stations to totally customized personal programming (Ibid.:21).

But perhaps the most characteristic media form will be hybrids, 'push-pull' media which allow you to "move seamlessly between media you steer (interactive) and media that steer you (passive)" (Ibid.:12). As we move into what Kelly et al. term "the post-HTML environment", the promise of

push-pull media is this:...to marry the programmed experience of television with two key yearnings: navigating information and experience, and connecting to other people. With networked media you get TV's high production values along with the intense communal experience of watching something together – virtual communities. You also get the ability to address small self-organizing audiences that broadcast could never afford to find. And you get well-crafted stories seamlessly integrated into other media, such as on-line conversations. This heightened ability to extract meaning, experience, or community – rare with content pushed by broadcast – is almost the rule with content pushed on a network (Ibid.:18)

Networked media, Kelly et al. predict – totally consonant with Tomita – will fill the entire media continuum, taking us "one more step toward closing the gaps between existing media, toward one seamless media continuum, viewable in an infinite number of ingenious ways" (Ibid.:21f).

Post-Mediasaurus Communication Concepts

A fifth approach to the new media situation is to look at the key models and concepts applied by mass communication researchers. Here one particular model stands out. It is particularly suited to the mass media, especially through its stress on the linear character of communication, conceiving of communication as a form of transport, involving active senders and passive receivers, etc. The model is one of the most harshly criticized, yet one of the most persistent. I am, of course, referring to the model of communication proposed by Claude Shannon – the dinosaur among models of communication.

Shannon's model and theory have been criticized so long by so many that there is little one can say that hasn't been said many times before. There is little use spending one's breath on the subject. But I shall review some of the key concepts in Shannon's theory which, while they may have been adequate in relation to traditional mass media, have proven less well suited to the new media.

Take, for example, the concept of 'medium'. Earlier, it was possible to consider a technical apparatus, a communication service and the relevant sender institutions as a more or less unified entity, a 'medium' – e.g., the medium of television. Now, thanks to convergence, several different apparatuses are able to perform the same tasks. You can receive facsimile messages via fax-machines, computers and telephones. You can receive newspapers in hard copy, via teletext and via Internet. You can listen to the radio through a radio receiver, via cable-TV and via the Net. Conversely, any given apparatus can serve multiple functions: e.g., the computer as both word processor, digital communicator and television receiver. Television sets serve as terminals for TV programming, teletext services, radio programs, video games, e-mail and surfing the Web. At once melding and differentiating communication functions – convergence and divergence.

The Concept of Media

Medium – technical	Communication structure
Medium – as a service	Media use
Sender	Organizing participants
Receiver (viewers, listeners readers)	User (participant)
	...
Feedback (feedforward)	Interactivity
Information transport	'Compunication'
...	Electronically mediated communication space
...	
Noice	User's request
Text	Process

What, then, is left of the concept of the medium? And in what sense is it meaningful to speak of a computer as a medium? A radio? Television? Clearly, we can no longer use the concept with the same confidence and clarity as we once did. Nor can we call ourselves television researchers, computer researchers, press researchers, and so forth, as unambiguously as before. It may even be necessary to abandon the terminology which is based on mass media, and which bears the prejudices of that perspective, altogether. Perhaps, as Lutz Goertz (1995) proposes, we might in the case of 'medium' as hardware or technology use 'communication structure', and in place of 'medium' as a service use 'media use', defined as a product of the final receiver apparatus.

Shannon's model and terminology had their starting point in a transportation metaphor, the conveyance of information, and communication could be conceived of as a relatively symmetrical process, where encoding and decoding were believed to be identical, albeit reversed, operations. Attention was therefore often focused on the perfect transfer from sender to receiver. The new, digital media are able not only to carry information, but to process, manipulate and revise the data transferred, as well. Consequently, the process is not necessarily symmetrical. The user's text may, after processing (and interactivity) differ from the sender's text. And the

most interesting aspect is often the ways in which the user actually creates text in his or her use or reading. It may be expressed in hypertext and hypermedia, where the user is accorded a major influence over the media text which arises in the act of media use. The user may, with the help of bits-about-bits decide how the data received shall be presented: as text, sound, images, video or 3D graphics – in any number of ways, which the sender cannot know, let alone control. Or, it may be that the message, rather than a fixed message, takes the form of a world to be explored relatively independent of the assumptions and intentions the 'sender' may have had.[5] In other words, on thisplane the convergence of technologies results in a new divergence between sender, media text and receiver. The classic model no longer – or only partly – captures these aspects. In Shannon's model the term 'noise' was used as a catch-all for anything that interfered with or modified the message as transmitted. In this sense, the new, digital, interactive media are extremely 'noisy'. But the concept has only limited relevance to what is actually at play.

The conception of communication as 'information transport' needs to be replaced with a model which sees communication as both transfer and processing. Anthony Oettinger coined the term compunication to cover the linkage between communication and information. Fredrich Kortz proposes that the notion of communication as information transfer be replaced by a notion that takes its point of departure in the user and conceives of communication as an electronically mediated communication space.

Many other key concepts relating to communication are equally in need of review and revision. In some extreme cases in the new media, the party which in traditional models is more or less simply referred to as the 'sender' does not produce any messages, but only controls the technical process of communication, as in the case of bulletin boards, video-on-demand or web servers. Such a party might – as suggested by Goertz – more aptly be termed 'organizing participants'. The parties which in traditional models are referred to as 'viewers', 'listeners', 'readers', each referring to a specific form of information, or 'receivers', 'recipients', 'consumers' or 'the audience', all referring to relative passive practices, might be called something that is neutral with respect to form and stresses the active, participatory nature of communication: e.g., 'users' or 'participants'. Among other things, because the notion of using the medium, of participating actively in the communication process, to produce or provide information, and to create networks for the exchange of information is central in the case of new media.[6] The parallel between the twoterms, 'participant' and 'organizing participant' underlines the fact that, theoretically speaking, the two parties may be regarded as operating on the same level.

As the 'sender' and 'receiver' concepts are replaced, the 'sender apparatus' and 'receiving apparatus' must also change inasmuch as the 'intelligence' in new communication systems to a greater or lesser extent has shifted from the act of encoding to the process of decoding. The shift may, for example, mean that the receiving apparatus takes over some routine operations from the receiver, that decoding increasingly becomes adaptive or responsive to the user's needs, desires or previous behavior, that the receiving apparatus may be used to ask for or seek information, etc. Thus, concepts like sender apparatus/receiving apparatus, and encoder/decoder, too, must also be reviewed and reformulated.

The concept of 'feedback', which in traditional models referred to the receiver's response and reply to the sender's transmissions, covers only a minor portion of the information traffic involved in new media and media systems, featuring information-return systems or two-way communication, which allow users to request (on demand) specific content or to contribute their own input into the media system in the form of participation or dialogic communication. Therefore, an attempt has been made to introduce the concept of 'feedforward' to cover the circumstance that the process begins with the user's request for specified content, which the medium then delivers. Still, the concept does not adequately describe the key aspect of the process, and it is clearly more meaningful to talk about interactivity, (mediated) interaction or dialogue than about feedback or feedforward.[7]

The same applies to many other concepts in communication research, which are derived from or consonant with the mass communication model: gatekeeper, two-step flow models, studies of media effects, quantitative content analysis, etc. Here, as in many other respects, the mass media terminology and model have proved deficient. The concepts which may have been adequate in relation to central features of the old mass media fail to capture significant features of the new media, and they can no longer be used with the confidence they once inspired. The new mini-media and network media are not only the signal for the old mass me-

dia to bow out; they also sound the retreat for the dinosaurs of communication models. It is high time we coined new concepts which are better suited to describe the new landscape.

Post-Mediasaurus Media Research

In addition to these basic concepts there are numerous more specific areas and problem complexes which require attention in the post-mediasaurus era. In the following I shall no more than outline a handful of them and raise some questions for further discussion.

Interactivity

One of the most central and significant features of the new media is their interactive character, the fact that in addition to conventional media output to the user, the new media can allow various amounts and kinds of input from the user to the medium or media system, which can significantly influence the form, order, length, structure of the message, i.e., the content of the media text.

Although this interactive potential is widely recognized, and despite the fact that 'interactivity' has been the subject of a considerable amount of 'hype' and media attention, it has received remarkably little attention within the research community and remains poorly defined (cf. Jensen 1998b, 1998c). The field of media and communication research still lacks a comprehensive theory of the phenomenon, let alone a consensus definition of it. Interactivity is thus an area in need of theoretical and analytical work.

Questions that need to be answered are: How should interactivity be conceptualized? How should we conceive of the interactive user? What are the implications of interactivity for the content which can be presented? What is novel, entertaining, informative about interactivity? That is, what is its appeal? Do users want to 'interact'?

Content

The interactive aspect raises a number of questions having to do with the technology, but it also raises questions relating to content. And these are, as always, more interesting. On the one hand, content in the new media is not expected to be radically different from the content of old media. The world in the digital, interactive era is – in the words of Peter Gruber of Sony Pictures Entertainment – "still a talent-driven, story-driven, melody-driven world".[8] Bran Faren of Disney Imagineering concurs: "Technologies are changing, but people are not. ... What it takes to touch their hearts has remained constant for thousands of years." And so does John Lasseter: "...flashy f/x may get people into the theater, but the essentials – plot and character development – are what keep them in their seats."

This suggests another possible reading of Michael Crichton's "Today's mass media is tomorrow's fossil fuel". Content, like fossil fuels, is becoming a finite, even a scarce resource. Given insatiable digital storage media and equally insatiable broadband distribution systems, it has become difficult to muster enough content to fill media capacity. We are reminded of Springsteen's "57 channels (and nothin' on)". The media of tomorrow will therefore to a considerable extent have to make do with yesterday's content, with fuel aggregated in the age of the mediasaurus – in repackaged, recycled, and 'reprise' editions.[9]

On the other hand, interactivity and the new convergence of computers and content will naturally change the premises for how content can be made available and for the kinds of content that can be made available. The question then arises: What will digitization, convergence, interactivity, etc., mean with respect to the stories that will be told? to the modes of address and aesthetic principles used? to the services offered? to the experiences shared? and to the sensations that can be simulated? What, exactly, does the novelty of interactive programs, services and content consist of?

In many respects content is the least developed, least explored aspect of the new media. New forms of expression, new products, formats, genres and services will, of course, evolve. When the PC was first introduced, the spread sheet was about the only application envisaged. But once the technology was in place, applications proliferated at a previously unimagined pace. The same will surely occur in the case of digital, interactive media.

Another major question concerns how we should approach the new content analytically. Most content analysis approaches presume the existence of a text, fait accompli, with a beginning and an end and having fairly fixed, identifiable features. But how do you go about analyzing a media product which does not have a manifest text but, instead, a set of unrealized, potential texts – a virtual world which the individual user can explore at will? Or a set of data which the user can use in any number of ways, where, for example – as Nicholas Negroponte (1995:49) proposes – we can influence the degree of sex, violence or political correctness just as

we today can adjust the sound, color and contrast? In short: How do we analyze texts that diverge?

Media Culture

Another area where interactivity and the convergence of computers and media content havean impact is the media culture, and users' behavior. A media culture surrounding not one-way media and broadcasting, but interactive media and dialogic communication must reasonably be something different. At present we know next to nothing about interactive users and the culture of interactive use: search patterns, preferences, behavior, interpretations, gratifications.

Among other things, we might ask: Can 'interactivity' enhance the tremendous cultural and commercial success that traditional media already have achieved? Or, phrased in more commercial terms: Does the average viewer or consumer want interactive media and interactive services? And, if so, what are they willing to pay for them?

The Media History of New Media

The access of media historians to media as they appear on the scene is vital to an understanding of the media in question. New media are presently surrounded by an extreme degree of historical amnesia. The reasons are several.

For one thing, according to the cultural logic of the media, the interesting, legitimate and prestige-laden objects of study are novelties. The instant version 4.1 is out on the market, interest in its predecessor, 4.0, is 'out'. Secondly, it is a consequence of the commercial logic of the manner in which new technologies are developed and launched. Most R&D projects are privately financed. If they are successes, efforts are made to keep them secret from their competitors. If, on the other hand, they are failures, they are kept secret from shareholders and investors. In either case, data are not readily available to students of the media, and the results, lessons learned, etc., are not documented. Finally, there are the requirements of publicity, the financial basis, and commercial success, which mean that every new product is touted as something truly revolutionary. Every little improvement and modification of existing technology and every new combination of existing technologies is introduced as something radically new and different. That is why 'the birth' of interactive television has been proclaimed again and again this past decade. All these factors work against the development of historical consciousness.

A Broader Field

Even if the mass media may be on the verge of extinction, one may – even without resorting to the more speculative branches of 'futurism' – confidently conclude that communication and media, as objects of study, them.

A steadily increasing share of modern-day reality takes place in mediated form. And with the new, digital, interactive media the mediated world takes yet another evolutionary quantum leap. Many activities which today require physical presence and take place face-to-face – shopping, bank transactions, marketing, teaching, social services, health services, games, etc. – have become mediated activities via interactive television, full-service networks, wireless technologies, integrated multimedia services in the home, and so forth.Speaking of telematics and 'push media', Kelly et al. observe: "Push media will penetrate environments that have, in the past, been mediafree – work, school, church, the solitude of a country walk. Through cheap wireless technologies, push media are already colonizing the world's last quiet nooks and crannies. ... Media abhors a vacuum. It will colonize any vacant communication channel" (1997:17, 22).

But what happens when all these spheres of life become mediated? What does it mean when a good part of everyday life becomes an object of interest to communication research? Meanwhile, the media occupy a much more central place in the current transition to the so-called 'information society', in international industrial convergence, and in strategies relating to the interface between citizen and polity, producer and consumer, teacher and pupil, and so forth.

Thus, mass media researchers may be losing their objects of preference: the mastodon mediasauruses; at the same time, however, beyond the era of the mediasaurus a new, more expansive landscape – home of an abundance of smaller and medium-sized, convergent and divergent media creatures – is opening up.

Media Research – Tendencies

New information technology and new media, as phenomena and praxis, have attained widespread acceptance and support, approaching consensus.

But there is a stark contrast between this extraordinary aura of consensus and the mobilizing force which surrounds the expansion of the new media technologies, on the one hand, and the progress made in conceptualizing them – theoretical work which is characterized by confusion, uncertainty and hesitation.

Surveying the current theoretical landscape, a number of new species or mutations present themselves:

- There is a tendency toward a growing share of administrative research which often has its origin in government or industrial planning and modernization policy and frequently takes the form of applied and policy research in the form of committee and consultant reports. This kind of research implies certain attitudes toward the production of knowledge and attaches conditions to it. Those who commission such research often presume that the studies will be conducted within the system, that is, that the system itself or its cultural, sociological and economic precepts and consequences will not be questioned. Thus, the prospects for generating theory are often poor, and free thinking is at a premium.
- Partly related to the foregoing: there appears to be a move away from theoretically oriented research toward more common sense-oriented studies with an emphasis on description, coupled with a fascination with data and the technological tools that produce them.
- The emergence of a new branch of journalism, 'IT-reporting', which, in the absence of media researchers, constitutes the primary frame of reference and source of knowledge about the new technologies – for members of the research community, as well. It has all the shortcomings of most journalistic products: a predilection for sensation and the novel, a short-term perspective, haste, superficiality, and a general lack of theoretical reflection. A discourse, in short, which is sometimes difficult to distinguish from pure PR and advertising.
- Finally, a tendency toward a technocratic point of view which naïvely equates democracy with technology and, lacking a definition of the former, concludes that more technology leads to greater democracy: that more interpersonal exchanges and more channels of communication will, in themselves, stimulate and promote democracy.

Naturally, these mutations – hardly a complete taxonomy – fall far short of telling us what we need to know and providing a theoretical framework in which to understand new media technology and what changes in the media landscape mean. Whether there is a relationship or congruence between the extinction of the mediasaurus, on the one hand, and the emergence of these new theoretical mutations – and the lack of critical theory which they result in – is, of course, a matter of speculation.

But, in this new media landscape, in these new circumstances, it would be very unfortunate if the critical theoretical reflection and understanding correspondingly turned out to be a 'theorysaurus' – fossil evidence of life-forms now extinct.

Notes

1. *Wired* puts it like this: "Their central mission is to shoot every conceivable media flavor across, through, in between, and around a network that includes every conceivable hardware device. In effect, they unify the mediascape, making it possible to send a video to a phone, to push an email to a dashboard, or insert your preferred colors and body size into a clothes ad" (1997:15).
2. Consider, for example, the title of the conference to which this paper was presented or the names of some of our research associations.
3. For example: mass audience = universal content; one-to-one communication = selective content, etc.
4. This change is consonant with broader cultural shifts in which mass markets are replaced by niche markets, mass distribution is replaced by segment-rationales and targeted marketing, traditional broadcasting is replaced by narrow-, niche- and pointcasting, etc. The convergence of media seems to be accompanied on a broad plane by a diversity of products, markets and (sub)cultures.
5. Negroponte writes, for example: "The medium is not the message in a digital world. It is an embodiment of it. A message might have several embodiments automatically derivable from the same data. In the future, the broadcaster will send out one stream of bits ... which can be converted by the receiver in many different ways. The same bits can be looked at by the viewer from many perspectives" (1995:71).

6. Recent years' shift toward greater interest in the receiver, and a corresponding subsidence in interest for the sender within the media research community – even if not addressing the new media – is thus consonant with the trends described here, which also lead to a greater emphasis on the user.
7. These proposed formulations are more than pinning new labels on old, familiar concepts; they represent concepts that have radical consequences for the entire conceptualization of the respective aspects of communication. Significantly, none of these new concepts refers to mass communication or interpersonal communication exclusively.
8. Quoted in *Newsweek*, 31 May 1993, p 37.
9. This is the motive behind the many acquisitions of media archives and other content caches that we see today.

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Technology as Cause of Change

Eli Skogerbø

Developments in information technology challenge the very intellectual foundations, theoretical and empirical, of media research. The convergence of technologies breaks down traditional distinctions between media and modes of communication (van Cuilenburg & Slaa 1993, Skogerbø 1997). These processes also give rise to the need for new orientations in research and a preparedness to cross over borders between previously separate research areas; a convergence between different areas of research, if you like.

My comments differ somewhat from others' approach to new technology and the consequences of technological advances. Whereas others primarily focus on actual changes in the technology, I am more interested in social and political change that parallel changes in technology. My interest in new information technology is due to the fact that technological advances, combined with economic and political forces, are among the principal forces of change in society and the polity today. No one interested in politics or society can ignore technological developments.

These prefatory remarks having been made, I should like to start out by questioning the premisses for this session, as reflected in the theme, *The New Media Landscape: Research on New Information technology*. This heading may be taken to imply that technological advances are the driving force behind changes in the media landscape. This is not necessarily wrong, but it is not a particularly sophisticated notion, and it smacks of a kind of technological determinism which I cannot subscribe to. The "new media landscape" is the result of much more than 'new' media and modes of communication like Internet and other digital and network-based communication.

Convergence and New Media as a Topic of Research

Dutch researchers Jan van Cuilenburg and Paul Slaa (1993) offer a definition of convergence which specifies the relationships between technological, political and economic change. They distinguish between network convergence, the convergence of services, and market convergence – only the first of which, strictly speaking, is a technological change. *Network convergence* refers to the changes in technology which make it possible for previously separate transmission networks to carry digitized messages of any kind, e.g., the ability of telecommunications networks to carry pictures and text. *The convergence of services* refers to the melding of different media and the emergence of entirely new media as a result of network convergence and digitization. Examples of this kind of convergence include various forms of electronic publishing, e.g., newspapers via Internet. *Market convergence*, finally, refers to an economic process: economic sectors and branches which, up to now, have been fairly independent of one another, come to overlap (e.g., telecommunications and broadcasting). This type of convergence is due in part to new technology, but it is also a consequence of the liberalization of previously closed markets and the internationalization of the economy and policy.

The three convergences have different consequences for cultural and media policy. Network convergence dissolves regulatory distinctions be-

tween different modes of distribution and will probably do away with the scarcity of distribution channels which was the prime raison dêtre not only of broadcasting monopolies but also of the concessionary systems which all the Nordic countries have maintained.

The convergence of services takes away yet other arguments for regulating the respective audiovisual services differently; it is also one of the main reasons copyright regulation has come under heavy pressure. Market convergence has also caused considerable concern on the national level: concentration, cross-ownership and the formation of alliances create multinational conglomerates which control the production of content, consumer hardware and distribution technology.

Research on 'the new media landscape' cannot focus primarily, let alone exclusively, on information technology. Changes in ownership, markets, media structures, media institutions, programme content, audience response and other phenomena which can be observed on national and international levels have to be explained in terms of more factors than information technology alone.

Technology, State and Market

My research project on changes in media policy and media structure in the small states of Europe takes its point of departure in the proposition that technology is one of several driving forces.[1] The project focuses on changes in three countries: Norway, Denmark and The Netherlands. All are under the same kind of pressure from external factors, which affect the premisses for policy: *the convergence of telecommunications, computer networks, broadcasting and publishing technologies; internationalization/globalization of the economy and markets, and Europeanization of political authority.* These processes contribute, individually and together, to limit the autonomy and freedom of manoeuvre of the nation-states vis-à-vis the environment.

The main focus of the project is on how and in which direction media policy is changing in different states, with special attention to how services to the public are maintained or changed with respect to such factors as accessibility of infrastructure and uniformity and standard of quality of output. What happens when the playing field of media policy is altered and new players come into the game? To what extent do national systems become more similar? What power do various interests command, and how are changes motivated and accorded legitimacy? These questions are explored empirically by means of material gathered from documents held by private and public organizations and institutions, and through interviews with representatives of the interests concerned.

Thus, the processes of technological change are not the prime focus in my research. To the extent that one factor can be isolated it is the role technology plays in relation to other driving forces that is studied. So far, the project has yielded two insights that are particularly relevant in relation to the issues discussed here: The first concerns *the expansion of the empirical field*, and the other has to do with the *theoretical challenge* that follows from the transcendence of established boundaries between disciplines, each with its own dominant normative and theoretical perspectives.

The convergence of information technology, telecommunications, broadcasting and publishing technologies is the starting point of the study; as a consequence, its empirical scope is broader than generally is the case in traditional media research. The differentiation of the media landscape is not the only reason for this. Of at least equal importance is the fact that entirely new interests and actors – each a source of data, norms and assumptions – have come on the scene. Among these new players are individuals, organizations and political forces which have something to gain by influencing the formulation of policy in the areas of information technology, telecommunications and traditional mass media.

This broadening of the empirical field is not without its difficulties, however. Analyses clearly demonstrate that network convergence may be described and operationalized in terms of the development of new kinds of media. Social, economic and political structures, on the other hand, are not so easily grasped in these terms inasmuch as markets and branches continue to be separate entities, despite the fact that networks and services converge. One important distinction between the telecommunications and broadcasting sectors is, for example, that they are regulated according to radically different regimes. In the Nordic countries, telecommunications is a regulatory sector unto its own, and it is currently undergoing comprehensive liberalization. Radio and television, on the other hand, are regulated via concessions and other instruments of control over the right to transmit as well as through regulation of content (language codes, advertising, types of programmes, etc.) Throughout western Europe only a limited amount of competition among relatively few broadcasters is permit-

ted. In other words: whereas the market is successively supplanting regulatory mechanisms in the telecommunications sector, the process is not occurring to anywhere near the same degree in broadcasting.

In the three countries in my study, for example, traditional media policy is the responsibility of the ministries of culture, whereas the 'new media' sort under the heading of 'telecommunications services'. This means that the data have to be collected from many different sources, not only from a wide range of organizations and institutions, but also from spheres of policy having quite different logics: cultural policy, communication (infrastructure) and transport, industrial policy, the labour market, etc. The same goes for non-governmental actors: Even if we have many examples of technological convergence leading to transcendence of traditional sectoral boundaries, representatives of the interests involved do not always view the processes from the same perspective.

The Problematics of a Multidisciplinary Approach

The greatest challenge in the study of the significance and ramifications of convergence lies on the theoretical plane, however, inasmuch as it involves a meeting of widely differing theoretical traditions. Media research, with its roots in humanistic and social science theory, has been dominated by more or less critical perspectives on the role of the media in society. The media have been perceived primarily as cultural institutions which play central roles in democracy and society at large, and only to a lesser extent as economic entities and members of an industrial sector or branch. To the extent the branch perspective has been applied it has often had a negative valence: e.g., criticism of commercialization, concentration of ownership and other undesirable and non-intentional consequences of technical or political developments.

Much of the literature which treats structure, policy and politics in the areas of telecommunication and information technology has quite different points of departure. With some exceptions, the non-technical literature on telecommunications is dominated by neo-liberal economic perspectives. This relatively new field of research has its origins in the fields of Business and the Law. Analyses of companies, market structures and competition are focal and the basic assumption is that this is a new industry, not particularly different from other branches. Thus, the former telecommunications monopoly is described as the result of 'natural monopoly' or of government intervention in the market rather than as institutions which have been, and are, producers of public services, i.e., utilities.

This literature generally regards themes like democracy and equality and, not least, cultural political issues as irrelevant, or as problems which have to be solved by other means than sector-specific regulation. A cardinal example of this kind of thinking is the following quote from a report on convergence commissioned by the European Commission to provide background for new legislation on the joint media and telecommunications sector:

> It could be argued that nationally based broadcasting legislation as a whole is concerned with "cultural aspects" or identity and accordingly should not be affected by other provisions of the Treaty at a European level. It is our view that this argument is not valid. The proviso for cultural identity may be applicable to certain regulation concerning the programme content of broadcasting services as they relate directly to culture. Such arguments should not be used, however, to prevent the harmonisation of relevant legislation at a European level relating to other aspects of traditional broadcasting regulation including the procedures for licensing, restricting business activities or the right to operate differing methods of distribution. ...(KPMG Consulting 1996:156).

KPMG rejects the notion that there can be cultural policy considerations pertaining to anything but programme content, an interpretation which is very restrictive, viewed in the light of Nordic regulatory tradition. Once again, we find a tendency toward technological determinism and in a form with a strong political charge: KPMG argues that convergence has *inevitable* political consequences, viz., the dissolution of existing regulatory regimes and total liberalization. That this line of argumentation is persuasive in political circles is clear in the following statement a Norwegian politician made in conjunction with a change in Norwegian telecommunications policy in 1996:

> Technological development has shattered the framework for telecom policy. Reality itself has broken the monopoly.[2]

The notion of *inevitability*, which has also influenced many in the media research community, glosses over power relationships and conflicts,

when in fact it is quite uncertain how technological convergence will affect markets, consumption patterns and society at large. Technology is an ingredient in power struggles, both domestic and international – a fact which is ignored when the focus remains trained on technological developments. Consider, for example, the differences in the views expressed by representatives of different actors in the media market.

It is a well-known fact that major shares of the information and communications industry are determined that the regulation of new services that emerge in the interface between telecommunication, broadcasting, and computer networks should be kept to a minimum. In a recent comparative study of Norway and Denmark, which included spokespersons in government, different categories of users, trade unions and industry, not a single person among those interviewed in Denmark (in 1995/96) opposed liberalization of the telecom sector (Storsul 1997). In Norway the picture was almost as clear. Nonetheless, there is quite an array of views among actors occupying different positions in the market place regarding the need for regulation. Among the representatives for large actors with a dominant position in the market, the prevailing view is that media and telecommunications are converging and that the emerging multimedia market neither should nor can be regulated by political authorities.

Similar views are heard among the representatives major software producers, and among other companies which occupy dominant positions in their respective markets. The picture changes, however, if we move from the majors to representatives for smaller, non-dominant actors with limited influence on the market. Here we find a solid opinion in favour of market regulation to ensure that the major players do not become too powerful so that they can dictate terms. This latter view is shared by representatives of various user and consumer groups, as well.

Thus, none of the actors considers political regulation irrelevant, but they differ widely as to the kind of regulation they would like to see. It is remarkable that those who have the most to lose, should the media sector continue to be tightly regulated, are working to make the regulatory regime as little restrictive as possible. These are the same actors from whom one most often hears claims regarding the inevitability of the consequences of technology.

What Media Research Can Contribute

It is here that we should return to the question of the challenges research on new information technology pose to the media research community. Several writers have argued that the confrontation with a new media landscape has thrust the field into crisis, that we stand empty-handed, with neither methods nor theories to meet the challenge.[3]

I, taking the same starting point, would like to advance a different view: Media research is always in a state of crisis – as any number of articles and debates bear witness to. Crisis is a standard feature of the field, and the interdisciplinary character of the field is the cause. The interdisciplinary character obviously gives rise to frustration over the lack of 'grand theories' and holistic approaches, but also to renewal and debate, not least with respect to the question of the importance of technology for social and political change. This is one of the classic themes in social science and mass media research which periodically comes to the fore with renewed force, whenever a new communication technology achieves a certain breadth of penetration.

There is an abundance of historical literature on the subject of the role of media and communication in contexts of social change. Particularly the question of whether technology has a liberating potential or, on the contrary, gives rise to alienation, impotence and social inequality has generated many a printed page (Marx 1970/1856-46, Brecht 1983/1927, Habermas 1989/1962, Enzensberger 1972, Williams 1975, among others). Many of these writers are still relatively little known outside the media research community. As members of that community we are quite well equipped to analyze developments in the media in that we have theories and tools with which to distinguish between, say, technological determinism and pluralism of interpretation.

Many of the works cited above are still in currency, and it is no coincidence that Marx, Innis (1951) and McLuhan (1987/1964) are all experiencing a revival of sorts. Over the last few years a number of writers have discussed the relevance of classic, more general social theory to an understanding of the 'information society', interactivity and how people relate to machines, the 'man-machine interface' (Bakke & Julsrud 1996; Rasmussen 1995, 1996; Webster 1995, i.a.). This is not to say that we can expect to develop a unified, cohesive body of theory, but that media studies have perhaps come to the point that we can make independ-

ent contributions to an understanding of social change. This was an explicitly stated goal when my department in Oslo, the Department of Media and Communication, was created in 1987. Perhaps the time has come, when to realize that ambition?

Greater collaboration between disciplines, which is so often urged, will not in itself solve the problem of understanding the information society. Even if I, myself, follow an interdisciplinary approach and urge others to do likewise, my own research shows that interdisciplinary studies can sometimes widen the gaps between different approaches, not close them. When critically oriented media research meets neo-liberal telecommunications research, it is perhaps only natural that not only pluralism of perspectives, but the level of conflict, too, increases. When media researchers apply their theories and perspectives to converging sectors, we contribute to the development of a field on our own terms. In a field of inquiry dominated by market analysis to date, perhaps it is by maintaining our critical perspectives that we make our most important contribution.

The Tension Between the Continuity and Change

My last reflection on the study of new media has to do with the tension between continuity and change, which I perceive to be a constitutive feature of developments in the media sector. Forn"s has, for example, pointed out that all media are in a sense interactive and virtual (Fornäs 1997:14), and my own research on changes in national media structures and media policies show that historical institutional organizations to some extent govern the course of change (Skogerbø 1996, Skogerbø & Storsul 1998). It is therefore an equally important challenge to media researchers to adapt 'old' theories and models for application to new fields of research as it is to develop entirely new theories on the transition into the information society.

Let me illustrate the point with a literary example: In her biography of Nora Barnacle, James Joyce's life-long companion and wife, Brenda Maddox (1988) describes the relationship between the two as very communicative, particularly in the early days of their relationship in Dublin in the summer of 1904.[4] Since both Joyce and Barnacle had to be at their respective workplaces during the day, they communicated by letter. But their correspondence was not like the letters we write today; it consisted of hastily written notes – often no more than a few lines – which criss-crossed Dublin in both directions several times a day. This was possible as the postal service in 1904 delivered mail in the city five times a day. In terms of stylistics (sentence structure, grammar and diction), too, the letters were oral and direct, with faulty grammar and orthography. Although unlike the letters we write and receive today, they call to mind another, 'new' mode of communication, namely, electronic mail. Nora and James used paper and a postman whereas we use keyboards and an electronic network; otherwise, the points of resemblance are clear: form, frequency, content, and function.

This famous correspondence from the turn of the century is a good reminder that technology does not necessarily explain cultural phenomena. If we are to try to understand what lies behind the special verbal stylistics that these letters and e-mail some ninety years later have in common, should we ascribe it to the computer, to the number of rounds Irish postmen walk, or to entirely different factors?[5] I leave the answer to this question to text analysts, but I would simply emphasize that the continuity and tensions between the old and the new are central features of mass media, whether we are concerned with content or structure. It will be impossible to understand and interpret these phenomena without the help of existing methods and theories.

We should not forget that there are obvious differences between the Barnacle-Joyce correspondence from 1904 and electronic mail of 1998. Whereas e-mail, as is often pointed out, breaks the bounds of time and space, allowing us to send and receive messages over vast distances in seconds, irrespective of time zones and 'banking hours', Nora and James were limited to the confines of their city, Dublin, and could only communicate when the postman walked his rounds. Nonetheless, the example, with all its limitations, invites reflection as to the nature of technological change and what scientific approaches may be fruitful.

It also raises the question of accessibility, of the distribution of communicative resources. Nora Barnacle and James Joyce were both poor, members of Dublin's working class, in a time when the whole of Ireland was poor – a time of mass emigration and razor-sharp class and gender distinctions. Still, both had access to the postal system, a disribution system which afforded them nearly continuous contact. Of course, it cost a bit to send a letter, but on the whole the postal service must have been inexpensive, efficient and widely accessible. Viewed in relation to the costs associated with owning a computer and subscribing to Internet – or, possibly, having free access through one's

workplace or school – the Irish postal service must have been more egalitarian in the sense of levelling social differences than the new electronic means of distribution have been to date. Whether the postal service may for that reason represent a greater force for social change than Internet is an open question.

The argumentation and illustrative examples offered here do not lead to any unequivocal conclusion, but point to ambiguous and diffuse aspects of meaning and content in today's evolutionary phase of the information society. This is where media research has its forte; our access to History and Media History provides us with a variety of sources which can help us interpret and explain how society is changing.

Notes

1. The project is part of a Norwegian research programme on the Europeanization of the nation state, 'ARENA'.
2. Inge Myrvoll (The Socialist Left Party) interviewed in *Klassekampen*, 20.6.1996.
3. Cf. Jostein Gripsrud's and Ullamaija Kivikuru's contributions to this volume.
4. Joyce later immortalized the date of their first rendezvous, 16th June (Bloom's Day), in Ulysses.
5. Both the letters from 1904 and e-mail of the 1990s have influenced language and literature. James Joyce probably drew on his correspondencewith Nora when he experimented stylistically in Ulysses and Finnegans Wake (Maddox 1994), whereas contemporary writers experiment with computer and networking styles. An entertaining example of the latter is Douglas Coupland's Microserfs from 1995.

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Media Culture and Communicative Competence in Europe

TAPIO VARIS

Such a thing as *Europe* hardly exists if we think of the existence of pan-European media. There are many contradictory trends in the process of European integration such as increasing regionalism and diversity of ethnic, linguistic and cultural identities. Europe, if it is to exist, is composed of many cultures and diversities.

According to *The New York Times* (20.1.1997) Finland has more Internet servers per 1 000 inhabitants than any other country. Currently there are approximately 64 servers per 1 000 inhabitants in Finland, while Iceland has 44, Norway 41 and the United States "only" 35. The Finns also have more cellular telephones per capita than any other people in the world. Currently, there are 1,7 million mobile phones in the country which means that every third person in Finland carries one. Most of the users are young people of the age 18-25 (*Helsingin Sanomat* 4 July, 1997).

No wonder that the *ABCNEWS* morning broadcast from Finland on May 15, 1997, stated that per capita, Finland is the most wired nation in the world. Most of its 5 million inhabitants have Internet access, and cellular phones are as ubiquitious as snow in this country:

> While the rest of the world is still trying to figure out how to install a modem to get Internet access, Finland is plugged in. The country is twice as wired as the U.S. and virtually every school in Finland's capital, Helsinki, is on the Net. Schools in the rest of the country should be wired by 2000.

Currently, approximately 76% of the schools of the whole country are wired. Communication competence and media literacy, or media education in general, are now high in the Finnish and European policies of promoting the idea of an information society. The educational priorities were also emphasized by President Clinton in his State of the Nation address in 1997.

Historically the European approach towards media and communication studies has emphasized more sociology of knowledge than the American tradition of mass communication research. Originally the European approach emphasized the concept of knowledge as a historical process (Merton, Mannheim) while the Americans often tended to stress information as a fragmentary and isolated concept. Today these differences are no more as obvious although postmodern media studies, for example, have a different role in Europe than in America.

The concepts of "mass communication" and "mass culture" reflect the American school of thought while a more genuine European approach would use the concept of "social communication" (la comunicacion social) which implies more the idea of communication as something of "sharing" (see Breton & Proulx 1989) or the exchange of meanings between individuals through a common system of symbols (Ong 1996). Currently the Europeans use the concept of "information society" to refer to what the Americans call "national information infrastructure" (NII), and "national learning information initiative" (NLII), and their counterpart "global information infrastructure" (GII). Contrary to "communication", the concept of "information" does not of itself involve meaning. While the American approach has emphasized private initiative, the Europeans have stressed public service. Today, the private initiative is aggressively being promoted everywhere by, for example, "liberalization" or deregulatization of communications while the public service approach is on the defence.

But even in Europe the traditions of communication have been very different in different parts of

the continent. The attitudes towards technology have also been diverse.

The early communication technology was based on rhetorics and related techniques. For the ancient Greeks technology (techne) meant more labor and skills that belonged to the salves while the free men concentrated on the spiritual ideas. The Romans, on the contrary, were more pragmatic and technology was combined with estehetics and harmony. The rhetoric skills were maintained in the Catholic Church and we can claim that the Roman empire and latin culture thereafter is truly a culture of communication.

Today, the term "skills" is seen too narrow and is being replaced by the term "competence". Philosophically the roots of "communicative competence" are developed by Jürgen Habermas who refers with this concept to the several means of using language to create concensus and agreement between two or more speaking and acting subjects. The attention is directed beyond the syntactical and grammatical rules of this or that language to the universal means in which speech is used to create and sustain social relationships. In a sense we are talking about universal skills of communication. We are born with the potential to use them to create a better society. Habermas presents an idea of the universal pragmatic features of speech-actions and hence also of communicative competence (Pusey 1987, p.73, 78).

A more pragmatic report to UNESCO by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century *Learning: The Treasure within* (1996) speaks of moving from "skill to competence":

> In industry, especially for machine operators and technicians, the ascendancy of knowledge and information as factors in production systems is making the idea of occupational skills obsolete and is bringing personal competence to the fore...
>
> ...if we add to those new demands the requirement for personal commitment on the part of the worker, regarded as an agent of change, it becomes clear that the highly subjective qualities, innate or acquired, that company heads often call 'life skills', combine with knowledge and know-how to make up competence required – which provides a good illustration of the link that education must maintain with the various aspects of learning...
>
> ...Among those qualities, the ability to communicate, work with others, and manage and resolve conflicts is becoming increasingly important. This trend is being accentuated by the development of service activities. (UNESCO 1996, p.89-90)

The concept of "communicative competence" or "media competence" is also used by the major European media conglomerates like Bertelsmann in their strategy as one of the key objectives in media culture. This German media giant which is almost equal to Time-Warner in size, emphasizes the role of the media and communication in the national economy in its basic document *Kommunikationsordnung 2000* (Communication order 2000, April 1997). This concept of "order" is another characteristic of a European approach to analyse world affairs, particularly in the German tradition.

There are several parallel trends that can characterize the media environment and public communication in Europe. One is the increasing effort to try to define what "Europeanness" really means, and the search for cultural and ethnic identities in a world of the global media. This is particularly characteristic for the smaller nations and language groups and observable in the Mediterranean countries as well as in the extreme North. Some major countries like France are anxious to maintain their linguistic and cultural dominance in the world.

It is very difficult to characterize our time or give any name to the era that we are either living in or approaching to enter in. We name different eras such as the Antiquity, the Middle Ages and Modern Time as if there were a linear progress in some direction in world development. We have called the epochs with such names as "Reformation", "Enlightenment". "Modernity" or "Post-modernity." May be there is no return to any more "world order" but to analyse world disorder and chaos. However, a political economy approach could point out that there exists a certain world corporate order of transnational conglomerates.

Now, after the Cold War we do not know any more how our new age should be called or what name should this post-everything era be given. The German magazine *Der Spiegel* wrote (No. 39, 1996) that we are witnessing a new industrial revolution: capitalism without fontiers. The worldwide struggle for jobs and salaries will change our lives radically. The national governments stand helpless while their businesses and enterpirzes look the world as a single one, global market. Is politics loosing its power, asks the journal.

Two experts in *Der Spiegel* note that this strengthening of what they call "turbo-capitalism"

is undermining the conditions of its own existence: the functionable state system and the democratic stability. We could add that it is the communication and information technology that is contributing essentially to these changes.

The rich counries of the world, the G7 group, has promoted for long two things. First, they have taken action to accelerate the so called full liberalisation of telecommunications infrastructure and services before the year 1998. And second, they have promoted global trade by opening up basic telecommunications services and infrastructures.

One of the consequences is the disappearance of national monopolies in telecommunications. They may continue in alliances with transnational giants. But less known is the possibility of replacing national monopolies with transnational oligopolies. The trade of world telecommunications is approximately 20% of the world trade.

An illustrative example is the 1996 deregulation of the United States communication industries which is launching a $ 1 trillion digital competition free-for-all. After 10 years of trying, the U.S. Congress finally passed a bill deregulating all segments of the communications industry. This means that from now on telephone companies, broadcasters, and cable operators are all free to enter each others' markets (*Business Week*, April 8, 1996). In Europe, the deregulation will become effective in 1998. These developments will change everything in the traditional media and communication businesses in the era of world-wide information infrastructures.

In the early 1990's the European Union (then European Community) had approximately 20% of the world market of telecommunications as compared with 35% for the United States and 11% for Japan. But no single EU Member State represented more than 6% of the world market share due to the monopolies of the national services.

The Americans speak of entertainment's new landscape. This is characterized by five trends. The first is globalization. As media companies search for growth, they are looking for overseas. All the three giant networks have extensive foreign assets and experience which can be used to build an audience for programming that can then be resold in growing markets overseas.

Deregulation, in turn, is making television networks more valuable by allowing them to own more local stations. The networks also may be able to operate several digital channels at each station they own.

The third dimension is technology. Direct broadcast and digital technology will create innumerable outlets for programming. But the giant networks, with their blanket coverage and core viewership, remain the most efficient way to distribute and promote the media.

The fourth trend deals with finances. The advertising market is booming. Stock prices are up, and the cost of dept is down.

Finally, there are new people in the business which brings the needed personal contributions to the business. (*Business Week*, August 14, 1995)

The European Audiovisual Observatory has studied the European audiovisual market in detail. According to them, the European audiovisual market in 1994, measured by taking the turnover of the 50 leading companies, enjoyed growth figures of 10,2%. (European Audiovisual Observatory 1994)

Currently, there is a strong increase in the number of television channels in Europe. As many as 98 new national or pan-European television channels were launched in Europe in 1995. This increase can be attributed to the development of the European satellite capacity, which gave rise to the first services offering digital technology in 1995.

The first digital programmes were offered to television viewers by the U.S. company DirectTV in 1994. In Europe, the beginning of the digital television was delayed by bottlenecks arising from a need to sort out cooperation patterns and make technical applications compatible with each other.

The French Canal Plus started digital transmissions in 1996, followed by the German Kirch, and Italian Telepiu. There are more than 40 different television transmission standards in use now.

Another factor affecting the European increase of television channels is the ongoing de-regulation which is also causing some confusion. The cable infrastructure is improving and is leading to the increase in consumer cable subsription.

Another important factor in the European television landscape is the recovery of television advertising which showed and increase of 14,7% between 1993 and 1994. Also the Pay-TV channels are developing fast.

The statistical data confirms, however, the market domination by the American programmes in Europe. American films are the main beneficiares of the admission recovery in cinema, but are also to a large extent responsible for it. Admissions for national films fell from 177 millions in 1985 to 89 millions in 1994, while the market share of the American films rose from 56% to 76% over the same period.

An analysis of 47 television channels shows that in 1994, as much as 53% of all films shown were American, as against 30% of national films and 23% of non-national European films. Over 68,8% of the fiction programmes (series, films made for television, cinema films) were of U.S. origin. (European Audiovisual Observatory 1994)

The percentage of European works in the television channels vary considerably. It should be remembered that the provisions of the European Directive *Television Without Frontiers* and the European Convention on cross-border television have included the aim of broadcasting a majority of European-made programmes. This has been regarded as the evidence of the future importance of the geographical origin of the programmes and of programmes purchased from independent producers.

European broadcasters are requested to reserve at least 10% of the transmission time, excluding the time appointed to news, sports, events games, advertising and teletext services, for European works created by producers who are independent of broadcasters.

For some time now we have been witnessing the growth of "infotainment", combination of information and entertainment, as well as "edutainment", a combination of education and entertainment. The genre of "entertainment" seems to have an almost unersal appeal in television programming. Opinion, information and commercial seem to be increasingly mixed.

The second trend has been targeting of the programming, segmentalization of the audience. The third trend has been the expansion of pay-tv, video-on-demand, etc (Varis 1996, p.14-18). The same observations have been made in Japan where a multi-media, multi-channel era in television broadcasting is creating more specialized television channels and audiences (Nishino 1994, p.126-127).

The globalization of television markets is a process that need not destroy diversity and difference but challenges the production and distribution of regional and local audiovisual productions and linguistic as well as cultural identities.

The rapid development of information and communication technology, especially in computer and telecommunication applications and systems, is creating profound political and cultural changes. At least two issues seem to dominate the immediate future of worlds communications: First, the exponential increase in the quantity of information and communication as a consequence of digitalization and photonic infrastructures in the emerging information society, and second, the rapid growth of telecommunications and integration of all media. The network media, like Internet, is opening a new channel of television programme distribution.

This process of globalization is promoted by technology which in turn favours simplified answers to most complicated social, cultural and religious problems. Technology, money and markets are global but culture, values, and life-styles are not.

Consequently, one of the major challenges of the near future will be the maintenance of cultural diversity in television programming. Television culture is, of course, a changing, interactive process that deals with human values. Those values, in turn, are difficult to predict nor can they be created from above only without respect to local cultures.

It is known that Europe is one of the major areas of commercial interest in the world's audio-visual markets. The American film industry invests massively in distribution and promotion throughout Europe. According to *Le Monde Diplomatique* the gigantic American companies Time-Warner-Turner, Disney-ABC, and Westinghouse-CBS are more and more present in Europe, particularly through local cable-tv companies. The exchange ration of visual images between Europe and America is increasingly in favor of the Americans. In 1988 the figure was 2,1 billion dollars in favor of the U.S. products, and in 1995 as much as 6,3 billion dollars (*Le Monde Diplomatique*, 2.2.1997). No figures are available yet of the success of Microsoft-NBC in Europe.

What is sure is that uncertainty in modern world has increased. The new communication and information systems are often more complex than the old ones. If the process of communication is better understood by generalist rather than fragmentary type of knowledge we have to be careful in accepting research practices from such fields of research where extreme specialization is favoured.

The nature of knowledge is no more as certain and absolute as in the world view of Galileo and Newton but increasingly transdisciplinary and contextual. Different disciplines are more in favour of the use of the theory of chaos than before. Complexity and unpredictability characterize their scholarly efforts to know and understand things. Chaos theory, in essence, implies that very simple dynamical rules can give rise to extraordinarily intricate, surprising and essentially unpredictable behaviour like fractals, turbulence, or the weather.

Planning an engine or even a computer and designing a building are intellectually demanding but they are quite different processes than creating so-

cial reality, communicating with humans and defining identities. People have their individual and collective memories, their history and the past, which defines where they belong and how they are approaching the existing or the future. It is this concept of "cultural identity" (or collective identity) which is gaining ground in the present European media debate of the relationship between global media and different cultural, ethnic and national identities (Schlesinger 1993).

The European Union is concerned of the weak level of "Euro-consciousness", "Euro-identity", or "Europeanness". It is too much defined from the above without creating possibilities for people to construct the meaning for "Europeanness" by themselves, if it is to have a meaning to them. The failures for efforts to create collective consciousness from above or force "official internationalism" are known to fail. Examples include the American attempts to create a free-world with the introduction of international television in the 1960's, or the Russian efforts to create an all-Russian empire by imposing Russian language and culture to other people within the empire in the middle of the 19th century.

The increasing Euro-centric attention on the problems of "Euro-identity" have already provoked the Asians to start defining "Asian-ness" and the Russians to search for "Russian-ness" in relation to the "European-ness".

The "White Paper" of the European Union defines the development of an "information society" in Europe as a global phenomenan where Europe should aim at achieving three objectives:

1. from the outset, placing its approach in a world perspective, and therefore encouraging the international alliance strategies of its companies and operators;

2. ensuring, at the same time, that the systems developed take due account of European characteristics: multilingualism, cultural diversity, economic divergence, and more generally the preservation of its social model; and

3. creating the conditions whereby, in an open and competitive international system, Europe still has an adequate take-up of basic technologies and an efficient and comptetitive industry. (White Paper 1994, p.110)

Although the documents speak nicely of "diversity" etc it may often turn out to be mere lipservice in relation to the existing reality. The European audiovisual space and the trends of regional television has been studied througoughly by Catalynuyan and Basque researchers in Spain (de Moragas Spa & Garitaonandia 1995) and the role of European public broadcasting by German and other researchers (Kopper 1997).

According to de Moragas Spa and Garitaonandia the regions of Europe are not the result of mere geographical or administrative divisions, but in many cases are the result of long historical processes, the legacy of the feudal structure, of Romanization, or of even earlier times, which have created a profound and important diversity of culture and language in the continent.

Today, the states are loosing influence as a consequence of provatization, transfer of authority to supra-national European levels and decentralization, with the gradual shift of authority in matters of communication to the regional, autonomous and local levels. Such names as Springer, Bertelsmann, CLT, Fininvest, Hachette, Hersant and Canal Plus are as important in the European communication sector as in the past has been the case with the BBC, RAI, ORTF, etc.

The idea has been the need to create a common cultural market capable of guaranteeing both the survival of European cultural identity and its industrial competitiveness. European communication policies are therefore defined as a form of resistance against the great powers (United States and Japan) whose industry, apart from casting a shadow over the cultural identity and supremacy of Europe, impoverishes its economy and curbs the creation of jobs.

However, as noted by de Moragas Spa and Garitaonandia, this debate on the European 'common' space has opened up a new front on which the member States are losing their powers in the field of communication: regionalization. Strangely enough, to the question "what is European" comes the answer "diversity", and together with the creation of a common audio-visual space, all the various audio-visual landscapes making up that whole have been mapped out: city, region, State and Europe. A European audio-visual policy will only be complete if it covers each and every one of these four spheres.

The television programming in the regions could offer exclusive coverage in the following:

a. presenting local reality as different from national and transnational reality;

b. presenting and interpreting news and current affairs concerning politics, culture and the national and international economy, selected and

discussed on the basis of the region's specific character and interests;

c. highlighting and giving prominence to the region's relations with other regions within the same State and with other nations, as well as the projects stemming from those relations (de Moragas Spa & Garitaonandia 1995).

A study of the print media and the European Union by Fundesco in Spain showed, among other things, that there are predominantly nationalist attitudes and even occasional touches of xenophobia in the European media (*The European Union in the Media* 1995, and 1996). The study defined Europe as an empty gap between the local and the global. Europe's image is statistics and economic information but not human nor social aspects. Since there are no common values or ideological substance there is a compensatory tendency to seek refuge in nationalist introspection. Sometimes this is manifested merely in a domestic viewpoint with well defined local interests but they coexist with a modern sense of globalization. A year later the same research project noted that appeals are made to the media's status as a public service or to a sense of social responsibility, but these ideologically shaped values are becoming blurred in a period that is dominated by mercantile interests.

There is no pan-European media nor audience. Giuseppe Richeri has pointed out (1993) that:

- a pan-European market does not exist
- there are many barriers for a all-European media (some are withering away)
- the media markets follow linguistic frontiers
- all-European commercial marker does not yet exist

Richeri also notes that although some media like television satellites and cable can be received across national borders the audience prefer to follow the linguistic-cultural closeness, their own lifestyle and habits in the media. There is also a trend of "minimal efforts" which determine the way people choose their entertainment. Furthermore, resources given to pan-European media are still scant when compared with national media.

The largest language group in the all-European audience is German with approximately 90 million audience in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Luxemburg, Belgium and Liechtenstein. In the future, there will be millions more from the Central and Eastern European nations. The second group is composed of the French-speakers (60 million) which is about equal with the English-speakers. The Italian speakers make up some 57 million inhabitants.

The 1996 Fundesco study of the *The European Union in the Media* stressed that the absence of media with a pan-European audience and scope makes the creation of a common reality still more difficult. The language barrier is turning out to be more persistent than customs controls. Furthermore, when the media discourse is favourably disposed towards supranational amalgamation, the frame of reference is notsections the constructed reality of Europe but the image of globality, with the time scale and a set of dimensions which clearly surpass the borders of the European Community. Global ideology lies behind strategies to induce a planetary market, and therefore operates on a waveband that is broad but standardised.

The researchers conclude that as a symbol and an image, today's Europe can be nothing but the Europe of the media, bound up with information, social debate and concensus. The idea of Europe requires inductive strategies that go beyond the interests and agenda values of the local and national media, whose geographical and cultural territories are still excessively littered with border elements. Politicians and top civil servants in Brussels often define the failures of the project Europe as stemming from a problem of communication.

In summary, the following trends are examples that could be observed from the European dailies in 1996:

- thematic polarisation: Even though the coverage given by the press seems ample from a purely quantitative point of view, the thematic values of EU-related contents generally reveal biases and polarisations. Society and culture sections contain scarcely any refence to the initiatives, policies and constructive values of the EU. To illustrate the contrast, it is worth pointing out that the number of texts included in economic sections is nine times greater than those published in culture and society sections. There is an increasing cultural homogeneity among the younger generations, apparent in a growing similarity among agenda signals referring to leisure, consumption, education and training, urban habits etc.
- local pre-agenda values: values of identity with local audiences

- reduction in critical tension: improvement of the economy in most EU countries; Balkan conflict has also done away one of the news stories that did most to deteriorate the image of Europe
- predominance of supranational discourse. Quantitative studies from several years show that for the first time in 1996 the information and comment of the European press dealing directly with the European Union (41% of the total) outnumbers items in which the European Union is related to the interests of the newspaper's own country. There is, in other words, more of Europe 'per se' in the media. References to non-EU countries, with the exception of the United States, have diminished considerably in the written press.

Communicative Competence

The efforts to create a pan-European awareness are combined by efforts to improve the basic information society skills for all. The basic strategy, like the one followed in Finland, implies three dimensions: basic skills while at school, life-long learning, and new vocational skills. The philosophy is based on the assumption that it is characteristic of the information society that information is available through many different media. A new media culture is about to emerge in which people need, in addition to the traditional reading and writing abilities, a new type of ability, "cultural literacy" – the ability to communicate, handle, understand and interprete information. It is the task of general education to provide every pupil with the versatile basic skills in acquiring, managing and communicating information which are necessary in the information society and essential for succesful further study.

In the early 1996 the Finnish Ministry for Education published a Report by a small committee on cultural and media literacy. It emphasized the importance of the new civil and professional skills and competence in the use of the media and nets. The report, among other things, pointed out that the field of the media is integrating and becoming interactive while audiovisuality becomes a central issue. This cultural change requires the reform of the traditional literacy into media literacy, or in broader terms into cultural literacy where it is of central importance to understand how the images and significance is being created (OPM 1996).

This short national Report is very much in line with the global approach of the UNESCO International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century report *Learning: The Treasure Within.* (1996) This report emphasizes the four pillars of education: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, learning to live with others, and learning to be.

Learning to know includes both the combination of sufficiently broad general knowledge and learning to learn. Learning to do means that in order to acquire not only an occupational skill but also, more broadly, the competence to deal with many situations and work in teams. Learning to live together means the developing of an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence in a spirit of respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace. Learning to be refers to the development of one's own personality: memory, reasoning, aesthetic sense, physical capacities and communication skills.

Formal education systems tend to emphasize the acquisition of knowledge to the detriment of other types of learning; but it is vital now to conceive education in a more encompassing fashion. There is an increasing understanding of the fact that intelligence is not one thing but many. We can speak of multiple intelligences (Gardner 1993 & 1996). The new media environment and communication landscape offers life-long system of learning.

One of the central issues is what do we really understand by the new forms of literacy like "media literacy" and what importance the media competence and communication skills have in the information society?

In America media literacy is increasingly being defined as the

> ability to communicate competently in all media, print and electronic, as well as to access, analyze and evaluate the powerful images, words and sounds that make up our contemporary mass media culture. These skills of media literacy are essential for our future as individuals and as members of a democratic society. (Center for Media Literacy, Los Angeles)

Research has focused on defined of what constitutes the "critical viewing skills", David Schaefer, however, criticizes the term "skills" as stressing too much the reception side of the communication process only. He, too, follows the Habermas approach of communicative competency defining it to include three dimensions: the cognitive one dealing with the potentialities of communication, the performative dimension, temporal dimension, and spatial dimension (Schaefer 1996 & 1997). Commun-

icative competency, then, would be the integration of all these levels (Sitaram 1997).

The rapid development of information and communication technology, especially in computer and telecommunication applications and systems, is creating profound political and cultural changes and also new learning environments. Traditional institutions of education are facing critical intellectual, pedagogic and institutional challenges.

At least two issues seem to dominate the future of communications. First, the exponential increase in the quantity of information and communication in the emerging global information society; and second, knowledge is becoming the most important resource in the global information economy. (Melody 1996). The key concepts are interconnectedness and network economy.

There are at least two technological trends in the late 1990's that affect world business, institutions and everyday life. One is the rapid exploitation of Internet by corporations and institutions, and the other is the deregulation of telecommunications and the introduction of new telematic services. It remains to be seen whether this "liberalization" of the huge telecommunications industry will create a true competition instead of monopoly systems or create only huge oligopolies.

The almost unavoidable globalization is promoted by technology which in turn favors simplified answers to most complicated social, cultural and religious problems that are bound to emerge and which are not global in essence. Already in the beginning of the 1960's the French sociologist Jacques Ellul spoke of the new media as a "technological bluff". He thought that each new medium does bring something new in the organizing, processing and utilization of information but also makes something disappear. The new inventions, though, always have consequences that could not have been foreseen (Varis 1995). Culture is a changing, interactive process that deals with human values.

But the belief in the revolutionary impact of the new technologies is very strong. New virtual technologies like the Learning Machine are propagated as "the most powerful learning tool since the invention of the book". Learning foreign languages, for example, is said to take place "at rocket speed!"

The problem of media skills and communication competence was created when the technological change last century had the consequence that the following generations could no more be sure of in what kind of a world would they live. The era of modernism did not only change the environment but also the way in which people perceive and construct the reality. The emergence of photography and later film were radical innovations in the media world. In order to understand them it was not enough to have the traditional views of what painting is or what is the role of a picture in culture in general.

Henri Matisse wrote:

> Our senses have a developmental age which is not that of the immediate environment, but that of the period into which we were born. We are born with the sensibility of that period, that phase of civilization, and it counts for more than anything learning can give us. (Lovejoy 1989, p.3)

Current media research also maintains the view that the dominant media emphasize some of our senses more than others and also have an impact on the structure of thinking processes. Walter Ong wrote of the "secondary orality" as the consequence of the emergence of radio. He said that to use the term "media" is useful to refer to the technological means like writing, printing or electronic means of communication, but it could also be misleading if it leads us to think that the use of these media would be only transmission of information. In fact, all of the media do much more; they enable thought processes inconceivable before. In communication between conscious persons the medium is more than what the medium is in information processing (Ong 1996).

The dominant media culture now is audio-visual in nature. The media environment is increasingly oral and visual, composed of audiovisual images. Furthermore, there is an accelerating speed of information abundance, noise and stimuli that are difficult to give significance. Parallel to the quantitative growth there is a qualitative process as well. Ignacio Ramonet from *Le Monde Diplomatique* has criticized the influence of television, televisable information, to the whole concept of information and journalism. The mere image of events is now sufficient to give significance to them and events without audiovisual content simply disappear from the agenda (Ramonet 1997).

Régis Debray speaks of *mediology*; of different eras of logosphere, graphosphere, and videosphere. During the first sphere of oral media the truth was theological with a center in the ancient Greece. Then, during the renaissance and the birth of printing, the truth became aesthetic and the center

moved to Rome. Now with the audiovisual media culture the truth is economic and the center is New York (Debray 1995).

Frank Biocca has repeatedly stressed the deep and qualitative consequences of the new media environment to design and cognition. According to him the change from a passive two-dimensional to an interactive three-dimensional media may be as dramatic as the change from still to motion pictures. (Biocca & Levy 1995)

It is also widely believed that the new technology solves the problems of employment, teaching and learning, free-time, democracy etc. However, the available evidence is rather contradictory and at least leaves many questions open. (Rifkin 1994)

Perhaps the artists are least prejudiced people because nobody determines them in advance conditions to use the new technology. Their imagination and utilization is only limited by economic realities and their own prejudices, customs and ignorance.

Now the skills and competencies of the era of modernism have since long changed into the art of postmodern media. In fact we are living something which could be called a telematic era of photonic communication and information technologies. The integration of telecommunications, computers and multimedia change in a qualitative way our traditional conceptions of almost all spheres of life. Less attention has been given to the ethical and moral problems which are also affected.

As has been stressed by contemporary French sociologists and philosophers we face three complex problem areas. The first one is the globality of technology, money and markets. The second one is the universality of values, and the third one the uniqueness of forms. Languages, cultures, individuals, random chances etc. are unique. If the values are lost, the global techno-structure conquers the uniqueness and homogenizes it.

Most essential in this new learning environment is the fact that whoever learner is constantly facing epistemic conflicts when the learner is presented with a problem that needs to be solved but which is outside the learners current repertoire. Most of the problems of the information society will be of that kind. The learner needs to proceed with self-regulation with an active engagement and self-regulation which is the learner's response to the conflict. The idea is to adjust and reconstruct thinking to deal with the learning problem at hand (Klemm 1996). This information ocean of the emerging information society could be navigated by computer and information literacy and with a broader competence of media literacy.

However, it is still necessary to maintain and develop what has been called traditional literacy. A recent study in Germany concluded that if a significant proportion of young generations remain literally limited in their literary capabilities, do not get proper introduction to computer literacy, and consequently develop poorly their skills of abstract thinking and imagination, there will never be any information society. A citizen in an information society uses similar frame of reference as a traditional reader when he or she uses information data services, computers or media in a productive way. (von der Lahr 1996)

In the new media-environment the concept of the "text" extends into visual, audiovisual and computerized dimensions. We can speak of the media space where cognitive, affective and intuitive elements co-exist. The new, telematic multimedia are telepresent everywhere.

In my understanding we face three kinds of problems. First we have to try to understand what is the learning process of becoming literate and what does communication competence and media skills mean in the information society. Second, we have to analyze the increasing neo-illiteracy. Third, we should discuss of what kind of skills should we give to the citizens now as compared to the earlier skills of writing and reading.

According to research, literacy skills are of central importance to the psychological and intellectual developments of human beings. Traditional reading of texts and stories to small children seem to be fundamental for their later developments. Consequently, traditional literacy can be seen as a condition to becoming media literate.

What is less known is how the cultural frames filter the processes of reading visual, auditive and other signals and messages. Seeing, for example, is very selective and the power of the dominant media culture is widely based on the audio-visual power of the images.

Along with the diffusion of the new media there is an increasing trend of neo-illiteracy in the industrialized countries. In general, the amount of neo-illiterates is estimated to be 10-15% of the adult population. In the United States *The Commission on Reading* estimates that 10% of the adult Americans are illiterate and another 44% only passively capable of reading.

Jeremy Rifkin gives the figure that approximately 90 million Americans are so poorly educated that they cannot write to explain a minor error of their credit card or read bus time-table properly, etc. He claims that today one out of three adult

Americans are partially or completely illiterate. (Rifkin 1996, p.60)

Although some European countries may still be proud of having high figures in general, the average total for the whole of Europe could be much worse than believed.

If we understand by literacy the process of abstract thinking that starts with the first years of birth with hearing stories and matures sometimes at the age of 14, probably no mediated information environment can compensate the neglecting of this process. In fact, unprepared immersion to the new virtual technology might turn out to be harmful to some processes. At least there should be serious, critical and independent research on the use of different information technologies for processes like learning.

The multimedia genres of "edutainment" and "infotainment" may also be too much culture-based. In some cultures like in Japanese the state of mind in learning is to force yourself to strive for acquiring knowledge. ("ben kyou"). It is different attitude than exposing yourself to "entertainment" (Utsumi 1996).

In any case, the new media environments, telematic applications in learning, teaching and working, and in citizen services require new skills and competence. It is necessary to know to use the networked, telematic media both to receive, produce, and disseminate messages increasingly in an interactive and collaborative way.

In an intercultural world communication necessarily mediates different values and cultural behaviors. Great civilizations and cultures have very different patterns of communication and use different senses in a different way. In consequence, if a truly global information society is to be created, more attention should be given to the diversity of cultures and the co-existence of different civilizations and cultures.

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Access, Dialogue, Deliberation

Experimenting with Three Concepts of Journalism Criticism

HEIKKI HEIKKILÄ & RISTO KUNELIUS

Journalism critics tend to complain that journalists often refuse to discuss journalism in general and conceptual terms which complicates discussion between the critics and journalists. Critics themselves, however, often suffer from conceptual vagueness. They tend to be 'reductionists' in the sense that they view – and argue about – journalism within their own and sometimes rather narrow conceptual framework. This often frustrates even the critics discussing among themselves.

This article attempts to tackle both these flaws of discussion. In order to contribute to a more diverse and clarified vocabulary for talking about the problems of journalism we discuss three concepts used in journalism criticism. They all provide different answers to what we see as crucial questions about journalism: what does journalism represent, and how to make journalism more public?

(i) *Access* leads one to ask: who is qualified to be (re)presented in journalism, in what capacity, or position? What restricts journalists in their pursuit for information?

(ii) *Dialogue* allows one to ask: how does dialogue work as a method of representing social realities, and to what extent does journalism generate dialogue?

(iii) *Deliberation* makes one ask: what kind of reflection and action is journalism a catalyst for, and does it enhance participation in the processes of problem definition and decision-making?

Each concept is quite widely referred to in journalism criticism. As ideas, if not as explicit terms, they are also familiar to journalists and readers in general. The problems with connecting these concepts to each other are obvious, though. Each of them relates to different traditions of thought. 'Access' is an important concept in media sociology and in normative theories of the press. 'Dialogue' has a prominent place in epistemology and cultural studies, whereas 'deliberation' emerges mainly from political philosophy.

Representation(s) in Journalism

Representation as a concept is very complicated and difficult to come to terms with, and perhaps fortunately so. Its various dimensions allow us to see how the epistemological, political, aesthetical etc. facets of journalism (and western culture) overlap. However, some sort of analytical grasp is needed.[1] Roughly speaking, there seem to be two somewhat different aspects to representation. It means either that (i) something 'stands for' something else, or that (ii) someone 'acts for' someone else (cf. Pitkin 1967).

(i) It probably goes without saying that news by definition re-present events and speech acts. News texts claim to *'stand for'* the elements of which the news stories are composed of. The news never correspond to reality as such, they can only make themselves seem plausible. The 'tricks of the trade' to insure this credibility are often technical, even if not consciously executed (cf. Manoff 1986; Kunelius 1996).

Of course, journalism does not re-present like a mirror. Instead it uses the linguistic, cultural, and professional conventions available. Acknowledging the semiotic nature of journalism leads us to think that journalism 'makes news' instead of merely reporting them. In this respect representation as 'standing for' is always problematic. It is especially problematic for journalism, because the illusion of correspondence is the cornerstone of news. From a semiotic point of view we can analyse the qualities of journalism's 'demimonde' (Ekecrantz

1996) and compare it to other semiotic worlds, but we cannot compare it to any authentic reality.

(ii) Representation is also political in the sense that those who are represented allow their representatives to *'act for'* them. This aspect is taken seriously in the designs of political institutions that seek appropriate procedures for electing representatives and then holding them accountable for their deeds. Journalism pretends that this aspect of representation is absent from it: modern journalism is supposedly unpolitical and independent, and unlike politicians, journalists cannot be elected or shifted down from their posts.

This simplistic view is equally problematic as the idea of journalistic texts 'standing for' reality. Even if journalism does not openly 'act for' anyone as political institutions do, it still participates in the production and reproduction of power relations in several ways. Power resides in language in general and in the selection of news topics, frames, and sources. This critical view on journalism is not without problems either, because it easily claims that journalism can represent nothing but power and the reigning ideologies. Paradoxically enough, this view holds that journalism corresponds to something 'out there'. The active role of the conventions of journalistic representations themselves is largely ignored.[2]

Be it self-serving rhetorics or not, journalists often claim to 'act for' the public. This does not merely refer to 'their right to know', or to the pressure of the assumed public opinion, but also to the interest of the public.[3] When maintaining this position, journalism acts politically, not entirely unlike the so called proper political actors.

These problems of representation cannot ever be genuinely solved. Journalism as any representative institution, has to live with them. For journalists as 'professional communicators' (Carey 1969) a more or less workable solution is to 'play innocent'. Journalists lean on other representative apparatuses in society (politics, culture, science, even sports) and represent their voices, actions, and viewpoints. Thus, journalism is supposed to represent through mediating the actions of other representative institutions. Whether the words of these institutions really 'stand for' reality is of less concern because their actions (including their words) take place in the name of the public.

Because making something 'stand for' something else is an act in itself, the semiotic and political aspects of journalism are unseparable. This tension is evident throughout the following conceptual journey.

Access

The image of the professional journalist is strongly interlocked with the idea of access. Firstly, there is the question of access *for journalists*. Do journalists get in touch with the sources of information? Journalists try to invade all sorts of places: hidden archives, cabinets of the powerful, or the chambers of princesses. The 'stand ups' by TV journalists from the corridors of the parliament building make this attempt visible.

This journalistic pursuit in fact actualises journalism as political representation. In a word, the 'stand ups' are really 'stand fors'. The journalist 'acts for' the public when s/he pursues the information and tries to break the news even if the established sources wish him/her to turn elsewhere. The image of the investigative journalist high on the ladder of professional hierarchy and the joy felt by journalists in the moments of exposure illustrate the signifigance of this idea. It may be that huge revelations are often due less to journalistic vigilance than to leaks within the establishment, but the space and air time given to these events prove their symbolic (and not only that) value to journalists and the media.

Secondly, journalists line up to protect the public domain. They are responsible for its purity, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. In parallel with the journalists' attempt to access the corridors of power, the powerful, in turn, try to make their way into journalism. It is, then, the duty of journalists to keep the public domain free from particular interests, sheer manipulation, and bad taste. From this viewpoint, another aspect of access is disclosed, namely access *to journalism*.

Media sociologists show the imperfection of journalism's everyday performance in both these respects. Instead of running after secret facts, journalism systematically listens to certain institutions or beats. This 'systemic bias' is explained by organisational constraints (Gieber 1964; Epstein 1973), the label of credibility or factuality stamped on the elite groups (Tuchman 1978), their usefulness (Gans 1980), or their effectiveness in economic terms (Fishman 1980; McManus 1994). By focusing on elites journalism permits a limited number of voices to work as 'primary definers' (Hall et al. 1978) of reality, either directly (Glasgow Media Group 1976) or indirectly (Ericson et al. 1989).

This criticism, based on organisational and ideological underpinnings has itself been questioned (Schlesinger 1990; Miller 1993). Despite that,

the basic question of journalism criticism, remains more or less intact: who has the upper hand in the relationship between journalism and influential sources? Do journalists direct politics or vice versa? Who controls the public domain? These debates reflect the practices and pressures that have made journalism a realm for specific actors and these practices also constitute the fundamental questions of journalism critics.

A slightly different variant of access criticism intensified during the early 1970's. The idea was actually clear and simple. Democracy requires open access to public institutions and resources for knowledge. This holds for journalism too, for it is a public institution regardless of its ownership. Therefore, access to journalism should be open to all citizens (cf. Jankowski 1995). The variety of voices in journalism is thus the measure of its 'publicness'.

When these criteria are applied in journalism research, the results are not too comforting. For instance the proportion of women among the sources of journalism is quite regularly no more than 15-20 per cent (cf. Kivikuru et al. 1997). The access provided to ethnic minorities also turns out to be limited. And in cases where they are given access, they are usually represented as objects for interpretation by majorities (cf. van Dijk 1991, 151-160). In the latter case, access is not merely about who gets in, but also about what properties and qualitites their voices have in relation to other voices.

Metaphorically, both aspects of access portray journalism as a *cafeteria* and professional journalists as its doormen or 'bouncers'. The most interesting question is not what the cafeteria is like (what is on the menu, etc.), but who gets in. It seems that the doormen only permit regular customers to get in, while others have to gaze in through windows.

The criticism initiated by access critics is undoubtedly important. Not the least because it challenges journalism on its own terms. On the one hand, it asks how well journalism can supply us with valid information (and resist inaccuracy and trivialities). On the other hand, it demands the doormen of journalism to distribute their publicness fairly between various social groups. This means that access critique formulates the classical problem of representation much in the same vein as professional journalism does. Therefore, journalism is able to circumvent the criticism to a great extent.

Roughly speaking, the answer of professional journalism to access criticism takes the following form. There is nothing wrong with journalism, if either

(i) those representative apparatuses that are given access to journalism are genuinely representative, or

(ii) if the actions and decisions made by those apparatuses unquestionably affect people's lives, whether the apparatuses are genuinely representative or not.

Even though the first condition is easily challenged, the second one is not. The fact that the priviledged actors do effect our lives helps journalism to survive the criticism. If critics suggest that journalism should replace the elite sources with 'average citizens', journalists can in response express their regret that 'average citizens' do not have bearing in our system, but elites do. 'Average citizens' are turned down as sources because their viewpoints are private and of no general importance. When 'unorganised' citizens want their views represented, they are told that they are not representative.

Another limitation of access critique is its implicit desire for journalism without journalists (cf. Prehn 1992, 258 quoted in Jankowski 1995, 11). If the selections and editing made by journalists are at the core of the problem, let us erase the profession![4] This idea simply does not work. The distribution of shared publicness always requires editing and selection. As some have argued, publicness without editors might favour exactly the same sources of information and even more so (Schudson 1995).[5] Besides, it is not very constructive to start journalism criticism by arguing that journalists are not needed.

When one tries summarise this, it is easy to see how different aspects of representation overlap in journalism. Firstly, the fact that journalism quite genuinely keeps its eye on the elite groups and investigates their actions tells us that journalism does it on our behalf. It 'acts for' us. Secondly, the privileges of access given to the elite groups seems justified because news journalism is supposed to mediate meaningful events for us. Journalism thus 'stands for' those meaningful events and speech acts. This leads us to see that access is ultimately grounded in exchange: if one lets journalism to get into one's domain, one gets into journalism in return.

The critical potential in all this lies in pointing out that those who seem not to have anything to offer to journalism do not receive the return gift ei-

ther. Access *for* is the precondition for access *to*. Of course, those who remain outside this symbiosis may still get into journalism, but in a different position. After all, average citizens and minorities are presented in journalism, but because they do not represent 'the general' or the 'important' they serve as symbols for perceived trends or deviations from them.[6] What 'unorganised' people are very rarely allowed to do is to explain their experiences in their own terms.

When we discuss the problems and possibilities of news journalism, the concepts of access has both strengths and shortcomings. It is strong in sharing a common ground with journalists and in addressing our common sense definition of the public as a 'pure' domain. Its definciencies are due to its strengths, though. Demands for increasing access are too easily invalidated by referring to the hard realities of society, and hard realities are often quite paralysing. The inability of journalism research to really challenge practices of news journalism (despite the cumulative evidence of media sociology) is, in a sense, evidence of this.

Dialogue

As a term, dialogue is familiar enough to journalists albeit, compared to the most sacred words in the vocabulary of professional journalism – say 'facts' – its ranking is considerably lower. As a concept, dialogue has many uses and dimensions. To begin with, it is useful to make one distinction. We feel that distinguishing (i) dialogue *in* journalism from (ii) dialogue *between* journalism and its readers helps to clarify our thinking.[7]

Dialogue in journalism. For journalists, the notion of dialogue usually refers to the idea of discussion, debate, or conversation taking place inside the space created by journalism. There are two noteworthy aspects to this figure of speech.

Firstly, journalists are presumed to open a forum for public dialogue. Their job is to bring various viewpoints and voices that exist 'out there' into this public space, and to represent them as faithfully as possible. Dialogue, in this sense, is supposed to reflect all existing relevant opinions in a given matter. Secondly, dialogue – using often conflicting voices and perspectives as the raw material journalistic texts – is considered to be the best method available for bringing out the truth. Say, for example, that we are writing about abortion. Dialogue in journalism leads us to consider: have we presented all the existing views, have we done our best to make the conflicting viewpoints encounter each other and 'fight it all out'?

What connects these two aspects is the idea that the measure of a good dialogue lies outside the dialogue itself. A good dialogue helps journalism to represent what is 'out there', either in 'reality' or in the realm of 'truth'. The task of journalism, then, is to create a situation or sphere where opinions and perspectives confront each other, and to make sure that no evasions take place (that questions are genuinely answered, etc).

For professional journalism, dialogue is either something that supposedly takes place 'out there' and is represented in journalism, or something that takes place within journalism (ultimately, in the texts produced by journalists). In both cases, the actions of journalists are neutral to the outcome of the dialogue. Public dialogue goes on without any active part played by the journalists. Parallelly, in our everyday vocabulary we often refer to 'public discussion' not as participants in the dialogue, but rather as spectators. In short, we view public discussion as members of the *audience*, not of the *public* that is discussing.

Despite its limitations, this definition 'dialogue' takes us a step further from 'access' in articulating criteria for journalism. At least two broad and useful questions arise. Firstly, we can pay attention to what kind of voices are allowed to take part in a discussion; and at which point of the debate; and in what role. A number of critical writers have called for a more 'multiperspectival' journalism (cf. Gans 1980, 313ff, Schudson 1995) or criticised the eagerness of journalism to polarise issues as conflicts between two (instead of many) opposing camps (Nohrstedt & Ekström 1994). Editor Cole Campbell, one of the proponents of 'public journalism', describes a similar tendency in saying that if people's opinions could be situated on a scale from one to ten, reporters would try to find representatives of the numbers nine and two. The problem is, says Campbell, that most readers and citizens find themselves between four and seven. (Campbell 1997, 10; see also Fallows 1996, 246)

Secondly, by focusing on the dialogue *in* journalism it is possible to challenge contemporary journalistic practices by asking how well the voices in different debates actually encounter each other. There are different ways of operationalising this idea. It is important to ask, for instance, what kind of dialogue is going on when the prime minister and 'ordinary people' are talking about the same social problem in the newspaper, but one is al-

lowed to speak in the front page whereas the others get to have their say in the lower corner of the 'letters to the editor'. The generic order of journalism (cf. Kunelius 1996; Ridell 1994) often works as a mechanism that damps the dialogic aspect of journalism.

Journalism has its own 'order of things' which designates a place, role, and competence for its actors according to their status: when the official sources (or 'primary definers') talk about facts, trends, and future plans, the 'ordinary people' have their say about their own (unique and particular) experiences, and feelings and about events that took place just recently. In the eyes of journalism our competence to address common problems differs.

An extreme version of measuring the performance of journalism against the ideal of open encounter or maximal interaction is the work of Pietilä & Sondermann (1994). Contrasted to their ideal, the 'society in the newspaper' (one issue of *Helsingin Sanomat*) proves to be only half a society. The actions of the newspaper itself do not provoke further action but instead the paper more often kills or dampens the initiatives of public discussion. Reporters make poor use of journalism's potential for stirring up dialogue inside the paper.

Criticising journalism for missed opportunities for more lively public discussion partly overlaps with the questions posed by the access perspective (cf. Hall et al. 1978, Ericson et al. 1987, van Dijk 1996). In a word, critics claim that the dialogue inside journalism is in fact a pseudo-dialogue in terms of both what sort of voices are allowed to take part and whose words are taken into consideration, and by whom. To elaborate on the cafeteria metaphor presented above: journalism is not only an unfair doorman (problems of access), it also acts as a slightly elitist head-waiter who tells people where to sit. Some tables are better situated than others: near the window, the powerful big shots have their important debates, and beside the kitchen door, the less powerful grumble among themselves. A professional head-waiter protects the more distinguished guests from 'unnecessary disturbance'.

Criticising the quality of dialogue abandons the technical and neutral view of the language of journalists (as something that merely sets the stage for others to perform on). It also points to the crucial importance of discourses in the construction of our social reality. At the same time, however, it also leads to very tricky and difficult questions. One concrete example of these problems is the difficulty of weighing the contribution of Jürgen Habermas' theoretisations about the public sphere and communicative action. Some critics argue that Habermas sets worthwhile ideals and useful goal for the development of public life (cf. Baynes 1994). Others argue that the whole idea of the public sphere as a possible forum for free communication is ideological (cf. Koivisto & Väliverronen 1996).[8]

It is not easy to make up one's mind in a issue like this. There are strong reasons for abandoning the ideal of a free and maximally interactive journalistic public sphere. One of these is the fact that this ideal (in its vulgar and unproblematised form) is often used in legitimising the very same practices that are criticised with the ideal. It is perhaps in vain to try and take the debate about journalism into a conceptual terrain where journalists can say: "But we *do* try to let everyone have their say, we *do not* emphasize this or that perspective, etc." A concept is sometimes easily redefined within the professional discourse of journalists and then used not as a tool for criticism but as a tool for silencing criticism. This, again, is another form of reductionism, refusal to see the unused potential in an idea. Almost eternal problems around the notion of 'objectivity' should be a good lesson for this. When a concept is so deeply rooted in the self-understanding of the professional practice of journalism (as objectivity is), it is of little use to try and change its definition and function in that discourse.

However, abandoning the ideal means moving into at least as difficult a territory. Firstly, one is in danger of losing all criteria for evaluating the performance of journalism. If there is no basis for fairly evaluating the interdiscursive operations of journalism (how it constructs dialogue in its texts), what sense is there in journalism criticism? Why on earth should journalists and their institutions take such criticism seriously! Secondly, there is the problem of suggesting something that has not yet done: the classical critical perspective that calls for an alternative vision is easily paralysed by its inability to show concretely what it really means.

Dialogue between journalism and the community of readers. A completely different way of operationalising the notion of dialogue in relation to journalism would be to ask whether journalism is not able to resonate reactions in its readers, whether it can activate readers to think, rethink, interpret, and discuss the representations of journalism, maybe even act on the issues and questions represented. From this point of view, one does not ask whether there is a dialogue going on inside journalism, but instead, how much and what sort of

dialogue is stirred up by journalism. The quality of journalism, then, can be defined the quality of the relationship between journalism and its readers (or community).

This idea too is familiar enough in professional discourses. Journalists feel that one of their functions is to start public debates and discussion. However, this task is clearly subordinate to the mission of informing: if and when journalism lifts new issues on the public agenda it does so by offering some new, interesting, and relevant information. To borrow James Carey's (1987) formulation, 'journalism of information' is taken as the foundation for 'journalism of conversation'. In other words, access is a precondition for dialogue.[9]

There are two separate strands of thinking about the dialogic relationship between journalism and its readers. On the one hand, the tradition launched by writers like Voloshinov (1990) and Bakhtin (1984a & b) situates the 'dialogic' in communication mostly within the act of reading, in the moment of interpretation (although the argument – especially for Bakhtin – stretches to the idea that conventional readings, in the long run, shape the text genres themselves). In this tradition, the meaning of a given sign or text is situated between the readers and the text. Meaning owes to the tension between the sign and the reader, between the accents of the producer of the sign and the consumer of the sign.

On the other hand, the pragmatist tradition measures journalism by trying to see how much 'real' conversation, debate, and discussion is raised in the communities that journalism addresses. Standard references in this line ofargument are Dewey (1927) and Park (1923, 1941) whose definition of the 'public' is worth mentioning. For Park, a public is a "group of strangers who gather to discuss the news" (Carey 1987, 10). This nicely underscores what the pragmatist tradition can bring to theorising journalism. The public is not primarily a 'sphere' or a 'space' in which public discussion takes place or into which 'access passes' are granted. A public is the result of publishing, of constant public action. It is something to be actively created time and time again, not something to be guarded by a particular group of professionals. From this perspective journalism that does not create discussion and does not react to that discussion is by definition not public at all.

Let us tackle these strands one by one. There is a rather well cultivated argument according to which forms of popular journalism are more dialogical than the more 'serious' and 'quality' forms of news. At least textually, it is possible to argue that popular journalism offers more room for the readers' own accents and interpretations, which connect the consumption of journalism to their own everyday experiences. The 'textual poorness' and lack of closure, the playfulness and excessiveness, the more or less open use of the potential of social embarrassment, etc. practically demand the reader to become more active in the process of signification than does the factual, ready-made, thoroughly explained and institutionally legitimised information of serious journalism. Perhaps the most eager proponent of this view is John Fiske (1989, 1992) who argues that the success of tabloid-journalism is evidence of its ability to offer people opportunities of articulating their 'own' meanings while reading. Thus, popular journalism would give a 'voice' to those who cannot be concretely heard in the actual texts of journalism.

This line of thought offers both important lessons and severe problems for journalism critique.

One of the lessons is a reminder: if people increasingly opt for the apparently non-political and trivial form of journalism, it is a clear indication of the failure of mainstream serious journalism to address the experiences of people in a meaningful way. The consumer of journalism might not benefit much from moments of more or less silent and private 'semiotic resistance'. Yet, these moments can be seen more empowering experiences (even being very aware of the limits of the empowerment, as we are sure people are) than getting to learn by heart some of the serious heavy-weight rhetorics of the day.

When a popular evening paper in Finland publishes pictures of a former ski jumping hero, now turned into a strip-tease artist, and when the 'hot line for readers' is blocked by a massive reaction of pity, shame, and support from the readers, it is all too easy to say that this is an example of how people are lured into trivialities and are not really interested in the important common challenges and problems we face. It would be worthwhile to stop and think that maybe the massive reaction has more to do with the dialogic conventions of reading: the story about the fate of a former national hero is easily connected to questions of gender and power, the fear of being cast out and losing one's social respectability, etc.

Be that as it may, those who celebrate the multiaccentual potential of popular journalism demonstrate, at least, that our tendency to evaluate cultural products (both in journalism and in journalism research) often reflects other cultural hier-

archies. Our 'taste' for a particular kind of journalism might prevent us from learning about the dialogic uses of different kinds of journalism.

The problems inherent in celebrating the popular are not to be overlooked. We should not forget that even if it were true that popular journalism is of a carnevalistic nature, the carnival is just precisely that: a brief moment of exception to the hard realities and routine power relations of everyday life. The pleasures and resistant interpretations provoked by the unruly readership while reading popular journalism are in their very production framed as separate from the important social realities. In a sense, then, they are more private or less public, because there is nothing in terms of common action that is suggested by these readings. The social function of the carnival might very well be that, by inverting some of our key hierachies for a moment, it actually strengthens those very same hierarchies.

There is also a serious rhetorical flaw in praising the possibilities of the popular. However sophisticated the argument is, it can be turned against all forms of journalism criticism. If meanings are created by the readers (representation is act by the readers themselves), journalism is ultimately not responsible for the representations. This is, of course, a grotesque misinterpretation of what is meant by the potential multiaccentuality of signs and texts. But it may remind us how easily (again) the critical vocabulary of journalism criticism can be turned against its purposes. For if readers make their meanings, then even the claims for more fair access are at risk of losing their strength.

The other strand of emphasising dialogue between journalism and the readers is partly connected to the idea of news stirring up multiple interpretations. As Park (1940, 130) once wrote, it is precisely because news can be read in different ways that we debate about them. But the pragmatist tradition may help us to circumvent some of the flaws noted above.

The foundations of this tradition were laid by Dewey in the debates of the 1920's when he formulated the idea that the only true medium for genuine communication in society is vivid face-to-face interaction and discussion. Thus, the local community or the 'public', in Park's terms, are the true media of social intelligence (cf. Dewey 1927, 219). This theoretical point has survived through the century mainly as a theoretical point. Recently, however, various attempts have been made to figure out its more practical implications for journalism, for instance by Anderson et al. (1994), Killenberg & Dardenne (1997) and Christians et al. (1993). These writers take us a step closer to the idea of public deliberation. For the moment, however, let us see how they help us to clarify a more challenging definition of dialogic journalism. Anderson et al. (1994, 140-141) offer a clear and condensed list of qualities for such a practice of journalism. It should:

- give readers reasonable access to the ideas covered i.e. journalists should listen carefully to what their sources say and try to mediate
- provide enough context for readers to be able to discuss what was suggested
- allow comparisons to other relevant perspectives on the same issue
- acknowledge the effect of the presence of the journalist
- invite those who are silent to react and speak further
- encourage and start more conversation.

Journalism, based on the notion of dialogue, might turn out to look somewhat different from journalism starting from the notion of access. In any case, journalism critique might make use of the idea of dialogue as the most fundamental aspect of good journalism. If one tries to use at least the greater part of the potential the notion holds, one should, we believe, be aware of the difference between arguing for dialogue *in* journalism and arguing for dialogue *between* journalism and its readerships. It is one thing to see dialogue as a method of finding out or reflecting the variety of opinions, and almost quite another thing to view dialogue as a process, a thing valuable in itself, independently of the outcomes of the dialogue. It is in this sense that Dewey writes in the last pages of *The Public and Its Problems*: "Ideas which are not communicated, shared and reborn in expression are but soliloquy, and soliloquy is but broken and imperfect thought". (Dewey 1927, 218). In short, all the 'results' produced by dialogue are in vain, if journalism is not dialogic in the process-oriented sense

If we take the more process-oriented dialogic role of journalism seriously, two practical requirements surface. Journalism must openly encourage different readings (and search for new modes of stories that do so) and it must commit itself to task of making these different readings and interpretations public. The challenge is to make the accents and articulations heard, to give them the power and

position they need to argue on particular problems and to make them the objects and starting points for new emerging public situations and conversations.

Deliberation

From the three concepts chosen here deliberation is rarely explicitly used in discussions of journalism. However, the meanings of the concept of deliberation cover a wide range of familiar aspects. In describing these meanings it is helpful to distinguish between the *'narrow'* and *'deep'* uses of the word.

(i) The 'narrow' meaning of deliberation comes close to the regular dictionary definition. Deliberation is more or less the same as careful consideration, discussion of all sides of a question, and putting serious thought into one's decision or action. In this sense, deliberation is by no means alien to journalism. The professional judgment in choosing what is newsworthy is one form of 'careful consideration'. To some extent this 'deliberation' is visible in journalistic texts, especially in editorials and signed columns. In the same vein, journalists also expect the readers to deliberate on which issues they might form an opinion on, and what that opinion would be.

In the narrow definition of deliberation it is assumed that the topics are separate from the minds that deliberate on them. The 'reality' is 'out there' and we can think whatever we like about it. Deliberation is a private activity. Each of us is responsible for our own deliberation, and for that only.

This idea makes sense within our tradition of liberalism and its sacred ideas of individual liberties. As free persons we are presumed to process information individually and to form opinions that are genuinely our individual opinions. This idea fits perfectly into the professional thinking of journalists, because it releases them from any responsibility in relation to the consequences of their stories. Journalism is supposed to cater facts, events, and interpretations which the readers may use however they like. The question of whether or not the public deliberate is not a concern of journalism. If it were, journalism would have to violate individual liberties.

(ii) The 'deep' definition of deliberation is a more demanding one. For a thinking process to be deliberative, at least three inter-related criteria should be met. Contrasted to what was said above, deliberation refers to a *public* process, which is oriented to *solving common problems* and in which the participants go through a *transformation.*

Benjamin Barber (1984, 136-137) illustrates this nicely by imagining a group of people in a cafeteria trying to agree on what they might order as a group. The group may solve their dilemma either by *choosing*[10] or *participating. Choosing* would mean that the group compromises on an order (from an existing menu) that would not violate their individual tastes. *Participating* would mean that the group starts to contrive new menus, invent new recipes, and experiment with new diets in an effort to create a common taste they all share and that will supersede the conflicting private tastes about which they once tried to strike bargains.

The choosers would most likely find a provisional compromise, probably the least opposed meal on the menu. However, the personal tastes would be left intact and unviolated. Therefore, choosers would end up in a similar dispute next time. The participators would not reach a genuine consensus either. However, in the process of redesigning menus the object of bargaining would transform, and along with that change – so Barber argues – the members of the group would change as well.

Deliberation as a public process suggests a public is not just 'groups of strangers' discussing this or that, but a group of people, who share a common problem. A deliberative public works for solving that problem. This process in itself presupposes transformations: the problems must be redefined and so must the participants' relations to each other and to the problem. It is obvious that there can be no deliberation without dialogue. But every imaginable dialogue such a group may have is not deliberation, not even dialogue as a process, unless some kinds of transformations take place.

The 'deep' definition of deliberation starts from an idea that when values have been named, issues identified, agendas set, and options delienated, most of what is meaningful in politics has already taken place (ibid. 157). Tackling this problem connects to a number of recent theoretical and practical projects: communitarian criticism of liberalism (Sandel 1982), discourse ethics (cf. Cohen & Arato 1992), and theories of participatory democracy (cf. Barber 1984). In a more practical vein, the challenge has been addressed, for example, in teledemocracy (Connell 1996), and in the attempts to develop the methodologies for polling (Yankelovich 1991; Fishkin 1994). In journalism these ideas – both in theory and practice – have been an inspiration to so called public journalism (cf. Rosen & Merritt 1995).

Discussions around the 'deeper' meaning of deliberation tend to be philosophical, because they challenge the cornerstones of liberal thought. And dissenting with liberalism is quite a deep-going project. More specifically and in relation to journalism, this challenge can be seen on three fronts. We need to rethink journalism's relationship to representative democracy, the idea of expert knowledge, and the notion of reason.

Representative democracy presupposes that a legimitate representation is based on verifiable institutional public support (through political parties, elections, referenda, polls, etc.). Similarly, as decisions are made according to the will of the majority, voices in journalism get presented in proportion to their assumed public support. Instead of such verifications, deliberative journalism would underscore the variety of ways to frame an issue. It would assume that opinions – not to mention majorities and minorities – do not precede public deliberation, that thoughts and opinions do not precede their articulation in public, but that they start to emerge when the frames are publicly shared. This 'epistemological shift' is well formulated by Michael Sandel (1982, 183): we can know good in common that we cannot know alone (cf. Glasser 1991).

In the news, opinions are usually deemed 'representative' when they either correspond to the assumed public opinion or when those who express opinions are seen as appropriate miniatyres of the society and its functions. It is not easy to be heard in the news if you talk radically for animal rights, because this view is considered marginal. If you make your argument public through action – say, demonstrations or attacks on fur farmers – your action will be presented as deviance from the normal social order and interpreted accordingly by the appropriate institutions, say, the police or the compulsory public intellectuals.

Contrary to this, if one thought that opinions were created in social relationships only, one would try to see such a conflict as a site or an opportunity for formulating a new kind of understanding concerning the ethics of using animals. Evaluating different voices would, then, be based on an assessment on how they contribute to new emerging definitions for a problem. The value of public actors would be measured against the process of deliberation and not against their status or statistical representativeness.

In a deliberative situation *expert knowledge* has no priviledged position. All the participants are experts in the ways in which the common problem touches their everyday lives. Thus, opinions and knowledge expressed in deliberation articulate the experiences of the participants.

The predominant ideas about expertise incorporated in journalistic practices can often be seen as obstacles for deliberation. The routinely accessed and priviledged experts are not assumed to derive their knowledge and opinions from social experience, but rather independently from it. Experts frame problems differently from citizens. Therefore, experts – be they philosophers, sociologists, engineers etc. – almost by definition alienate themselves from the practices of everyday life (cf. Dewey 1927, 206-209).

Some recent empirical studies stress the differences between the established frames of experts and those of 'ordinary people'.[11] While institutionalised expertise is based on demarcations and analytical distinctions, ordinary people tend to ground their observations in connections and coherence (cf. Harwood Group 1993; Huxman & Iorio 1996). These studies insist that commonplace experience should have its place in defining, discussing, and solving public problems. This does not mean, however, that deliberative journalism should reduce all discussion to common sense. Rather, the perspectives 'ordinary people' should be allowed to transform the analytical distinctions of established experts as well as define new questions.

Besides being at a distance from everyday experiences, experts tend to conceive *reason* instrumentally. This means that experts frame problems that they find solvable.[12] The attempt to make problems manageable often means shutting out alternative frames, particularly those which relate to commonplace experiences. An example is found in discussions about (un)employment policies.

The problem of unemployment seems manageable only if it is framed with short term goals. One such goal is to cut the number of unemployed persons through favouring short term jobs and more flexibility with wages. This may alleviate the problem statistically and also bring jobs to those who now seem permanently unemployed. Framing the problem from the perspective of everyday life, however, might show that the actual problems do not disappear: the uncertainty about the future, the inability to control one's own life etc. are overrun by the more manageable definition of the unemployment problem.

In addition to avoiding the tendency to find only manageable and solvable problems, deliberation emphasises the value of participation in itself. Participation in issues that 'ring true' to one's own life

can bring *public happiness* that one can acquire nowhere else (Arendt [1963] 1990, 119). Public happiness is different from private enjoyment achieved, for instance, in reading multiaccentual tabloids. Public happiness is born only if one has an opportunity to act and make one's accents public. Whether one's actions have the desired effect is less important. One can feel public happiness in participating even though the problems do not necessarily disappear.

The most prominent effort to take advantage of the deep meaning of deliberation are the recent experiments under the title of 'public journalism'. From the beginning of the 1990's this movement – comprising more than 200 projects – has tried to redesign journalistic conventions to resonate better with the citizens' definitions of problems and to contribute to their participation.[13] Special projects have focused on political events like elections, or on specific problems such as crime, unemployment, race relations etc. There have also been efforts to create new sustainable practices for newsrooms. In order to illustrate some aspects of more deliberative journalism we shall conclude with a brief discussion of some of these experiments (for a more full description, see Charity 1995; Lambeth & Craig 1995).

The election projects can be seen as reactions to the excesses of political campaigning in the United States. Instead of been submitting to the agenda of spin doctors, public journalists try to construct – and commit to – the 'citizens' agenda' in their election reporting. Here the conceptual depth of the movement is often also seriously compromised. While the theory suggests that the 'citizens' agenda' may only be created in a slow public process, many election projects take the short cut to locating the agenda, through polling, as if the citizens' agenda were 'out there' waiting to be discovered. Despite that, new kinds of encounters between the citizens and candidates have been developed succesfully in these election projects (cf. Schaffer & Miller 1995). The projects focusing on social problems underscore more clearly that agendas, definitions and solutions cannot be merely discovered, but instead they have to be worked through. In attempts to redesign journalistic routines the emphasis is usually on the means of information gathering. The point is that journalism not merely retrieves and mediates information, but it also helps to produce it. The production of information normally takes place in discussion groups that are used practically in all public journalism projects.

The significance of discussion groups becomes obvious when we compare them to more traditional routines of journalism. While journalism conventionally favours established sources and experts that provide generalised, unlocalised, presumably 'value-free' and thus supposedly representative information, discussion groups anchor their views on concrete conditions. Consequently, the focus groups produce local knowledge that is essential for more deliberative journalism. Such journalism can also appreciate the chance to come up with suprising and insightful knowledge.

Building journalism on the notion of deliberation has some noteworthy problems. One of these problems is its intimate connection to the idea of community. It is uncertain to what extent any amount of deliberation is able to create a public community not reducible to some existing idea of a community. Paradoxically enough, the danger of reductionism reappears in the thought that is supposed to be utterly antireductionist. It is particularly important to spot this risk, when we remember that deliberation often means commitment to particular solutions to our common problems. Public participation requires certain cultural and social competences that are not evenly distributed in societies. It may be that criteria set for what is reasonable and constructive discussion suit the educated, and relatively well paid journalists and their peers, but probably not all the citizens.

How does deliberation, then, help us to think about journalistic representation? Mainly by arguing that journalism should be representative and responsive to the everyday experiences of its readers and to their framing of common problems. In addition, deliberation sets out give a different answer to the question what is the meaning of public discussion. The meaning is not so much in the quest for truth, private pleasures of reception, or in dialogue as such. More than those, public discussion should be about transformations of public definitions and opinions concerning common problems. There are obvious problems with deliberation relating to the risks included in the notions of community, participation, and cultural competence. However, for truly deliberative journalism, these risks would appear as common problems around which genuine publics could emerge.

Discussion

It is against the spirit of this text to write anything "conclusive". For instead of ending anything, this paper is an attempt to map parts of journalism

cricitism in a slightly new and different way. Whether our map is useful at all will hopefully be proven by future discussions and experiments. Instead of a proper conclusion, then, we want to offer some points that still trouble us about the project.

We feel that it is necessary to try and develop, clarify and rethink the vocabulary with which we make sense of journalism. There are powerful 'external' reasons for this. The common 'public sphere' created largely by mainstream news journalism during this century faces severe economic, cultural, technological, and political challenges. The great audiences are fragmented by market needs and technology. The economic base of 'Enlightment journalism' is in question. The ever more visible and meaningful differences of identities and discourses question the position of journalists as the 'translators' of symbols. The new network environment opens by-passes around the editing monopoly of journalists. The representative credibility of journalism seems to be eroding. The list could be longer and more elaborated, but the crucial lesson is this: it is not a bad time to rethink. The future may not be altogether open, and it is certainly not determined by the perspectives that journalism research takes, but still, new insights are needed to anticipate the problems of the future.

We feel it is especially important that journalism research makes an attempt to question the monopoly of journalists to define the vocabulary with which journalism can and should be evaluated. It is, of course, only a small addition to the publicness of journalism that researchers ask new kinds of questions from journalists. It also remains unclear to what extent it will be possible to diversify the perspectives even further to include other stakeholders of journalism: readers, civic activists, news sources etc. The public itself would be the most important participant in this discussion, but as long as we view the audience as the 'spectators' of public discussion or as those who do not have access, development in this direction is highly unlikely.[14]

One difficult question in our project is to what extent it is at all possible to develop a vocabulary of journalism criticism that would allow different stakeholders of journalism to discuss journalism in a way that would challenge the participants' own perspectives and still remain intelligible. After all, meanings are, in the end practical, matters, and the tendency to reduce terms and notions to one's own practice is a serious obstacle in these debates (as we have pointed out in various points above). It should be admitted that no-one is innocent of the sin of reductionism.

Given these unsolved problems, we have, in this paper, focused mainly on the relationship between journalism and journalism criticism.[15] We have tried to work with concepts that seem to be at least familiar (at least to begin with) both to the critical research traditions of communication studies and to the professional discourse of journalism. From this perspective, our three concepts arranged themselves during our work into the order in which we presented them.

The concept of access is closest to the core of the discourse of professional journalism. This helps us to understand some of the problems that the notion brings with it to journalism critique. Especially for the public at large and for the 'ordinary people', access is treacherous territory. When access, in the end, turns out to be a relation of bilateral exchange, the 'ordinary people' simply do not have hard enough currency to offer in exchange for permission into journalism. Journalism of access is more interested in factual information (and its institutional guarantees) and representative sources than what kind of contributions any one of us could offer on a given subject. Within this notion, journalism is about who is saying, rather than about what is said.

Dialogue is a helpful notion precisely because it allows us to shift the emphasis away from the problems of access. If journalists were to choose voices in the public discussions more in terms of the content of what is said of than who happens to be uttering the content, the institutional factors and resources might carry less weight. From the perspective of dialogue we can also criticise the ways in which journalism administers the discussion between the voices that are accessed. And this perspective becomes even more challenging when we suggest that journalism should take seriously its roles both as the initiator and facilitator of public discussion, and that it should also commit more resources into being able to cover (!) the ongoing results of the dialogue it has set in motion. As we can see, the more seriously we take the notion of dialogue, the further we are drifting from the legitimate core of journalism as 'mediating' the facts.

Deliberation is (in relation to contemporary professional journalism) the most demanding notion of our notions. If deliberation is considered a public activity, it requires some sort of basic dialogic conditions.[16] There are two fundamental points that encourage us to take deliberation as a working concept of journalism criticism. First of all, it underscores the competence and potential of all members of the public. People are experts in their own lives,

and thus they possess valuable knowledge for solving and redefining public problems. They are also capable of this kind of constructive discussion. This perspective helps us to counter and question the intimate links between journalism and the structures of knowledge in society that form the core of access discourse. Secondly, deliberation emphasises the idea that public opinions and solutions are created in the process of deliberation. Thus, the challenge for journalism is not only to think about, who can participate, but also about, what sort of situations are created for participation and deliberation.

One way of saying what the public journalism experiments are all about is that they are an attempt to invest to the readers, to take them seriously and to create practices and situations in which the people are able to formulate views and ideas worth publicing. This effort is a fundamental challenge not only to ideas about journalism, but to the routines of journalism, and to practices of government in general.

Notes

1. Our viewpoint in relation to representation is by no means exhaustive. We stress two dualisms in the concept by referring to two different analytical distinctions: 'semiotic vs. political' (Williams 1983) and 'standing for' vs. 'acting for' (Pitkin 1967). For recent treaments of representation see e.g. Peters (1997); Hall (1997).
2. This is a perfect example of how journalism is reduced to just one of its significant aspects by critics. For an illustrative example of this see Herman & Chomsky (1988).
3. Self-promotional declarations are by no means rare. The editor-in-chief of *Helsingin Sanomat* Janne Virkkunen was exceptionally candid in this respect a week before the Finnish EU referendum: "Helsingin Sanomat is aligned neither with the govenment, interest groups, political parties or faceless forces of market economy. It is committed to its readers." (HS, October 9. 1996).
4. This idea is common when discussing the new communication technologies. The notion of 'disintermedialisation' - the disappearence of the mediator - seems to capture this idea. However, the latest develpments on the internet seem to to contradict rather than corroborate it.
5. The historical and empirical 'verification' of the nature of such unedited journalism can be found in Ekecrantz & Olsson (1994, 100-131).
6. The 'symbol persons' have become common in the news. According to one analysis during a four day period TV news presented 34 'legitimate sources' and no less than 19 symbol persons. Not surprisingly foreign symbol persons depicted wars and conflicts, whereas all(!) Finns (8) were used as signs of a brighter future and recovery from economic recession. (Ampuja 1997).
7. While finishing this text, Schudson's (1997) recent contribution to the discussion about the meaning of conversation in democracy came to our attention. He suggests some interesting distinctions (conversation oriented to sociability vs. conversation oriented towards problem-solving) that partly overlap with our themes here. Anyone seriously interested in this theme should take his points into consideration (as we hope to do in forthcoming texts).
8. These points are not, of course, totally mutually exclusive. Their difference reflects partly the question of whether 'normative' discourses in general are useful compared to more 'analytical' grasp of things. However, one might suggest that the argument for a more 'analytical' approach (which e.g. Koivisto & Väliverronen argue for) is at least implicitly based on normative goals.
9. This marching order is in some ways a peculiar one, given the often noted fact that it is precisely the opinion pages – such as the letters to the editor – that interest people and make them talk either to each other or back to journalism. Whereas the harder and more factual 'news' tend not to create that much discussion and debate. As Berelson (1949) pointed out a long time ago, one of the essential uses of journalism (or a newspaper) is that it offers material for face-to-face interaction. It might very well be that talking about other peoples opinions or views fits better to these situations than talking about the 'facts'. After all, a fact is a given, isn't it?
10. Barber (1984, 136) uses the word voting instead of choosing. The referent of the idea is broader, though. Not only in elections, but in social life in general, we find ourselves in situations where we may quite freely choose what to think, but we have much less say about the alternatives between which we make choices.
11. The pros and cons of expert knowledge were disputed already by Lippmann ([1922] 1963) and Dewey (1927). The contemporary discussion is very much indebted to them (Carey 1989; Rosen 1994; Peters 1997).
12. Karl Popper (1966) is probably the most influential theorist in this field. Even though he is perhaps not so familiar to journalists, his idea of critical rationalism resonates nicely with journalists. According to Popper one should take a rational, critical, and realistic atti-

tude towards society. Being rational means that one should look for facts. Being critical means that facts always turn false. Being a realist means that, due to errors in our thinking, one should only take small steps, not to think revolutionally about anything.

13. Public journalism has also been harshly criticised. Especially the big metropolitan papers have considered public journalism as fraud, dishonest, and an ultimately anti-democratic idea. Some scholars have been suspicious about the economic underpinnings of projects that have been funded partly by publishers and supported heavily by philantropic foundations (Hardt 1997). Hardt also criticises public journalism's rhetoric of lack of historicity. Public journalism's proponents tend to overlook the economic conditions in which journalism works and the constraints of social structures in general. Whereas the criticism from metropolitan papers seems to serve their own status and interests, the latter critique is more accurat, albeit ultimately rather dismissive of all reforms in journalism.
14. Seija Ridell (1998, forthcoming) challenges the notion of the 'audience' precisely from this perspective. She also has plans to take the conceptual challenge to the level of practical experiments.
15. This is not to say that there would not be a lot of work to be done on other fronts as well. For instance, Jan Ekecrantz (1997, see also Ekecrantz & Olsson 1994) makes a good case for arguing that better academic journalism criticism and research need a more multidisciplinary base to begin with.
16. Although e.g. Thompson (1995, 255-258) seems to think otherwise.

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State, Market, Crisis

Swedish News Journalism on the Economy

Bo Mårtenson & Håkan Lindhoff

During the 1990s, Sweden has experienced considerable economic turmoil. Recurrent economic crises have made inroads in the so-called welfare state, with market solutions being sought for growing number of sectors and societal functions. These developments have opened up new areas, and presented new tasks for traditional news journalism. Sweden's entry into the European Union and adaptation to an increasingly internationalized economy have, furthermore, led to a marked increase in specialized economic reporting. The current phase of development as we approach the end of the millennium may be described in terms of globalization and a growing role of finance capital, with what seems to be an ever greater emphasis on the symbolic aspects of economic events and processes. As a consequence, media descriptions and constructions of economic conditions have become increasingly focal. They have coonsequences for democracy, as well as for the economy itself.[1]

Following a series of turbulent bank and real estate crises in the late 1980s, processes of economization and deregulation have increasingly challenged the traditional Swedish welfare model. The immediate effects have been rising unemployment, coupled with a growing budget deficit and rising interest rates. Today, unemployemt has stabilized at an elevated European level, while inflation has declined and Sweden's fiscal situation has improved. The transition in Sweden from Keynesian economics to neo-Liberal theory is hardly unique in Europe, but considering the initial position and the relative swiftness of the process, the Swedish case is quite distinctive. Changes in the political and economic spheres, as well as their corresponding reformulations at the discursive and rhetorical levels, have been accomplished in a comparatively short period of time.

How are we to describe and interpret the role of economic journalism and its consequences with regard to changes in the relationships between politics, economics and culture? This question indicates the focus and perspective of a research project currently under way in the Department of Journalism, Media and Comunication at Stockholm University: "Journalism on the Economy" (Nowak, Lindhoff & Mårtenson 1998).[2] The present article offers an overview of the research questions addressed, the methods and empirical strategies applied, and findings to date.[3] The study is essentially descriptive and exploratory in character, but an overarching ambition is to improve our understanding of the ways in which economic reporting has influenced and contributed to public knowledge of the economy and related matters. Thus, the project addresses problems relating to the media's roles vis-à-vis the public sphere, democracy and citizenship.[4] Whereas the relation between journalism and the political system has been well explored by media scholars, the relation between journalism about the economy and economic policy and the economic 'public sphere' has received considerably less attention.[5]

The following article is divided into four sections. In the first we discuss the theoretical points of departure of the project and the research questions we pose. Thereafter, we present some of the main findings and observations from the two studies completed to date: a study of the news coverage of the national budget in 1994, 1995 and 1996 on three Swedish television channels (Bo Mårtenson), and a study of the reporting of the economic crises of the 1990s in nationally circulated newspapers *Dagens Nyheter* and *Expressen* [the former Sweden's leading daily, the latter one of two daily tabloids circulated nationwide; both papers owned by

the Bonnier group] (Håkan Lindhoff). The ambition in both studies has primarily been to determine the 'discursive character' of the coverage. Our starting point is a conception of news journalism as institutionalized discourses. Throughout our analysis we distinguish between a thematic dimension and a rhetorical dimension (cf. thematic and schematic levels in van Dijk (1988)). Similarly, the concept of "news construction" of the economy is used to indicate that we primarily conceive of journalism not as mirroring reality, but as symbolically reconstructing it.

The findings and observations made in our studies are then contrasted with a historical survey of economic reporting, based on an analysis of three Stockholm newspapers during the 1930s. The 1930s represent a decisive period in the early years of welfare economics as a dominant influence in Swedish economic policy; the findings may also be compared with Mike Emmison's observations concerning how the notion of "the economy" gained acceptance in the discourse of British print journalism of the same period (Emmison 1983). The historical part of the project so far has focused on the news and debates in the press surrounding the presentation of the national budget each year during the period 1929-1939 (Hansson 1997).

Finally, on the basis of a very general comparison of the journalism of the 1990s and that of the 1930s we offer some preliminary conclusions about Swedish economic reporting. Coming studies will focus on economic news reporting of the 1970s and 1980s, more specifically, the journalistic coverage of the national budget and miscellaneous economic crises.

Questions and Starting Points

Our overall objective is to describe and problematize the constructions of the economy found in Swedish news reports on the economy. Questions about how the journalistic 'version' of the Swedish economy relates to reality or to academic economic discourses are not formulated explicitly. Not because they lack relevance, but rather because our focus rests on the internal structure of the journalistic discourse on the economy.

Our overall aim is naturally founded in research on news reporting in general, both in the press and on television – more precisely, studies concerning definitions of 'journalism' and 'news' and related observations regarding the dissolution of genre boundaries (cf., i.a., Gripsrud 1989; Höijer 1995; Nichols 1994). The centre of our focus rests on the conventions of economic journalism and how those conventions influence public perceptions and understanding of 'economic matters, events and processes. Our collaboration with the Liverpool Public Communications Group (LPCG) at the University of Liverpool was a source of great inspiration in the early phases of our project. The Group conducted similar research in 1995-1996.[6]

Our motive for studying economic journalism arises out of observations concerning certain specific characteristics of 'the economy' as a public issue and as an object of media reporting, i.e. characteristics that differ from reporting on other subjects.[7] Put another way: economic events and processes show certain characteristics that have implications for the journalistic treatment they receive. These observations formed the basis for our empirical strategy and the analytical models.

a) Economization. The increasing salience of the economic agenda over the past ten to fifteen years is an empirical observation and starting point, while it also is a compelling motive for studying economic journalism (cf. Hvitfelt & Malmström 1990; Lindhoff & Mårtenson 1996a). We distinguish between two levels of meaning in this process. On the one hand, *real* economization in the sense that economic factors and considerations have become more influential in public affairs and political issues relating to the economy, and economic issues have come to dominate other political issues. Loosely, one might say that public issues are increasingly defined and discussed in economic terms. Secondly, we have a *medial* economization in the sense that the economy and economic matters increasingly affect news reporting, spreading into other media and journalistic genres, as well. Meanwhile, the current metamorphosis of genres implies a potential conflict between content and form, between a relatively uniform and dominant economic discourse and a blurring of the boundaries between news and other media genres (cf. Nichols 1994). Questions relating to the homogenization or diversity of media constructions of economic events and processes are brought to a head.

b) The economy as a system. The systematic nature of economic events and processes is a fundamental characteristic (cf., i.a., Emmison 1983; Corner 1995a; Plaschke 1994). We can observe elements, components or indicators of the system on both micro and macro levels, e.g., profit rates or rates of return on investments in indi-

vidual companies or rates of inflation or economic growth, but also the fact that individual indicators are systematically related to the economy as a whole. In economic theory this implies a selection and a specific hierarchy of elements/indicators. The implication for economic news reporting is that reporting about the economy always is a matter of a (secondary) selection of indicators, and thus an implicit or explicit understanding of (or assumption about) the relations between the indicators in queston. The relation between inflation and unemployment, or between market interest rates and stock prices are typical examples. The other side of the coin is that economic news reporting always ignores or discounts some indicators, e.g., unemployment was played down, and inflation and the budget deficit played up in Sweden in the early 1990s.

c) *'The economy' as a totality.* 'GNP', gross national product, is an economic term for a measure of a country's total aggregate production, its growth and potential. But the expression, 'the economy' also implies a reification of this total entity and is associated with characteristics on the dimension activity-passivity (cf. Emmison 1983; Rae & Drury 1993). Both purely economic and cultural connotations of the expression are relevant to an understanding of how it is communicated, how economic events are reported by news journalists and how the stories are received by their readers/viewers. The characteristics assigned to economic forces and processes are closely bound up with the relationship between the economy and the political system and the civic sphere. They also relate to ideas about 'economic cultures', more specifically national economic cultures, that is, which economic measures are politically or culturally feasible in different societies or at different points in time (cf., i.a., Plaschke 1994; Clegg & Redding 1990).

d) *The economy as symbols.* The economy is always symbolic in some sense. Still, we note that the economic sphere is becoming increasingly symbolic. The explanation lies in the growth and internationalization of financial markets, due at least in part to the privatization and deregulation of previously publicly and politically steered economic flows. Yet another force is the economization of symbolic values such as incorporeal rights, licences, formats, not least those pertaining to media production. A third factor is developments in information technology (computerization, satellite transmission, mobile telephony, e-mail, internet, etc.) which have facilitated a growing volume of increasingly rapid electronic transactions, particularly in the financial sector. These factors all give rise to greater demand for market information and for information on changes and trends in general. Expectations, prognoses, even moods and feelings, gain in importance, and, equally, an orientation toward the future tends more and more to take precedence over awareness of the present. This forward thrust of the symbolic realm has important, albeit hard-to-predict, consequences both for the function of the economy and for economic journalism.

e) *The economy and knowledge.* Systemic or 'technical' understanding is probably more important in relation to economic matters than to most other areas of news journalism. Comprehension aspects are in other words crucial to the reception of economic news (cf., i.a., Höijer 1989; Corner 1991). This is particularly true of synchronic understanding; in a diachronic perspective, economic processes often seem relatively simple and unambiguous. This constitutes a 'solution' of the dilemma of complexity which economic theorists, market actors, economic journalists and their audiences all confront, and involves a radical reduction of the number of components in the system and the establishment of fixed or posited causal relations between them. In economic theory this necessarily implies applying simplifying models, but in the market it often means reducing the economy to unproblematic rules of thumb, such as the relation between a couple of variables and their trends, both, historical and anticipated.

Interesting in this context are the obvious implications for economic and economic-political journalism: economic events are reported in terms of relatively simple and clear-cut 'narratives' about the nation's economy, which creates a structuring framework for individual items of economic news (cf., i.a., Corner 1995a). This underlying narrative context also influences perceptions of the newsworthiness of individual news events. One view conceives of economic reporting as a confrontation or conflict of expert knowledge and 'common sense', leaving a fairly broad middleground of 'non-knowledge' open for mythological interpretations. Silverstone (1981, 1988) discusses this distinction in relation to television in general, but the

notion would appear to have special relevance to economic reporting.

To sum up: These characteristic and specific features of 'the economy' as an area of news reporting serve as a starting point and frame of reference for our empirical studies of the contribution economic news reporting makes to popular understanding of economic matters. The following pages summarize some of the principal findings of the studies completed to date.

Television News About the Budget, 1994-1996

Bo Mårtenson

The first study in the project analyzes television news coverage of the presentation of the Swedish Budget and Finance Bill in 1994, 1995 and 1996.[8] The choice of the budget as the focus of study and as an example of how 'the economy' is reported by economic journalists is strategic. The event is recurrent; hence, it is known in advance and editorially 'planned for'. Consequently, there is little likelihood of serendipitous or marginally relevant treatments, but rather the event may be expected to be covered 'by the book', i.e., according to the conventions of the profession and genre. Furthermore, the budget is an economic event having far-reaching ramifications, and it presumes a comprehensive view of the Swedish economy. These factors make coverage of the Budget and Finance Bill a particularly suitable object for any study of the constructions of economic journalism, while it also permits historical comparisons.

The reports carried in the newscasts of three nationwide television channels – SVT1 (*Aktuellt*), SVT2 (*Rapport*), and TV4 (*Nyheterna*) constitute the material for analysis. The SVT channels are traditional non-commercial, licence-financed public service channels, whereas TV4 is privately owned and commercially financed.[9] Six aspects or levels of the reporting are examined each of the three years.[10]

a) The Economy 1994-96 in a Diachronic Perspective

Developments in the Swedish economy and in economic policy during the period are a basic aspect. A summary of the version of these developments offered by economic journalists in three years of budget journalism describes the narrative context in which individual news items are evaluated and constructed. One may conceive of this narrative context as a continuous "story" of the Swedish economy in the mid-1990s (cf. Corner 1995a and LPCG 1998 on the British economy during the same period).

Above all, the description has been compared to observations of the economy, synchronic and diachronic. The comparison reveals successively greater complexity and less congruence in the Swedish economy over the period. The optimism expressed regarding balance in the budget, for example, contrasts sharply with pessimism regarding seemingly permanent unemployment in conjunction with the last budget of the period. Reports of market actors' reactions and Sweden's relations with the European Union further variegate the picture.[11]

b) The Economy: Thematic Foci

Economic news reports in 1996 were analyzed with respect to the themes and actors treated and the dominant journalistic strategies in items of economic news throughout the week the budget bill was presented. The week is in no sense representative, but was chosen because of its significance; it was a week in which news about the economy and politics was particularly prevalent.[12] Of a total of 152 principal news items during the week, no fewer than 37 had to do with the budget bill, either directly or indirectly.

The analysis identified seven distinct discursive fields or areas. Each budget-related news item could be assigned to (i.e., was oriented toward) one of the following themes. In rank order, according to frequency of mention, the themes are

(i) the welfare state – threats and possible defences

(ii) unemployment – status and prognosis

(iii) the market response

(iv) the budget, from the point of view of the market

(v) state and government finance – status and prognosis

(vi) Europe – the implications of the budget with regard to the EU and the EMU

(vii) the budget in the context of economic theory.

These thematic areas may be considered in terms of either a political-economic dimension or a state (public)-market (private) dimension (cf. Jensen

1987). The budget-related news events were more often given angles, or constructed, relating to the former dimension (i and ii) than to the latter (iii, iv, vi, vii). Thus, the news of the budget is still reported as an essentially political phenomenon, even though market perspectives have become increasingly salient in recent years. It is also interesting to identify emphases in the budget coverage in a third perspective which takes its point of departure in the duality of the Budget and Finance Bill itself: the bill contains both concrete budget allocations and judgments and prognoses that form the basis for the finance (revenue) plan. Concentration on the finance plan implies that coverage will be more oriented toward the economic system than to the political system, and more toward the future than to the present. To some extent it also means an orientation toward symbolic rather than material aspects.

Characteristic of coverage the day the bill was presented (20 September 1996) was the predominance of future-orientation instead of the specific allocations proposed, a predominance which prevailed regardless of the theme (i-vii) treated.

c) The Economy: Actors

The analysis of actors revealed a decided predominance of politicians and journalists. Politicians were among the principal actors in 16 of the 37 news items concerning the budget, and journalists figured prominently in 15 items. Members of the general public, economic experts and spokespersons for organizations were present to a markedly lesser extent. The pattern is illustrative of the introspective and self-citing nature of economic journalism today – and perhaps journalism as a whole. The items in which journalists figured prominently were of two basic types and reflect two different strategies for active news reporting: the former corresponds to the familiar studio dialogue with a journalist in the role of expert; the other a variation on 'primary reporting', whereby the journalist actively chooses the subject, sources and 'angle' of the story. This latter form of news reportage, which is often only loosely related to 'events' behind the news event constructed, appears to be an increasingly characteristic construction in popular economic journalism.

d) Representations: Verbal and Visual

The discursively significant expressions in the reporting relating to the budget consist of verbalized constructions of the future (e.g., the use of the present tense), dichotomies (like "winners and losers"), metaphor (e.g., wallet, piggy-bank, tightened belt) and euphemism (like "savings" instead of "cuts"), as well as visual representations. A general problem for journalism in a visual medium like television is the need to find ways of visualizing abstractions. This is especially a problem for economic journalism, not least considering the expansion of the symbolic aspects of economics, such as market expectations, assessments and outlooks. Visual illustrations of established verbal metaphors are a common and distinct strategy, but even genuinely visual metaphors occur (e.g., expectations of growth accompanied by lyrical nature motifs, crystal balls for economic prognoses). A third form of representation is the use of figures and statistical graphics, a familiar convention of economic journalism. We submit that this serves two functions: an informative function and, equally, a 'metalinguistic' function in that it signals a certain genre or elicits a certain mode of decoding.

e) Constructions of the Market

'The market' is most probably the most significant single phenomenon in Swedish economic journalism of the 1990s. The market appears, or is constructed, in newscasts in two ways. On the one hand, we have the market's responses to or rating of policy measures; on the other, routine presentations in graphics and figures (stock prices, exchange rates, interests rates). The daily, routine imparting of financial information may also be taken as a daily 'thermometer reading', an indicator of the health/unhealth of the nation's economy. As such it raises questions concerning possible shifts in the relation between the economy and politics, between the market and government.

A distinct impression of the budget news during the week studied is that the reporting is markedly less active and independent vis-à-vis the market than it is vis-à-vis the political sphere. We encounter few journalistic assessments of market reactions, and independent analyses of trends or events in the market are much less common than political analyses.

f) Modes of Audience Address

Finally, the news items have been analyzed in terms of the various modes of address used in them. These strategies (which, of course, might also be treated as journalistic methods or news conven-

tions) imply a presumed or anticipated audience and/or a sense of the purpose of news reporting. This perspective seems essential in analysis of Swedish television news (and perhaps Swedish news reporting in general), imbued as it is with the traditions and conventions of public service broadcasting. Two contrasting modes of address are easily distinguished in the items concerning the economy and economic policies: on the one hand, the journalist as 'average citizen', who makes no effort to disguise his lack of expertise and asks the questions most people would ask, given the chance; on the other hand, the journalist as 'expert', who answers questions and makes judgments with no reference to any other authoritative source.

An observation based on the budget coverage of the three channels is that impartial reporting of what others have said seems to be declining in favour of direct audience address in one or both of these two modes. Combinations of the two are increasingly common: typically, a studio dialogue between a layman-journalist (often the anchor) and an expert-journalist, creating an 'educational' situation. This trend calls for closer examination of constructions of 'expertise' as opposed to 'common sense' in economic news.

* * *

The analysis to date supports two principal observations about the economy constructed by journalism as a 'public issue' and involving a corresponding 'public knowledge':

(i) The interaction between economic journalism and the political and economic systems seems to be increasing in importance as a consequence of the expansion of the market sector, internationalization, and the growth of the symbolic economy. At roughly the same pace, economic-political reporting speaks to a growing economic audience, parallel to the traditional 'public', the citizenry. The economy is increasingly perceived to be active and autonomous, beyond political and civil control, but affording greater opportunities for individual participation on financial markets. This would appear to be a cornerstone in the current public perception of the economy in Sweden.

ii) The 1990s have been a period of economic crisis and restructuring, the dismantling of the welfare economy, and a fundamental shift in the relation beween politics and the economy. The decade has also – put somewhat drastically – elicited a news journalistic project with the objective of bringing 'the market' into alignment with a coherent and logical understanding of the Swedish economy, a welfare economy which heretofore mainly has been a political issue and a matter for 'the state'. Journalists' educational ambitions in this regard are primarily visible in the modes of audience address journalists (and their editors) choose. At least in part, they are explained by the tradition of public service broadcasting, in which 'comprehensibility' and 'consensus' are key words.

"Economic Crisis" Discourses in Swedish Newspapers 1992-1997

Håkan Lindhoff

Paradoxically enough, "economic crisis" seems to have become a permanent or normal feature of the Swedish economy as it is described in news reporting of the 1990s. This manner of characterizing the economy may be traced back to treatments of the oil crisis and the acute inflation of the 1970s and 1980s, when repeated devaluations of the Swedish 'krona' were the government's 'patent remedy' for the nation's economic ills. Reported symptoms of crisis also seem to carry over into periods of recovery and 'boom', i.e., there is a marked lag that occasionally puts reporting out of phase with actual economic conditions. One approach to describing Swedish economic journalism of recent decades is to render these crisis discourses more manifest: What are the characteristics of an "economy" in "crisis" – as described by Swedish journalists?[13]

One study in our project has addressed this question on the basis of economic news reporting in newspapers during the 1990s. The material studied derives from two of the largest newspapers in Sweden, *Dagens Nyheter* (DN) and *Expressen*.[14] The content of the papers is readily accessible through a searchable full-text database of all articles published.[15] The database permitted an extensive search for selected discursive terms (indicators of crisis and of economization) in the total copy produced during the years in question; secondly, samples could be selected for closer analysis of journalistic expressions for economic crisis and 'crisis consciousness' and for identifying the dominant crisis discourses. The purpose of this selective analysis is to describe and interpret discursively significant aspects of the journalistic treatment of 'economic crisis' in relaton to the media context.[16]

a) Indicators of Economization and Crisis-Orientation

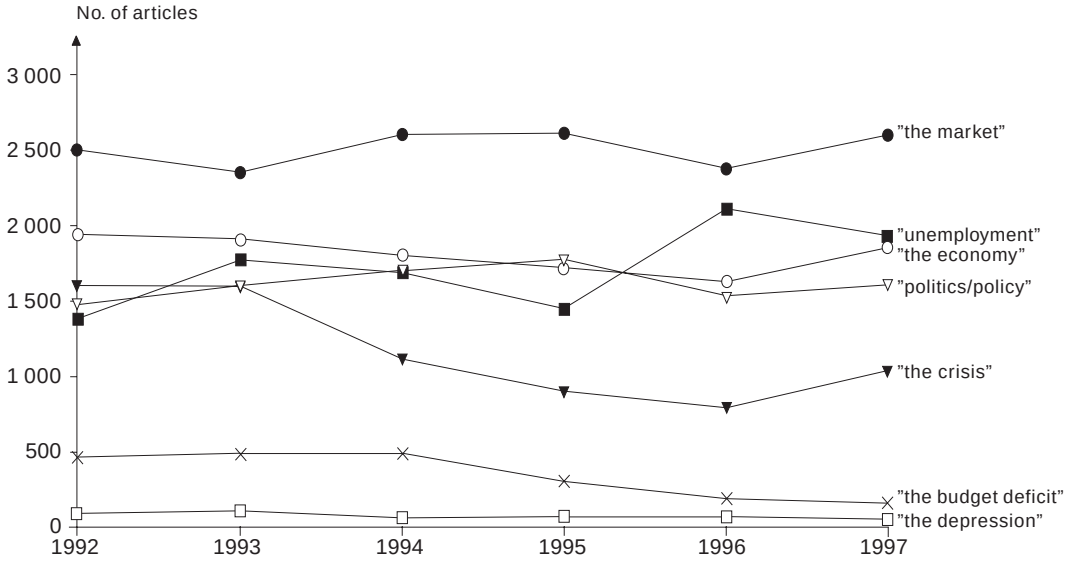
By studying the frequency of selected economic and crisis-related terms in the total text mass of *DN* and *Expressen* during the period 1992-1997, we were able to identify certain important indicators of the economy and the economic crisis and to chart their stability or variability over time (cf. Boréus 1994). The measure chosen was "number of articles containing at least one mention of a given term" (or "a given pair of terms used once or more in the same paragraph"). Comparing the frequency of the terms in question, one gains an impression, albeit a gross one, of the character of the total text in these respects. Figure 1 shows some of the results of this measure.

All in all, between 10 and 11,000 articles per year contained expressions including the term 'economy' (*ekonomi*...) – either the noun itself or as the prefix in a compound word[17] – whereas the term, 'policy' or 'politics' (*politik*)[18] occurred in between 11 and 12,000 articles a year. If we accept this as a gross indicator of the degree of economization and politicization of journalistic prose, we may conclude that economy-orientation is nearly as strong as newspapers' traditional political orientation. We also note that the relationship is fairly stable over the six-year period.

The diagram shows our findings regarding the frequency of seven terms (as independent nouns in the definite form,[19] singular, only): 'the market' (*marknaden*), 'unemployment' (*arbetslösheten*), 'the economy' (*ekonomin*), 'politics'/'policy' (*politiken*), 'the crisis' (*krisen*), 'the depression' (*depressionen*) and 'the budget deficit' (*budgetunderskottet*). The terms, 'the economy' and 'politics'/'the policy' each occurred in between 1,500 and 2,000 articles per year. 'The crisis', as a reified expression having implicit meaning, is nearly as established, although the frequency gently declines over the period. Meanwhile, journalistic use of the term 'unemployment' shows a steady increase. It is, of course, difficult to judge whether these tendencies may be taken as an indication that journalists increasingly perceive the high level of unemployment in Sweden to be a permanent feature of the economy, rather than a temporary symptom of crisis.[20]

Quite clearly, the term 'the market' has become well established in Swedish journalism during the past decade; it occurs in 2,500 articles per year during the period under study. No other term is mentioned as frequently, not even 'the economy'. Sig-

Figure 1. Seven Discursive Terms in Dagens Nyheter and Expressen, 1992-1997



Source: Presstext.

nificantly, 'the market' and 'the crisis' are hardly ever mentioned in the same paragraph. 'The market' is not associated with crisis, either as a cause, a symptom or a consequence of it. Instead, 'the market' seems implicitly to be regarded as a solution to many a crisis – an impression borne out in closer analysis (see below).

Articles which mention 'the economic crisis' or which use 'economy'/'economic' and 'crisis' in the same paragraph are four times as common as articles which use 'the political crisis' or 'politics/policy' and 'crisis' together. Thus, there is reason to believe that the reader of *DN* or *Expressen* these years associates 'the crisis' with one or several of the economic factors which, in Sweden, had a critical period: the bank or credit crisis, the unemployment crisis, the currency or interest rate crisis, the real estate crisis, the budget deficit or national debt crisis. Analysis of the frequency of these terms shows that mention peaked in 1992 and 1993. These were what might be called 'the multiple crisis years' in Swedish journalism. This was one of the reasons for choosing 1992 for a closer study of economic crisis coverage in the news.

b) The Discursive Character of Economic Crisis News

Despite its arithmetical exactness, the broad quantitative measurement of mention of various indicators in the total material yields only a vague and superficial picture, which is open to alternative interpretations. To make the description more precise so as to permit a more careful analysis of the news texts of the economic crisis, in which discursive terms are examined in context, a more limited sample was selected: all the articles in DN's business news section during 1992 in which the terms 'economy'/'economic' and 'crisis' were mentioned in the same paragraph. Some 103 articles filled these criteria. They were analyzed carefully with regard to the following aspects:

(i) writers, sources, actors

(ii) geographical distribution

(iii) type of news construction

(iv) thematic discursive characteristics relating to economic factors

(v) thematic discursive characteristics relating to crisis

(vi) overall assessment of economic crisis discourses.

Some 37 journalists at *DN*, 33 of whom were men, produced 85 per cent of the texts; with a 'hard core' of four male journalists producing half of them, however. The remaining 15 per cent consisted of Swedish wire service copy. Roughly 15 per cent of the articles were commentary, the rest being straight news. Altogether 31 actors were mentioned by name; 20 of these were Swedes. Economists (14) and politicians (9) were the most frequent categories mentioned. Women (3) were seldom mentioned, and 'average' citizens were virtually absent, the sole exception being an unemployed woman, who was interviewed by a female journalist.

Not surprisingly, the geographical distribution shows a concentration – more than half of the texts – on conditions in Sweden. Next-most common was news from Finland (13), which either explicitly or implicitly was held forth as a model for solutions to the crisis. The rest of western Europe and the EU and eastern Europe were not infrequent foci of crisis reportage. However, (with the exception of a couple of articles about Japan) Asia, Africa and Latin America were totally absent from the material. Altogether, one may say that, compared to an earlier study of economic journalism, including the coverage in DN (Lindhoff & Mårtenson 1996a and b), a surprising number of international perspectives were present -with the exception, that is, of perspectives from the truly critical economies of the Third World.

The dominant types of news constructions – judged on the basis of whole articles using a four-cell ideal typology like the one used by Ekecrantz and Olsson (1994)[21] – were *compound reconstructions* (49) and concerted actions (39). *Case descriptions* (7) and *narratives* (8) were relatively few. The compound reconstructions concerned financial results, financial troubles, prognoses and plans, whereas most of the articles interpreted as cases of concerted action were closely tied to the news source, such as demands or proposals relating to government policy ("crisis packages"), the Bank of Sweden, economists, business leaders, union leaders etc.

Clearly manifest in the reporting about economic crises is the paradox recognized by Corner (e.g., 1995a), namely, that the economy – "in reality" as well as "in the news" – simultaneously shows both a synchronic aspect, an extremely complex system of mutually interrelated variables, and a diachronic aspect, consisting of unequivocal narrative episodes. Synchronic compound reconstructions, which often treat prognoses concerning indi-

vidual variables like economic growth, inflation, unemployment, etc, are mixed with diachronically expressed actions, which sometimes develop into episodic narratives over time. The news forms tend to be oriented more toward the actors' initiatives than toward the complexities of the economic system.

The analysis of the discursive character of crisis news reporting did not primarily focus on rhetorical-linguistic characteristics, but rather – like Emmison (1983), Jensen (1987) and Rae & Drury (1993) – more on the content, the thematic characteristics regarding economic matters and crisis (cf. also van Dijk's (1988) distinction between discourse schematic and thematic structures). As to economic content, the news texts have been examined with respect to four dimensions of economic systems, inspired in part by economic theory[22]: dominant temporal perspective; the relation between material and symbolic components of the economy; the relation between micro- and macro-levels; and the degree of market orientation of the economy.

Very briefly summarizing the principal findings of the analysis of the economic discursive characteristics of the 103 crisis items, we may describe the texts, as follows: They are oriented more to the future (53 of the 103), than to the present (22) or the past (28). They deal with symbolic components (65) such as expectations, prognoses, hopes and plans, more than material components. The macro-perspective (71) is predominant, individuals and households being only sparsely represented, along with unions and local and regional government (cf. Svallfors 1996). Finally, constructions of the market are relatively few (registered in only 20 of the 103 articles on economy/economic and crisis, 13 of which on unemployment or the labour market.

The presence or absence (or degrees thereof) of significant terms in the material is, of course, of great importance in any discourse analysis. In view of the widespread and frequent occurrence of the term, 'the market' in news texts in *DN* and *Expressen* found in the indicator study, it is remarkable that the term is used so little in articles relating to economic crisis in DN in 1992. Why is this so?

Most probably, as the the total inventory of economic indicators suggested, because the terms 'market' and 'crisis' seldom occur together in economic news reports, not in the same articles in any case. The market is not portrayed as a cause of crisis, and it is seldom described as crisis-stricken – with the possible exception of the labour market. On the contrary, implicit in many texts is an assumption that the market is not part of the problem, but rather part of the solution. This should not be taken to mean that reporting turns a blind eye to symptoms of crisis in the market, for example, in relation to the bank crisis of 1989/90. The crisis was, of course, reported, but not in terms of a 'credit market crisis'. The term, 'the market', in fact symbolizes, or evokes a vision of, ideal conditions; it is reserved for discussions of changes in the economic system. It nearly always carries a positive valence. Reporting on the economic crisis is much more inclined to delve into analyses of the crisis as it impacts on the public sector (e.g., in connection with budget deficits) than to turn a critical eye on crises in the market.

The news texts in *DN* and *Expressen* were also analyzed using a simple causal and temporal model of crisis-as-process in order to describe them discursively with respect to crisis themes. Five phases in a crisis process were identified. Figures in parentheses indicate the number of articles in which the respective phases are dominant. There is generally one phase per article, occasionally two (yielding a total of 120 observations in the 103 articles):

(i)	the history or background of the crisis; historical comparisons	(3)
(ii)	explanations of the crisis (reasons, responsibility, and causes)	(19)
(iii)	descriptions (presence, symptoms, trends)	(35)
(iv)	consequences and effects of the crisis	(30)
(v)	recovery, solutions, measures to combat the crisis	(33)

As indicated here, expressions of the presence of the crisis, its trends and consequences (iii-iv) predominate (more than half the observations). Articles treating consequences do not generally focus on analyses of cause and effect, but tend rather to point out who is already suffering, or may be expected to suffer the consequences. Among these 'victims', industry and commerce (14) and the public sector (10) tend to be mentioned more than households or individual people. Roughly one-fourth of the observations focused on 'recovery', i.e., improvements in the economic situation and measures taken to solve the crisis.

Most remarkable is the fact that so few (less than one-fifth) of the articles deal with the causes of the crisis, assign blame or responsibility or recount its historical background. The articles that do

so display considerable disparity and some interesting tensions. Some texts find the roots of the crisis here in Sweden (4), whereas others consider it to have come from abroad (5). Some articles attribute the crisis to certain companies, the structure of enterprise in Sweden, or market conditions (3), while others attribute it to failures of economic policy or wrong-headed politicians (5). Finally, some texts look for causes in the short term (in the economy or market), whereas others consider the longer term (in politics).

c) Interpretation of Dominant Economic Crisis Discourses

With that we arrive at a total assessment of the crisis discourses found in the economic reporting in DN in 1992. Closer examination and interpretation of the 103 articles reveals that the reporting was not univocal, but rather divided – principally between two main discourses regarding the economic crisis in Sweden (cf. Hall 1980). A basic issue in economic theory, economic reality, and economic journalism is the relation between the economy and the political sphere. In his analysis of economic journalism in the British press of the 1930s, Emmison (1983) has documented how 'the economy' came to be a systemic and reified notion of something which politics actively sought to gain control over, inspired by Keynesian thinking.

By contrast, the dominant crisis discourse in the Swedish press of the 1990s seems to express a process tending in the opposite direction, in line with the current transformation of the economy: The *active economy-discourse* about crises sees the economy as active in relation to the political sphere. Furthermore, the solution to the crisis lies not in the realm of politics, but in the liberation of market forces. It is the market which evaluates government policy, not vice versa. The crisis may in fact represent a salutary purge, freeing the market from politically imposed shackles. A Friedmanesque scenario.

This dominant discourse, however, alternates with a secondary discourse, quite clearly influenced by lingering Keynesian or neo-Keynesian thinking, which posits a *passive economy* or an *active political sphere* vis-à-vis the crisis, i.e., political actions which steer the economy out of its critical condition: Economic policy measures are needed to solve the crisis, at least to cure its direst symptoms. The expressions of this second overall discourse are more tentative, more pleading or, sometimes, more exhorting and have a strain of wishful thinking, whereas the expressions of the dominant discourse more explicitly offer recipes to solve the crisis and, on occasion, analyses of its causes.

Some few texts suggest a third, subordinate, deviant and more *critical* discourse concerning economic crises, which questions the motives of the active economy-discourse: Is the crisis perhaps deliberately staged? A tactical manoeuvre on the part of market actors in order to gain power over the political sphere once market forces have been liberated in the crisis situation?

Not infrequently, the two dominant discourses appear in one and the same article, but without reflection or serious comment. The material contains virtually no instances of 'dialogue' between the two discourses; the contradictions between them remain tacit. They are consonant, however, in the view that the crisis is a crisis for the whole of Swedish society, and that everyone shares the burden as well as a responsibility to restore the economy to health, whether through the free play of market forces or through policy measures ('crisis packages' – where cutbacks are fairly consistently referred to as 'savings'). One might even speak of a kind of *consensus* between the two dominant crisis discourses, which in one respect bridges over their mutual antagonisms. It consists of two unison admonishments to the Swedish people: to "obey the market's signals" and (yet) to "follow the guidelines set out in economic policy". This , then, seems to be the prime message that the dominant crisis discourses address to the Swedish people.

d) 'Crisis Consciousness'

To find out more about how economic journalism addresses its audience, we also undertook an interpretive study of some 120 articles in *DN* and *Expressen* during the period 1990-1996. The criterion of selection was use of the term, 'crisis consciousness'. Although not all too frequent, the term is a discursively significant indicator of how the text relates to the reader. Thus, it invited closer examination. The term itself may be said to symbolize Swedish newspapers' manner of presenting the crisis to the people. Use of the term peaked in 1992 and 1993 – as is the case for much of the crisis-related terminology. What does 'crisis consciousness' mean, as used by economic journalists? Does it reflect an educational ambition on the part of the papers, is it an open appeal to promote consensus as to how the crisis should be interpreted, or might it be a manipulative strategy, intended to foster public acceptance of austerity measures?

A closer examination of the expressions relating to the need for crisis consciousness reveals marked linguistic variations. Only half of the articles were straight news articles about the economy and politics; the rest were columns, news commentary and editorials. Some of the latter were vaguely critical, some even sarcastic.

All in all, 'crisis consciousness' as a discursive term does not seem primarily to have stood for an orientation toward a better understanding or awareness of the *economy as crisis*, however. Instead, as suggested by the above-mentioned area of agreement between the two dominant crisis discourses, there seems to have been a more or less conscious effort to win popular acceptance of the seriousness of the crisis and of the measures proposed to meet it. That is, it was more a question of opinion formation and influencing the economic behaviour and the economic-political attitudes of the reading public. "Accept the crisis" – these few words give the gist of the dominant economic crisis discourses in the economic news texts of *Dagens Nyheter* and *Expressen*, seen from the reader's point of view (cf. van Dijk 1998).

The Historical Context: Economic Reporting of the 1930s

Swedish economic news reporting during the 1990s, a period of questioning and gradual dismantling of the welfare state, may be contrasted with that of the 1930s, which was the period in which the 'welfare construction work' got under way. The historical span between these periods may seem somewhat tenuous, and the search for parallels or analogies and contrasts a bit far-fetched. Nor do the results of the historical analysis performed to date[23] offer a basis for unequivocal conclusions. The methodological problems are many, inasmuch as we have wanted to apply methods that would permit comparisons over time. The risk of making anachronistic interpretations is overhanging; our discourse-analytical approach and constructivist perspective do not lend themselves to applications in the all too distant past.[24]

Despite the difficulties, the descriptive and exploratory portions of the historical study provide our first data regarding how the conventions of Swedish economic journalism in print media have evolved. This is not the place for the necessary background information about the media situation and Swedish economic policy of the 1930s. Let us therefore only very briefly recap the findings of this first exploratory study.

The material analyzed was the coverage of the annual presentation of the Budget and Finance Bill in three Stockholm dailies during the period 1929-1939 (eleven years). The three newspapers display distinct political colours: *Socialdemokraten* (Social-Democratic), *Dagens Nyheter* (Liberal), and *Svenska Dagbladet* (Conservative). A commonly encountered problem in studies of press history concerns the style of presentation of various kinds of texts. News copy is not, for example, as easily distinguished from commentary, opinion pieces and leaders as it is in journalism today. Conventions regarding placement, editing and headlines differ. Nonetheless, all the material relating to the budget bills has been included.

The volume of news texts devoted to the Budget and Finance Bill during the 1930s is roughly the same in all three papers, nor does it change over the course of the period. Between 2 and 4 per cent of the printed text in the papers was devoted to the budget bill during the weeks studied, one week each year. Any comparison with budget news of today is tenuous, but a rough estimate indicates that the share of text devoted to budget coverage today is roughly the same. *Socialdemokraten* carries consistently more budget news, and increases the amount of coverage toward the end of the period – a trend that parallels the paper's role as 'Government organ' after the Social-Democrats took power in 1932.

The study combines an analysis of the kinds of texts used in economic reporting (documenting, forecasting, explaining or commenting) with a focus on the themes and aspects of the economy treated in the texts. The thematic dimensions are micro- or macro-economic subjects, material or symbolic aspects, synchronic or diachronic presentations, and ascribed activity or passivity.

Not surprisingly, we find that macro-economic subjects and material aspects predominate budget news. The symbolic content of the budget bill is not allowed as much attention as the actual budget dispositions. The relationship is very nearly the inverse in the 1990s budget reports. In the 1930s, the Budget and Finance Bill is presented as an explicitly political phenomenon. Despite the prevailing uncertainty and severe crisis, the economy is largely portrayed as being passive and within the control of the political sphere. The opposite applies in the 1990s (cf. Emmison 1983).

Straight news predominates. About 85 per cent of the material, headlines excluded, is neutral and impartial reporting, and true to the source. This applies equally to all three papers, irrespective of po-

litical colour. Valuating texts (commenting, forecasting, explaining) are mainly leaders. *Editorial* valuation is not achieved via news selection and coverage, other than as the obvious dependence on the news source. Consequently, there is less scope for 'news construction'. One may speak of consensus prevailing among the newspapers in the news articles. They all report the same budget.

An interesting contradiction between the texts and their headlines is to be noted, however. The political standpoints of the papers are expressed in rhetorical headlines over essentially identical news copy about the budget. Another interesting tension may be noted between the 'objective' straight news texts and valuative texts and commentary – particularly in leaders and in the frequently strongly biased quotations of other papers' commentary. Not infrequently, the papers carry commenting articles by invited economic experts, such as professors Cassel, Heckscher and Myrdal or even the principal news source, himself: Minister of Finance Wigforss.[25]

Thus, we found – somewhat surprisingly – a large measure of homogeneity and stability during the period. The similarities between the newspapers is striking when it comes to straight news coverage of the economy, and newspapers' manner of reporting, documenting and commenting on the budget changes little during the period.

Economic Journalism During the 1930s and 1990s: A Comparison

What light do our studies of economic journalism of the 1930s and 1990s cast on the reporting of the two decades? Any such discussion must be tentative since the material from the two decades differs: coverage of the budget bill in three nationally circulated newspapers in the 1930s vs. television news coverage of the budget bill on three channels and news reports of Sweden's economic crisis in two nationally circulated newspapers in the 1990s.[26]

There are nonetheless three good reasons why comparisons between economic news journalism in the 1930s and 1990s may be fruitful. First, the welfare state was in its establishment phase in the 1930s, whereas it is in the process of being dismantled in the 1990s. These processes are reflected in a growth in the budget during the 1930s, both in real values and in relation to the GNP, whereas the 1990s have witnessed corresponding shrinkage. Second, popular awareness of *the economy as welfare* emerged during the 1930s, whereas this same idea has been called into question in some quarters in the 1990s (to a lesser extent even in the 1980s). Third, as a consequence of these first two relationships, the relation between economics and politics, between market and government, is a very relevant dimension in any comparison of the economic journalism of the two periods. How stable or variable is the economic news in terms of its thematic content?

As for the volume of budget news, we find that about the same relative *share* of newspaper copy is devoted to reporting the budget bill in the 1930s as in the 1990s. If we take this as a gross measure of news values, we may speak of stability. As for the different genres of news journalism, we find a mixture of genres in both cases, but the composition of the mixture differs between the two periods. In the 1930s the different sections of the paper are not as distinct; commentary and straight news reporting are sometimes mixed. In the 1990s, a formal differentiation of genres between sections prevails. Overall, we find a commitment to the norm of 'objectivity' in news reporting, while we also note a certain relaxation of the norm over the course of the decade, through both a growing tendency to 'season' news pages with 'analysis', columns and commentary as well as frankly partisan news reporting. In the 1930s, partisan sentiment was expressed almost solely in headlines (often with as many as three levels, which correspond to 'kickers' and lead paragraphs in newspapers of today).[27]

The material from the 1930s contains a good measure of neutral recounting of what sources have said; the differences between papers of different political allegiance are minor. Political standpoints are expressed in commentary, leaders and quotes from other newspapers, and through partisan headlines which sometimes stand in stark contrast to the neutral copy that follows. The formal similarities between the papers are striking. The television news about the budgets of the 1990s is also very true to the source, but the news reports differ considerably in terms of formal expression. The economic crisis reporting may also be said to be true to source inasmuch as it concentrates on status reports (compound reconstructions) from a variety of sources and to initiatives on the part of major actors, like the Bank of Sweden, the Ministry of Finance, the Swedish Employers' Federation, and so forth. With few exceptions – taking the form of narratives or case studies – routine economic reporting is rather dependent and uncritical in relation to powerful actors as news sources.

Thus, a comparative analysis of the findings from the two decades suggests that the economic

journalism of the 1930s is less actively constructive than that of the 1990s. The conventions of news reporting have changed. It might be too hasty a conclusion to say that newspapers' ideological activity on economic issues was expressed exclusively through the rhetoric of headlines and commentary, but one is tempted to take this as a sign that the journalism of the 1930s – an era characterized by a strong party press and strong integration between the press and political institutions, when newspaper editors frequently doubled as politicians – was less independent as an institution.

Another prime difference concerns what themes in the budget documents the reporting focuses on and plays up. In the 1930s, many of the news stories include detailed accounts of the bill and the various allocations and items in it, with an emphasis on material economic components. In the 1990s, the symbolic content of the budget is in focus in at times quite selective accounts of the finance plan's prognoses and expectations regarding such things as inflation, growth or unemployment. The predominance of a macro-economic perspective in the 1930s corresponds to a similar tendency in the crisis coverage in *Dagens Nyheter* during the 1990s. Do the formal requirements of the medium not permit excursions to other levels?

In the 1930s, the budget as well as the growing public economy and welfare state were all seen as decidedly political phenomena. The economy is portrayed as being passive and within the control of policy measures. This is the nature of the economic discourse in all three newspapers, i.e., irrespective of political colour. Keynesianism was in the ascendant. In the 1990s, these convictions have lost their vigour – which is particularly apparent in the crisis journalism of the period. Two discourses seem to run parallel: on the one hand, the dominant one, which conceives of the economy, expressing itself through the market, as active and assumes that it is essentially impossible, or at least inadvisable, to control it through political measures. Here we see the influence of neo-classical economic theories. On the other hand, we have a discourse in which political bodies are called upon to solve essentially economic problems, such as unemployment. The economy appears to be passive, whereas politics (once again?) seems to be active. The ambivalence noted here is seldom reflected on or discusssed openly. The dominant construction in television news of the budget through the 1990s conceives of politics as being active vis-à-vis the economy.

Observations regarding the relationship between economics and politics are very important to the project at hand. The question of what has happened in this regard between the 1930s and the 1990s will be the focus of future studies in the project, "Journalism on the Economy 1970-1998". Studies of the evolution of economic reporting as a genre will also be oriented toward news constructions relating to both rhetorical and thematic representation as well as their contexts. To what extent do we note stability or variation in relation to business cycles and crises? In what ways is the pattern displayed in economic journalism visible in other contexts and in more general journalistic conventions?

In view of the relative paucity of research on economic news reporting in the field of media and communication studies – compared to, say, studies of political communication or election coverage – and considering the growing role the economy has begun to play in relation to the political sphere, 'economic news studies' would appear to be a field of growing importance. Current processes of internationalization present an obvious incitement to comparative studies of discourses of economic journalism, covering both time and space.

Notes

1. For further discussion of financial markets, internationalization and the role of mass media and communication technology, see, for example, Lybeck (1993), Lash & Urry (1994), Arrighi (1994), Hirst & Thompson (1996), and Martin & Schumann (1997).
2. The project was made possible by the generous support of The Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation, Stockholm University and the Ridderstad Foundation (Ridderstads stiftelse för historisk grafisk forskning).
3. Several colleagues have read and commented on an earlier draft of this article. We wish especially to thank Sigurd Allern, Esa Reunanen and Esa Sirkkunen for their input.
4. Habermas' theory of the public sphere is an obvious point of reference here. See also Dahlgren (1995); Corner (1995b); Neuman, Just & Crigler (1992).

5. Hvitfelt & Malmström (1990) and Hadenius & Söderhielm (1994) are two Swedish examples.
6. The Group, which is led by Professor John Corner, includes Kay Richardson, Neil Gavin and Peter Goddard. The principal findings of the research mentioned here will be published in Gavin (1998, forthcoming). Chapter 1: "Economic News and the Dynamics of Understanding" offers a good overview. Studies of reception and receivers' comprehension of economics news are central to the British project. See further Corner (1991) and Höijer (1989) for a discussion of the basic questions of reception studies. Various small-scale audience studies complement our research on Swedish economic reporting; the results of those studies are not reported here (cf. Lindhoff & Mårtenson (1995), Mårtenson & Lindhoff (1995)).
7. See Corner, Richardson & Fenton (1990) for a discussion of "public issue television".
8. Through 1995, the bill was traditionally presented on January 10th each year. Since 1996, it is presented in September.
9. Privately owned TV4 has contracted to fulfil certain public service functions in return for the concession entitling it to use the nationwide terrestrial distribution network.
10. The study is reported in greater detail in Mårtenson (1998). News coverage of the National Budget and Finance Bill in 1994 has been analyzed by Lindhoff & Mårtenson (1995); see also Mårtenson & Lindhoff (1995).
11. A national referendum on membership in the EU was held in September 1994. Sweden had become a member by the time of the second budget in the period. Understandably, these events dominated many areas of news coverage.
12. Other events during the week (16-22 September): the opening of Parliament, the presentation of several other important Government Bills, and a conference of European finance ministers concerning the EMU. By way of comparison, consider the analysis of economic reporting in Stockholm daily, Dagens Nyheter, a much more ordinary week in November 1995.
13. Crisis, from the Greek, means decisive juncture, or turning point. The word has come into the Swedish language, as into English, via medical terminology, viz., the term for the critical turning point in the course of an acute illness. The notion of 'permanent crisis' seems to be a contradiction in terms. Nonetheless, Swedish economic journalists have used, and continue to use, the word lavishly, irrespective of the health of the economy at the time.
14. Both newspapers are Stockholm-based, but nationally circulated; both belong to the Bonnier group.
15. The database, Presstext, contains all the texts published in *Expressen* since 1990 and all those published in *Dagens Nyheter* since December 1991. Starting in 1992, the database offers full access to both newspapers, including articles and notices of all genres, but excluding advertisements. Other Swedish newspapers - e.g., *Aftonbladet*, *Svenska Dagbladet* and *Göteborgs-Posten* – have established similar, publicly accessible databases since.
16. The study is reported in greater detail in Lindhoff (1998).
17. Like German, Swedish relies on the formation of compound nouns to a far greater extent than English. Thus, the corresponding measure in English might be the term, 'economy' plus the adjective, 'economic'.
18. '*Politik*' denotes both. In the definite form (see note 19), however, the word mainly denotes 'politics', but may also refer to an antecedently specified policy.
19. Corresponds to noun accompanied by a definite article or demonstrative pronoun. Usage of definite/indefinite form differs between English and Swedish, and thus the distinction is not as clear in translation.
20. For 1997 compared to 1996, increasing numbers of articles containing "the crisis", "the economy" and "the market" are observed, partly due to the growth of newsreports on the Asian crisis.
21. The typology involves two dimensions: (1) the journalistic strategy, mainly 'representational' or 'reconstructive'; and (2) temporal or spatial orientation. Reconstructive strategies predominated among reporting of the economic crisis, both temporally oriented (concerted actions) and spatially oriented (compound reconstructions). Ekecrantz and Olsson (1994) made similar findings in a study of contemporary journalism in general.
22. For studies of the roles economists and economic theories play in economic journalism, see Parsons (1989) and Hugemark (1994).
23. Hansson (1997).
24. Some promising methodological solutions are offered in a large-scale historical project on the role and functions of journalism, currently in progress at the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication (cf. Ekecrantz & Olsson 1994).
25. Parsons (1989) notes a similar presence of professors of Economics in the financial press in both the USA and Great Britain during this era.
26. One might, of course, argue that the three newspapers (perhaps supplemented with *Aftonbladet* and *Stockholms-Tidningen*) were the dominant media in the 1930s, and, likewise, the three television channels are the dominant media of the 1990s with regard to the media's role as popular sources of general knowledge about the economy.
27. Cf. Ekecrantz & Olsson (1994).

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Trivial Stories and Fancy Pictures?

Tabloidization Tendencies in Finnish and Swedish Regional and National Newspapers 1982–1997

GÖRAN DJUPSUND & TOM CARLSON

In recent years media researchers have noticed how commercial or market oriented news-logic is affecting the standard of television news, at a time of increasing competition (e.g. McManus 1994; Klite et al 1997; in the North e.g. Asp 1995; Helland 1995; Hjarvard 1995; Hvitfelt 1994). This development has been described with concepts like tabloid-TV, tabloidization, and tabloid fever (Klite 1995). When news is sold as an entertainment product, the material is converted into categories of human interest and soft news. Furthermore, visual elements, the drama, tempo and rhythm of reporting news has become more emphasised.

Among others, Neil Postman has argued that television and its format has become the paradigm for the overall conception of public information. Consequently, the total information environment begins to mirror television (Postman 1986, 111; cf. Altheide and Snow 1992). Thus, concerning the daily press, which is our topic of interest, McManus (1994, 7) writes that...

> [...] newspapers are now moving 'to embrace such topics as parenting or hobbies or shopping, and a willingness to billboard such subjects on the front page – often at the expense of government news' [...] A more obvious change in print has been the trend toward more vivid and graphic presentation [...] [N]ewspapers across the country have become more visually oriented [...] '[M]any editors appear to have been convinced ... that more and bigger photographs [...] were necessary counters to the visual and entertainment elements of TV'.

In this study, we focus on Nordic daily newspapers. The purpose is to monitor eventual tabloidization tendencies over time. Before we determine the material and method, we will briefly introduce some normative starting points, as well as specify our conception of tabloidization on a theoretical level.

Normative Starting Points

The study has a normative point of departure. Thus, we define democracy as follows: democracy in a society will be fulfilled to the extent that the citizens influentially participate in public decision-making (Ståhlberg and Helander 1972). With the term public decision-making, we do not exclusively mean decisions by elected representatives. We also embrace other decisions that clearly influence the life of large citizen groups, e.g. labour market agreements. The conditions for this definition are, on the one hand, a social participation, and on the other, that this participation is influential. Both the social participation, and especially the degree of influence at the same time, depends on certain other conditions. The most overwhelming premise can be described as knowledge. This knowledge consists of three fields. Firstly, knowledge of which questions are, or will be, on the political agenda. Secondly, content-related knowledge of these questions and alternative views and solutions concerning the questions. Thirdly, knowledge of how different groups within the society see these questions. Equipped with this kind of knowledge, the citizen has the ability to form his/her own opinion of which solutions to support. Furthermore, the citizen can draw guidelines for his/her own strategic actions.[1]

From which sources should the citizen obtain this knowledge? Normatively, we argue that one of

the most essential functions of the mass media is to offer citizens knowledge and information of the above-mentioned variety. This view can be specified in two points.

Firstly, we agree theoretically, that an individual medium neither can nor should fulfil its consumers' need of knowledge totally. Of course, this need should be fulfilled by the total media supply that the consumer uses. However, some relatively new trends related to media consumption should be noticed in this connection. Even if newspaper reading in the Nordic countries continuously lies on a relatively high level, there are tendencies towards a decrease on this point. For example, the willingness of households to subscribe to daily newspapers is decreasing in many population segments. Slightly simplified, it could be suggested that, whereas citizens used to subscribe to several newspapers, today they are becoming more dependent on only one newspaper source. At the same time, the use of the media is swinging more and more to the advantage of radio and television. According to our opinion, this indicates that the demand for relevant information is moving towards the individual medium.

Secondly, we presume that the media have three slightly separate roles. In line with the definition of societal decision-making given earlier, these roles are; to arouse interest for what is happening in the society; to show which questions are topical or under debate; and to give information about these issues and ways in which they can be handled. Every medium operates with all these fields, but the balance is achieved in different ways in different media. On the one hand, we are dealing with the differences between the radio and television and newspapers. On the other hand, the circulation – national versus regional or local – has significance in this connection. Especially television is largely characterised by the rather low limits for the amount of information it provides. At the same time, television and radio have the advantage of being able to work with several communicative elements. Thus, these media meet their consumers on more levels than newspapers.

To sum up, media should: arouse interest; present topical and upcoming issues; inform about the standpoints of different groups of actors. In this regard, it is natural that radio and television work more with these first two sections, but they do not completely neglect the third. The press has traditionally focused more towards the third section. Generally, we maintain that a certain difference of focus between the media is acceptable. However, the essential result of the discussion above is that the press has a special responsibility concerning the fulfilment of citizens' needs for social and political information. Against this background, the aim of this study is to examine what kind of information the press actually presents to the public. From a reader's perspective, we pose the following question: "Have the opportunities to obtain social information changed during the past years for newspaper readers; and if so, how?" In this respect, special attention is paid to the various tendencies which were criticised in the introduction, and which here are united under the concept of tabloidization.

Tabloidization

Tabloidization includes aspects concerning both content and format. Regarding content, our interest is limited to a phenomenon that we call trivialization (cf. Asp 1995, 17-25). This has to do with an orientation towards "soft news", "human interest", "infotainment"; and away from "hard news" concerning politics, economy and social processes. News of sport, dramatic events like crimes and accidents, entertainment, culture, lifestyle, everyday life, celebrities, weather, sensations and so on, get increased space.

Regarding format, our interest is limited to visualization, a phenomenon that gives rise to bigger pictures and other iconic signs, still more colours – more pictures based on the degree of the aesthetic quality; symbol amplitude, topicality and expressiveness. The reasons for visualization are many. One has to do with reader maximisation. At a time of over-supply of information and shortage of receiver attention, visualization becomes an additional technique to catch the attention and interest of the public. Since it is assumed that readers have become conditioned by television to be more visually orientated, a visually appealing newspaper product is needed in the fight for market share (e.g. Rehe 1985, 11). Another reason has to do with the diffusion of an originally American trend in the newspaper world (see Henning 1995). Newspaper publishers have now adopted a new concept of aesthetics and design. Creating a visualized newspaper is a way of presenting layout skills, and a talent for implementing new trends.

These tendencies have a number of consequences. Concerning trivialization, such a development, in the end, erodes the citizens' capability both to obtain relevant knowledge and to participate in public decision-making. Concerning visualiz-

ation, it is possible that such events, which offer "good pictures", begin to be preferred when news is selected. Thus, the information upon which citizens base their opinions and actions might be distorted. This is especially significant today, when newspaper reading often means a quick glancing of headlines, captions, leads and photographs. Consequently, one can presume that press pictures, in the long run, will affect the knowledge of newspaper readers. Earlier research on information processing supports the belief that the brain processes pictures in a different way than words. Besides the ability to process pictures quicker, people seem to recall them better. Moreover, photographs seem to awaken a greater emotional involvement (see Graber 1988 and 1996).

In Figure 1, visualization and trivialization are combined in order to illustrate four different situations.

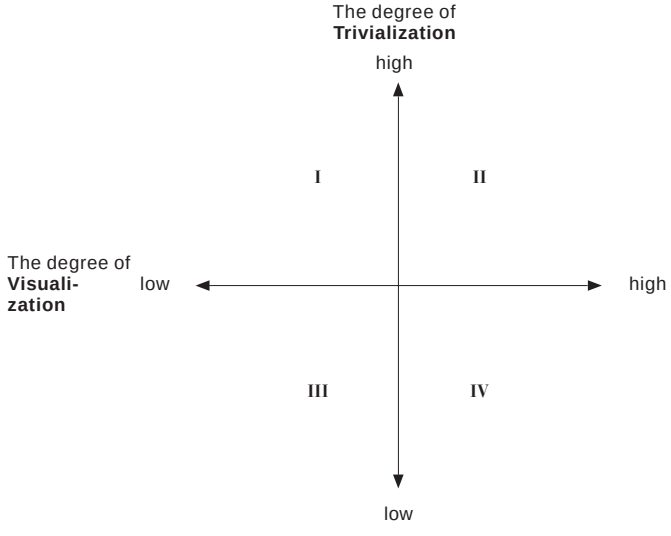
We expect observations in quadrant I (low visualization degree, high trivialization degree) to be rare since a material based on "soft news" and "human interest" usually is richly illustrated with pictures. Quadrant II (high trivialization degree, high visualization degree) is the area to find the traditional, commercial tabloid- and evening press. Quadrant III (low trivialization degree, low visualization degree) is typical for some extreme newspapers of the German press tradition (e.g. *Züricher Zeitung, Frankfurter Allgemeine*) but also of a continental tradition (*Le Monde, Figaro* etc.) From a purely theoretical point of view, this kind of press would be ideal. However, it is doubtful whether such a category would be able to attract ordinary people or whether it would please only a highly educated elite. Quadrant IV (low trivialization degree, high visualization degree) is in that case to be preferred, i.e. socially oriented news presented in a visually appealing form that is able to convey interest, thus reaching larger groups of citizens.

Empirical Data

Admittedly, our discussion of tabloidization has been rather general. Empirically, we approach the development of newspaper reality in a more restricted way. The crucial question is how to examine, in a restricted but still fruitful way, tabloidization tendencies in the press. Which newspapers should be analysed and what should be examined? When choosing newspapers, attention must be paid to their character. Thus, it is important to notice where a newspaper is published (cultural context). Moreover, one should pay attention to distribution ambitions and circulation (national, regional, local). Another consideration concerns whether we are dealing with a daily or evening newspaper.

Firstly, we restrict our research to daily newspapers. Secondly, we will observe both national and regional newspapers. Finally, we take into account the cultural context where the newspapers are published. Thus, we decided to observe newspapers published both in Finland and in Sweden. From national newspapers, we chose the Swedish *Dagens Nyheter* (DN), and the Finnish *Hufvudstadsbladet* (Hbl). The *Swedish Västerbottens-*

Figure 1. The Relationship between Visualization and Trivialization



Kuriren (V-K), and the Finnish *Vasabladet* (Vbl) represent the regional press. This design allows comparisons to be made both between countries and between the national and regional levels.

The research covers two periods: one week (21-27th April) in 1982 and 1997 respectively. Thus, the span seems to be long enough to identify changes in the newspapers, without the factors in the newspapers' environment having changed all too dramatically. Empirically, we chose to examine the front pages. The reasons for this were three: Firstly, to be work economical. Secondly, to take support from earlier research that had similarly restricted analysis to the front page, the part of a newspaper that has undergone the toughest scrutiny from a journalistic point of view (see Hvitfelt 1985; cf. Ekecrantz and Olsson 1994, 102; McManus 1994, 218). Thirdly, it is our conviction that the front page today – at a time of a superficially glancing, television-oriented readership – has become an even more important part of a newspaper than previously.

Regarding the trivialization aspect, the following will be examined: We will observe the area (cm2) and the share (%) of different types of articles. The articles are divided into three categories; "hard news", "soft news" and "news of crimes and accidents" (cf. Asp 1995; SOU 1975). This analysis will embrace both textual and visual elements.

The visualization aspect will be analysed in a number of ways. Firstly, we will observe the share of pictures on the front page. Secondly, we measure the extent in which articles are illustrated. Finally, we will analyse the "main picture" – that is the largest photograph on the front page – in more detail. One reason for focusing attention on the main picture is that it is theoretically possible to see the main picture's shape and placement on the front page as a kind of reflection of how the newspaper wishes to meet its readership (cf. Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 206).

Findings

What do the Newspapers Write about?

The degree and the art of trivialization in news is selfevidently a complex phenomenon. In this study, however, we will choose a simplified approach and focus only on the topic that the news is handling; "hard news", "soft news", and "crimes and accidents". McManus (1994, 219) has argued that the share of serious socially oriented news in an ideal case must be at least 70% of the newspaper as a whole. However, since our interest mainly concerns developmental tendencies, we will not present an ideal model with given restrictions for shares of different news categories. Our normative conviction is, nevertheless, that "hard news" should dominate the front page.

The news mix in the examined newspapers is presented in the form of bar graphs. Before we present our results, we wish to point out that our research material is relatively small. Furthermore, the results are presented mainly in the form of means. Thus, one or two clearly deviating pages can mislead the mean values of a whole period for a newspaper. To avoid these pitfalls as efficiently as possible, we have kept an eye on the standard deviation. In unclear cases, and when the standard deviation has been high, we have returned to the actual newspapers to control whether there exists an appropriate balance between our reader impression and the summed numerical impression. The result regarding the news mix of the different dailies is presented in Figure 2.

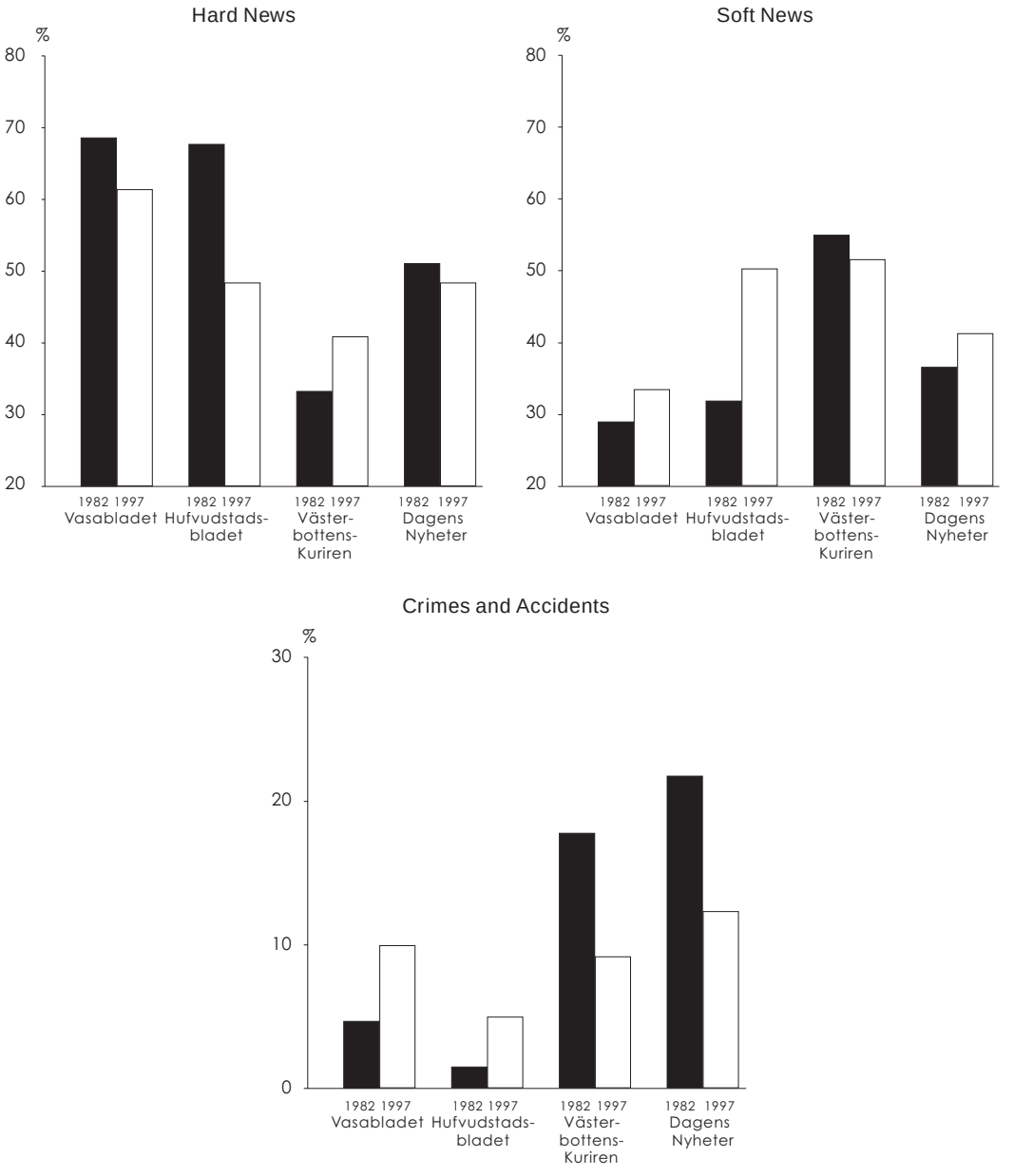
The overwhelming perception is that the news is affected rather by the differences between countries than the differences between national and regional newspapers. Furthermore, it is worth noticing the levels from which the newspapers start out in 1982. At that time, the Swedish newspapers (DN and V-K) showed a higher share of both "soft news" and "crimes and accidents" than did the Finnish newspapers (Hbl and Vbl). Over time, Hbl is the newspaper where the biggest changes have taken place. The paper shows a clear decrease in the share of "hard news" on the front page.

When we look at the situation in 1997, we notice that Vbl is the only newspaper where the "hard news" is allowed to dominate the front page in a way that causes one to remember the earlier mentioned ideals. In the other newspapers, the "soft news" and the reporting of "accidents and crimes" have gained a dominating position.

Concerning illustrations, we notice that "soft news" is the most visualized. However, we can also observe certain minor differences between the newspapers. Vbl and DN, which during the first period had the least visualized "hard news", show the biggest change on this point. During the later period, these newspapers are even slightly more visual than Hbl and V-K.

To sum up, if we assume that the goal to aim for is a clear priority for "hard news" on the front page, we can state that the Swedish media, already in 1982, were rather much trivialized. Over time, the Finnish media is developing towards the same di-

Figure 2. News Types on the Front Pages (means; %)

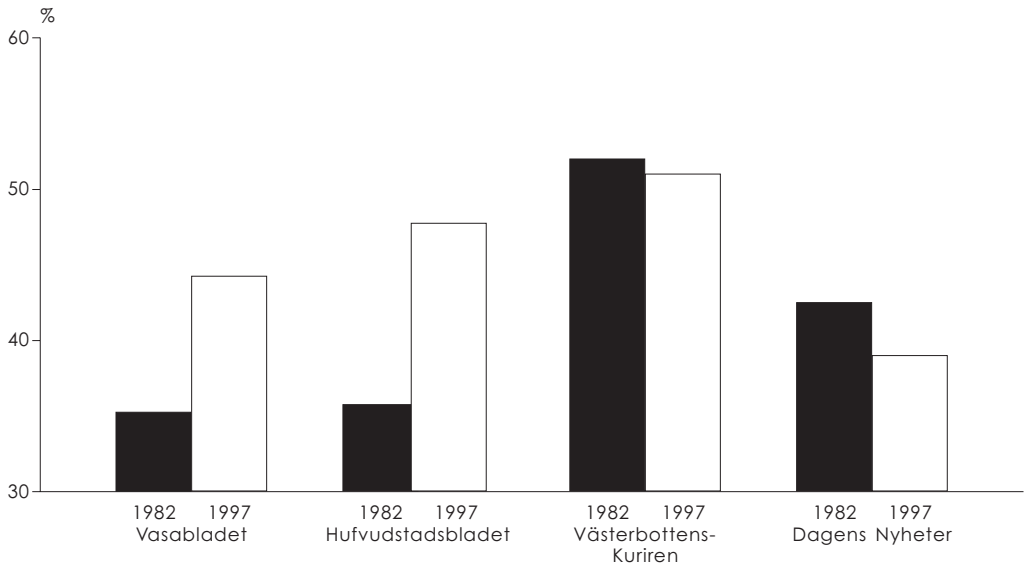


rection. However, Vbl seems to retain a slight and acceptable amount of "hard news" on its front page.

Visualization of the Front Page

Concerning visualization, the other dimension of tabloidization, we are empirically observing two aspects. Our questions are: "How visualized is the front page?" and "What are the expressions of the visualization?" Some light can be shed on the first question by looking at the relationship between the textual and visual elements on the front page. The different expressions of visualization can be seen from many viewpoints. Here we have chosen to focus on the amount of pictures. Furthermore, we

Figure 3. The Share of Visual Elements on the Front Page (means; %)



have undertaken a qualitative analysis of the main picture. The share of visual elements on the front page is presented in Figure 3.

The front page of today seems to be highly visualized. On average, nearly half of the front page contains pictures. Furthermore, we notice that the differences in development are mostly to be seen between the two countries, rather than inside each of them. The Swedish newspapers were, already during the first period, heavily illustrated. Since that time the textual elements have continued to fight a loosing battle. In Finland, the development is slightly different. Hbl and Vbl had, in 1982, a relatively low visualization value, but have since developed strongly. Especially Hbl appears today to be even more visualized than DN. It is also worth mentioning that the number of pictures on the front page varies without a clear pattern, either within or between the newspapers.

Let us now examine the main picture on the front page. How dominating is it? Are there differences between newspapers, and can we notice some changes over time? The position of the main picture has been measured by its absolute size (cm2), and its share (%) of the front page. The last measurement indicates how clearly a certain picture has been chosen to be emphasised. Figure 4 clearly shows that the main picture has been worth choosing as a subject for special attention.

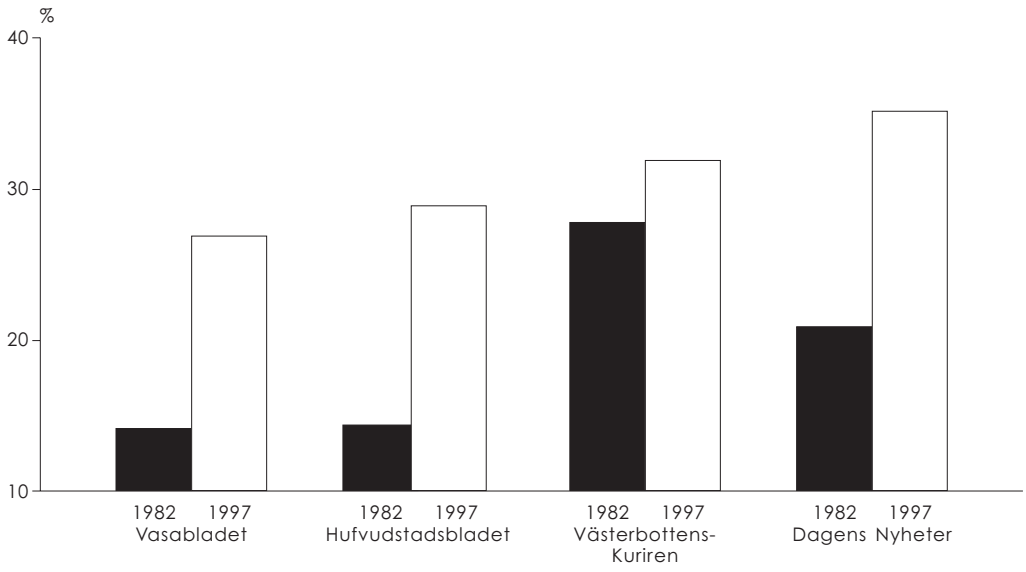
The result illustrates a remarkable strengthening of the main picture's position (cf. Becker 1997, 6). The development is particularly strong regarding the Finnish dailies. In 1982, the main picture differed only marginally from the other pictures, whereas in 1997 the picture often dominated the front page. On average it covered about one third of the page.

Certain differences between the countries were also revealed. Again, the development seems to have started earlier in Sweden. Already in 1982, the main pictures on DN's and V-K's front pages were relatively large. In spite of this, they are still becoming larger as time goes on. To sum up, the front pages of the daily papers today are strongly visualized and this, in a way that strongly underlines the main picture and its position.

Qualitative Observations

In the following, the main pictures (n=52) will be qualitatively analysed in closer detail. Our interest is, as mentioned earlier, mainly directed towards aspects of form like abundance of connotations, aesthetic qualities, expressiveness etc. As a starting point for the analysis we use Roland Barthes' partition of photographic connotation techniques: 1) use of trick effects; 2) posing of people; 3) posing of objects; 4) photogenia, in other words, taking advantage of lighting, camera angles, exposure and developing techniques; 5) aestheticism, in other words, a purpose to raise the photography to an art standard; 6) syntax; in other words, utilising a se-

Figure 4. The Share of the Main Picture on the Front Page (means; %)



ries of pictures (Barthes 1986, 21-25). The unit of analysis is the main picture. The description below covers each newspaper separately.

Vasabladet 1982

(1) A black and white (in the following: b/w) picture of a man outside, showing a horse.

(2) A b/w picture of two roadworkers in a village, repairing a hole in a road with spades and tarmac.

(3) A b/w picture from an "afternoon home" for school children: on a couch, a woman is reading fairy tales for five children.

(4) A b/w picture of three young men standing at the charred ruins of a burned-down village shop.

(5) A b/w snapshot from an ice hockey match. A goalkeeper lies on the ice; two players are struggling for the puck.

(6) A b/w picture of preparations at a theatre: an actress is trying on a fur coat.

Vasabladet 1997

(1) A colour picture which portrays a man on his plot of land. In the background stands a newly built indoor sports hall.

(2) A colour picture: a man standing on a road besides a fence gate. In the background lies a forest area (which is planned to become a car park for an indoor ice-skating rink).

(3) A colour picture taken inside a prison cell: two male prison officers are standing at the cell door.

(4) A colour picture from a pub; three men try, half-lying and laughing, a stage built for the world championships in ice hockey to be televised. Posing and utilisation of a camera angle from below are used.

(5) A colour picture of ice fishing (jigging). Two jiggers are cleaning fishes on the ice. Strong, clear colours.

(6) A colour picture of Bishop Desmond Tutu sitting on a chair in his office in Cape Town.

In summary, there are no clear patterns regarding themes, neither within nor between the points of time. Certain pictures that arouse attention and interest can, however, be observed. Thus, in the pictures of 1982, children and animals (a horse) are depicted. Among the photographs from 1997, the picture from the pub, with its hilarious atmosphere, and the one from the unknown prison environment can be labelled as attention grabbing and interest arousing. Bishop Tutu is the only portrayed person representing a social elite. Pictures related to sport occur sparingly in both points of time. Concerning format, the changeover to colour pictures is worth noticing. In other respects, the aim to create distinguished pictures is not eye-catching. Posing, with an altered camera angle, is used only in the pub photography.

Hufvudstadsbladet 1982

(1) A b/w picture from a hot-tempered demonstration; police officers try to move environmental activists who are offering passive resistance.

(2) A b/w snapshot from an ice hockey match. One player is powerfully tackling another.

(3) A b/w picture of Israeli soldiers on a ladder about to evict Jewish settlers from a roof in Sinai.

(4) A b/w picture from the archipelago: a man in a boat is transporting a tractor. In the background stands a boathouse.

(5) A b/w snapshot from an ice hockey match: four players in front of the goal; the puck is going into the goal behind the goalkeeper.

(6) A b/w picture from an ice hockey match; again a situation in front of the goal; several players are struggling for the puck.

(7) A b/w picture of Argentinean soldiers parading on a street lined with people.

Hufvudstadsbladet 1997

(1) A b/w picture from a football match; struggle for a ball; one player in the air is heading the ball; an opponent is waiting behind.

(2) A colour picture from a residential suburb: a girl dressed in red and black is waiting at a bus shelter. Grey concrete can be seen in the background. The wall of the bus shelter is decorated with a black and white advertising poster of Russian female soldiers on parade. The photograph includes aesthetic ambitions (the contrast between grey and red; the advertising photograph within the picture).

(3) A colour picture with a sport motive: four men are training in a rowing pool. The picture has a beautiful composition: the oars are lathering the water in the bottom right corner; the edge of the pool and lines of the oars are running over the photograph.

(4) A b/w picture: a book stall on an esplanade; people are passing by. In focus, a woman is standing with a book in her hand. The picture is taken or cropped so that the subject matter slopes strongly down to the right edge of the picture.

(5) A colour picture of a demonstration against building a power line: four children with a demonstration sign; an adult in the background. The motive is again diagonally sloping.

(6) A b/w picture: two men are standing with a nature conservation diploma in their hands, on stones, in the middle of a sea. Half the space of the picture is taken up by the sky with light clouds. Clear character posing; the persons have been transported to the stones just for taking the picture.

(7) A b/w snapshot from an ice hockey match; two players and a goalkeeper are struggling in front of the goal.

Traditional media logic can be noticed in the selection of pictures in 1982, more widely than in the material of the year 1997. The 1982 material seeks drama, struggle, and excitement. The sport pictures of 1982, that comprise nearly half of the material, offer a certain meaning to that kind of criteria. The same can be said for the pictures from the eviction and the scattering of the environmental activists. These two pictures and a third, the military parade, are linked to "hard news". Furthermore, in 1997 the occurrence of sport pictures is noticeable. In the demonstration picture of 1997, children have taken the place of environmental activists. Themes from abroad are missing, replaced by local news – the suburb and the esplanade. Concerning format, an increased consciousness of composition and aesthetics can be observed. The pictures chosen to dominate the front page in 1997 are often those which have a special form (colour matching, sloping angles of camera, posing). The paper has, however, not totally abandoned black and white photographs.

Västerbottens-Kuriren 1982

(1) A b/w portrait of a smiling Lennart Hyland (a well-known television celebrity) looking at the camera. Clear character posing and wilfully chosen object posing – a raised boxing glove. The caption explains the meaning of the glove: "When Hyland hits it usually leads to success".

(2) A b/w football picture catching a penalty situation from behind the net: the goalkeeper is "hanging" in the air trying to grab the ball. The situation picture is branded with motion.

(3) A b/w ice hockey picture: a journalist with a microphone in hand is interviewing two ice hockey players in a locker room.

(4) A b/w picture of a man and a woman dancing a "hambo" in a national costume in a village. Character posing.

(5) A b/w picture in a children's kindergarten; three children surrounded by soft rag-dolls which the nursery has got as a present from a high school class. The photographer has utilised object posing (dolls).

(6) A b/w picture of five "disappointed environmental protestors" standing outside a provincial administration building.

Västerbottens-Kuriren 1997

(1) A colour picture from a football match. The players are struggling for a ball; one is lying on the grass.

(2) A colour picture: a contesting yachtsman in a pleasureboat in water, behind the ice flows (= early training). An intertextual caption: "The yachtman's sense of snow".

(3) A colour picture: an older man is standing in snow on his land watching an earth embankment. Headline: "Nervously waiting for the spring flood".

(4) A colour picture: the ousted chairman of a provincial tourism committee walking, head down, across the floor of a court room. The background is, through the photographer's choice, inaccurate in a way that creates the impression of movement.

(5) A colour picture taken at the inauguration ceremony of a new business centre. Actress Maud Adams is looking and smiling at the camera. In the background are people, among them journalists. The photographer has used a camera filter which makes the shine of floodlights in the background appear starlike. The edges of the picture are black toned.

(6) A colour picture: a group of schoolchildren are standing at a wall. A car is passing by in the foreground. Movement in the picture is created with exposure; by picturing the car inaccurately, high speed is indicated.

In the material, both of 1982 and 1997, some well known and interest catching media celebrities ap-

pear (Hyland and Adams respectively). Correspondingly, two sport themes appear. Furthermore, interest and emotion arousing children are pictured both in 1982 (soft environment: rag-dolls) and 1997 (hard environment: traffic lane). Only one picture per each period can be mentioned as relating to serious socially oriented news: the disappointed environmental protesters (1982) and the bitter, ousted chairman of a provincial tourism committee (1997). The last mentioned is the only person in the picture material who represents an elite (local). Concerning form related aspects, also here a tendency appears towards increased usage of photogenic techniques: creating movement into the motive; the starlike picturing of floodlights in the picture of Maud Adams, and black toning of the edges. Moreover, the newspaper has totally changed black and white pictures to colour pictures.

Dagens Nyheter 1982

(1) A b/w picture: firemen standing by a burnt house. A valuable archive had been stored in the house: some of the archive papers have been rescued and are lying charred on the lawn.

(2) A b/w football picture: the players are running a "lap of honour", right arms with clenched fists lifted as a sign of victory.

(3) A b/w picture from a press conference. Minister Fälldin is speaking in the foreground, with an arm lifted in the air. Minister Ullsten in the background is looking elsewhere.

(4) A b/w picture of a long demonstration march. Employees of a factory are marching with signs. In the foreground stands a woman with a screaming, open mouth. Her sign is dominating the picture.

(5) A b/w football picture: two players fighting for the ball. Intensive expressions on the faces.

(6) A dramatic b/w picture. On a street, police officers are overpowering a male driver who had been "joyriding".

(7) A b/w picture from a "ghost town" in South Georgia. Old wooden houses and high snow covered mountains in the background. One man can be seen faraway in the middle of the scene.

Dagens Nyheter 1997

(1) A colour picture from a swimming pool. The face of a female swimming competitor – with open, panting mouth – appears from the turquoise water. She is looking upward and resting on one of the red ropes, which border the racecourse. Through the chosen depth of field, the background of the picture is blurred. The intensive face together with the red and turquoise colours gives a beautiful, aesthetic and photogenically generated picture.

(2) A colour picture: The face of an immigrant and an upper body are to be seen in the low left edge. The rest of the picture is showing a street scene with people wandering about. The environment is, through the chosen depth of field, unclear (which gives an impression of "an anonymous mass").

(3) A painted colour illustration of watercolour type. The face of an immigrant, white with brown contour lines, surrounded by white squares in a moss green background with text like, "black vote", "time for a change", "take up your rights".

(4) A colour picture: a wildlife protector and a police officer in a hut are inspecting a shot, hanging bear. A man with a child in his arms is to be seen in the doorway.

(5) A colour picture from a rock concert. A female singer and a guitar player are pictured. Photographic play with sharpening; slope photography or cropping. A beautiful composition of colours.

(6) A colour picture; portrait of a teenager. A picture of a face; a shadow is falling over the left side of the face. In the right edge, there is a black silhouette of a face. Photogenic impression: shadowing and silhouettes.

(7) A b/w picture from a prison cell. A young man is sitting hunched up on a chair in front of the cell window. Grey tones give the impression of sadness and closeness.

In the photographs of 1982 we can see – equally to Hbl – ingredients of drama, excitement: policemen performing "live" an arrest, working firemen, sport elated scenes of struggle, a screaming demonstrator. In the pictures of 1997, similar motives have nearly disappeared. Instead, a trend, which flashes in the material of 1997, is the close picturing of individuals' faces (pictures 1, 2, 3 and 6). In addition, the photograph of the young prisoner is letting the observer come nearer him. The reason for photographs like these becoming the main picture is that close-ups have the ability to arouse interest, partly, because people can interpret feelings from facial expressions (e.g. Graber 1988, 166-174). DN is the only newspaper in our material that pictures politicians in a main picture (Fälldin, Ullsten), The formlike changes are remarkable. Colour pictures dominate the material of 1997. One picture, moreover, represents a type of an artistic watercolour painting. Over time, a clear and speaking sense of composition is to be seen here; a prolonged photo technique utilising depth of field, exposure, shadowing, colour nuances and angles in the pictures of 1997. Today's main pictures are undeniably, from an aesthetic point of view, speaking; and it seems to be a credible reason for choosing just these photographs to be the main pictures in this newspaper.

We can now present a summary of the observations above. Concerning the subject matter of the pictures, the occurrence of sport pictures among the main pictures is particularly notable in all the newspapers, especially in Hbl, both in the year 1982 and 1997. Thus, sport (soft news) gets a dominating position on the first pages (cf. Ekecrantz and Olsson 1994, 156). An explanation for this is that sport pictures offer aspired situations of motion, excitement, struggle, and drama.

Some pictures embrace people. Photographs of members of an elite (in politics, finance, and culture on the local, national or international level) are, however, unusual. Pictures of celebrities, which are typical for the tabloid-press, occur only in one newspaper; V-K. Instead, "common people" and athletes dominate the character gallery of main pictures.

It is, however, difficult both over time and between newspapers, to list clear patterns concerning the content of the pictures. Related to the aspects of form, clearer patterns can be distinguished though. Firstly, the change from black and white pictures to colour pictures is seen over time. Only in the national newspapers, DN and Hbl in 1997, can black and white pictures also be found (one picture and three pictures respectively). The main pictures have, in all newspapers, become both bigger and more colourful over time. Secondly, form consciousness and aesthetic ambitions have grown over time. Especially visible is this development in the national newspapers DN and Hbl. A likely development is to be seen also in V-K and Vbl, though less clearly. In the case of DN and HBL, the aesthetic and formlike qualities used by the photographers have probably played a role in the editorial choice for the main pictures during the subsequent researching point of time. Pictures with a kind of drama and excitement, which were notable in the year 1982 in these newspapers, have been replaced by another visualized format.

One of the main picture's "outer contexts" is still worth mentioning. Concerning the main picture placement, some newspapers have begun to place the main picture in the middle of the page. Furthermore, since the main picture has become still larger, more colourful and also more aesthetic – and thus still more attention and interest arousing – there is a risk that the picture, in today's glancing reading process, "parasites" on the traditional "hard news" which is normally placed in the upper left corner of the page (cf. Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 206). Hence, our final impression of the development of the main picture is not entirely positive.

Conclusions

Our empirical study has concentrated on content and form of the front page. Therefore, we have separately examined the themes, which the news is emphasising. With this, we have intended to form an opinion on the newspapers' degree of trivialization. Related to form, we have observed the degree of visualization and its manifestations.

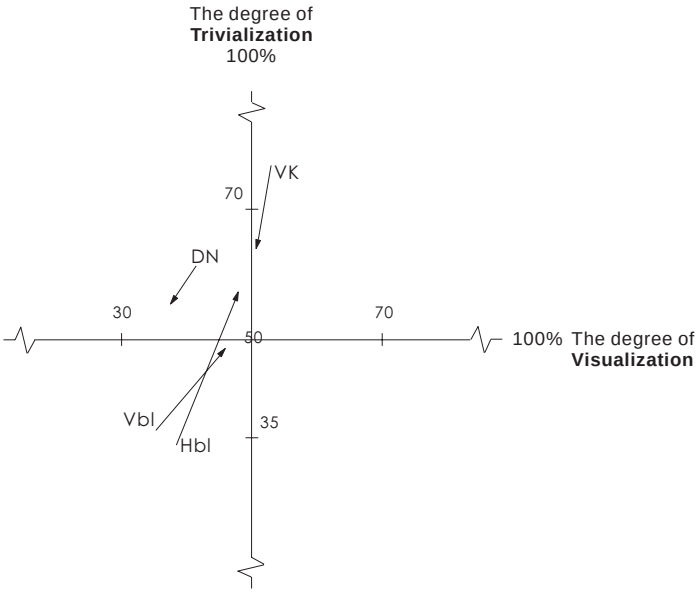
Earlier, our opinion was that visualization and trivialization together form the features which help to describe newspapers, both from a certain given time point, and over time. We can now raise a question as to how widely the newspapers have evolved in the direction of any of the extreme positions of the coordinate system (see Figure 1). Are they approaching the one that we called the normative ideal, a position with a relatively high degree of visualization, but with a dominance of serious socially relevant "hard news"? Alternatively, are the newspapers gliding to the field which we saw as being less desirable; tabloidization?

Unfortunately, the totality of our empirical observations fails to capture a clear and elegant conclusion. Instead, we can point to, and make conclusions over, our result concerning the degree of visualization in respect to trivialization. Thus, in figure 5 we have set the means for these features for each newspaper at both points of time. The trivialization degree consists here of the categories "soft news" and "news of crimes and accidents".

The impression, which we can get from the figure, is, from a normative perspective, slightly alarming: The values of trivialization and visualization are relatively high. The differences between the countries is mainly based on the fact that the Finnish newspapers have powerfully developed towards this direction, while the Swedish newspapers have already earlier had high values in this aspect. Here, we must remember the earlier observation that the "soft news" was the most visualised. Furthermore, the photographs have developed in many aesthetic and interest arousing ways. It is selfevidently hard to produce pictures of this kind with a "hard news" theme. This can partly explain why the pictures relating to "hard news" occur so seldom, especially as the main picture on the front pages. Another partial explanation to the overwhelming preference for "soft" and visualised news is less obvious. Namely, it is possible that editors make the supposition that the readers prefer to read richly illustrated "soft" news, rather than news related to harder social questions. Newspapers' commercial interests may have promoted such a policy. If this is the case, the newspapers, at least to a certain point, either intentionally or not, have given up their earlier, carefully followed journalistic ideals.

Knowing very well that the differences are not always especially large or completely statistically significant, we will still pay attention to the developmental tendencies linked to the context. We have often during this research had reason to suggest

Figure 5. Trivialization and Visualization Tendencies 1982–1997



that the Swedish newspapers, for better or worse, have been further along in development concerning both content-related and form-related aspects. Now it is shown, for example in Figure 5, that the Swedish newspapers are developing, even if only marginally, towards the opposite direction of the Finnish press. We can, of course, only speculate the reasons to this change. Two tentative explanations to the change are to be found; one is based on the sociologist Johan Asplund's discussion of saturation processes (Asplund 1967), the other on business-economical market logic.

Leaning on Asplund's concept, we mean that the journalistic organisation, i.e., editorial staff, has driven the development of visualization especially, and of trivialization, so far that the process is beginning to reach its saturation point. The process can no longer embrace innovative change, which is an important spurring element, seen from the professional journalists' perspective. The choice in the future will have two alternatives; either to lead visualization and trivialization further and more towards the earlier mentioned tabloidization; or to turn the development towards a new direction. The last mentioned alternative means that newspapers then could go towards lower visualization and/or trivialization. This would give space for more "hard news". Simultaneously, if the placement and importance of pictures in the future will not lose their status, they could at least stay on the same level as they are today.

Actually, the market logic motive tells the same on behalf of reorientation. In sum, we have the opinion that since the majority of newspapers on the market has become relatively strongly visualized and trivialized, high values on these characteristics are not any more the way by arousing positive interest, to deviate from the crowd. The aim of being exclusive, which in other cultural fields creates distinction, leads on the mass media field to imitation and similitude (Bourdieu 1996, 20; cf. McManus 1994, 70). One could say that the actual innovation cycle is going to reach a full circle – a reason why the innovators who will create the next innovation should already be totally prepared to form a basis for this (cf. Djupsund 1997).

Combined, both the sociological and the business-economical deliberation is moving towards the same direction. This makes the developmental tendencies of the Swedish newspapers intelligible, and finds support in the successes that some newspapers have reached. The Danish *Jyllandsposten,* for example, has consciously chosen a rather different type of media logic for the basis of its operation. However, it does not seem especially probable that the whole newspaper industry will go through such a reorientation. Our final assumption is that we in the future, in the Nordic countries, will see a

much more differentiated newspaper diversity; and the readers' engagement to newspapers will show a high correlation to the reader's position in a more and clearly class-ridden society. In other words, in the future we will have two categories of press. Firstly, there will be newspapers with high-quality coverage of public affairs for citizens with influence and a high standard of living. Secondly, there will be tabloids and tabloidized daily newspapers for the masses.

Notes

1. It is important to observe that knowledge alone can neither assure participation or influence in decision-making. Knowledge is only a necessary, but not sufficient, precondition for the above to take place. Therefore, also the opposite holds true: An obvious lack of knowledge nearly makes it impossible for citizens to participate with influence in serious social decision-making.
2. The figure has been inspired by the pattern which McManus (1994, 122) developed in order to shed light on the conflict between the commercial and the traditional journalistic news criteria. The vertical axis in McManus' figure presents the "orientation value", a traditionally journalistic normative criterion: the news has to give the citizens a possibility to orientate towards serious socially related questions. The horizontal axis in McManus' figure represents "entertainment value" and embraces the commercial news logic that maximises profit. The "entertainment index" that McManus creates, includes the criteria "human interest, conflict, unusualness, amusement and visual quality". In our adapted model, the horizontal axis, visualization, is thus an aspect of the entertainment value. Our vertical axis, trivialization, has the same aspect as McManus' "orientation value": The lower the trivialization, the higher the orientation value.
3. These categories need closer explanation. The material that we call "hard news" is mainly the same as "serious socially oriented news", that can be found in, inter alia, a Swedish press investigation (SOU 1975, 72). It embraces two main areas. Firstly, politics = events in the political life; related to political decisions or with attention to political organisations, authorities etc. Secondly, economy = events in the working life, production (enterprises and labour market) and consumption (living standard etc). The "hard news" also embraces, among others, news abroad, news related to the official administration, social organisation, and environmental questions. The category that we call "soft news" embraces news topics that cannot be coded into the earlier mentioned category. "Soft news" covers material about leisure activities (e.g. sport); culture (if the cultural activities do not concern political or economic aspects); personal profiles (e.g. celebrities); weather; and conventional entertaining "human interest" themes. The last category, "news of crimes and accidents" needs no explanation.

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Appendix 1. The Numeric Material in the Figures

Newspaper		Hard News (%)	Soft News (%)	Crimes and Accidents (%)	Visual Material (%)	The Main Picture (%)
VBL 1982	Mean	68,50	29,00	4,67	35,17	13,50
	Std. dev.	10,27	12,66	1,53	6,37	4,26
VBL 1997	Mean	61,33	33,50	10,00	44,17	26,39
	Std. dev.	30,87	29,10	6,08	8,38	3,37
HBL 1982	Mean	67,57	31,86	1,50	35,86	13,84
	Std. dev.	14,47	14,10	,71	9,26	2,67
HBL 1997	Mean	48,29	50,29	5,00	47,86	28,32
	Std. dev.	12,91	13,38	5,66	4,74	4,35
V-K 1982	Mean	33,17	55,00	17,75	52,17	27,11
	Std. dev.	17,65	17,61	9,67	6,43	4,83
V-K 1997	Mean	40,83	51,50	9,20	51,00	31,39
	Std. dev.	27,72	25,11	4,60	3,74	6,49
DN 1982	Mean	51,00	36,57	21,75	42,43	20,39
	Std. dev.	20,11	18,22	23,98	4,89	3,88
DN 1997	Mean	48,29	41,29	12,33	39,14	34,49
	Std. dev.	20,14	18,63	19,35	4,30	4,07

The Problem of No-Effects of Media Concentration

JOHANN ROPPEN

In his classical work *Social Control in the Newsroom*, Warren Breed (1955) demonstrated how publishers would act in order to make journalists comply with his political views. The publishers worldview would be conveyed in a number of ways – either directly through the publishers articles, his public appearances or direct intervention in the newswork, or indirectly by structures and habits in the newsroom, by the priorities made during the day and the talk about the final product. Journalists would also notice that newspeople adapting to the publishers values would benefit from getting better assignments, maybe better pay and would also get leading positions.

In Breeds world, USA in the 1950s, the newspaper as medium had not yet started its decline and the big corporate owners were still of less importance in most local markets. But things would change. During the 1970s, it became evident that the newspaper was a medium for which the trend was pointing downwards in the US. More and more households would drop the subscription of the local daily. The percentage of adults reading newspapers steadily declined from 80 percent in 1970 to 62 percent in 1990 (Bogart 1991:272).

Simultaneously newspaper chains were growing faster and faster. Taxation, lack of competence or disinterest, family struggle and the high price level of newspapers are reasons mentioned for newspaper-owning families to sell their newspapers to the chains (Bogart 1991:49). It is more profitable to make money from consolidating existing newspapers than from growing into new markets.

What is the relevance of these American observations for the rest of us? The Norwegian press historian Svennik Høyer concludes that the general development of the press is the same in USA, Great Britain, Denmark and Norway (1995:261). This is of course very simplified, and only valid in a very general historical context. E.g. when it comes to general penetration of the newspaper, Norway, Sweden and Finland is lagging, since newspapers still are read by more than 80 percent of the population. But the process of concentration in the newspaper business have undergone a more rapid development, especially in Norway than in the USA. This has also caused concerns in most European countries (Mångfaldsrådet 1997:2). Here I shall briefly mention the current aspects in the Nordic countries.

In Sweden as early as in 1980 a governmental committee was appointed to deal with the problem of mediaconcentration. The committee never succeded in its attempt to introduce new legislation in the field (SOU 1980:28). Fourteen years later a less ambitious report was presented (SOU 1994:145), and a public committee was set up to watch and analyze the development of the media when it comes to diversity and freedom of speech (Mångfaldsrådet 1997:2). In Norway public committes in 1988 and 1995 presented reports discussing the topic (NOU 1988:36 and 1995:3), and by Spring 1998 an independent body regulating all media acquisitions will start working. In Finland the government has tried to hinder cross-ownership, while in Denmark there seemingly is much less discussions on the matter. Still, a joint-Nordic project was initiated by the Nordic Council in order to look a bit closer into the matters (Cavallin 1993).

The political concerns and the fact that concentration is increasing, have so far not had only limited influence upon the Nordic and European research in the field. That is another reason for turning to American research: Here is where the em-

pirical research have been carried out. The American research might have flaws, but European research in the field is almost non-existent.

European research should be aware of the shortcomings of the American research and elaborate designs which more appropriatly can face the challenges the changes in the industry puts forward for research. For research to get even with the new situation, one must apply other methods and perspectives than Breed turned to forty years ago. The players have moved out of the local publishers office, and into the corporate headquarters. The focus of the research should follow the same route.

Concentration and Politics

In mediaeconomics concentration is regarded as the outcome of unequal growth within an industry (Penrose 1959, quoted in Gustafsson 1995), thus leading some, a few or one company into a high level of control, while others are driven out of competition or into a dependency of the larger companies. This is a very general model, applicable to almost any industry.

In a media-centred context the concept of media concentration might be applied to the links in the general model of mass-communication (DeRidder quoted in McQuail 1993), one can speak of concentration on the sender, content and audience part of the model. But is the sender the owner or each and every newspaper the corporation controls?

In the Nordic discussion it has been suggested to differ between owners and companies: Concentration of ownership and market concentration. In a country, there might be few or many owners, and in the local markets within the country there might be few or many companies. When few owners control the few existing companies – monopoly or oligopoly exists. If the few owners control many newspaper, one faces the classical chain situation. The situation where many owners control few or many companies seemingly is a theoretically based constructions. The many owners – few companies is attributed to cooperative arrangements, which hardly exists anywhere in the world. But the situation where many owners controls many companies, one might approach the perfect competition or maybe the true variety situation. Neither this is easily found today. The model is suggested by the Swedish media professor Lennart Weibull (Mångfaldsrådet 1995:1).

Rolland (quoted in Sánchez-Tabernero 1993:6) have also suggested a company – industry dichotomy. Rolland suggests to use the concept integration at the company level, while concentration is to be applied at the industry level. This will of course obscure the fact that companies, like newspapers, might be low on integration, but still be the only newspaper in the market. This perspective has also been picked up and elaborated by Lange and Van Loon (quoted in Mångfaldsrådet 1995:1, page 24).

Applying the perspectives to a "real life" setting, one can observe that both at the local market as well as in the national setting, the overall tendency is towards fewer and fewer owners as well as companies. Local concentration is mostly a question of driving local competitors out of the business, and this has happened to a great extent. Most towns are being served only by one newspaper. Nationally the big chains or corporations are acquiring smaller chains and independent newspapers – preferrably newspapers with a dominant position in the market.

Internationally the global players are to some extent building global empires – but mostly within their own cultural sphere. E.g. the largest fish in the pond, Rupert Murdoch and his news corp., mostly owns newspapers in Australia, USA and Great Britain. This pattern also applies to the experience in the Nordic countries. The global players are almost not present, especially not in the newspaper industry. The Nordic newspaper corporations invest in newspapers in other Nordic countries. However, in Eastern Europe all global players are present – also Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and Finnish companies.

One might ask why it is necessary to carry out all the hairsplitting discussion of concepts, when the industry at an increasing pace is experiencing dramatical changes. The local concentration is a process almost completed in most markets, while the global concentration for newspapers still have a long walk. The currently developing national concentration should thus be at the focus of interest, and is what is referred to when concentration is mentioned later on in this article.

Invisible Ownership

Family based companies and one-man corporations are visible – the corporation not necessarily is so. There are a number of studies of Rupert Murdoch, maybe the most visible contemporary media-tycoon. Not all these studies consider him being a maniac (Coleridge 1993), but the majority do consider him being brutal and scrupulous in his profit-

draining efforts, as well as an owner of low-taste publications, into which he turns also some of his former middle-class newspapers.

Media research have not produced significant studies of media empires – such studies have been performed to a great extent by former editors and journalists (e.g. Squires (1993), Ghiglione (1984), McCord (1996) etc.).

The main problem for research, is thereby that vital (contextual) data on the very objects of interest is lacking. There is a widespread overall tendency to treat all chains as equals, and clearly, they are not. Thus it makes no sense to present data only dealing with chains vs. non-chains, as Beam also suggests (Beam 1993, Matthews 1996).

What do we know of the different chains? A number of case-studies have showed that publishing or journalism-oriented owners consider chains being different when they are discussing who shall be the new owner of the newspaper they are selling. The differences seem to go along lines of journalistic commitment vs. willingness to soar profit. Clearly, high quality journalism is costly, and thus reduces profit – at least this is a commonly held belief within the industry (Demers 1996, Matthews 1996)

Matthews (1996) shows that managers of publicly and privately owned newspapers had different levels of autonomy in matters of staffing and major content changes (adding sections, subscribing to news wires, hiring/firing staff). Still, it is hard to assess whether these differences may be ascribed to the formal structure of the still very large organisations, or whether the chains policies are the real cause of such effects. Still, the need for a more in depth analysis of the different chains is a step in the right direction.

The chains emphasising journalism are mostly the chains connected to high-quality newspapers: *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times* and *Knight Ridder*. Companies being regarded high-profit seekers on the expense of high-quality journalism are chains like Gannett, Thomson, Ingersoll and Newhouse. Typically, they will pay more for a newspaper than their more quality-oriented competitors, but in order to make this high price being a good investment, the newspaper will virtually be plundered once it is acquired. There are a few cases describing this process (Ghiglione 1984), but some of the investors also speaks straight-forward about this (Coleridge 1993).

What is considered being a trend is that the quality-minded chains seemingly are forced to adopt the strategies of the profit-oriented chains – possibly at the expense of journalistic standards (*American Journalism Review*, jan./feb. 1996).

Empirical Research: An Overview

In order to present a more systematic overview of the research in the field, I will here differ between projects by temporal span and by object of research. The temporal span is of two kinds: Contemporary (i.e. no historical perspective in the data collection) and before-after studies, e.g. before and after a newspaper have been acquired by a chain. The object of research might be one single newspaper or newspapers within a chain, or different kinds of newspapers. Comparisons of chain-newspapers and inpendent ones is a quite common design.

What knowledge have been gained by the different perspectives? I will here briefly describe some typical studies within each of the four approaches. The studies have been picked mainly from the journals *Journalism Quarterly* and *Newspaper Research Journal* after a search in "communication abstracts" for the keywords newspaper management, newspaper economics, newspaper industry and media ownership. I have no intention of pretending my list to be complete in any way, but I hope my study establishes an overview in the field.

1) Studies of Single Newspapers or Chains: Gannett as Case

One might ask, how is a chain run? And where does corporate management put the local managers and journalists? These kinds of studies are yet to come. In order to demonstrate what kind of material exist, and what problems is connected to the available sources, I have tried to compile writings on Gannett, the largest newspaper chain in the USA.

A chapter in Ben H. Bagdikians famous book: *The Media Monopoly*, first published in 1983, is dedicated to the Gannett, and foremost its ability and willingness to create myths regarding its freedom ideology and how it is carried out in its operations. The chapter can also be read as a fascinating, and of course biased, story of the leadership exerted at the top-level of Gannett. Foremost by the (now) former president, CEO and chairman of Gannett, Al(len H.) Neuharth. One of the most quoted anecdotes about Neuharth stems from the fact that Mr. Neuharth used to wear a sharkskin suit, and no one really were sure where the shark stopped and Mr. Neuharth began.

Bagdikian combines in his analysis three sets of data: Gannett's own promotional advertisements, speeches delivered by Mr. Neuharth, analysis of take-overs, and elusive reports from Gannett's presentation of the company to the analysts of Wall Street. Clearly, the image presented of Gannett in the three different settings do differ. Where the PR material as well as the speeches told the story of Gannett as a company devoted to quality local journalism, the individual freedom, including its own, local editors, in practice several cases seemingly contradicted this image of reality.

The cases mentioned are Salem Oregon, where Gannett in 1974 seemingly drove a competitor, a local weekly, out of business by using unethical business-methods. In another case from 1970 Gannett exaggerated the circulation of a newspaper, sold it and later lost the trial when the new owner sued the company. According to McCord (1996:147-150), the unhappy buyer came out short in the final verdict – Gannett lost less from the fine than they would have if not selling the paper.

The journalist first presenting the Salem story, Richard McCord, have later on presented his own story (*The Chain Gang*) how he got hold of the secret material from the trial, as well as how he presented it in his Santa Fe newspaper, threatened by the local Gannett paper, and how he later used his knowledge in order to help a local chain in Wisconsin in an effort to fight off Gannett (McCord 1996).

Bagdikian as well as McCord and Peter Katel (1984) have presented the story of how Gannett bought the New Mexican of Santa Fe, violated the agreement of the former owner to continue as CEO and editor, and later on lost the lawsuit he raised against Gannett.

There do also exist to books from insiders, to some extent telling the story of Gannett: Peter Prichard's book: *The Making of McPaper, the Inside Story* (1987). The book describes in detail the devotion and hard work by the young staff creating a new newspaper, but can hardly considered being a piece of research.

Donald J. Brandt has written *A History of Gannett 1906-1993*, (1993) but this official corporate history is naturally not at all critic of Gannett. E.g. is the problems in Santa Fe, where Gannett was sentenced to return the New Mexican to the former owner because of violation of agreements of operation. In Brandt's history the acquisition is described in four lines in this 600-pages book.

Allen Neuharth, the CEO of Gannett in its most intense period of growth and during the launch of USA Today have written an autobiography: *Confessions of an S.O.B.* (1989). This strange autobiography folds out Mr. Neuharth's view – mostly upon Mr. Neuharth, but also his business-principles and ideas for the industry. Though with more than one layer of make-up. The controversies in Portland, Santa Fe and Green Bay have not been mentioned.

All these last books convey important knowledge of the Gannett, and is a natural point of departure for students and scholars doing research on Gannett – but these books is definitely not examples of research themselves.

Most of the books also deal almost exclusively with the business side of the enterprise. The way the editorial operations is carried out is not discussed in much detail.

In American Journalism the Pulitzer prize is considered being the ultimate recognition of good journalism. What chains owns the winning newspapers or the newspapers where journalists are awarded? The last three years (1995-1997) 25 of totally 42 prizes have been awarded to the traditional quality-newspapers. The Gannett did not win a single prize during these three years.

14 prizes have been awarded newspapers outside the top-layer. Some of them are rather small. But no prizes were awarded to eg. USA Today, the second largest newspaper in the US.

This low number of prizes is hardly a surprise when reading Mr. Neuharth's opinion of the Pulitzer prize. Neuharth plainly writes that the hunt for Pulitzer prizes might distract editors from doing a good job for the local community (Neuharth 1989:256-257). Then goes on by mentioning that Gannett until 1989 won 37 prizes – some before, and some after being Gannett newspapers, though the vaste majority of these prizes were won before Gannett's acquisition.

My main point is that it is very hard to trust the official sources and the insiders of a company like Gannett. I have no idea whether the company would approve researchers to approach the newspaper, but nevertheless this is what researchers must do.

2) Comparisons of Newspapers or Chains

This is quite a intuitive way of finding out what is the consequences of concentration of ownership: How does corporate newspapers differ from independent ones. Other studies have tried to compare different kinds of newspapers according to kind of ownership – private or public.

Editors and Editorials:

Akhavan-Majid et.al. (1991, 1995) compared Gannett newspapers to independent newspapers and found that editors of the chain newspapers would be less afraid of putting on an activist role, but also found that the vaste majority of Gannett newspapers would support the similar views. The data were collected by surveys.

Demers (1993) found editors at large and chain-owned papers had more autonomy and freedom to improve editorial content than editors at smaller and independent newspapers. There were no significant differences between chain-owned and independent ownership.

Political Views:

Wackman et.al. (1975) found that in the presidential elections 1960-1972 the chains more or less were "overwhelmingly homogenous" when it comes to presidential endorsement.

For the presidential elections from 1972 to 1988, Gaziano (1989) found that the degree of homgenousness wass less overwhelming, and she related this finding to the fact that chains had grown in number of newspapers affiliated.

The same tendency towards less homgenous chains was also found by Busterna and Hansen (1990) in a study of 1.500 newspapers stand in the presidential election years 1976, 1980 and 1984. Newspapers in general supported the Republicans about 80 percent of the time, but group-owned newspapers were not different from other newspapers.

Prices:

Busterna (1988, 1991) have studied the chain Gannetts prices for advertising, and have found that Gannett is charging more than independent newspapers do. He suggests that power is more important than managerial ability in setting prices – Gannett is exploiting its market position.

Content:

Glasser et.al. (1989) looked at the coverage of the Gary Hart story. They found that the Knight-Ridder chain-papers gave more and better play to the story than other newspapers subscribing to the Knight-Ridder service, but not being owned by the company.

Wagenberg and Soderlund (1975) found that within one specific chain, the editorials were aligned in political matters during the 1972 election.

Other Perspectives:

Beam (1993) have found that when it comes to a wide range of organizational practices, size is more important than chain dependency or not. Beams data stemmed from a survey answered by senior- and middle level managers in 60 American dailies. Busterna (et.al) (1991) have compared the use of library resources between chain newspapers and independent ones, and have not found any substantial differences between the two groups. Demers (1988) found no difference in polling practices between independent and chain-owned newspapers.

Underwood and Stamm (1992) found a general tendency towards reader-oriented and market driven journalism in a sample consisting of 12 newspapers. 429 journalists and managers were interviewed, and the chain-newspapers would have the strongest tendency towards reader- and market oriented journalism.

3) Before-After Studies of Newspapers

What happens when a newspaper is bought by a corporation? This question has been studied in some cases. A close relative when it comes to design, is studies of newspapers changing from a competing market situation to the status of local monopoly, conf. the discussion of local vs. national concentration.

Content:

Coulson and Hansen (1995) looked into the news content of *The Louisville Courier-Journal* which was bought by Gannett. They found that the amount of news substantially increased, but the average length dropped. It was also registred a decline of hard news, and newswire material exceeded staff-written material.

Romanow and Soderlund (1988) performed a before-after study of the Canadian newspaper *The Globe and Mail*, which was acquired by the Thomson group in 1980. A content analysis of 96 issues showed that the changes in content were not substantial, and the significant changes was in accordance with adjustments of the newspapers profile, initiated by the new owner.

A Gannett experiment with a local Florida newspaper was studied by Smith et.al. (1988). The newspaper decided to drop the international and national news coverage, turning into an exclusively local newspaper. It maybe isn't too surprising that the content analysis observed a drop in interna-

tional and national material ... The main finding was that the mix of news stories swinged towards crime and disasters. This could be an effect of the wish to make a local newspaper look like *USA Today*.

The same Gannett-swing towards local news was observed by Plopper (1991) as Gannett took over *The Arkansas Gazette* in the midst of a bitter newspaper war. The new management tried to change the content in order to satisfy reader interest. This meant a decrease of national and international material, and an increase of local/state news. The efforts did not significantly change the competitive situation in the market.

Thrift (1977) looked at the editorials in 24 dailies changing from independent to chain-newspapers between 1960 and 1975. The resultat indicated chain papers had fewer argumentative editorials in controversial contexts on local topics.

Ghiglione (1984) edited a collection of case-studies of take-overs of smaller and larger chains. The cases were written by journalists with different kinds of perspectives and methods applied. Thereby the books is only of limited value for research.

4) Before-After Studies of Different Kinds of Newspapers

These kinds of studies are few, and the main reason is probably the sources needed.

Hale (1991) looked into the ownership – newswire relation, and found that chain papers are not different from indepent papers. The chain newspapers were more likely to subscribe to the news service delivered by the chain. An interesting methodological feature of Hales study was the fact that he compared newspapers with a time-span of five years, and in the sample of newspapers were 60 independent and 60 chain newspapers, as well as 60 former independent newspapers being bought by chains. Newswire subscription is a very simple variable to conduct, and the study possibly could indicate that it is hardly an important variable.

Pasadeos and Renfro (1988) compared issues of *The New York Post* from before and after its purchase by Rupert Murdoch. More visuals, "sensational" headlines, "sensational" stories and "local/regional" stories were found in "after" issues of the Post. The changes could be attributed to the purchase, because the competing *The Daily News* was not found to have changed much in the same period of time. Findings were generally similar to those obtained in a study of Murdoch's *San Antonio Daily* and its competitor.

By this way of chopping up the existing research, one might easily get the general impression that the research is quite obsessed with counting. This is in accordance with my general view. There is nothing wrong with counting, but I question whether the counting is made properly as long as the knowledge of the chains is very limited.

How to Interpret the Findings

A decade has passed by since Gerald F. Stone summed up the findings of the research in the field of effects of concentration: No substantial findings connecting directly the big chains with any specific contemporary trend in journalism (Stone 1987). The same conclusion was also reached by Picard (et.al.) (1988), Lacy et.al. (1989) said research was inconclusive and later on Underwood (1993) and David Pearce Demers (1996) have observed the same lack of conclusive findings. The studies presented here applies to the same conclusion.

As long as we don't know how chain policies are carried out, it is hard to know what is the real force behind change or no-change. This applies both when it comes to comparing chains with independent newspapers (e.g. Thrift 1977, Beam 1993, Underwood 1993, Coulson 1994), as well as in comparisons of publicly and privately owned chains (Hirsch and Thompson 1994, Matthews 1996).

Inconclusive data, how is that dealt with? Demers answer to the problem is as follows: Corporate newspapers (newspapers owned by corporations) are not harmful to traditional journalistic values, to freedom of speech and not bad for business. Quite contrary, newspapers being owned by a non-local corporations are more free to criticize local authorities and are relatively autonomus, corporate newspapers have more diversity of opinions than independent ones (this is measured by a content analysis of letters to the editor in different newspapers), and increase in prices for advertising is explained by chains better competence in order to evaluate the potential of the local market.

I will here point to methodological problems in Demers perspective. The first adresses the fact that he has collected his data by surveys of local managers, secondly he has not studied the corporations policy. The first problem is important because one can not know to what extent the managers would answer the surveys strategically – being aware of the criticism directed towards corporate newspapers. The other problem is more in accordance with my main theme in this paper: The corporation – manager relation is a missing link. One can hardly

study effects of chains or corporations without first getting an idea of what the chain actually do.

I will point to five reasons, or obstacles for media-research in this area:

1) The process of concentration deals with a large number of units, and is not a process being narrowed by a short timespan. In Television, the US market have until recently been dominated by three large networks. In Europe, the national broadcasters have been dominating. Thus the structure of the business (or service) have made it very easy to get the big picture. There is not a great many institutions to study. In the newspaper business the big picture is quite a different one. National newspapers share some of the same features as national broadcasters, but the main parts of the market consist of local based newspapers, with local identity and traditions. It is not easy, it is actually time-consuming and expensive, to grasp in depth knowledge of a high number of newspapers.

2) It is hard to get access to data. Reports on financial as well more general reports on the business' whereabouts is considered being vital to be kept secret, and is thus kept away from researchers, an observation also made by Underwood (1993).

   In the Nordic Countries (and to some extent Northern Europe) some business data is accessible for every citizen – also without the company's consent. And even though chains owns the most of their newspaper 100 percent, each newspaper is still organised as an independent company with the responsibility to deliver an independent and thorough annual report on as well general as financial matters. Media researchers have mostly ignored this kind of data.

3) Research and education is to a great extent financed by media – and media don't want critical research examining media. This has both direct as well as indirect consequences. Directly the industry don't want to support critical media research, and researcher as well as research might suffer from this. Indirectly the industry might chose to support or not to support the educational system which the researchers also is a part of. Support and non-support might be applied on a whole range of fields, stretching from direct financial support for buying new equipment or new buildings, supplying visitors from the industry, accepting students for short- or long term visits or research programs etc.This point has also been put forward by Hale.[1]

   This point of criticism should foremost be addressed to American research, since very small parts of funding for media research in the Nordic countries is paid by the business.

4) The question is not theoretically challenging. The current trends when it comes to theory and research practice, is not in favour of empirical studies of matters which theorists already "knows" the answers of. Well known critics like Bagdikian (1992) and Herman and Chomsky (1994) have by the use of grande theories portrayed an image of the problem that is easy to grasp and surely fits nicely into many supporters worldview. But parts of the empirical research they convey could be described as anecdotical.

5) The changing media landscape is not compatible with the traditional boundaries of media research. Sociology of news needs to be expanded into the realm of politics and economy in order to get a grip of the structures surrounding the newsroom.

Studies like Lacy et.al. (1989) is an interesting attempt to combinate economical, sociological and jounalistic perspectives in order to get a grip of the big picture.

* * *

We still don't know whether chain policy is the independent variable, as opposed to the more simplistic notion of merely being a chain is the driving force. Research on concentration needs to handle this problem in order to get along with the forces outside the ivory tower.

Note

1. Quoted in *Underwood* (1993:114).

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Beyond the Pendulum

Critical Genre Analysis of Media-Audience Relations

SEIJA RIDELL

There are mounting indications that the heyday of cultural studies in its prevalent audience oriented and ethnographic guise is moving towards an end. The critical voices that have been heard systematically yet sporadically since the end of eighties appear now to be getting louder and gaining strategic impetus. It has become more and more common to run into claims that cultural studies has reached an impasse or drifted into a crisis. Hearing seminar speeches and reading articles with such arguments make one feel that the time might be ripening for a new trend within cultural studies or, even, for (re)inventing a new fashion outside the field. This sense of a deadlock is not lessened by the perception that no fresh names seem to be entering the international (read: Anglo-American) podium of cultural studies nor is there theoretically innovative and ambitious empirical research being done – or at least published.

The by now well-rehearsed tenor of much of the critique, of ethnographically inspired audience studies in particular, has been that its proponents have neglected the economic, political and societal determinations of the daily use and meaning-making of media in favour of the micro processes of media consumption. This favouring, for its part, is seen to be accompanied by a faulty over-estimation of audience activity as well as a similarly mistaken confusing of the multiplicity of decoding with empowering and even resistant social action. At its extreme 'the active audience theory' is labelled as an 'indiscriminate celebration of audience pleasure' (Kellner, 1997: 116) or 'pointless populism' (Seaman, 1992) which in actual practice serve to legitimize both the unequal conditions of reception and the deepening of global commercialization of the media, as well as the neo-liberalist policies that contribute to this development (see also, for instance, Condit, 1989; O'Connor, 1989; Budd et al., 1989; Carragee, 1990; Evans, 1990; Curran, 1990; Corner, 1991; Gripsrud, 1996; articles in Ferguson & Golding, 1997).

No wonder, then, that in the 'current revisionistic climate' a recurring appeal that one hears (besides that for an increased policy orientation) both from without and within the field of cultural studies is for 'a 'return' to a more social science approach' and with it to questions of cultural power (see Ferguson & Golding, 1997: xv). The most prominent internal critic in this vein is David Morley who has consistently over the years lamented the abstract theorizing and the too strong textualist inclination of especially most American cultural studies. He has insisted that a critical awareness of the broader social, institutional and material foundations of culture and communications should be incorporated into the starting points of cultural studies where it belongs and where it initially also used to be. Now, as 'the momentum of sociological revisionism' is well under way (ibid.: xvii), might Morley's feelings of marginality soon be over?

The call for putting society back in or, differently, for a return to the critical political project of early cultural studies, should of course be appraised in the context of publishing firms' shrewd strategies. It could even be seen as their la(te)st trick to keep the cultural studies iron hot as long as possible. Revealing in this respect is, for instance, that all the 'outstanding and original essays' – as they are so eloquently, and at the same time quite misleadingly[1] praised by the editors – in the recent critically inspired collection *Cultural Studies in Question* (Sage, 1997) happen to be written by the all too well-known Anglo-American authors.

It remains to be seen whether this 'sociological revisionism' will prove attractive and lucrative enough to replace media ethnography and become the new trend of cultural studies. Personally I doubt

this. Be that as it will, something that presents itself as 'new' is bound to show up soon – this is dictated already by the insatiable needs of academic publishing business.

Beyond the Pendulum's Swing

In this article, I will not dwell upon the swing of scholarly pendulum which, for a change, seems to be taking cultural studies towards a supposedly more social and critical 'macro' approach after a decade's dominance of romantic-hermeneutic 'micro' orientation. Rather my concern is whether it is possible to find a way round the dualistic either/ors of the pendulum itself as it, in my view, effectively prevents all efforts to rethink and tackle the power-related social and cultural dynamics of meaning – especially in reception. For instance, despite all the calls to the opposite, an antagonism between 'structural' and 'interpretative' approaches is time and again set up by the participants – be they critics or targets – in the discussion on the state and future of cultural studies. Hence, within the confines set by the pendulum's swing, it is difficult to pose the question, for instance, of the actual political implications of people's everyday meaning-making. At the more structural end of the pendulum's swing, the daily processes of meaning can be rejected as unworthy of serious interest by relegating them to the private, and thereby supposedly insignificant, realm of social reality. At the other end, the issue of audience's active involvement in and complicity with the reproduction of power relations can equally easily be dismissed as an insulting act by structuralist (political or otherwise) determinists who reduce audience members to cultural dupes.[2]

As it happens, I very much share the critique by Ferguson and Golding of cultural studies' drift towards depoliticised textualism, for instance their argument that during this development 'cultural activities became texts to be read rather than institutions or acts to be analysed' or that 'social structure, political force, economic dynamics all appeared to have evaporated by the intense heat of textual 'interrogation' (ibid.: xxi). In my view, this critical account quite aptly summarizes the current state of cultural studies in Finland as well. However, I'm not going to rehearse here yet another version of the grand critical narrative of what was done wrong, for what reasons, by whom and how it all should have been done. As I see it, this strategy of accusations does not lead us anywhere but reproduces time and again precisely the dichotomy of structural and interpretative perspectives that foreclose at the outset the possibility to explore fruitfully the interpenetration of human sense-making activities and social institutions.

In what follows I will advance a view that a socially based and semiotically inspired conception of genre may offer one way beyond the pendulum. It may even help in moving on from merely repeatedly stressing that 'macro structures can only be reproduced through micro-processes' and that we should try to integrate the analysis of micro and macro levels (Morley, 1997: 126, 127).

With this specific social semiotic conception of genre I counter-argue the claim, implicit in much of cultural studies' critique, that culturally oriented audience studies, in particular, does by definition 'echo the logic of capitalism' (Gitlin, 1997: 32) or that it is, somehow inescapably, naive and impotent in terms of critical research.[3] My contention is that it is important to study audiences' meaning-making also at a more 'micro' level of media reception and use and that this is possible to do in ways that are not necessarily politically affirmative and sociologically irrelevant. However, in order to achieve this, we should not focus on the structural conditions of reception – such as economic inequalities or the 'realpolitik' of government and market policies – as somehow having direct and external impact on people's behaviour (see Ferguson & Golding, ibid.: xxiii). Rather, we should pose the question from a more 'internal' perspective to concern the ways these 'mediating factors' (ibid.) actualise and work as integrated and dynamic elements of the daily activities of social actors. Thus we can avoid the mechanistic idea of 'macro' determination of human 'micro' action as well as the notorious structure-agent dualism thereby invoked, and instead assume a more action-oriented ('structurationist') approach.

In short, without in any way denying the importance of the larger social, economic and political settings of audiences' meaning making, the genre approach proposed here wishes to concentrate on the ways people themselves, in using and interpreting the media, actively partake in reproducing the social power relations and thereby contribute to their own cultural subordination (cf. Grossberg, 1995: 75-76). One point in proceeding from such a starting point is that it might generate insights for not always only talking about, at a general and abstract theoretical level, the determinations and conditions of meaning in reception, but also for opening up opportunities for challenging them in more concrete and particular ways.

From Encoding/Decoding to Cultural (in)Competences

Despite the remarkable popularity the concept of genre has lately gained within cultural media studies, the more theoretical and critical potential of the concept has not so far aroused too much interest. However, in some Nordic scholars' work, one can find gestures towards also a broader and more ambitious conceptualization where attention is paid to the role of genre in mediating between texts and the contexts of their production and/or use. To take a few examples, Jensen (1995: 72) has recently pointed out that genre 'offers a strategic medium level of analysis... integrating social and discursive aspects of communication and implying how particular media texts may be approached by audiences'. Hence, in Jensen's view, 'genres offer a promising avenue for studying mass communication as a cultural practice' (ibid.: 65). Also Hagen (1992: 111), in her study of TV news reception, takes up genre's contextual and mediating role, among other things, in ordering 'the relationship between the producing institution and its audience'. Helland (1995), for his part, presents a culturally inspired, contextual definition of genre and employs it also empirically in his recent study of TV news production.

Whereas both Jensen, Helland and Hagen take as their point of departure Williams' (1977) in itself fruitful conception of genre, I will in the following return to a one-time proposal by David Morley of translating the encoding/decoding model into the framework of genre theory, and suggest that it deserves a closer look. The idea of genre as a part of an overall model for studying mass communication from a cultural perspective disappeared from Morley's own work after his turn to ethnography and the concept has figured in his later writings only in passing and theoretically in a much more modest role. However, Morley's tentative suggestion for a 'genre model' in his critical *Postscript to the Nationwide Audience* study (Morley, 1981) seems to me to have unrealised potential when wanting to get hold of the ways the media-related processes of meaning in reception are implicated in and contribute to the reproduction of social structures and power relations. In the following I will use Morley's proposal as a springboard to sketch a socially based notion of genre for the purposes of critical media analysis.

Two particular points of Hall's (1980) original essay need to be taken up in this connection. First of all, the idea that the encoding/decoding model would synthesize different perspectives and provide 'an overall model of the communication circuit as it operates in its social context' (Morley, 1980: 9 and 1989: 17) still offers a valid starting point for situating and investigating audience sense-making activities in their broader material and societal settings. Of special pertinence is the view that the processes of mass mediated meaning, as a circuit of interrelated though separate and differently positioned elements of production, textuality and reception, are structured in dominance, that is, under conditions of unequal power relations. As Hall has later put it, somebody always controls the means to signify and represent the world and this control of the 'apparatus of signifying' – by owning the media or writing their texts – puts one in a different position of power over discourse from those who depend on the world's being signified to them (see Angus et al., 1994: 261-63). Or, as the view of symbolic subordination has in several occasions been formulated by Morley, the audience may have power over a text, but it does not have power over the agenda, set by the centralised media institutions, within which that text is constructed and presented. (see, for instance, Morley, 1992: 31).

Also the concept of preferred reading – or, rather, preferred meaning[4] – that lies at the heart of the encoding/decoding model is important here. The concept points to the ways media texts are structured by signifying mechanisms that promote certain – dominant – meanings and suppress and marginalize others. In other words, the texts are not entirely open-ended but encoded in ways that attempt to 'hegemonize the audience reading' (Angus et al., ibid.: 262). Hence, according to Hall, in preferred meanings we talk about points where 'power intersects with discourse' (ibid.), its workings thereby being recognizable and researchable at the level of textual properties.

As a third pertinent point of the encoding/decoding model one could mention a later specifying addition by Hall, namely that the model was not meant to refer to 'signification in general' but to specific discursive practices, such as that of making television programmes (see Angus et al., ibid.: 259).

As regards Morley's appropriation of the encoding/decoding model, two specifications made by him are of relevance in this connection. Firstly, he formulated the idea of preferred meaning in terms of addressivity, thus stressing the concept's – and, by implication, the whole model's – rhetorical nature. In other words, the text cannot determine actual interpretations but always only invite audience

members to accept the meanings foregrounded in the text. As Morley (1989: 21) puts it, the text may offer the audience 'specific positions of intelligibility, it may operate to prefer certain readings above others; what it cannot do is to guarantee them'. However, when succesful, the rhetorical strategies of the text can be seen to guide audience perceptions and interpretations in quite forceful ways, as the ''modes of address' construct our relation to the content of the programme, requiring us to take up different positions in relation to them' (Morley, 1992: 84). As I shall take up soon, the addressivity of media texts has also powerful social implications.

Secondly, Morley alludes to the textual mode of address as a genre-related issue (see Morley, 1981: 12). Hence, the presentational strategies the encoder employs in order to 'establish a relationship of complicity with the audience' (Morley, 1992: 108) and to promote specific meanings in the text, are conditioned by genre conventions.

When turning to Morley's (1981: 10) actual proposal of 'translating our concerns from the framework of the decoding model into that of genre theory', then, one of its prime ideas was the substitution of the model's three codes by 'a more developed notion of the complex repertoire of generic forms and cultural competences in play in the social formation' (ibid.: 10-11). Thus instead of accepting, negotiating or rejecting the dominant propositions (preferred meanings) of the text more or less directly according to their social (class) position, audience members are seen to employ a set of genre-based conventions and rules to make meaning of similarly genre-specific media products (ibid.: 12).

What is important to emphasise here is that competence in a genre can be socially and politically disabling. Namely, the way genre conventions 'constitute the ground or framework within/on which particular propositions can be made' (ibid.) is often a very restricted one. To take an example, news genre requires its audience to be competent, most notably, in the codes of elitistically understood public sphere as well as a to be familiar with a similarly narrow understanding of specific cultural categories, such as that of gender. (cf. Morley, ibid.: 12-13)[5]

In sum, then, reformulating the encoding/decoding model into a genre model focuses attention on the culturally mediated dynamics of meaning – both in reception and more generally. Crucially, the model connects this genre-based dynamics with the ways mass communication is organized and operates as an institutionalised social, economic and cultural complex. Furthermore, the question of cultural power is approached in terms of the differentiated cultural conventions, codes and rules that audience members have internalised and use routinely when encountering different kinds of media texts. The core of the critique based on this genre model is that while making it possible for people to interpret the media in culturally appropriate ways, generic competences may at the same time set constraints on their action as social subjects. This means that in employing competently and actively in their meaning-making the conventions of a given genre, people simultaneously partake in sustaining the broader conditions of meaning in reception. Thus problematizing genre conventions would be a step towards – and, in fact, a pre-requisite for – questioning those conditions.

At the level of media texts, the power of genre can be approached as a rhetorical question of addressivity. As mentioned, we are here talking about those presentational strategies that the encoder employs in order to foster audience alignment and identification and to recommend certain meanings instead of some others. It is important to note that in the case of news texts, for instance, the addressivity is established and operates at two analytically distinct levels. First of all, there are the mediating operations of the encoding journalists to which Morley (1992: 84) refers as 'the framing and linking discourse of the programme' and which can be fruitfully tackled also by discourse narratological tools (see, for instance, V. Pietilä, 1992; Kunelius, 1996). It is through these genre-conditioned narrating activities that also the 'newsness' of news is established and reproduced in the text. On the other hand, the accessed news actors also address the audience in their specific ways. But as the journalists, due to their controlling of the narrator's discourse, are in the position of organizing and operating the news actors' voices in the text, the latters' modes of address are secondary in relation to the actual audience.[6]

Genre and/as Social Action

The genre model outlined above is characteristically a 'semiotic' model as its primary focus is upon the textual, symbolic or representational aspects of meaning, the more mundane aspects remaining outside its scope. The model's conception of mass mediated processes of meaning as an analytic whole can be described with a metaphor of 'communicative contract' where the producers and receivers of,

for instance, the news are seen to share the same conventions concerning the textual characteristics and, by implication, the established cultural status of news. This generic 'news contract' is constantly reinforced also at the level of textual features, most notably in the repetitiveness of strategies of presentation.

Thus within the model, the relation between the media and audiences is approached in terms of textual encounters where symbolic meanings are (re)produced through the employment of genre conventions. Correspondingly, a genre critique in this vein focuses on the representational *differentia specifica* of news, examining, among other things, what kind of positions of intelligibility the news text constructs for the audience to adopt in its meaning-making. The main point of the critique is to make visible that the 'objective mode of address' of the news, based, most notably, on the discursive strategies of immediacy and authentication, is far from socially and politically neutral and innocent. For instance, Connell (1980) points out that the 'transparency-to-reality' effect, created in TV news through different verbal and verbal-visual forms of presentation, fundamentally and effectively relegates the audience to the role of a passive onlooker.

Now, it seems to me that we can get a more nuanced view of the ways the processes of meaning in reception contribute to the sustenance of social and power relations, if we theorise also the more concrete, practical aspects of actual media-audience encounters. By incorporating this understanding as a part of the presented semiotic genre model, it is, in my view, possible to open up a larger analytical framework than the one suggested by Morley in his *Postscript*. In this way, we can also strengthen the genre model's critical edge.

What needs to be paid special attention to here are not, however, the immediate contexts and situations of everyday media use and reception as such, but rather the way they are organized into and largely take place as fixed and self-evident habits. For instance, viewing the news on TV or hearing them on radio forms for many people a specific 'genre routine' which is performed more or less automatically, by taking only a scant notice of the news text, not to mention the taken-for-grantedness of the activity of following the news. This doesn't, however, mean that the daily media-related behaviour would be somehow insignificant either in terms of individual experience or from a broader social perspective. Quite the contrary, it can be argued that watching the TV news, for instance, is precisely in all its triviality both a personally meaningful and culturally and socially significant act.

The significance of media and genre routines, more generally, lies in the fact that they offer collectively based and culturally established lines of action according to which it is possible for individual actors to experience, in a very concrete way, order and stability in a constantly changing universe (cf. Schoening & Anderson, ibid.: 99). Thus media-related routines are central in the processes of 'ontological security' (Giddens, 1984). Especially pertinent in contemporary societies is the role of news routines as they provide actors with a sense of being connected to a common world of ongoing real events, or, as Giddens (ibid.: 50) formulates it, of 'the continuity of the object world'.

What is of key importance here is that media and genre routines are intimately interrelated with the ways media industry operates in organizing its output. For instance, broadcast schedules provide actors with a daily clock and a weekly and yearly calendar to which they can adapt the rhytm of their particular activities (see, for instance, Scannell, 1988, 1989). The relation, of course, is not one of direct causality or determination but of mutual accomodation and interdependence. As Morley (1989: 36) puts it, at the same time as 'the broadcasting institutions construct their schedules in ways which are designed to complement the basic modes of domestic organization' they inevitably 'come to play an active and constitutive role in the organization of domestic time'. Seriality is another 'ready-made' basis that the mode of production provides for daily media-related routines. As Scannell (1995: 8) points out, seriality gives the audience 'a sense of the overall structure or flow of programs as a regular, patterned kind of thing through the hours of each day and from one day to the next, and the next and the next'.

From a critical perspective, the social significance of media and genre routines is grounded in the fact that in performing these routines people, at the same time as they make subjectively and culturally sensible meanings, also affirm and reproduce, in their very concrete practical action, the structural determinations and conditions of meaning in reception.

To summarize, then, there are especially two points here that the semiotic conception of genre needs to be complemented with. Firstly, there is the view that the significance of media-audience encounters is not restricted to textual and representational aspects only, but also the routinised activities of using and receiving the media and their texts are

saturated with significance. Hence, these routines are in themselves constitutive of the social and cultural dynamics of audiences' meaning-making. Secondly, it should be emphasised that in the case of journalistic genres, in particular, and most notably of the news, the significance is intimately linked with the sense of membership in 'imagined communities'. For instance, as pointed out by Morley (1991: 14),

> the regular viewing of the nightly television news (or of a long-running soap opera) can be seen ... as discourses which constitute collectivities through a sense of 'participation' and through the production of both a simultaneity of experience and a sense of a 'past in common'.

And, one could add, as regards especially the news on TV, the viewing offers most vividly also a sense of 'present in common'. Here the direct broadcasting of news programmes creates a heightened sense of simultaneous 'engaging in a joint ritual with millions of others' (1992: 268).

All that has been said so far can now be summarized in a social-semiotic notion of genre that conceptualizes the dynamics of mass-mediated meaning in reception in terms of three analytically distinct but interrelated and simultaneous levels or aspects – those of textuality, representation and routines. The notion can be presented as the following model:

What is noteworthy in the model is that media-audience relations are approached at all levels from a rhetorical perspective. In other words, different media genres are seen to construct for the audience specific interpretative positions in relation to media texts and their representational contents. At the same time audience members become interpellated as social subjects with particular kind of cultural characteristics as well as invited to participate in specific 'imagined communities'. A core problematic of critical genre analysis, then, is formulated around the issue of media-related construction and reconstruction of social subjectivities and collectivities. This leads to a double-focus for the empirical analysis where attention should be paid, on the one hand, to the ways the audience is addressed textually and contextually. On the other hand, focus is on the actual reception and appropriation of these modes of address by audience members.

In employing the model as the analytic framework in the empirical study of news, for instance, attention is paid, first of all, to those discursive or presentational strategies that are employed in the text both to establish a relationship of complicity with the audience and to promote specific meanings for the audience to accept. Put another way, the focus is on the discursively constructed positions of intelligibility that the audience is invited to adopt in its meaning-making both of the textual genre characteristics and of the meanings preferred in the text. Second, as regards the representational aspect, the concern is, most notably, with the images of collectivities or communities that media texts construct and invite the audience to identify themselves with. An 'imagined community' constantly and prominently evoked in the news is that

Figure 1.

aspects of news genre	*focus 1 (text)*		*focus 2 (reception)*
presentational	(re)production of textual positions of intelligibility both in relation to the genre of news and the meanings preferred in the text	ADDRESSIVITY	recognition and interpretation of textual genre characteristics and the (preferred) meanings of the text
representational	representations of cultural identities and 'imagined communities'		recognition and interpretation of represented identities and communities
practical	the organization of news output		established practical activities of using and interpreting the news

of the 'nation', as the news, indeed, is a genre which diffuses 'emblems of nationhood' (Schlesinger, 1991: 165) on a daily basis. Third, the ways news producers organize their output are also approached in terms of addressivity. The regular daily appearance of morning papers, for instance, signals in itself that 'the breakfast-time world is still in order' (Bausinger, 1984: 344) and that by receiving and reading the paper readers become part of this world. Similarly, broadcast schedules offer the audience a membership in a common cultural (at present predominantly national) world which is unified and synchronized by shared and often simultaneous genre routines.

Thus one point to be made here is that addressivity is in itself a powerful social and cultural force. In fact, it is a key category in the social-semiotic genre conception through which the actual social and political implications of mass-mediated processes of meaning can be fruitfully grasped.[7]

Without going into details here, the second major question to be studied empirically concerns, as mentioned, the ways audience members, in their actual meaning-making, receive and appropriate the 'social persuasion' of media genres.[8]

Concluding Remarks

By way of concluding, it needs to be stressed that the genre model outlined above does not want to deny the intertextuality and interdiscursivity – and thereby the multifarous meaning potential – of media texts, even of such a highly standardized product as the news. Nor does the model deny the interpretative capacities of audience members.

The point rather is to argue that, in actual practice, the meaning potential of media texts is structured according to genre conventions and that also their use and reception operate along quite conventionalized lines. Moreover, the argument continues, these conventionalized aspects of meaning play a central part in the structuration and sustenance of the social world at large as well as the power relations that underpin it. In addition, of special interest in this respect are those media genres that have established themselves a widely-spread and/or unquestioned cultural position. Thus the news, for instance, is a case in point for the social-semiotic genre study as it is among the main providers of 'a sense of commonality and normality' in society (Schoening & Anderson, ibid.: 105). Within the critical social-semiotic framework, then, one point is to examine and expose precisely the mechanisms that serve to guarantee the largely naturalized cultural status of news as a transparent reality discourse for anybody and all. Another point is to politicise the genre-specific conventions and strategies of fixing and normalizing meaning in news discourse, most notably through the professional strategies of immediacy and authenticity. Namely, as Hall (1985: 46) points out, "'normalization' does not appear out of thin air' but is always a result of an ongoing struggle over meaning.

In more general terms, the objective of critical genre analysis is to scrutinize the unifying tendencies and dynamics of especially dominant cultural forms and, in this way, make visible their actual social and political implications. And here, in fact, intertextually oriented study and genre analysis can complement each other usefully. Namely, by exploring the polysemous qualities of media texts and their reception, the former can reveal the cracks, fissures and inner tensions of the seemingly unitary, unambiguous and as if uncontestable processes of genre-conditioned meaning.[9] Thus both approaches contribute, from different directions, to challenging dominant significations and opening up opportunities for producing alternative social realities.

Notes

1. As regards originality, the articles by Carey and Garnham, for instance, are modified versions of the texts published in *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 1/1995. Also Morley repeats in his article partly the same points he has made in several earlier connections.
2. One central thrust in the swing of the pendulum has been the deep aversion felt by many proponents of cultural studies for political economy – and vice versa. A constructive dialogue can hardly be expected if the former accuse the latter of crude determinism while the latter claim the former to be tinkering uselessly with popular trivialities. See, for instance, Kellner (1997: 120) who refers to the series of futile debates which only have continued 'a long legacy of animosity between the schools'. Kellner, for one, suggests that the divide is artificial and should be overcome. For an illuminating example of this unproductive hostility, see the articles by Garnham and Grossberg as well as Garnham's comment on Grossberg and Carey in CSMC, 1/1995.

3. Perhaps more than direct accusations this impression is due to the lack of any constructive alternatives from the critics' side. For instance, Gripsrud (1996: 8, 10) who acidly attacks cultural audience studies, among other things, for 'impoverished grasp on the social determinations of televisual communication', is careful to make the reservation that he is 'not at all totally against audience studies' and that, in fact, 'much cultural studies work in this area has certainly been of great value'.
4. In my view, referring with 'preferred reading' to the properties of text causes unnecessary analytical confusion. I suggest that we make a terminological distinction and use 'preferred meaning' when talking about the properties of texts. 'Preferred reading', then, could be used when speculating whether the audience might interpret the given text along the lines of its 'preferred meaning(s)'. Cf. Hall (Angus et al., ibid.: 261) who notes that there is a slippage between preferred meaning and preferred reading in his encoding/decoding article and that 'preferred meaning is on the encoding side, not the decoding side'.
5. Cf. Billig (1997: 209) who in writing about the utility of constructionist social psychology to cultural studies, takes up the expressive and repressive functions of routine uses of language and patterns of speech. According to him, discursive habits 'enable certain things to be said, and others to be left unsaid'.
6. In narratological news analysis, the news text is conceived of as a composition of two kinds of discourse, that of the narrator and those of news actors. Moreover, the former is seen to occupy a higher and privileged position in the textual hierarchy thereby having also the primary discursive power. A parallel distinction is made by Hartley (1982: 109-15) when he talks about institutional and accessed voices in the news. It should be noted, however, that despite their 'technical subordination' the news actors' viewpoints can dominate the news text.
7. In fact, within recent rhetorical study of genre, addressivity is seen to have major sociological relevance in a 'Giddensian' sense. Most notably, of the American rhetorical scholars Miller (1994: 72) argues that it is precisely addressivity that provides 'a specific mechanism by which individual communicative action and social system structure each other'.
   Let it be noted, moreover, that within the field of rhetorical studies, there has lately been a lively process of rethinking genre in terms of social action (for an overview see, for instance, Freedman & Medway, 1994). As part of this rethinking there have also been attempts to politicise the category of genre itself. For instance, within the Australian genre school, Threadgold (1989: 107) argues that genre is 'among the very processes by which dominant ideologies are reproduced, transmitted and potentially changed'.
8. In my Ph.D. dissertation (to be published in Finnish spring 1998) I employ the social-semiotic conception of genre to study empirically the reception of TV news.
9. In a Bakhtinian terminology, one could talk about a combined study of the centripetal (consolidating) and centrifugal (dispersive) social and cultural forces of meaning (see Bakhtin, 1981).

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Crisis? What Crisis?

Analysing Audience Studies

BO REIMER

Audience studies is without a doubt one of the most lively subfields within media and communication research. This has been the case for more than a decade. An interesting aspect of the field is that it is relatively *communicative*. Within the field, researchers from the social sciences and the humanities actually tend to speak to, and learn from, each other, even though research objectives and methodologies may differ. The meetings are not always productive, and obviously not everyone is as communicative, but all in all, the dynamic character of the field makes it one of the most exciting ones within media and communication research presently.

However, even though the field has evolved, and continues to do so, it is to a certain extent caught up in what Stuart Hall (1989) has termed a crisis within the dominant paradigm in communication studies; a crisis with both internal and external dimensions. I will in this paper discuss the ways in which this crisis affects audience studies. I will argue that we at this stage either know less about audiences than we think we do, or less than we care to admit. In the discussion I will focus not only upon the dominant paradigm but also upon its main critical alternative, and I will argue for an increasing attention to the question of contextualization as well as for a move towards modernity theory.[1]

The Field of Audience Research

The history of the field – or, more correctly, the subfield – of audience studies has been written at numerous occasions and needs not be repeated in any detail here (Jensen and Rosengren, 1990; Moores, 1993; Reimer 1994: ch. 3). Suffice it to say that a commonly accepted picture is that audience studies was dominated by the social science tradition of Uses and Gratifications until about 15-20 years ago, when it was challenged by the more humanistic, and, in the traditions' own word, more critical, approaches of reception analysis and media ethnography, (the difference between these two being that reception analysis focuses on texts, whereas media ethnography focuses on the whole context within which media use is taking place).[2] Taken together, this has meant that audience research today has become more qualitative and more humanistic in character, and that focus has shifted from an interest in generalizable results to more historically specific studies, in which people's more or less unique interpretations of media texts (reception analysis), or the actual contexts of media consumption (media ethnography), have been the primary objects of analysis.

This qualitative turn, which of course in no ways is unique for audience studies, has shaken up the field. There are now two strong traditions conducting research with more or less similar objectives.

On the one hand, these two traditions continue to evolve independently of each other. That is, there are researchers committed to their respective tradition that do not come into contact with the 'other' tradition. Some Uses and Gratifications articles in the journal *Communication Research*, and some reception analysis/media ethnography articles in the journal *Cultural Studies*, would fit that description, for instance.

But, as outlined above, there are also researchers moving *between* the traditions, creating a rather unstable field in which it is not as easy as before to determine who your friends – or your enemies – are. Dividing lines that before were fairly stable, with commitments either to a social science ideal, with quantitative analyses, an interest in generalization and a liberal political outlook, or to a humanities ideal, with qualitative analyses, an inter-

est in the unique, and a radical political outlook, are not stable any longer. More and more researchers have become eclectic, moving in-between traditions and methods, creating a 'blurred genre' (Geertz, 1983; Schrøder, 1987).

But what, then, is the problem with contemporary audience research? Is there a crisis? First of all, the qualitative turn, and the movements within the field, has without a doubt been immensely important for our knowledge about audiences. There is no question about that. But I would argue that we know less about audiences today than we think we do – or at least less than we say we do.

First, even though audience research by definition should deal with different kinds of media, and with different kinds of media genres, it is quite obvious that the last decade of studies has been devoted primarily to television, and especially to the fiction output on television. This is no to say that the focus exclusively has been on fiction on television, but that has been the prime object of study.

There are many reasons behind this. The television focus is partly due to the strong standing of television in American culture, and on the strong standing of American research in the international research community. In other countries, more research has been devoted to other media, but in the international journals, the American influence is strong.

The focus on fiction has to be seen partly as a reaction against an earlier focus on news and other 'important' genres, as characterised by (male) social scientists. Focusing on fiction is thus a way of taking media practices more typical of women – soap operas, romance books – seriously. But it also has to do with the characteristics of fiction as genre. In contemporary audience research, the different ways that people can interpret the same text is an important object of study, and in conducting such studies, fiction has been regarded as a suitable genre to study, since it is more open to different interpretations than are factual programs such as news.

Second, even disregarding the narrow focus on television and fiction, the cumulativity that we should expect, given the large numbers of studies conducted during the last decades, is not there. This is true both for the quantitative and qualitative traditions, albeit for different reasons.

When it comes to the quantitative Uses and Gratifications tradition, a tradition explicitly devoted to cumulativity and to generalizability, it is somewhat ironic to realise that even though most articles carry references to a number of key theoretical overviews, such as the introductory chapters to the two main Uses and Gratifications anthologies (Blumler and Katz, 1974; Rosengren et al, 1985), very few articles seem to build on previously conducted empirical work. That is, most researchers seem to prefer conducting their own surveys with their own specific questions rather than building on earlier research. Possibilities for analysing changes over time, or differences between nations, are therefore small.

Within the qualitative camp, the situation is quite different. Here it seems much more common to discuss in detail the empirical work carried out earlier. The work by Ang (1985), Morley (1986), Radway (1987), Lull (1990) and others are discussed time and time again. However, in many cases it seems as if discussing other people's research is in itself enough. The amount of new empirical, qualitative research being published is not overwhelming.

Third, although there are researchers trying to work eclectically, there is a gap between what could be termed a micro and a macro approach to audience research. This gap is on the one hand concrete. Some researchers work on a micro level, some on a macro level, and very few on both levels. But there is also a gap in the sense that there is disagreement over which level is the most fruitful to conduct research on – even when research interests coincide. This is particularly clear in relation to questions of power, ideology and economy, where proponents of a macro perspective on the media argue that much of today's audience research, in its focus on micro contexts, and on the different meanings people may make out of, for instance, Baywatch, totally neglects such questions (Corner, 1991; Seaman, 1992).

I will return to the relationship between the micro and the macro later on in this article. The point I want to make at this stage is that, even though there are researchers taking the micro/macro problematic seriously and constructively (cf. Morley, 1992; Lull, 1995; Livingstone, in press), at the moment there does not seem to be any consensus on how to deal with the problematic. And for too many researchers, the problematic is not deemed important enough to deal with at all.

Stuart Hall and the Crisis of the Communication Paradigm

In an influential article published in 1989, Stuart Hall argued that the dominant paradigm of media and communication research – the social science

paradigm – was in crisis. This crisis had both an internal and an external dimension.

The internal dimension had to with the paradigm's epistemological and theoretical weaknesses. The main weaknesses, as Hall saw it, were the crude *behaviourism* of the paradigm, and its *individualism*. Even though we know how complex matters having to do with signification, meaning and language are, and even though we know that human beings are primarily social beings, belonging in concrete social and cultural contexts, the dominant paradigm still continued to reduce these matters to simple indicators, and to questions of individual choice.

The external dimension had to do with the dominant paradigm's attempts to constitute media and communication research as a self-sustaining discipline; a discipline with its own theories and with its own empirical objects of analysis. The problem with this, Hall argued, is that communication is not, and can never be, a discipline. It is a regional field, related to other fields, both theoretically and empirically:

First, in understand to understand communication, theories about communication can never suffice in themselves. The only way to theorise meaningfully about communication is to relate such theories to, and to ground them in, more general social theories of the social formation as a whole, since it is within this framework that communication works.

And second, it is not only theoretically that communication has to be grounded in a larger context. This is also true empirically. It is no longer possible, if it ever was, to conceptualise of communication practices as external to social structures and to other kinds of everyday life practices. Communication practices are related to other practices, and, Hall argued, it is increasingly the case that it is communication institutions and practices that actually constitute the social field. It is through communications we make sense of the world. It is therefore unthinkable that we should try to understand communication practices outside this world.

Hall's critique of the dominant paradigm of media and communication research was harsh. It is not self-evident that many members of this paradigm would agree with the picture Hall painted of the paradigm (and especially not with his views on the behaviourism of the paradigm). However, I believe that many of the points made were valid, and I believe that by discussing them in relation to today's field of audience studies, it may be possible both to identify some of the field's more basic shortcomings, and to arrive at some suggestions concerning how to proceed within – or maybe even beyond – the field. I furthermore believe that the critique can be raised and applied to the whole field. That is, the critique raises questions that are valid not only in relation to the dominant but also to the alternative paradigm within audience studies (if 'dominant' and 'alternative' are reasonable terms within this field).

Individualism and the Lack of Contextualization

In Hall's critique of the dominant paradigm's internal problem, a key aspect concerned its inherent individualism. People are treated as autonomous, strong individuals, making rational decisions outside of social and cultural contexts, even though we know this is not the way people 'are' or act. This individualism is of course typical not only of the dominant paradigm within media and communication studies. It is basically the view of the individual that dominates social science in general – which in turn is related to the ideology of Western capitalist societies.

Within the field of communication studies, it is interesting to realise, however, that it is within the Uses and Gratifications tradition that this individualism has been most visible. The media effects tradition, which was challenged initially by the Uses and Gratifications traditions in the 1940s, and more strongly in the 1960s, is in many ways at odds with the notion of individualism. That tradition's view of the individual can be seen as more negative: people will react more or less similarly on a message transmitted to them. Or it could be seen as more sociologically grounded: people live in different surroundings and have different socially and culturally based competencies. Some are able to 'resist' messages, some are not.

For the Uses and Gratifications tradition, on the other hand, the ways that people handle different messages fall back upon their specific needs and motives. People are able to identify their specific needs, and they use the media in order to satisfy them. This is individualism in a pure form. It is a view that completely ignores the notion of *contextualization.*

It is not difficult to identify the above discussed weakness within the Uses and Gratification tradition. The tradition takes the strong, rational individual as its point of departure, and that perspective is furthermore made concrete through the choice of research methods. The traditional way of

proceeding within the tradition is to conduct large-scale surveys, in which people are asked about their needs and their motives for using the media. By so doing, the unit of analysis is obviously the lone individual, and the way of understanding his or her actions and motives is by asking him or her standardised questions, without meeting the person in question. The social and cultural context within which he or she lives can thus only be grasped through questions in the survey, and such questions are in themselves rare.

It would seem as if the above stated problem should not be a problem at all for researchers working within reception analysis or media ethnography. In both cases, the researchers meet the people they are interested in, they ask questions in person, and at least for media ethnography, they even visit people in their homes. The unit of analysis can even be the family rather than the individual. So can there really be a problem of individualism here?

I say yes. There is a problem, but it is on another level. Within the Uses and Gratifications tradition, each person is treated like a context-free, specific individual; an individual whose actions and needs can be understood without taking into account the context he or she belongs within. Within reception analysis, and specifically media ethnography, the context definitely matters. But the problem is that *each context is treated as if that context does not belong within a context in itself*. What the traditions do not take into account strongly enough is that each specific context is positioned within a larger structure, and that it is shaped by its position in that structure. That is, each context is treated like it is autonomous, without relation to other contexts. But if we are to understand the goings on in different, specific contexts, then we have to take into account two things:

First, people do not wind up in different contexts by accident. They do so depending on a number of factors having to do both with social and cultural background, and with current conditions. The composition of each specific context is therefore not random.

Second, the meanings of each specific context is shaped by its position within the larger structure of social space. Thus, it is not enough to ground people's actions in their everyday life micro-contexts, it is also necessary to take into account the macro-structures shaping those contexts.

In these senses reception analysis and media ethnography have a highly individualised view of contexts. The contexts are not contextualized (cf. Reimer, 1997b).

Media Practices and the Everyday Life Context

The distinction between an internal and external dimension, as used by Hall, is of course not clear cut. To a certain extent, they overlap. Thus, when we now move to a discussion of external factors, this will be a continuation of the discussion in the previous section.

I have already argued that contexualization is important when trying to understand why people use the media the way they do. This is also what Hall argues when he writes that media and communication practices cannot be understood outside the social or the cultural. When it comes to audience research, this means that people's media practices must be related also to other everyday life practices. Media practices differ from other everyday life practices to the extent that they are mediated, of course, but they belong within the same context, and the choice of watching television, for instance, is made in relation not only to the alternative of listening to the radio but also to the alternative of going for a walk, for instance. It is furthermore the case that the meaning of a person's media practices is also related to other everyday life practices. The choices a person makes in everyday life are deliberate, even though often made routinely, and taken together they express something about who the person is and who he or she wants to be.

The tradition within audience research that has taken this kind of contextualization most seriously is of course media ethnography, where the debate has concerned whether it is altogether meaningful to start with a person's media practices and then try to contextualize them, or whether it is necessary to instead start with the context, and then try to understand the role played by the media practices within that context (Drotner, 1993).

It should be remembered, however, that also researchers working quantitatively increasingly have tried to position media practices within a larger everyday life context. This has been carried out with the help of the *lifestyle* concept. In surveys, respondents have been asked questions not only about media use, but also about other leisure activities – this in order to get an understanding of how people combine media practices with other leisure practices, and of how these practices together make up a person's lifestyle (Johansson and Miegel, 1992; Reimer, 1994).[3]

It would seem as if the procedure of treating media practices in relation to everyday life practices is rapidly becoming a 'natural' way of pro-

ceeding, both within the social sciences and the humanities paradigm. This may not come as a great surprise, given, as Hall argues, the important role played by the media in everyday life today. The distinction between mediated and interpersonal communication is becoming more and more difficult to uphold in a meaningful manner, and the introduction of increasingly sophisticated new media also tend to render the distinction if not obsolete, so at least less important.

However, describing in detail what a person's living room looks like, or showing empirically that there are a number of relationships between, for instance, the viewing of certain TV programs and certain outdoor activities is not particularly meaningful in itself. Those patterns must be interpreted in relation to a theoretical perspective.[4] That leads us over to the third and final of Hall's problematics.

Theorising Audiences

In order to understand why people use the media the way they do, it is of course necessary to have a knowledge of factors and processes that are specific for the mass media and for mass communication processes. It is in this respect necessary to take into account theories concerning the cultural forms of different media (Williams, 1974) as well as theories concerning genre (Neale, 1990). It is also necessary to take into account theories concerning the actual process of interpreting or decoding a text (Hall, 1980).[5]

But, as Hall argues, media and communications is not a self-sustaining discipline. As a regional field, its progress is to a great extent shaped by progress within social theory as a whole. Media and communications can only be properly understood with the help of theories that take into account media and communications' place within the larger social formation, and even though such theories of course can be formulated by media theorists, it is also necessary to be aware of what is happening within other regions of social analysis.

Today, the most vital debate within social analysis is carried out within a *modernity* framework. Within this framework, theorists try to overcome a number of difficult oppositions in social analysis: First, the opposition between constancy and change. Second, the opposition between generality and specificity. And third, the opposition between structure and agency (Reimer, 1994: ch. 2).

The way to handle these oppositions is to focus on how contemporary Western societies are forever changing in an interplay between macro processes and people's actions and reactions on these processes. In order to understand this interplay, it is necessary, first, to be historically specific: Western societies have many things in common, but the processes of modernity that are under way look different in different cultures. Second, it is necessary to acknowledge that the processes of modernity are ambiguous. There are many different processes under way – economic, political, social, technological and cultural – and these processes do not all go hand in hand. It is not possible to reduce these processes to one, common underlying factor, either (such as the economy). Instead, the different factors are related to each other in historically specific situations, and in these situations, the relationships may be articulated quite differently (Hall and Gieben, 1992).

Modernity is shaped by many macro processes, including industrialisation, urbanisation, secularisation, democratisation and globalisation. But obviously also the mass media (in this discourse named, rather awkwardly, mediazation) have played an important role in the shaping of contemporary societies – a role that furthermore without a doubt is becoming increasingly important. Given this situation, it is somewhat remarkable to note that in the writings of the major modernity theorists – Habermas (1990), Giddens (1991), Beck (1992) – the mass media are mentioned here and there, but they are very seldom treated in detail.[6]

Although few modernity theorists have devoted much time to the mass media, it seems obvious that the modernity perspective can be made useful for analyses of the media. This is something more and more researchers within the field of media and communications seem to agree upon. Media analyses written within a modernity perspective is becoming increasingly common (Drotner, 1992; Reimer, 1994; Fornäs, 1995; Moores, 1995).

This is not to say that the modernity perspective is present in media studies everywhere. It is at most an alternative perspective, a perspective that may be used, not a perspective that everyone feels they have to take into account. This is also the case within audience studies. I believe, however, that there are very good reasons for applying such a framework. Four specific reasons can be identified:

First, the emphasis on *historical specificity*, in relation to the notion of non-necessary relationships, is a crucial starting point. Particularly the social sciences version of audience studies has been too interested in finding universal, generalizable patterns in audience behaviour. One problem with this procedure, as discussed earlier, is that it seems

very difficult to empirically identify such patterns. Another problem is that such patterns, when identified, are raised to such a level of abstraction that the generalizations become practically meaningless. This latter problem within the social sciences paradigm is to a certain extent shared by the alternative paradigm, when summary statements of the kind that 'different people interpret similar texts differently' are made.

Second, I briefly discussed the *micro-macro* problematic earlier. This is of course not an easy problematic, but it is a problematic that cannot be left unattended to. Has the focus on micro studies meant that power and ideology have been replaced by less 'important' topics, such as pleasure? The critique is valid in the sense that in much of today's micro analyses there does not seem to be an interest in macro structures and proper contextualizations. However, this has more to do with the way micro analyses are carried out than with the focus on the micro in itself. Morley (1992) is surely correct in arguing that it is quite unproductive to put the micro against the macro as an either/or question. It is through micro processes that the macro constantly – daily – is reproduced, and in order to reach a proper understanding of macro processes, it is necessary to integrate analyses of power and ideology with everyday life analyses. Such an emphasis is central within the modernity perspective.

Third, in making analyses historically specific, and in focusing to a great extent on contemporary societies, the *local-global* connection has increasingly come into focus. Of central importance here is the notion of changing relationships between time and space, of how, through processes of time-space compression (Harvey, 1989), or time-space distanciation (Giddens, 1991) the world is shrinking and our relationships to other people no longer are confined to physical, immediate settings. The mass media are obviously heavily involved in these processes, and it is with the help of the media (television, radio, but increasingly also the Internet) that people's social and cultural contexts are changing.

And fourth, although the modernity perspective in a way is a macro perspective, it still theorises micro processes, and it uses the concept of *cultural identity* in order to meaningfully grasp human thinking and action. With cultural identity is meant that people's identities have to be seen, first, as socially rather than as individually grounded. Identity is shaped in social interaction. And second, this identity is complex, it is unstable, and to a certain extent contradictory (Hall, 1992). In one way, it could be argued that people's identities always have been like this, but it is quite likely that such a view of identity is more relevant in a complex, late modern society than in a traditional society. It is furthermore a view of identity that is relevant to apply in audience studies. Which parts of a person's identity comes to the fore in front of the TV, and in relation to which programs?

Concluding Remarks

I have in this paper discussed contemporary audience studies from the viewpoint of Stuart Hall's critique of the dominant paradigm within media and communications. The objective has been to identify weaknesses and problems with the tradition, and to see if Hall's ideas may be used productively. In so doing, I have focused not only upon the dominant but also upon the alternative paradigm within audience studies.

What can then be said about the state of the field? First of all, it is obvious that the field of audience studies is quite heterogeneous, and that any critique raised in this or any other article does not affect everyone involved. But even so, I believe that the points raised by Hall are valid when looking more specifically into audience studies, and I believe the crisis affects both the dominant and the alternative paradigm.

I outlined initially some of the shortcomings of the work carried out. We do have 'knowledge' of audience behaviour in the sense that we know from work within the dominant paradigm that media practices are related to a number of socio-cultural and economic factors such as age, income, education and gender. We also know from this paradigm that psychological properties are of some importance (disregarding at this stage the relationship between these factors and properties). We furthermore know from the alternative paradigm that media interpretations are highly varied, and that the micro-context within which media use is carried out is important in order to understand the meanings of said use.

But where do we go from there? It is at this point it becomes necessary to integrate micro and macro studies with each other, to integrate media practices with other everyday life practices, and to make sense of these processes with the help of relevant theories – theories that I believe should be drawn from the modernity discourse. This is of course not an easy task, but it is a task that more and more media and communications – and cultural studies – researchers seem to think it is worth pursuing.

It should be noted, and taken seriously, that pursuing such a task will have a number of consequences, all of which may not be attractive or easy to deal with. It may mean having to set more modest, albeit more meaningful, goals with the practice of audience studies; specifying more clearly the limitations of what we are trying to accomplish (Reimer, 1997b).

But it may also mean winding up in a position in which the whole discipline of media and communications can be questioned: If we move closer to social theory and everyday life analysis in general, what is the point of studying media and communications specifically? Why not just conduct cultural analysis in general? The task here will be to overcome the problematic distinction between specificity and generality. It will be necessary to argue convincingly for the need for understanding the specific in order to understand the general.

It is to the modernity discourse we may have to turn in order to find our arguments.

Notes

1. This paper is a result of work carried out within the research project 'Cultural Identities in Transition', a project financed by The Swedish Research Council of the Humanities and the Social Sciences. For a presentation of the project, cf. Reimer 1997a. For empirical analyses carried out within the project, cf. Andersson and Jansson 1997. I want to thank James Lull for valuable comments on an earlier version of this article.
2. These distinctions are of course not the only ones possible. Jensen and Rosengren (1990) argue for five separate traditions (including, somewhat peculiarly, the media effects tradition), whereas McQuail in the textbook *Mass Communication Theory* (1994) beside a behaviourist and a social-cultural tradition (roughly the social sciences and the humanities distinction used in this paper) adds a structural tradition typical of research within the media industry itself. Although obviously conducting audience research, the aims of the media industry tradition is so different from the aims of the academic traditions that it would not be meaningful to discuss that tradition in this context.
3. The concept of lifestyle has also been used within media studies in order to predict media use. That is, a person's lifestyle has been used to predict his or her media use (Donohew et al, 1987). The theoretical problem with such a procedure is of course that it is difficult so see how one can meaningfully distinguish a person's media practices from his or her other everyday life practices, and use one type of practices as independent variable, one type as dependent variable.
4. The social science traditions dealing with lifestyles are painfully undertheorised. Cf. Reimer 1995.
5. Whether it is also necessary to take into account factors having to do with the production of media is a question I will side-step in this article.
6. One major exception is of course Habermas' early work *'The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere'* (1962/1989), but the analysis of the media in that book has not exactly been applauded, and Habermas has subsequently (1992) revised his views. For a more thorough analysis of the media from the position of social theory, cf. Thompson 1995.

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The Contested Power of Persuation

A Rhetorical Approach to Reception Theory and Analysis

BARBARA GENTIKOW

The oldest theories of communication in European culture, including reception theory, can be found in works on rhetoric. The classical texts are Aristotle's *Art of rhetoric*, Cicero's *De oratore* and Quintilian's *Institutio oratoriae*. Rhetoric is both an art and a science, both theory and practice and was an overarching element of higher education in Europe for nearly 2000 years. From about 1700 it was excluded from scientific theory and survived more or less only as a practice, in a mutilated form, reduced to its *elocutio*- or even only *ornatus*- elements, that is to say to instructions on how to decorate a speech in order to make it effective. At its worst, rhetoric became synonymous with "empty phrases or attempts to lead astray, cheat and manipulate people" (Johannesson 1990: 9). Thus rhetoric as a comprehensive theory of communication as social practice, including *ethos* (the speaker's honesty) was reduced to stylistic instructions and perverted to recipes for seduction[1].

This was specially the case in the field of communication studies. Rhetoric became here "a victim of populist advices" where it "is nearly always shrinked to an extremely dubious trivial knowledge" (Ottmers 1996: 54). Serious communication research in a rhetorical perspective was more or less completely absent, while a flood of text-books taught scholars in journalism, advertising and sales how to formulate one's "message" in the most persuasive way. It was only around 1960 that classical rhetoric was rediscovered, both in Europe and in the United States. The most influental authors were Ch. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca (1958/1969) who initiated "the new rhetoric" in an European research tradition, and Kenneth Burke (1950/1969), G.A. Kennedy (1963, 1972, 1994), Herbert W. Simons (1976, 1989) and Walter J. Ong (1982/1991) who gave strong impulses to rhetorical studies in the United States, where rhetoric had not been so consequently expelled from the higher regions of communication studies, because of the more pragmatic approach to science there.

It looks like a renewed interest for a "maximum-rhetoric" is growing in these years in Scandi navian communication studies as well. Some names and titles concerning recent works in the Scandinavian countries include: Bengt Nerman (as a precursor, with his influential book *Massmedieretorik* from 1973), Britt Hultén, Kurt Johannesson, Georg Johannesen (*Rhetorica Norvegica)*, Øivind Andersen, Jostein Gripsrud (with an ongoing research project on *Rhetoric, knowledge, mediation*)[2], Peter Larsen, Jan Lindhardt, Jørgen Fafner, Charlotte Jørgensen, Lone Rørbech, Christian Kock. Some of these works are closely related to mass communication and are thus trying to apply this oldest communication theory to modern mass media.

Rhetoric and Reception

Research so far, however, is curiously restricted. These studies deal mostly with rhetorical analyses of mass media products[3], not with the reception of these texts. The main purpose of this paper is to extend the field of research with the perspective of reception and the role of the audience.

> Rhetoric is an empirical and normative science about the production and reception of utterances, seen as a whole... The fact that it both looks at production and reception implies that

> it has to examine how utterances work (Kock 1997: 14).

Every text in a communication situation implies and is addressed to an audience (a person, or, mostly, persons receiving an utterance, by watching, reading or listening). Ong puts it like this:

> To speak, you have to address another or others. People in their right minds do not stray through the woods just talking at random to nobody... In speaking as in writing, some recipient must be present, or there can be no text produced (Ong 1982/1991: 176f.).

In other words: people are reasonable, they are positioned, they live in society, they talk / act with purpose, they relate to an other or another.

The audience and the process of reception is an integrated part of rhetorical theory and practice. I dare say: no other communication theory does include reception so consequently as rhetoric does. Some researchers even maintain that the audience is the primary instance in the rhetorical communication model[4]. In ancient theory it is Aristotle's book on rhetoric which most explicitly deals with these aspects of communication, including descriptions of different audiences' varying dispositions, and reflections on the role of affects for the reception process)[5]. Plato quotes Socrates for a similar definition of the good orator as mastering different audiences with different strategies of persuasion, knowing "when he should speak and when he should refrain, and when he should use pithy sayings, pathetic appeals, sensational affects, and all the other modes of speech which he has learned..." (Phaedrus, quoted in Merton 1946: 108). In our times Perelman's & Olbrechts-Tyteca's treatise on argumentation and other works of Perelman are most directly concerned with the role of the audience in the communication process.

Power Relations

My focus will be on power relations. Both rhetoric and communication models in traditional media studies deal, more or less explicitly, with the relation between texts and readers in terms of the text's influence upon the reader. Media history has been told as the story of changing paradigms from "almighty media" over "powerless media" to "powerfull" media, thus indicating a supposed oscillation of power balance between texts and audiences. And rhetoric is known not at least because of its open declaration that the speaker wants to persuade his audience, which can be understood as an act of power.

No doubt: rhetoric is clearly target orientated and interested in being effective. Rhetoric can in this respect be defined as a theory and practice of effective communication. Rhetorical speech as an act of power can even take the form of violence:

> Argumentation is an action which always tends to modify a pre-existing state of affairs... The person who takes the initiative in a debate is comparable to an aggressor... (Perelman & Olbrichts-Tyteca 1958/1969: 55).

But this power is modified by at least three dimensions of the communication process, modifications which are often suppressed or forgotten, in an undialectical reception of the rhetorical tradition:

The first is, very obviously, that rhetoric does not ascribe power only to the one side of the communication process, that is to say to the speaker. Rhetoric is very much about the power of the audience as well. The best evidence for this is the existence of the long tradition of rhetoric itself: nobody would ever have written a single treatise on rhetoric if readers were thought of as being easy to persuade.

The concept of the audience is that of a powerful one also in other respects. The rhetorical speech act's implied audience is characterized by two fundamental qualities: she or he[6] is a free person and is different, both from the person speaking and from other members of the audience.

> No need to persuade if the object of persuasion is a slave or a prisoner; in this case the person in question could be moved quicker and more efficiently from one place to another by direct physical action (a push, for example). And if people really are identical, sharing the same values and opinions and belonging to the same gender, race and social class, there would obviously be no room or need for persuasion at all (Kittang 1996: 125, referring to Burke).

The audience is quite often seen as adversaries. The typical rhetorical "act of mediating implies ... a certain degree of opposition which has to be conquered" (Foght Mikkelsen 1997: 74). Or: "the orator speaks in the face of at least implied adversaries" (Ong 1982/1991: 111). This notion of the audience as an adversary is not a negative category. On the contrary: it ascribes power to her or him, as it ascribes power to the speaker. She or he is a person the orator carefully has to take into account, even treat as an equal.

The orator has to adapt himself to the audience in order to win it (says Cicero for example; see Andersen 1995: 24). This empowers the audience in a paradoxical way:

> If orators adapt themselves to their audiences, then the image of the powerful orator playing masterfully with the emotions of the helpless crowd is a myth... According to this myth, the audience falls under the spell of the hypnothic orator, who shapes its views like a potter moulding clay. However, these theories consider the power of suggestion flowing from the orator to the crowd, and they ignore the powers of the audience over the orator. It can be argued that if orators can control crowds, it is only because crowds control orators (Billig 1987/1996: 225).

Secondly: rhetoric operates with different degrees of power in relation to different genres, different audiences and different situations. Not every speech has the same target orientation and uses the same "power of address" (Leith & Myerson 1989). In relation to the classical distinction between the three speech genres one can say: target-oriented and "effective" communication relates most directly to speech in court (*genus judiciale*) and political speech, *genus deliberativum.* Fictional texts can be seen as belonging to the epideictic genre, *genus demonstrativum*, which does not have a direct purpose (in terms of setting in motion intended actions), but aims at supporting and affirmating existing values, or "bringing about a consensus in the minds of the audience regarding the values that are celebrated in the speech" (Perelman 1979: 6). Audiences differ in terms of how much they agree with the speaker beforehand. A good orator will take account of this and adapt his way of argumentation to these conditions. Thus he will probably choose a more dialogical style when talking to people who are most likely to agree with him, and a more agonistic one when the audience does not share his opinions and is not easy to move. Also the situation influences the speaker's use of power; the same topic which may cause a heavy and hostile debate among guests in a TV-talkshow may be discussed peacefully by the same persons in a bar.

Thirdly: there is no "one rhetoric". Rhetoric or better rhetorics consist of many versions in the classical Greek and Roman era and many interpretations in the centuries after. Gorgian rhetoric and the professional debating competitions which Protagoras instituted were forthrightly agonistic, aiming at the destruction of the opponent (Billig 1987/1996: 28), whereas the Socratic methods of questioning and the Aspasian style are known as dialogical. In modern rhetoric, some stress the dialogical character (Perelman, Gadamer, Bakhtin, Fafner, Jens), some the target-oriented, more aggressive elements of rhetoric. Among the latter are feminist critics, equalling the power of rhetorical speech with typically masculine modes of discourse (Billig 1987/1996: 26ff., de Laurentis 1989).

A fourth modification of the power of the rhetorical speech could be seen in the dialectics of this kind of aggression, as Perelman notes. Continuing his last quotation, he writes that, though being aggressive, argumentation is at the same time

> the triumph of persuasion over brute force... The use of argumentation implies that one has renounced resorting to force alone, that value is attached to gaining the adherence of one's interlocutor by means of reasoned persuasion, and that one is not regarding him as an object, but appealing to his free judgment. Recourse to argumentation assumes the establishment of a community of minds, which, while it lasts, excludes the use of violence (Perelman & Olbrichts-Tyteca 1958/1969: 55).

Argumentation

The most characteristic element of rhetorical communication is, probably, argumentation. This is also a clue notion for discussing the question of power relations between the speaker and his audience.

There are three different ways of arguing: by *logos*, by *ethos* and by *pathos*, which are also different ways of appealing to rational and emotional dimensions in the minds of the audience.

More generally however, the rhetorical way of arguing is not identical with convincing with rational means. To say 2 + 2 = 4 is not a matter of rhetoric, but of logics alone. Matters of human life cannot be treated by logical, formal proof (alone), but it is necessary to make an opinion (a certain point of view) probable, credible, "einleuchtend" (Gadamer), through reasoning. Logical puzzles and mathematical problems can be solved in a "correct" way, whereas "an unarguable rightness and wrongness cannot be established" in controversies in daily life (Billig 1987/1996, with reference to Protagoras). The rhetorical speech act is not about proving the truth, but about showing that one position is more probable than others. Rhetoric requires art to create belief. Rhetoric is an art mainly neces-

sary when things cannot be proved in an unambiguous way. Therefore rhetorical argumentation is more about persuading than about convincing. This is not necessarily negative but due to the ambiguity of most situations in human life. The authorship and the circumstances of a crime are difficult to prove, one has to find good arguments for and against different possibilities. A politician cannot prove that his party will do better in improving public health conditions, he can only try to make his suggestions as credible as possible. We are not able to prove that a film is good, we have to find good arguments for our judgment.

Rhetorical argumentation as seen in opposition to logical proof can in a first operation be described with the following oppositions – for so being explored once more in relation to internal ambivalences:

Rhetorical argumentation and logical proof

Argument	**Proof**
opinions	"scientific" truth
different meanings	one meaning
the reasonable	the rational
probability	(logical) necessity
open	closed
appeal for adherence	convince
modest	compelling

Zeno compared logic with the closed fist, rhetoric with an open palm. Rhetoric is carried out in a context of justification and criticism, with differing points of view, and "possesses an openness not to be found in the context of logic" (Billig 1987/1996: 125). Argumentation can, strictly spoken, not convince, arguments can only "appeal for adherence". This is a term used by Perelman. The same is due to the notion of rhetorical argumentation as "modest".

It is a logical necessity to agree with the law of gravity; proofs can be given which are so compelling that people who disagree make themselves a fool. This is not the case with the argument that the American president Bill Clinton, accused of sex affairs, is innocent or with the argument that the TV-series *X-files* has high quality. Perelman stresses on the one hand the strong goal-orientation of rhetorical speech but at the same time defines the orator's way of speaking as necessarily modest because all argumentation, all reasoning which is based on a "disagreement about values" is uncertain, the orator has no "guarantee whatever that everyone will agree with his point of view" (Perelman 1979: 13). "The philosopher has at his disposal only an argumentation that he can endeavour to make as reasonable and systematic as possible without ever being able to make it absolutely compelling or a demonstrative proof" (Perelman 1979: 14). "Wanting to convince someone always implies a certain modesty on the part of the initiator of the argument; what he says is not "Gospel truth", he does not possess that authority which would place his words beyond question so that they would carry immediate conviction. He acknowledges that he must use persuasion, think of arguments capable of acting on his interlocutor, show some concern for him, and be interested in his state of mind" (Perelman & Olbrichts-Tyteca 1958/1969: 16). The only thing the orator can do is to appeal for the adherence of the audience: "The goal of all argumentation... is to create or increase the adherence of minds to the theses presented for their assent" (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1958/1969: 45).

In relation to proof, argumentation is a dialogic, open, democratic and modest way of speaking. But there are different modes of argumentation, depending of the situation and the participants. Thus argumentation can also be more goal-oriented, closed, authoritarian and compelling.

The two faces of argumentation

Goal-oriented, "monologic"	dialogic
"closed"	"open"
authoritarian	democratic
compelling	modest

The rhetorical text has a fundamentally dialogical character even if the communication situation can be monologic (as typical for mass communication with its separation of orator and audience)[7]. The act of speaking in classical rhetoric is conceived of as an interaction between people with a purpose. The speaker counts on an audience, he or she is always in the orator's mind. There are two strategies of communication: either stressing one's own position or refusing the other's. The first may be more authoritarian, the latter has a more dialogical character because the orator has to presume possible other positions, has to think the other's possible thoughts. Talking means making the audience receptive and at the same time being receptive for (possible) reactions of the audience. Some have compared rhetorical communication to a game of chess:

> Both the rhetorician and the chess player will prepare in advance by anticipating counter-strategies from their opponent... And just as the initial layout of the chess problem implies a

> potential dialogue as well as a contest, so the rhetorician's search for his "means of persuasion" implies a counter-persuasion, long before the debate has even begun. Either way we arrive at a dialogue (Cockcroft & Cockcroft 1992: 3f.).

As to the dialectics of authoritarian and democratic, Perelman & Olbricht-Tyteca noted, as quoted before, that rhetorical argumentation is "aggressive" but that it is, at the same time, "the triumph of persuasion over brute force" (Perelman & Olbrichts-Tyteca 1958/1969: 55). Another argument in favour of the democratic character of rhetoric is its use in court which implies "that anyone, however clear the proof against him, has a right to present his case in the best light possible" and the historical fact that "oratory flourished most in the democracies and least under tyranny"[8].

The clearly target-oriented, effect-directed and authoritarian character of the rhetorical speech is thus, paradoxically, only the other side of its dialogical, open and democratic aspects. Target-orientation is not the opposite of dialogical but a property of the agonistic form of dialogue which is typical for rhetorical speech. There is a struggle going on which, in my understanding, is both agonistic and dialogical.

One of the paradoxes which characterizes rhetorical argumentation is that even the most dialogical communication "requires negation. When speakers merely agree with one another, there is nothing left to say" (Billig 1987/1996: 28). As a goal-oriented speech act communication has a purpose, the orator tries to win the audience to his own position, tries to draw him or her in the direction he wants, tries to control both meaning and the communication process in general and behaves more or less authoritarian. As a dialogue, communication has to do with a variety of participants and opinions, the orator has to take the audience into account, has to be open for (possible) different meanings, and the audience on its side has the possibility to open up for or to dismiss the orator's propositions. The audience is both a goal and persons who are orator's equal, adversaries who may disagree or even contradict. Communication is an act of contest based on "mutual goodwill" (Perelman 1979: 11).

Dominant Concepts of Communication in Media Studies

In a simplified way I will examine two main concepts of communication which are important in media studies in relation to the rhetorical way of dealing with speech acts. I place transfer models on the one side, interactive models on the other, and the "uses and gratification" approach in between.

1. Transfer Models or the Power of the Speaker and the Text

> Very much, perhaps even most, of mass communication theorizing has dealt with the question of effects. Effects have been of interest for many groups in society, those who want to reach others with their message and therefore want to get the most effective channel to the audience, and those who express fears for the negative impact of media (McQuail & Windahl 1993: 58).

The effects of political propaganda, advertising, violence and sex in media have been and still are the most debated issues, both in media research, public and popular discourse. Predominantly early media studies have employd tremendous ressources for this kind of research. The efforts were very different in terms of validity and reliability and there have been, no doubt, valuable results too. This was mainly the case with early research into the social psychology of mass persuasion, performed by scholars like Lazarfeld and Merton in the 1940s. But a very big amount of these studies was rather problematic. This was, after my opinion, at least partly due to the predominant notion of communication as the transfer of a message from a sender to receivers.

This model is still living strong, as shown by the following quotation from one of the most used books for Norwegian students of media studies, in its most recent, updated edition (Schwebs & Østbye 1995:15):

> At the core of communication there is the transfer of a message from sender to receiver. A fundamental communication model looks like this:

> The model is best known in the shape of the Lasswell-formula, describing the act of communication by answering the following questions: "Who says what in which channel to whom with what effect?" (Lasswell 1948).

One could argue that also rhetoric deals with the effects of communication. In some respects, the transfer model looks like a true representation of rhetoric's focus on the powerful orator who tries to transfer his opinions to his audience. The Lasswell formula resembles rhetoric even more directly: it could be a quotation from rhetorical prescriptions concerning *inventio*, where questions like who, what, where, by what help, how, when, why etc. were used as rules for argumentation. But a closer look reveals that these are similarities only on the surface. Rhetoric does not work in the same way as the transfer model supposes, neither in theory nor in practice. One of the most important differences is that rhetoric operates with the uncertainty of argumentation and with an interactive communication model where effects are not completely predictable, while the transfer model presupposes a mechanical transmission of a message to receivers.

The transfer model has been heavily criticized, because of, among other reasons, "having omitted the element of feedback" or understating the activity of the receiver. Nonetheless the model is still evaluated positively by well-known current researchers: "This criticism, however, should not obscure the fact that it is even today a convenient and comprehensive way of introducing people to the study of the communication process" (McQuail & Windahl 1993: 15). It may be convenient for some, but it is utterly problematic as a way of conceptualizing communication. This makes it necessary to criticize the model once more. A rhetorical perspective of such a critique may add some new insights.

The Lasswell formula and other transfer models have been refined many times, particularly by the addition of a social context and by ascribing the audience certain selective activities. But in spite of all amplifications the model does not get rid of its implicit asocial "analogy of human communication with the technology of relais-stations" (Bruhn Jensen 1995: 8), of its mechanistic and deterministic notion of the speech act and of its deeply rooted monologic character. Ong has formulated the following criticism of the model (which he calls "the media model"):

> This model obviously has something to do with human communication, but, on close inspection, very little, and it distorts the act of communication beyond recognition... To speak, I have to be somehow already in communication with the mind I am to address before I start speaking... I have to sense something in the other's mind to which my own utterance can relate. Human communication is never one-way... Communication is intersubjective. The media model is not (Ong 1982/1991: 177).

Other arguments against the model from a rhetorical point of view could be: the over-emphasizing of the target-oriented character and the corresponding underestimation of the dialogic elements of the speech act and the implicit understanding of the orator as powerful agent and the audience as a victim, instead of people interacting with a purpose. The notion of the audience as passive receivers or even dupes has probably been the most damaging consequence of this communication model. It is not only a shortcoming in communication theory but has had and still has effects on media practice: the way journalists (are taught to) treat their readers is quite often "down-grading and cynically contempting"[9].

This picture of the audience becomes apparent in empirical reception studies too. Effect studies and other empirical research using the transfer-model operate typically with large scale quantitative interview research. The people interviewed are called respondents, a name which degrades them from active participants with personal opinions to objects reacting to questions which others (the resear-chers) have formulated. Besides that, and probably more important, the audience is in this tradition treated as "taxonomic collectives" which can be calculated and which are predictable, as for example the widely used television audience ratings suggest every day (Ang 1991). In rhetoric the orator also tries to take his audience into account, but this happens with less secure and more flexible assumptions about human behaviour than today's streamlining of the audience. The orator never knows exactly how the audience will react because rhetorical communication is not about certaintie but about probabilities, also in relation to the "effects" of communication itself.

Transfer models and especially effect studies use a very problematic definition of effect. It is hardly possible to assume measurable effects of speech acts. An effect is manifest and final – can communication be like that? Communication is not finished with the audience's reaction, she or he is not left behind with a manifest piece of communication. What looks like effects is often much more unstable and floating than effect studies claim to prove. In short: there is a considerable difference between rhetoric's theory and practice of presenting one's opinions effectively and effect theory's

contentions of being able to prove empirical effects of communication. Rhetoric has a more dynamic concept of communication, presuming possible effects of a speech act, contrary to effect studies' contention of certain results. This is not least because the audience is ascribed an important role in the process of argumentation, in which not only the orator influences the audience but also the audience, vice versa, influences the orator.

My last point of criticism refers to the notion of the "message" or the text produced in the speech act. The transfer model implies a notion of the text as monosemic. Consequently, the reading process is seen as the transfer of "the one" (and only) meaning of the text to the reader. Furthermore, much of effect research tried to quantify measurable effects on the audience on the basis of quantitative textual analysis – an utterly problematic method because the meaning of a text can hardly be "counted". An other widespread tendency of the transfer paradigm is neglecting the media text as important part of the analysis. This was criticised quite early for example by Merton who claims that the understanding of persuasion only is possible when we analyze both the content of the text and the responses of the audience to it (Merton 1946: 12).

Finally, some remarks on two models which do not immediately look like belonging to the transfer-paradigm. The first is critical theory or the Frankfurt school. This theory's most well known text dealing with media reception is Adorno & Horkheimers *The Culture Industry. Enlightenment as Mass Deception*. Its main thesis is that capitalistic mass culture deceives and suppresses people, thus implicitly assuming powerfull texts which uncontestedly express the ideology of the ruling class and create passive, victimized mass audiences which uniformly accept these messages. This pessimistic view had strong influence on e.g. Scandinavian mass media research in the 1970s and on the widespread theory of cultural imperialism which assumed a similar damaging power of American (popular) media texts on audiences in the Third World and Europe.

The other theory using a transfer model in a rather unexpected way was developed especially in the film journal *Screen* during the 1970s. It "based on psychoanalytical theory concerned with the positioning of the subject by the text" (Morley 1992: 59). Maybe not by purpose but at least in it's consequences, this is a theory of the reader's total determination by the text. The relation is conceived as ahistorical, general, abstract and essentialist. No way for the reader of acting specifically and differently. "In "Screen theory" there can be no struggle at the site of the interface between subject and text (discourse), since contradictory positions have already been predetermined at the psychoanalytic level" (Morley 1992: 61). Thus this model represents ultimately just "another version of the hyperdermic theory of effects" (Morley 1992: 59). Or, with i different metaphor: "It is a theoretical perspective which presumes a unilateral fixing of a position for the reader, imprisioning him or her in its structure, so as to produce a singular and guaranteed effect" (Morley 1989: 21).

Lewis's critical position reads like this, even more polemically:

> The journal... frequently granted films, programs or other discourses more power than was dreamed of even by the most misguided member of the "effects" tradition. Audiences disappeared from the construction of meaning altogether, to be replaced by a witless creature known as the "textual subject". The textual subject, like the unfortunate mouse in the behaviorist's experiment, was manipulated and forced (by the text's structures and strategies) to adopt particular positions (Lewis 1991: 34).

2. Uses and Gratifications or the Power of the Reader

> Uses and gratification research emerged because of the discovered inadequacy of the older tradition of campaign or effect studies. Setting out to show the effects of mass communication, the campaign studies instead mainly demonstrated the limited incidence of direct effects and adduced a range of intervening factors, such as selective exposure and selective perception, that mediated direct effects. The chief value of the campaign studies was that they demonstrated... the relative lack of short-term effects and persuasive power of the mass media...
>
> The uses and gratification approach recognizes that two kinds of influence shape the intervening variables. First, it assumes that uses of the media depend upon the sociological milieu of the audience: the structure of groups and contexts in which the audience is situated. Second, uses and gratifications research rests upon the psychological principle that human perception is not a passive registering process but an active organizing and structuring process... Various authors pointed communication research away from the campaign studies tradition by arguing

> that audiences' uses of mass media had little relation to the uses expected or intended by producers...
>
> In sum, uses and gratifications researchers shifted the impact of mass media from the effects of producers' intentions to the effects of audiences' intentions, which are understood to depend upon sociological context and active psycho-logical process (Carey & Kreiling 1974: 227).

At the same time as being an alternative to effect studies, the positive spirit of the uses and gratification paradigme represented an alternative to the pessimisme of the Frankfurt school's intellectual critics. Indeed, this tradition offered new insights compared with the shortcomings of both effect research and critical theory. But the "new school" had new blind spots too. One of these was the lack of interest for the text, or what was communicated. Thus

> uses and gratifications research fails to link the functions of mass media consumption with the symbolic content of mass-communicated materials... (Carey & Kreiling: 232).

An other blind spot was the individual and ahistorical psychological perspective.

Transfer based effect research (including critical theory and *Screen* theory) and the uses and gratifications approach represent unilateral models of communication. This lead to a mere reversal of the power relation rather than a to a re-evaluation in a more radical way:

> If the "effects" approach was guilty of treating the television message as univocal and uncontested, then some members of the "uses and gratifications" school were equally culpable in giving the viewer the power to consciously accept, reject and manipulate the meaning of the message at will. In this brave new world, television could no longer influence us because it was totally under our control (Lewis 1991: 14).

3. Interactive Models

Both the notion of the text, the notion of the audience and the notion of the communication process in these models, however differentiated they might look, is contested by interactive models which shall be the issue of the following section.

Hermeneutics

Rhetoric is supposed to be a genuinely humanistic field of study, and the genuine theory and method of the humanities is hermeneutic understanding. Fafner puts it like this:

> The rhetorical activities of *talking* and *writing* are corresponded by the hermeneutic activities of *listening* and *reading*... Hermeneutic is the same as interpretation (Fafner 1997: 15).

The most fundamental difference between transfer models and the humanities' notion of communication is its interest for meaning. Humanistic tradition is about the production and reception of (textual) meaning. Transferred to media reception, it is about the question of audiences making sense of media texts and technologies in the social context of their (everyday) lives.

The German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer defined hermeneutic as "die Kunst der Verständigung" (Gadamer 1971: 283). This is a formulation with allusion to the definition of rhetoric as *ars bene dicendi* and with reference to communication in a more general sense. The concept of *Verständigung* means both to inform, to understand, to make oneself understood, and to agree. Gadamer wrote most explicitly about communication in this perspective in an article from 1967, under the heading *Rhetorik, Hermeneutik und Ideologiekritik.*

The following quotations highlight Gadamer's most important points in the context of my discussion.

> Woran sonst sollte ... die theoretische Besinnung auf das Verstehen anschliessen als an die Rhetorik, die von ältester Tradition her der einzige Anwalt eines Wahrheitsanspruches ist, der das Wahrscheinliche, das eicsz (verisimile), und das der gemeinsamen Vernunft Einleuchtende gegen den Beweis- und Gewissheitsanspruch der Wissenschaft verteidigt? Überzeugen und Einleuchten, ohne eines Beweises fähig zu sein, ist offenbar ebenso sehr das Ziel und Mass des Verstehens und Auslegens wie der Rede- und Überredungs-kunst... So durchdringen sich der rhetorische und der hermeneutische Aspekt der menschlichen Sprachlichkeit auf vollkommene Weise. Es gäbe keinen Redner und keine Redekunst, wenn nicht Verständigung und Einverständnis die menschlichen Beziehungen trüge – es gäbe keine hermeneutische Aufgabe, wenn

> das Einverständnis derer, die "ein Gespräch sind', nicht gestört wäre und die Verständigung nicht gesucht werden müsste (Gadamer 1967: 117-118).

The role of the audience in Gadamer's concept of the communication process is active and participatory, with both orator and audience trying to find *Verständigung*. Gadamer's theories had considerable influence upon humanistic research in Germany in the 1970's. He became, among other things, a precursor for reception theory which mainly was developed by Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser from Konstanz. Jauss discovered "the reader as an instance of literary history" (Jauss 1975) and the importance of a "horizon of expectation" for the reception process; Iser's most important contributions to reception theory were "Die Appellstruktur der Texte" (Iser 1970)[10], "the implied reader" (Iser 1972) and a notion of the communication process as an interaction between text and reader (Iser 1976). Without going into too many details, I will comment on some of these theoretical points in a rhetorical perspective.

Jauss upgraded the reader to "an instance of literary history", in contrast to the notion of the autonomy of the text as the only producer of meaning. Literary history should not be the history of texts alone, but also the history of their readings. The meaning of a text is not unique and stable but unfolds successive-ly in its different readings over the course of time.

Iser elaborated this social-historical macro perspective by looking closer at the text and the reading process. He does not refer to rhetorical tradition, but I see some interesting affinities, especially in relation to his notion of the appealing structure of the text and of the implied reader.

The literary text has, following Iser, an intentional and communicative character. And this is more than a stimulus, as the reading process is more than a response. One of Iser's most important discoveries[11] is that the literary text is more or less open, more or less potential (or, in today's terminology: virtual). It has "gaps" which invite the reader to "realize" the potential text and thus to contribute to the production of meaning. Older texts in literary history are, following his analysis, more directing, that is to say closed. Modern texts, like Joyce's *Ulysses*, are open, less directing, leaving more meaning production to the reader. This can be applied to the "two faces" of rhetorical communication, with both target orientation (directing, "closed") and dialogical structure ("open"). The notion of 'the implied reader' can be seen in a rhetorical perspective as well. It is an abstract category in both concepts, as a textual structure in Iser's theory, as suppositions in the mind of the orator in rhetoric.

Another key word of reception theory I want to mention in relation to rheto-rical tradition is *Erwartungshorizont* or horizon of expectation. Jauss applies it in a wider, historical context, Iser in the micro-perspective of the reading process. The concept refers thus both to the experiences and expectations of historical readers meeting the "horizon" of (historical) texts, and to the reading process in form of "protentions" and "retentions", describing the reader's "wandering" through the text by making assumptions about the meaning of elements and modifying them in the course of reading. Expectations play also an important role in relation to genre, the author and circumstances of the communication situation. They influence reception in terms of colouring the meaning of the text in special ways. These can be related to the way the listener's dispositions and affects, including his confidence to the orator (or lack of it), which Aristotle describes, colour the audience's accept or refusal of what is said.

Semiotics

Partly before, partly at the same time as Jauss and Iser, Umberto Eco developed a reception oriented text theory, from a semiotic perspective. Like Iser, Eco also operates with the categories "implied reader" (which he mostly calls "model reader") and "open texts"[12]. But he extends his analysis from high literature to trivial texts and popular culture, develops much more systematic and complexe communication models and stresses more than Iser the character of both author and reader as textual strategies. When he includes trivial texts like *Superman* or Ian Flemming's novels about James Bond, he reveals that these are typical closed texts (as also Iser would have stated) but that such a strong target-oriented structuring does not mean that the reading process is closed. On the contrary: paradoxically such standardized and stereotypical trivial myths allow quite free readings:

> They seem to be structured according to an inflexible project. Unfortunately, the only one not to have been 'inflexibly' planned is the reader... They can give rise to the most unforeseeable interpretations, at least at the ideological level (Eco 1979/1984: 8).

And such readings are legitimate, while a free reading of a typical open text of high literature, like Kafka's *Prozess*, would make it collapse. Also Iser's notion of the reading process as a movement of protention and retention finds a more complexe description and analysis in Eco's version, particularly in his model of operations performed to read a text, developed in *The Role of the Reader* (Eco 1979/1984: 14) and his application of, among other categories, "forecasts and inferential walks" to empirical readings, as he did in his Harvard lectures, published as *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods* (Eco 1994).

Cultural Studies: Media Reception as Struggle, Battles, "Living Room Wars"

The British "Birmingham School" or "Cultural Studies" developed from about 1975 a new concept of communication which integrated social science, cultural theory, semiotics, psychology and criticism of ideology in a comprehensive theory of communication as the social production of meaning. This new paradigme was presented as an alternative to the main reception theories at that time, with a very clear refusal of effect research, with polemical attacks at reader-in-the-text studies (mainly *Screen* theory), with a rejection of the Frankfurt school's implicit notion of the audience's determination by the text, and with critique and amplifictions of the uses and gratification model. At the core of this new theory are three suppositions: the struggle for hegemony in modern societies, the "structured polysemy" of the text and the notion of "active audiences".

Communication in modern societies which are divided and differentiated by class, gender, ethnicity etc. is a site of struggle between competing interests. In contrast to orthodox marxist views of a power bloc dominating society and meaning in toto, the cultural theory of this school does not assume a one-way influence of this power upon "suppressed people", but suggests more complexe relations. That does not mean the absence of power.

> The object of analysis is, then, the specificity of communication and signifying practices, not as a wholly autonomous field, but in its complex articulations with questions of class, ideology and power, where social structures are conceived as also the social foundations of language, consciousness and meaning (Morley 1980: 20).

One of the most famous studies concerning the character of texts was Stuart Hall's paper *Encoding – Decoding*, first published in 1973. His description of three possible ways of reading, as "accepting" or "preferred reading", as "negotiation" and as "oppositional decoding" was the first systematic rejection of the picture of the reader as a victim in media science and communication studies more general. The model may look banal today, but at that time it was a breakthrough. In a rhetorical perspective it contains both the aspect of powerfull target-orientation and openness: "The message is thus a structured polysemy" Morley 1980: 10). This is a concept of communication as contest, as in rhetorical argumentation.

Some scholars, like John Fiske[13], read the model as a manifest of the reader's liberation (from having been the suppressed victim of a dominant meaning), and a whole cultural movement, postmodernism[14], started celebrating the decon-struction of (textual) meaning and its dissolution in endless, more or less arbitrary meanings.

Ingarden, Iser and in part also Eco would have objected to such inter-pretations; they insisted on the existence of "legitimate" and "aberrant decodings", maintaining limits of meaning[15]. Stuart Hall defended his model explicitly against interpretations which denied textual or ideological power: "Polysemy must not be confused with pluralism... There remains a dominant cultural order, though it is neither univocal nor uncontested" (Morley 1992: 52). "Preferred reading" means an encoding of the text which aims at decoding the message in a certain way:

> The element of preferred reading is the point at which power intersects with the discourse... It' s not just that they are powerful because they control the means of production; they try to get into the message itself, to give you a clue: 'Read it in this way'... It's an attempt to hegemonize the audience... (Hall 1994: 262).

This is very much in accordance with the rhetorical model of speaking with a purpose and with target-orientation. At the same time Hall denies that this orientation is synonymous with effectiveness: "It's an attempt to hegemonize the audience which is never entirely effective and usually not effective. Why? Because they cannot contain every possible reading of the text. The very text which they encode slips from their grasps. You can always read it in another way" (Hall 1994: 262). This corresponds to some degree with Perelman's notion of persua-

sion being a modest attempt of gaining adherence from the audience.

There are several other affinities between cultural studies' theory and rhetorical tradition. One of these is the fundamental preoccupation with the question of power and the concept of power relations not as absolute but as "relative hegemony", and not as unilateral but as contested. Power is not transferred to, not just forced upon helpless victims, neither in (modern) society nor in communication. Communication is contest or "struggle about meaning", as one of the keywords of the cultural studies tradition puts it. Other typical metaphorical articulations (from the same field) are: *The Battle Between Television and its Audience* (Ang 1995/1996) and *Living Room Wars* (Ang 1992/ 1996).

An other affinity is obvious in Morley's writings. In his first empirical study, about the reception of the television news program *Nationwide* (1980), he distances himself sharply from earlier reception theories, but mentions one work as a positive exception. This is Robert Merton's *Mass Persuasion* (1946) which has an explicit rhetorical perspective. Merton's project is a case study of an extremely successfull campaign where a female radio star managed to collect huge amounts of money pleading the audience to buy war bonds. The study connects the analysis of the message with the analysis of the audience's responses and the psychosocial climate of the time, thus trying to give some explanations for the success of this persuasion. Morley describes the tasks of new empirical audience research by proposing questions which could be formulated in a rhetorically oriented analysis as well: "What are the means which the encoder uses to try to "win the assent of the audience" to his/her preferred reading of the message?" and he characterizes identification as a method of "gain(ing) the audience's complicity" by "suggesting" the preferred readings to the audience" (Morley 1980: 11). In later works, e.g. in an article written in collaboration with Roger Silverstone, he also mentions the importance of exploring the significance of metaphor and other rhetorical devices (Morley 1992: 208ff). The article suggests, with "the amendment of the notion of reading by one of rhetoric" a model

> of the 'structured freedoms' of an audience's involvement with te'levision... The dimensions of media, the modalities of viewing, and the mechanisms of rhetorical engagement offer a more adequate account of that relationship, above all in their capacity to come to terms with the dynamics of the consumption and production of meaning at the heart of television's work in contemporary culture (Morley 1992: 209f.)

Empirical research in the tradition of this theory of communication as interaction are qualitative reception studies, with media ethnography as a special direction. Relatively few people are interviewed (in depth and mostly in natural settings), and observation can be used in order to find out about the (social) context of reception. This approach focuses on the question of how (different) people make (different) sense of media in conditions which are as realistic as possible. The reader is called informant in this tradition, that is to say he or she does not just respond to the researcher's questions, but is invited to "tell stories", in her or his own words. This is a quite different, open and exploratory research process, compared with the transfer-model's ambitions to test and control "effects" of media texts. Audience is seen as a subject and an implicit instance of the communication process here, not as an object or a target and not at all as a victim.

A clear disadvantage of this paradigm is identical with its most interesting property: its holistic approach. It is extremely demanding to pay attention to all the dimensions of the communication process, both in a micro- and a macro-perspective, to analyze all elements in their complexe interrelations, to connect the individual and specific to the social and more general, and to conclude with results which handle the multifarious data-material without reductionism and avoid determinist explanations. Research of this kind demands team work, preferably collaboration between scholars from the social sciences and the humanities. Such conditions are, as far as I can see, not given in today's media research.

Maybe as a consequence of this, research in this tradition has often a bias towards either audience sociology (neglecting the text) or humanistic close studies of the text and its individual readings (neglecting the social and power relations). Another weakness, which shows up particularly in media-ethnography, is the tendency to overstate the circumstances or the context of reception in such a way that the text of communication "disappears". Also the focus on media technology can have such consequences.

It is absolutely necessary to focus on the text, in order to get a grip on the communication process as a whole. In my opinion, the rhetorical tradition is particularly well suited for such a turn, being a

theory and practice which fundamentally relates to speech (text).

For a Rhetorical Turn of Reception Theory and Empirical Reception Studies

I will conclude by sketching some ideas which are meant as bricks towards a rhetorically oriented reception analysis and theory. At the core of these suggestions is both an amplification and a reduction of the cultural studies' approach.

The reduction consists of a preliminary narrowing down of the research process to its more strictly textual dimensions. This is meant not as a principal restriction of theory but as a pragmatic step of operationalization. I am, at least in the first place, not interested in audience sociology. Later research, or others, may supply such explicit social and political dimensions. This does not mean that the research I suggest does not have social implications. It has, in so far as it is about communication as the social production of meaning and includes the aspect of power.

The extension means a considerably stronger stress on the textual dimensions of the communications process. This concerns not only the media text recieved (with both verbal and visual strategies of persuasion) but also the texts produced by audiences, as a response to the first one. My aim is thus to enrich the cultural studies' approach with the rhetorical model of communication, both by analysing media texts and responses as rhetorical devices and by looking at media reception as a contest, a struggle about meaning.

Cultural studies have also to be extended by an exploration of the new conditions in which the struggle about meaning has begun to take place and will take place in future. New media's sharpened efforts to conquer parts of an ever segmented audience and new (probably even more) "active audiences" have to be examined critically. How much do new choices and roles mean "the ultimate realization of audience freedom", how much will this new "active audience" represent a state of being *condemned* to freedom of choice", living

> within an increasingly media-saturated culture, in which they *have* to be active (as choosers and readers, pleasure seekers or interpreters) in order to produce any meaning at all out of the overdose of images thrown before us (Ang 1996: 12-13).

In detail, a text-oriented reception study could take the following steps:

1. A reader-oriented or more precisely: a rhetorical analysis of the communicated text, for example a television program about nature. The text should be conceived as argumentation, with a "structured polysemy", that is to say both closed (having a project) and open (not being able to transfer the preferred reading with any guarantee whatever). The rhetorical analysis of media texts is a promising approach as part of reception studies, allowing focus on the communicative, reader-oriented characteristics of these texts, as the most appropriate point of departure for analysing audience responses. Research of audiovisual texts in this direction is only in its beginnings. But there are a few models. One of these is Merton's early study of persuasion mentioned before. The strength of this book is partly due to a thorough analysis of the examined campaign text and its structure. This analysis includes a study of its temporal pattern, a thematic analysis of its ideological and emotional appeals, and an investigation of the image of the speaker, analogue to the ethos argumentation. Merton's example is from radio, which deals with spoken words, orality. We have to apply rhetorical analysis to modern mass media's multifarious expressions, both written and oral, both verbal and visual, to music as well as to the peculiar oral literacy of an interactive medium like the internet.

2. A rhetorical analysis of secondary texts, for example an article in the Norwegian *Programbladet* about this nature program. Such a text can be important for the audience's "horizon of expectation". As a kind of advertising these texts often stress the more spectacular emotional appeals of the text. In relation to the internet these "secondary texts" could be both scientific reviews on this medium and public and popular opinions about it.

3. A rhetorical analysis of the interview-texts. One of the biggest problems of qualitative reception studies is the analysis of what the informants tell the researcher. A rhetorical approach certainly does not resolve all problems of such an analysis. But there are some aspects which make a rhetorical analysis particularly promising. One of these is the oral character of interview texts which they have in common with traditional rhetorical speech. Another is the use of metaphors, as a way of the readers' navigating in the information flow, by giving concreteness to abstract thoughts and limiting complexity to smaller, comprehensible units (Lakoff & Johnson 1980)[16]. Qualitative interview texts are typically discourses, narratives, storytelling; thus "any attempt at systematic analysis must... involve forms of narrative analysis" (Lewis 1991: 93, refer-

ring to Mishler). While reception oriented text analysis is beginning to be taken serious as a field of study, there still do not exist, as far as I know, corresponding text-oriented reception studies.

4. A concluding examination of the audience's comments in relation to the orator's utterances. How do empirical viewers relate to the different strategies of the rhetorical text? How do they judge the orator, in relation to his competence, reliability and honesty? Do they get persuaded by the arguments? Are they moved (by *pathos*), do they feel enlightened (*logos*), entertained (*ethos*)? How does the text's total audiovisual argumentation affect the *audience*? Such questions are, surprisingly, absent at least in the empirical qualitative reception studies I am aware of.

As a whole, what has to be examined is the relations between orator's text, the rhetorical strategies of secondary texts and of the texts produced by audiences, in considering the character of the medium, the social context of the speech act and the dominant socio-cultural order.

On a micro level, the speech act itself is characterized by both (authoritarian, closed) target orientation and (open, democratic) dialogue, of both contest and *Verständigung*. On a macro level, the production and reception of (media)culture unfolds in a field, characterized of social and political power structures. Rhetoric integrates both levels, at least when understood as "maximum-rhetoric". But as said before, I suggest a preliminary narrowing down of the research process to its more strictly textual dimensions.

Notes

1. The Norwegian poet and professor in rhetoric, Georg Johannesen, puts it as a change from "maximum-rhetoric" to "minimum-rhetoric". He was one of the first in Scandinavia to fight for a re-evaluation of rhetoric as "a topological way of thinking, practical philosophy, pragmatism, sophism, moral philosophy, marxism, structuralism, humanities" (Johannesen 1987: 8).
2. I am participating with a rhetorical text analysis and an empirical reception study of television programs about nature.
3. And mostly with verbal texts alone: the application of rhetoric to visual texts or music for example, which are important elements of utterance in modern mass communication, is still in its beginnings.
4. "Wer in rhetorischen Kategorien denkt, denkt primär vom Hörer – Leser her... Im rhetorischen Kommunikationsmodell hat der Empfänger der Nachricht den Primat" (Plett 1991: 4).
5. It is particularly in book II, 2-17 of *The Art of Rhetoric* that Aristotle deals with the aspect of reception. The chapters contain a presentation of the audience as segmented in terms of different sociographic conditions and as under influence of different affections. Book II, 1 contains interesting remarks on "the corruption of the hearer" which I will comment on in an other article.
6. Translated to our days. Classical rhetoric did not include women, neither as speakers nor as listeners. Orators were male, with only one obvious exception, Aspasia. She was, according to Cicero, the true discoverer of rhetoric as dialogue (Billig 1987/1966): 28).
7. Of course, there are differences between interpersonal communication, direct communi-cation to several people or a bigger group, and mediatated mass communication concerning the "dialogic" and "democratic" character of the speech act. My models have to be amplified mainly by the distinction between interpersonal and mediated communication (see Hjarvard 1997) and by the integration of "interactivity" as a typical form of interaction between the audience and new electronic media (see Jensen 1997).
8. Kennedy 1963: 23. This is also stressed by others, like Jens (1987) who separates rhetoric and propaganda by saying that propaganda does not seek truth, while rhetoric presupposes liberalism and therefore only is possible in democracies.
9. Hultén 1989: 26. The author recommends instead to "write for readers who are one's equals", in good rhetorical spirit.
10. With the subtitle *Unbestimmtheit als Wirkungsfaktor literarischer Prosa*. The title as a whole was translated, not quite exactly, with *Indeterminacy and the Reader's Response* (1971). In a rhetorical perspective, it is the "appealing structure" of the text which is the most interesting aspect of this lecture / article.
11. With background in theories of Roman Ingarden who introduced the notion of textual "gaps" (or "indeterminacy") and of the reader's "concretization" in studies as *The Literary Work of Art* which first appeared in 1931.
12. He does this long before Iser, in *Opera aperta* from 1962 which very interestingly uses *indeterminazione* as one of the most important properties of modern texts, as Ingarden did before and Iser after.
13. Fiske ascribes the reader more or less unlimited power in the reading process. He held considerable influence, at least for a period. His stress on the polysemy of the text and the audience's abilities to "making their own

resistant meanings" of cultural signs and "evading social discipline, evading ideological control and positioning" (Fiske 1989: 2) result in a rather idealized concept of communication as "semiotic democracy" (Fiske 1989/1991: 67ff.).

14. Postmodern theories imply an even stronger underestimation of the power of the text (production) and a corresponding overestimation of the power of its reading (consumption), by deconstructing the text, making textual meanings arbitrary and thus transforming readers to autonomous, sovereign producers of such meanings. These are, in my opinion, "deviations" or "aberrant decodings" of interactive and participatory theories of communication, which imply power and purpose on both sides of the process.
15. Eco talks both of "aberrant decodings" and "the unlimited semiosis" of cultural signs.
16. My own research on (Danish) people watching foreign channels on cable television revealed for example a very pronounced use of travel-metaphors. The cable universe was obviously experienced and understood as a room in which the viewers moved from place to place. This notion of space and feeling of mobility was evidently an important part of their meaning production (Gentikow 1993).

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TV Sport and Rhetoric

The Mediated Event

PREBEN RAUNSBJERG & HENRIK SAND

Most television programmes are not easily categorised into one or another television genre. The borderlines between programme formats are often fluid, and categories tend to overlap. For this reason, many articles and treatises on television start out with a definition of the kind of programme or genre to be discussed. The subject of the present article is televised sport. A good share of the texts on this subject do not address the question of what precisely television sport is, or how this particular kind of television programme or genre differs from other kinds of programmes and genres. Perhaps because what television sport is seems as obvious as the question is banal. For, even if one may often be in doubt as to the genre a given programme belongs to, few if any have trouble deciding whether or not they are watching sport. In fact, characteristic of televised sport is the fact that what passes across the screen seems to proceed so "naturally", is so self-evident, that it seldom raises any major questions. Whereas analysts and critics of the medium (and to a lesser extent those who write reviews) frequently discuss the formal language or "grammar" of fictional programmes, the forms of expression of sports programmes are only discussed when something has gone wrong, when something has interfered with the "natural" representation of the event at hand.

The literature on televised sport is not totally devoid of definitions and delimitations, but the vast majority concentrate on the content of the programmes rather than the form of expression. Thus, the area is characterized in terms of content rather than format inasmuch as definitions depart from "sports", and anything and everything on television that deals with sports is tossed into the same bag. In other words: sport programmes are television sport because they are about sport, and not because they have the appearance of sport and have the format of television sport.

We do not mean to reject this traditional definition, but we do intend to proffer an alternative to the genre problematics of television sport with a view to gaining a better understanding of television sport as a phenomenon.

Here we propose a generic delimitation of television sport which takes its prime point of departure in what might be called the nature of (televised) sport as an event (Dayan & Katz 1992). That is to say, a delimitation that relates to sport, both as an object of media intervention, and, secondly, as a media event and television text. Our point of departure is Dayan and Katz' theory of media events: it is in connection with live transmissions of sporting events that one finds the most characteristic features of TV sport, while such transmissions also elicit the greatest degree of fascination – both on the level of reception and in purely aesthetic terms. Ratings around the world are unanimous: live transmissions of sporting events attract by far the largest audiences. They are mainly international contests, e.g., the Olympics, World Cups and European Championships. On the aesthetic level, too, it is these same events which set the standard which other sports programmes emulate, and which national channels' sports departments are judged by.

In extension of the delimitation of sport as a field, we shall also examine the aura of "naturalness" which seems to surround television sport. Or, more precisely: we shall examine the seemingly extreme degree of codification in the semiotic structures of television sport, and the extent to which this codification can be said to involve a specific "rhetoric of TV sport", and what such a rhetoric might consist of.

Efforts to situate television sport in relation to other, more thoroughly described television genres often point out that television sport contains elements from many other television genres and thus occupies a position "somewhere in between". (These exercises may well be a kind of apology for having shown interest in such a low-status subject as sport in many respects still is.) In his book, *Fields of Vision*, Gary Whannel proposes a triangular model of television genres, the points of which are labelled drama, journalism and light entertainment (Whannel 1992:61). He then argues that television sport occupies a position somewhere in the centre of the triangle. That is to say, it contains elements of all three. This, Whannel proposes, is the reason television sport is so popular.

Margaret Morse expresses a similar point of view in her article, "Sport on Television", one of the few decidedly aesthetic approaches to the subject. Among other things, Morse discusses what happens to an American football match when it is televised. Before getting into the process of mediation, she tries to pin down the source of the fascination sport-on-televison exerts. Sport, Morse argues, is special because it occupies a position between news and entertainment:

> Sport thus enjoys some of the privileges of instant-breaking major news stories as well as some of the authenticity of the news. Indeed, sports do make the news shows, after the political reports and before the weather. Thus the position of sport in the television flow raises it, like the news, above genres which specialize in mere entertainment. The aura of scientificity of sport, its news-value, and its perceived realism protect its extraordinary status. (Morse 1983:60)

Despite an aesthetic interest, which is developed in extenso in the rest of the article, Morse's approach to the problem of genre and television sport is largely content-based. Programme format is defined in terms of the subject treated and is found to be interesting because it occupies a special position – in relation to news and the weather.[1] This observation is most valid in relation to sports magazines, however.

In her doctoral dissertation on sports journalism, Danish media researcher Kirsten Frandsen (1996) differentiates between two main formats in televised sport: the magazine and "live" transmission. The former category includes sports news, interviews, reportage, and documentary journalism – in short, everything that is not a live transmission. Whether this distinction adequately covers television output of today – with show-like programmes such as the British Gladiators, programmes offering bookmaking odds and advice in "tipping" soccer scores, and, finally, what might tentatively be called "activating" sport programmes, viz., workout programmes, tai chi, etc., where the intent is to get the viewer to participate in one or another form of physical exercise – is open to question. Nonetheless, the distinction between magazines and the live transmission is a handy tool, affording a means by which to sort all the derivative forms away, leaving the central and original form of television sport, which is also the form which has the most well-articulated aesthetic and rhetoric, namely, the live transmission.[2]

In an attempt to develop a new conception of television sport in relation to other genres, we shall try to avoid regarding TV sport as something chiefly defined by its content, where format is treated in the same terms as are commonly applied to newscasts and magazines. Instead, we shall try to specify the aesthetics of television sport and take that aesthetics as our point of departure in defining "television sport". Aside from a latter-day tradition of festive studio decor and more or less glamorous studio hosts and hostesses, accompanied by brassy musical and graphic vignettes, etc., etc., it is essentially an aesthetics of the live transmission. Consider the model below.

Figure 1.

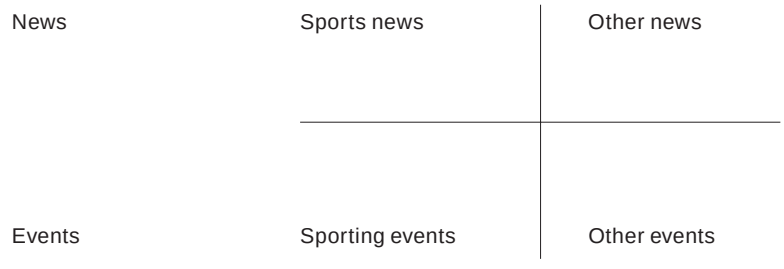


Figure 1 shows the rationale behind a content-based definition of the genre. The most salient distinction is that between sport and non-sport, indicated on the vertical axis. It is, however, the horizontal distinction which interests us here: a distinction in which the definitive criteria are a specific form and aesthetics of production: the live transmission. In this sense, the "horizontal" genre definition takes its starting point in the characteristic features of the programme; it is media-specific and operates in terms of the aesthetics of the medium. The point is this: even if the live sports transmission might easily be defined in terms of its content and lined up along other representations of TV sport, on an aesthetic level it bears greater resemblance to other live transmissions that do not necessarily have anything to do with sport.

The live transmission is the form of television that is most characteristic of the medium, mainly because it capitalizes on what the other major visual medium, film, cannot: simultaneity. In his book, The Open Work, Umberto Eco discusses the possibility of defining a televison-specific aesthetics – or poetics, as he puts it. In Eco's view, the starting point for such a discussion should be the live transmission:

> The aspect that would seem most interesting and fruitful to our research is also its most characteristic, unique to the medium: namely, live broadcasts. (Eco 1989:107)

Transmissions of sporting events are generally simultaneous with the represented events themselves. And, as everyone knows, a central aspect of televised sporting events is the suspense of not knowing the outcome of the contest; here the coincidence in time between the event and the media event is crucial.[3] The reason simultaneity is so important is that televised sport, more than anything else, is a representation of a sporting event. In the following we shall examine the transformation (Whannel 1992) which takes place in the mediation of events. Our point of departure, however, is that in relation to media events television primarily (but not exclusively) serves as the "channel" – in Jakobson's sense of the term – which makes communication possible. The event takes place first outside the medium, then in the medium – a circumstance which to a considerable degree dictates how the medium forms the event. Eco:

> ... a TV narrative represents autonomous events which, though they can be approached from different angles, have a logic of their own that demands to be respected. (Eco 1989:110)

> ...a kind of narration which, despite an appearance of causality and coherence, relies primarily on the mere sequence of events, and in which the narrative, even though it might have a thread, is constantly spilling beyond its margins, into the inessential, the tangential, the gloss, where for a long time nothing may happen, and the camera remains focused on the curve of a road waiting for the sudden appearance of the first runner, or, weary, wanders to the façades of the surrounding houses or the expectant faces of the spectators, for no other reason than that this is the way things go, and there is nothing else to do but wait. (Eco 1989:116)

Thus, television is dependent on the event that it transmits. The medium is not in control; rather, the event lives a life of its own, largely independent of the medium's intervention. Given the importance of live sports transmissions in relation to other sport programmes on television, one would expect the form to have been the subject of frequent analysis. Surprisingly, this is not the case. One reason for the relative lack of such studies is the degree of "naturalness" or "self-evidence" associated with sports transmissioons: What is there to analyze? TV only shows what is going on. It is primarily a question of representation, and no amount of camera effects and graphic design can change the basic factors which make up the focus of interest: Who will be the winner? If nothing happens, there is nothing to show.

> What cameras can never do, of course, is legislate for drama that is not there. If a match is tedious, or a race is all but won with fifteen laps to go, even the most sophisticated camera work cannot install drama where none exists. (Barnett 1990:156)

We shall return to some of the factors which distinguish the mediated sporting event from the actual event, for, even if television is dependent on the chain of events as they develop, it would be naive to assume that television has no alternative but to "wait and see". The event and the media event do not coincide totally, they are not identical. But first, let us consider the points of similarity between the two, which are regarded as the distinguishing characteristic of live sports transmissions as a genre. It is this similarity which is indicated on the horizontal axis in Figure 1, and in the following, we shall

base our discussion on Dayan and Katz' definition and discussion of media events.

The Media Event

> If festive viewing is to ordinary viewing what holidays are to everyday, these events are the high holidays of mass communication. (Dayan & Katz 1992:1)

In Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History, Dayan and Katz (1992) specify the definition of a media event in terms of a series of criteria regarding conditions that must be present in the event itself. In the first place, a media event is never routine; it breaks the routine and "preempts" the ordinary programme tableau; the biggest media events are those which occupy all channels simultaneously. By appropriating the programme tableau, the medium accords the event importance and underlines its character of event. Secondly, the event is transmitted "live" and takes place in remote locations (Dayan & Katz 1992:5); the event occurs, furthermore, independent of the media organization. Finally, in contrast to a news event, the media event is planned in advance. It is this combination of live and distant and exceptional but planned which Dayan and Katz consider the prime features of the media event as an independent genre.

In the early days of television the entire programme schedule (brief as it was) was a media event – an event about the medium itself. Programme scheduling was fluid; there was no formal tableau to be changed or preempted, only a series of programmes.[4] There has to be a fixed programme tableau for there to be any meaning in the concept of media event. The weekly British soccer match Saturday afternoons on Danish television has been a feature of the programme tableau for the past 25 years; it is not a media event. On the contrary, it is part of the programme tableau which can be preempted by an event.[5] *Tips-Lørdag* the Danish equivalent of the British Grandstand, is a 4- to 5-hour sport programme, typically with a soccer match or the like as its main feature. In November 1995, it was preempted by a live transmission of HRH Prince Joachim's wedding.

It is, of course, not always easy to determine when a programme is part of the programme tableau. Over the past few years, it has become a tradition for Danish TV2 (corresponding to British ITV) and many other European television channels to carry long transmissions from the Tour de France bicycle race three weeks in July, and we know already that we will be seeing a 14-day transmission from Sydney in the late summer of the year 2000. The typical event must therefore be singular or unique, a once-in-a-lifetime occurrence. The degree of an event's "event-ness" will decline in direct proportion to the frequency of its occurrence. The borderline between event and non-event is not precise, but the circumstance that an event, unexpectedly delayed for some reason, will preempt programmes later in the schedule constitutes a sure criterion. If delayed, say, one hour, the tipping report would not be transmitted, whereas a national team soccer contest would be, no matter when it finally got under way.[6]

That the event is planned in advance is another characteristic feature. "Planning" should be understood as being known in advance to occur at a given time and place, not as being regularly scheduled. This, too, is a definitive criterion that excludes a number of similar types of programmes. "Special bulletins" and coverage of major accidents, etc., which break into the normal flow of programmes, concern events which were not planned in advance or foreseen. They are generally news-related.[7] As in the case of preemption, there is no firm definition of the degree of planning and how far in advance the event must be known.

A media event is always "live", and it is this directness which gives it the quality of something happening "here and now", plus a sense that "anything can happen". Thus, directness lends the situation an element of suspense. This feature is the media event's most palpable characteristic, and indeed, it is hard to find examples of media events which are not transmitted live.[8] In the case of deliberately delayed transmissions, the programme will not fulfill the preemption criterion. In such cases we have an event which is not considered important enough to break the programme tableau for.

Finally, there is the criterion of "remote location". In Dayan and Katz' simplified model, a programme can originate in one of two places: in a studio or outside one. The medium has to go to the event, which takes place elsewhere – otherwise, it is not a media event. This criiterion is closely related to the secondary differentiaton into three levels of events, which Dayan and Katz operate with.

They distinguish three levels of actors: organizers, broadcasters, and spectators. The organizer is responsible for the event in reality, that is, whether it receives media coverage or not. The broadcaster (producer) is the actor who arranges the transmission of the event, which occurs apart from the transmission. In the terminology of traditional com-

munication theory this actor corresponds to the sender or media sender. Audiences (viewers, spectators) are the actors who receive the transmission, in whose eyes it is an event. On this level it is important to conceive of the three actors as being distinctly separate or independent, and as interacting via a "process of negotiation" (Dayan & Katz 1992:55).[9] Cases where the organizer is also the producer are, by definition, not media events.

In many respects, this trichotomy corresponds to the trichotomy, reality, text and reception. As in all textual relationships, a transformation occurs between reality and the text, viz., encoding, and another occurs between the text and reception, viz., decoding. In the present article primarily the former transformation will be examined, with a view to gaining text-based insights into the process of decoding. In other words, our focus rests on how the real-world sports event is interpreted by the producer and then presented as a textual representation to the viewer.

Before considering the level of the producer, let us first briefly orient ourselves concerning the levels of the organizers and the viewers, respectively.

The Level of the Organizer

Before looking at the media sports event in greater detail, we should consider certain aspects of the (real) sports event, i.e., the sport itself. Every sport has its own set of rules; these may be said to provide the script for the event in question. The rules say which person(s) will play, where the event will take place (locus), and when, or in what time frame, it shall take place (time). Thus, the rules provide a synopsis or storyboard which is then filled with concrete spatio-temporal phenomena and actors. The storyboard is the framework in which the event takes place; it is a temporally and/or spatially inviolable framework: the locus of the sport is artificially, but definitely limited. Any transgression of the rules which apply within this framework is penalized. If, for example, a soccer player takes the ball over the sideline, he or she forfeits control of the ball.

Needless to say, a match involves any number of scripts. Some derive from cultural myths; others derive from the manifold character of the sport itself. Here we have no ambition to characterize various sports; let it suffice to say that a three-week bicycle race differs considerably from the execution of a five-minute figure skating programme. This "phenomenology of sports" frequently figures in discussions of what sports make "good television" and what sports do not lend themselves to the medium.

Meanwhile, there is also a sociological aspect. Various organizations, committees, leagues, etc., organize the sport and arrange the events. Tournaments and cup contests are the archetypical forms on this level. On the one hand we have forms in which the various events are essentially of equal status (e.g., golf tournaments, league matches); on the other, structures in which the events form definite hierarchies, culminating in a championship or "cup final" (e.g., elimination tournaments like Wimbledon or the World Cup).

Thus, already on the phenomenological plane we find a range of semi-textual and narrative entities, which on this level in the concrete execution supplies the sporting event with a discursive determination of the actors in the context of a spatio-temporal framework.

The Level of the Viewer

On the level of the viewer we have the viewer, obviously, but also some to extent the spectator, as well. In a study of television aesthetics it is only natural that the viewers be in focus, but the presence of a spectator role on the phenomenological level makes it necessary to examine the two roles more closely. The viewer role is often filled by an individual with knowledge and experience of the spectator role. As a spectator, one can find oneself missing the slow-motion instant replay; as a viewer one can miss the spectator's control of his gaze.[10]

In the process of defining the event in terms of organizational structures we touched on the sociability of sport and that the observer which this quality implies is primarily the spectator, and only secondly the TV viewer. It is not particularly productive to rank-order the two categories like this inasmuch as the number of viewers nearly always outnumbers the number of spectators attending the event. It is commonly assumed that the spectator's access to the event is more authentic than the viewer's, and it is also typical that the idea of having "been there" is a hallowed emblem of the sports audience.

The Level of the Producer – the Rhetoric of the Sporting Event

As we have seen in the foregoing, using Dayan and Katz' typologi of the media event one can conceive of it as consisting of three levels: the organizer, the producer/sender and the viewer. This trichotomy

corresponds in a number of ways with a conventional model of verbal utterances, viz. Someone$_1$ tells Something to Someone$_2$. The producer (someone$_1$) relates an event (something) to the viewer (someone$_2$). At the same time, it is quite clear that the event-as-told is not identical with the event-as-it-happens. We are dealing with two levels or perspectives here, a textual level and a referent level. The latter casts light on how what is told relates to the occurrence related; the former how the message related is related to the other person.

Figure 2 shows the processes of transformation that take place in connection with a media event, where communicative and cultural levels are differentiated. The model is general, covering all kinds of textual contexts, including those which in concrete textual contexts are to be regarded as derivative forms. Within the fictional register, the sender level will also prevail over the actor level in the event; fictional reality is totally steered by the sender, who creates the text. In the case of non-fiction, sender and actor operate on different levels; indeed, this dual relationship to the factual register is constitutive of non-fiction.

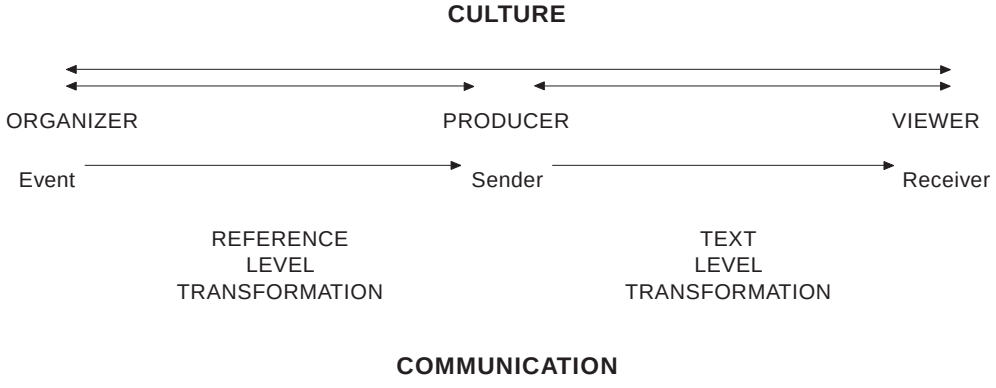
Meanwhile, there is also a metacommunicative level: the various actors know how other actors, as well as the relationships between the various actors, normally work. These relationships are non-textual, but they are cultural. This means, first of all, that the different levels can act on this knowledge and plan their actions accordingly. Actors on the level of the event can either ensure lack of coverage or increase the likelihood of coverage, i.e., textualization of the event by using what they know about the sender and the receiver and their behaviour and preferences. A striking example was the "invasion" of Somalia by U.S. military forces in 1992. The sender level was commissioned to cover the event "live", and the invasion was scheduled to suit "prime time" on the Atlantic coast of the USA: Within the world of sport there is a recurrent discussion of when matches should be scheduled in order to reach the maximum number of viewers.

Viewers, meanwhile, generally know enough about the circumstances of the event so that they can, if they wish, wait until the climax the last quarter, for example – before tuning in to see the most exciting part. Any number of examples of this metacommunicative or contextual knowledge present themselves, and the implications such knowledge has for the textual level are quite fundamental. However, on the textual level they are, and remain, contextual and in many respects secondary as something which exists, but only materializes in the textual representation. The text is also the focus of our attention here.

The transition from the realm of opportunities associated with the event to the text is simultaneously a transition into the level of discourse; a text is always uttered from a utterance position (the sender) and in this sense becomes the perspective on the open phenomenological event which, through objectifying it, closes the event.

> A TV-transmitted soccer match is such a narrative: It is a discourse, because it – in contrast to the match itself – can be attributed to an utterance subject, to a narrating party (the producer, the collective behind the audiovisual production itself). It is this utterance subject, who creates the match. The discourse is closed, inasmuch as every televised soccer match has a beginning and an end (and a middle, I am tempted to add – hommage à Artistotle). (Schantz Lauridsen 1986:27, author's translation)

Figure 2.



The text specifies the discursive entities, I-HERE-NOW, or, more generally, a perspective, a place, a time, which together organize the closure of the event, which defines a textual process in a finite space. Every textual presentation is subject to this discursive logic, this verbal Origo[11], and, through its textualization, sets out a set of entities. At the same time, the discursive utterance positions the receiver in relation to the event. We must therefore operate with three sets of Origo entities:

Thus, the text – quite in keeping with the model, Someone says Something to Someone – sets out three discursive levels, each of which consists of three logical relationships. The figure shows one of many possible configurations of them; the time is constant here, but could as well be a variable.

Returning for a moment to Dayan and Katz' definition of the media event and the four definitive criteria: planned, preemptive, distant and "live", we find that these two pairs of relationships correspond well with the two levels indicated in Figure 2. The qualities of being planned and preemptive have to do with the overall contextual relationships, where the three actor-levels know about the event in advance and are familiar with normal scheduling, which can be set aside. The qualities "live" and distant, on the other hand, have to do with the textual representation.

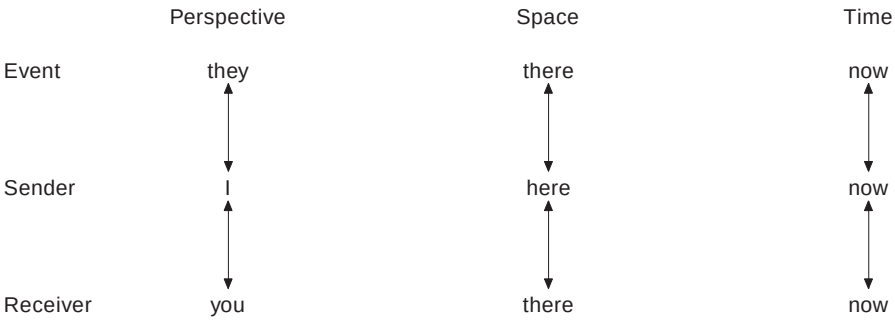
The media event represents a concrete case of there-here-there and now-now-now. In the following we shall take a closer look at how these relationships are concretely expressed in the transmissions, but first we should consider another important communicative element.

As we see in Figure 3, the actual perspective is situated as a distinction between different perspectives. We may assume that the sporting event is ever trying to offer opportunities for identification on this level, and, furthermore, that sport is a very suitable framework for sympathies and antipathies, which on the textual level means that there is a constant rhetorical effort to link perspectives of the three levels together through the utterance of a transcendent "WE". It is this level which means that events are related through a fundamentally actantial identification of villains and heroes, winners and losers. And it is on this level, too, that the producer stands between an essentially communicative inhibition and a narrative necessity. It is these narrative scenarios which are in focus in the following.

Four Levels of Meaning in the TV Sport Text

The television sport text may be divided into two main categories: picture and sound. Each of these in turn may be divided into two levels: in the case of picture, photographic image and graphics, and in the case of sound, wild sound and commentary. An early treatment is Edward Buscombe's now classic mongraph, *Football on Television* (Buscombe 1975), which consists of structuralistic essays on various aspects of BBCs and ITVs coverage of the Soccer World Cup in West Germany in 1974. The Danish literature offers scattered analyses, particularly of the visual aspect of televised sports, all of which are indebted to Buscombe. Among these contributions, Palle Schantz Lauridsen's "A Football Narrative", an analysis of DR TVs coverage of the World Cup contests of 1986, is seminal.[12] In the article, Schantz Lauridsen describes how a soccer match is narrativized through ritualized sequences of shots, which are repeated in certain situations throughout the match, thereby forging the contest into a narrative whole. The article focuses exclu-

Figure 3.



sively on the sequence of shots that occurs when teams score, but the author also notes that similar "rituals" may accompany throws-in and corners (Schantz Lauridsen 1986:49). Analyses of individual transmissions will not be considered here; instead, we shall treat the subject more generally, describing the four levels of meaning in the texts of televised sport in relation to the factors specified in Figure 3; perspective, space and time.

The Image and Perspective

A television transmission requires one or more cameras. Even if modern television transmissions nearly always use more than one camera, the viewer can orient him/herself in the space of the sporting event thanks to the fact that the primary camera maintains (what has become) a codified position which does not alter during the event. This position, which may be regarded as the primary position of the sports transmission, is the point of view which becomes established as the viewer's point of view, and it is returned to time and again throughout the transmission. It is the normal position, the point of departure or the basic point of view. According to the conventions of the genre, the primary position coincides with the best seats in the stadium.[13] This rule is especially applicable to most televised sport in Europe and other countries outside the USA.[14] Thus, a firm point of view is established at the start, but it is a point of view from which one departs and then returns. One of the most common observations regarding perspective and televised sports versus non-mediated sports is that the many cameras in the former case provide a broader and more comprehensive perspective than is available to the real-life spectator. This is partly true, but the opposite may be argued, as well. For even if the many cameras from many angles, plus their ability to zoom in and zoom out, to be very close and very distant and all points in between, give the viewer an omnipotence which is specific to the media sports event, it is nonetheless a chosen position, one of many possible at any given moment.

> The live spectator will be free to move, to turn the head, to absorb many different pictures, sounds and smells simultaneously, and will therefore stay master of his or her own interpretation. (Barnett 1990:155)

The placement of the cameras and, thus, the chosen perspectives define and delimit the space of the televised sports event. Whereas the use of zoom-lens close-ups gives the viewer an illusion of "here" (cf. Figure 3), the at once comprehensive and delimited overall images of the transmission are a deixist reference to "there", i.e., to the locus of the sporting event. A place which the cameras have made accessible to the viewer.

Television transmissions of soccer matches have evolved considerably since 1986 and 1974 when Schants Lauridsen and Buscombe, respectively, described them. On the visual front, the greatest change is due to a tremendous increase in the number of cameras used to cover matches. When German ZDF transmitted the World Cup tournament in 1974, they used five cameras per match (Buscombe 1975:50). Twelve years later, in Mexico, eleven cameras were used in the most important contests. Today, eleven cameras is standard procedure, and if a match is of extraordinary importance, up to twenty cameras may be used. RAI used 16 to 18 cameras per match from the quarter-finals on in the World Cup tournament in Italy in 1990 (Seifart 1990:86).

The Tense of Visual Images

The time frame is the same in all three levels in Figure 3. But time is also a dimension on which direct sports transmissions differ from other direct transmissions, such as openings of Parliament, royal weddings and jubilees. Running time and real time coincide in all live transmissions; in the cases mentioned there is a 1:1 relationship between telling time and told time. Live transmissions of sporting events differ in that the running time is regularly interrupted with brief pockets of suspended time. Most such pockets are filled with play-backs ("action replays") or slow-motion repeats of the play just completed, etc. Episodes which the producer deems more or less crucial.

In his article, "Chance and Plot", Umberto Eco (1989) likens what happens in the producer's televised text to jazz improvisations; he conceives of the production of the televised text as an instantaneous piecing together of information within the framework of knowledge of previous texts of the same kind, television texts which make use of the same code. The amount of raw information in a soccer transmission is tremendous: images from as many as twenty cameras, wild sound from from about ten microphones, the words of the commentators (one or two in most cases), and various kinds of graphics at the producer's disposal.

> Filming, editing, and broadcasting, three phases that in cinema remain perfectly separate and distinct, are here fused into one – a fact which certainly warrants the identification of real time with televisual time, since no form of narration can condense the autonomous duration of the represented event. (Eco 1989:107)

In addition to giving the producer a "second chance" in case he/she has missed something important in the running account, the "pockets of time" have the more significant function of punctuating the account, preserving and embellishing crucial junctures. These unpredictable moments, their preservation through the "instant replay", and the almost erotic – at once intimate and analytical – aesthetics which characterizes them make up one of the prime characteristics of the live sports transmission. It is an aesthetics which reflects a desire to make the most of the highlights, the most exciting moments of the match. The aesthetics of sports journalism is an "aesthetics of the instant", and the endless repetition of the most exciting moments is a visual celebration of both the aesthetics and the moment.[15]

Graphics

The increasing use of computers in modern television production has had a palpable influence on live sport transmissions, particularly on the graphics used in them. Graphics are primarily used for two purposes: to package and present the transmission, and to provide various kinds of information during the course of the event being covered. Here, we shall concern ourselves with the latter.

Computers are mainly used to collect, store and process data and information, and they give broadcasters access to much more information than they might have otherwise. It is both information that producers may have had access to earlier, albeit less readily – the names of players, officials, coaches and managers, playing time, and the score – and information that is available thanks to the computer alone. This is information which, typically, is of a more analytical nature and which is the result of "collaboration" between camera and computer. It is, for example, information about the distance between the ball and, say, a defensive "wall". The computer analyzes the data registered by the camera and, on the basis of that data, calculates the distance and a graphic representation of the play at hand. Other examples include graphic representations of the configuration of players over the field and the use of paintbox (to analyze key plays in retrospect).

Other computer-aided information includes the age, weight and "track record" of individual players, the number of warnings (yellow cards) received, and so forth. It is all presented visually and not, as earlier, by the commentator. Characteristically, information once provided by the commentator now originates with the producer – superimposed over the picture of the field, the ball and the players. As the source – or sender of the concrete graphical image – increasingly often is the producer or other person on a higher level of utterance than the commentator, the authoritativeness of the information provided in the graphics is greater than that of what the commentator says. (More on this point in the section on the commentator, below.) This leads to situations in which the commentator speaks on the basis of the graphics, i.e., orients himself to them, rather than having the graphics illustrate what he says. There are quite practical reasons for this: major international events involve far more commentators than there are producers, and each covers the event in his own language to his respective audience. In most cases, the pictures (and thereby the production) are supplied by a team from a broadcasting company in the country where the event takes place. (Consequently, it occurs that viewers can hear a commentator complain that the producer has not supplied the "right" pictures, but hardly ever when producer and commentator come from the same country (read: broadcasting organization.)

In addition to descriptive and analytical information relating to the event, graphics may also be used to identify the station producing the pictures, i.e., the station which owns the rights to transmit the event. Here we have the logotype of the company, commonly placed in a corner of the screen, but in the case of televised sport also different kinds of station identification worked into the informational graphics; the station and (often) the manufacturer of the computer program, the time-taking device, etc., used in the production may be integrated into the presentation of the commentators, information about players entering and leaving the contest, the remaining minutes of play, match statistics, and so forth. Or in the graphics which more and more frequently accompany the instant replay: the blinking "R" of yesteryear is increasingly replaced by three-dimensional, framed images, where the station's name and logotype and identifying typography is included in the frame. This visual effect, which represents a new, compu-

ter-animated intermediate form between graphics and picture has a corresponding hybrid on the sound front, as well: a whistling or "swooshing" sound that accompanies the "photo-graphics". The sound mimics the movement of the framed picture as it sweeps onto the screen and signals a jump (back) in time.

"Wild Sound"

Television productions normally involve three kinds of sound: "wild sound", speech and music. In the present context, we may largely ignore the latter category, inasmuch as the only music present in televised sporting events occurs as wild sound, music as heard in the arena or room of the event. In the case of soccer matches, for example, music is most prominent in the case of contests between national teams (albeit an increasing number of clubs have anthems of their own, which are played when the players take the field and perhaps after the match when the "home team" has won). In sports like gymnastics, where rhythmic music plays a key role, significantly, the music viewers hear in their loudspeakers is nearly always acoustic sound from the venue of the event, i.e., wild sound, rather than background or "mood" music.[16]

"Music as heard in the room of the event" has an ambient, spatial quality which signals that it has been "collected" by a microphone on the scene. One might say that in addition to the music, we hear the room itself – consider, for example, the characteristic acoustics of a handball court or gymnastics hall. In this sense, wild sound is the sound of the event itself; it is not a parallel tape or CD recording of "The Moonlight Sonata" or whatever the gymnast may have chosen to perform to. That the output, in purely technical terms, may be (and usually is) the result of mixing the uptake of several microphones in the room is irrelevant; the point is that the sound viewers hear sounds like the sound which spectators who are physically present in the room are experiencing (even though it in fact is a mix of sounds from different sources in the room). Wild sound includes the voices, breathing, puffing and groans of the players; they, too, are experienced by viewer and spectator alike.

It is important that we hear sounds from the venue of the event; it is, we will recall, a definitive characteristic of the media event. The ambient, spatial and, in some senses, less-than-perfect wild sound is a sign that the sender/producer level does not control the actor level. Consequently, viewers experience the televised event as an event that has a life of its own, above and beyond the intervention of the medium. One might say that wild sound is the fingerprint of the event on the media event, or a stamp of authenticity. The distinction between the sender and the actor which the sound of the television text marks thus forms a part in the aesthetics of realism in which television wraps the event.

Commentary – Speaking to the Picture

Of the four levels of meaning, the picture is paramount; the primary information is carried in the picture. Be that as it may, the commentator's speech is a prime characteristic of televised sport, and sport commentary is one of the most-studied features of televised sport in the rather scanty literature on the subject. The analyses to date have mainly concentrated on the commentary divorced from the pictures; interest has mostly revolved around what is said without any particular relation to the accompanying visuals, let alone how words and pictures might interact.

(Not infrequently, the purpose of the analysis is to reveal one or another kind of "chauvinism": considering the sparseness of the literature, one finds surprisingly many examples of commentators talking about"exotic foreigners", "good-looking handball-lasses", and so on.) Here, however, we are interested in the interaction between the commentary and other levels.

The role of commentary in the case of televised sport is special inasmuch as the interaction of sound and picture in sports transmissions is quite different from that in newscasts, for example. In the latter case, the greater share of the information is imparted via the speaker, and the visuals serve as illustrations.[17] The newscaster/reporter is a speaker – one who speaks – and not a commentator, i.e., someone who talks about something which we, too, can see. The TV sports commentator mainly plays a verifying, clarifying and corroborating role. He speaks to the pictures and generally speaks about something we can see. Consequently, the role differs from that of the news anchor, who talks about things we do not know, what is more, things that often either have not been or cannot be visualized.

The function of the commentator is four-fold; he/she speaks about

a) things viewers can see: "...Number Ten, Michael Laudrup enters the field..."

b) things they may not necessarily be able to see: "...all three substitutes are now warming up..."

c) things they may or may not know: "...Thirty-year-old Peter Schmeichel, who hails from..."

d) things they cannot know: "Michael Laudrup warmed up before the match, but is not in the starting line-up."

It is in the first case, a), that the commentary has the most corroborating function. In the second case, b), the commentary may be corroborating, or it may be diverting. If the commentary arises out of something the commentator alone can see, thanks to his physical presence at the scene, in the room of the event, it is diverting; if, on the other hand, it refers to something visible on the screen, something viewers, too, can see, it is corroborating. Thus, the nature of the function depends on whether the commentary has its origin in the event or the media event. In the third case, the commentary is diverting since we cannot see on the screen that Peter Schmeichel is thirty years old, or what club he hails from. Even here, however, the commentary bears a fairly close relation to the picture inasmuch as such comments usually are made when the player in question is on camera. This may also be true in the fourth case, d), but such information is more likely to be offered when the referent is not on camera (the example above might be elicited by a reflection on what Laudrup might have done in the situation at hand, had he been in the game). The comment contains an implicit desire to change the referent's absence into presence. Commentary of the fourth kind may, for that matter, be entirely explicit since it need not bear any relation to the game or what appears on the screen: e.g., comments on the behaviour of the crowd before the match, or "insider" gossip about purchases, sales and firings.

As we proceed from a) to d), we note a gradual tendency away from the corroborating function. At the same time, we experience an increasing freedom from the requirement of simultaneity between picture and commentary. This has to do with the nature of the game itself. The primary object is the ball. The commentary follows the ball, not the players, because the commentary follows the camera (the picture is paramount), and the camera follows the ball. The symbiosis between ball and camera remains unbroken as long as the ball is in play. As soon as the whistle sounds and a pause ensues, the focus can shift, and the focus of the commentary generally shifts from the ball to the players.[18]

In addition to the corroborating and diverting functions, sports commentary is also instrumental in channeling and conveying symapthies and antipathies. Commentators are supposed to be nonpartisan, but they seldom are. In transmissions from domestic (national) matches, where two athletes or teams from the same country oppose one another, a commentator's impartiality/fairness to both can be a source of considerable irritation to viewers. The opposite holds, however, in international contests or if one of the teams has the same nationality as the commentator and his audience. When players in one way or another are the extended or vicarious agents of a national audience, that is, their actions and feats are metonyms for an ideal or sense of community, the commentator's role will essentially be to mediate a transcendental "we" (Fig. 3). His very use of the word, "we", reduces the distance between the viewer and himself and, by virtue of his position on the sidelines of the field, to the players. The players, who were originally the objects of the viewers' sympathy are rendered, so to speak, identical with the viewers, so that sympathy no longer flows only from the viewer or commentator toward the players, but from the commentator toward the viewers, as well.

The Partner

Whereas it once was uncommon for a match to be covered by more than one commentator, today it is rather the rule than the exception. Naturally, the two commentators do not talk about the same things. The commentator is the one who corroborates, who reinforces the events; his role is to impart the sense of immediacy, simultaneity, and he has the right to speak in the present tense the very moment events transpire. The co-commentator or "partner", on the other hand, has to wait until there is a pause or a lull in the match. Just as the studio host or hostess gives the floor to the commentator, the commentator gives the floor to his partner, either by asking him his opinion or simply by stopping to give him a chance to speak. Should, however, something unexpected or exciting happen, the commentator has both the right and a duty to break in and take over, since both cannot speak at once. The here and now is the province of the commentator.[19] Thus, the commentator is the one who corroborates the events in real time, whereas the partner mostly does this in connection with replays, whereby he also contributes to an auditive embellishment of the moments which have been deemed

worth repeating. The partner may, however, contribute diverting comments at will, but only when the commentator has given him the floor. Nor is the partner allowed to let himself get carried away.

The partner is (nearly) always a retired star player. This lends him credibility, especially when he talks about behind-the-scenes happenings. Since his function is primarily diverting, he needs to know things we (and the commentator) do not know. The information can be of many different kinds, but basically falls into one of two categories: tactical information and insider information. The tactical information is analytical in relation to the match at hand, yet diverting: it does not relate to what is shown in the picture, but to the background. Insider information does not necessarily relate to what is on the screen or to the background. It may consist of gossip which the partner has picked up thanks to his privileged status as ex-star; belonging to the inner circle, he is privy to information. But the partner may also contribute simple fillers - anecdotes and references to his own career, which besides helping to maintain the aura and mythology that surrounds the sport, serves a vital function: filling the time in lulls in the game.

The partner is an important figure in that he, regardless of what takes place on the field, can always contribute something of interest to the televised event. And this something is totally independent of the real event. Thus, the partner helps differentiate the media event from the event itself in that he is part of the system which means that a dull sporting event need not necessarily be a dull media event.

The Commentator's Perspective

The commentator is located not in the "there" of the event, but in his capacity of on-the-scene reporter, he establishes his own "here", which coincides with the "here" of the event, but different from the "here" of the sender.[20] The "here" of the sender is the studio or the medium, from which the commentator heas ventured to cover the event.[21]

The producer and the camera crews have been sent to the scene, as well, but they lack significance in this context; in fact, an effort is made to ignore their presence and to reduce the results of their efforts to a "given", to something "natural". The commentator is "our man on the spot" par excellence, and typically we only hear mention of the producer and crew when something goes wrong and prevents us (and the commentator) from seeing what we want to see. Often, all these co-workers are reduced to "the hardware" which underlines that it is the privilege of the viewer and his ally, the commentator, to interpret the event – not the cameraman, engineers, etc., whose job it is merely to bring the pictures to us.

One of the purposes of the rhetoric of the transmission is, to the extent possible, to make the "here" of the event and the "here" of the viewer coincide. At the same time, it should be clear that the sender/ station's normal "here" is not the place where he, for the sake of the event, is stationed. This last point is of importance in establishing the autonomy of the event, that it would have taken place (in the same way) regardless of whether television had shown an interest or not. Interestingly, however, in relation to Dayan and Katz' criterion, that the event generally take place outside the studio in remote locations (Dayan & Katz 1992:5), the sporting event establishes an intermediate position inasmuch as not infrequently, not only does the commentator, but the entire studio, with studio hosts/hostesses, guests, and so forth, move out to the venue of the event.

Concluding Remarks

In this article we have proposed a genre approach to televised sport with a focus on form, rather than content. We have found televised sport to share certain characteristics with other kinds of television which – applying Dayan and Katz' definition – may be called media events. The concept of the media event represents a point of departure for the study of how television sport on an aesthetic level transforms the sporting event from an event into a media event.

We have shown that the sports transmission is the result of a transformation which takes place in both sound and picture components. The aesthetics of televised sporting events draws to some extent on the aesthetics of the sporting event, an aesthetics of realism, so that the sports transmission has an aura of "naturalness". But the aesthetics of the televised sporting event is equally an aesthetics of the instant, and a characteristic feature of that aesthetics is a tendency to try to preserve and embellish the decisive moments in the event. This is done on multiple levels: in the narrative, through repetition of the moments in question; visually, for example, through the graphic framing and enactment of the repetition and the graphically designed analysis of the moments; auditively (and narratively), through a doubling of the commentator function with the addition of a co-commentator or "partner".

The commentator function is, furthermore, crucial to the striving of the media event to establish a transcendental "we", which is a key to understanding the rhetoric of major national televised sporting events. This "we" comes into play in establishing/imparting the antipathies and sympathies which arise in connection with international contests, while it also shortens the distance between the viewer, the mediator (here: the commentator), and the actors. It may be conceived of as a verbal analogy to the camera's intimate study of the event and its actors – particularly in the most intense moments, but it also extends beyond these individual moments, and even events, to be a model for the entire medium in its approach to major national sporting events.

Notes

1. Much of Morse's article is devoted to identifying certain aesthetic characteristics of television sport, and in the course of that pursuit she does indeed move beyond the content-related approach signalled in her more general introduction.
2. This article, parts of which were presented in a working group at the 13th conference of the Nordic Association of Mass Communication Research in Jyväskylä, Finland, in August 1997, is written with mainly soccer in mind. The more general observations in the beginning of the article apply to all kinds of sports, and even the more concrete examples in the latter part of the article may be more or less readily transposed to other kinds of sports (see further note 14).
   The first "live" images of a soccer match – England vs. Scotland – were transmitted 9 April 1938. Thus, the tradition of live transmissions is virtually as old as the medium itself.
3. Thus, in a sense, the simultaneity of the representation points toward the future, which is unknown to everyone – the producer, the players, as well as the spectators – an uncertainty which applies to both the event and the media event. Not knowing the outcome is the key to the programmes' fascination, an important aspect in the phenomenology of sport as well as of the aesthetics of televised sport. Nonetheless, the aesthetic expression of delayed transmissions is often identical with the truly "live" transmission – perhaps in order to maintain the illusion of simultaneity. Only in the case of sport news and "wrap-ups" is the aesthetic expression remarkably different.
4. Paddy Scannell (1995) describes fixed programme scheduling as a key to why television is perceived to have the character of "routine" or "everyday". Viewers have to know when and what they can expect to see on television so they can get excited about it! Media events require, quite dialectically, the everyday, the routine in order to be the "holiday" Dayan and Katz conceive them to be.
5. Even though the weekly soccer match in itself is not a media event, in an attempt to resemble a "real" event as much as possible, it borrows much of the aesthetic praxis of major TV sports events. Thus, on a purely aesthetic level most of the characteristics of television events are transferred over to weekly/daily non-events. The aesthetics is applied on the rhetorical plane so as to convince the viewer that this weekly event – on the rhetorical plane at least – is equivalent to an exclusive media event.
6. It is common knowledge that channels are commonly besieged by irate viewers when events unexpectedly preempt other programmes. Viewers are angry, for example, when a sports transmission is broken off in the middle of a key play, and parents are angry because a women's handball match has preempted a children's programme.
7. Dayan and Katz offer an illustrative example of the distinction: "Thus, we are interested in the Kennedy funeral – a great ceremonial event – and not the Kennedy assassination – a great news event" (Dayan & Katz 1992:9)
8. When we say "live" or "direct" here, we ignore the physical delay inherent in the transmission itself. The moon landing was a direct transmission, even if it took six minutes for the signal to reach Earth; similarly, live interviews are direct, even if we hear a slight delay in the voice transmission.
9. In the real world (of sport) they are not actually distinctly separate. Due to the sums of money involved, particularly money deriving from the sale of distribution rights, the sender (broadcaster) has more and more say in the organization of the event itself, i.e., more influence over the organizer.
10. In addition to experience of being a spectator, many viewers also have experience of being players. This is particularly true with respect to the most popular sports, ball sports, cycling, etc., and may contribute to the great popularity these sports enjoy.
11. The concept of the linguistic Origo originates with Karl Bühler (1934/1965). Bühler's linguistic model is most widely known through Jakobson's (1967, (1960)) model of the text, in which Jakobson's three fundamental functions reproduce the Origo concept.
12. Other Danish contributions include Henrik Jagd and Benny Warning's "TV Soccer and Nationalism" ("Tv-fodbold og nationalisme") and Mogens Schmidt's "The Armchair Stadium" ("Et stadion i stuen?"),

which, besides being first, is also the treatise which contains the deepest reflections on the role of the commentator. Nearly all the Danish literature on mediated sports concerns soccer, and it is characteristic that a peak in the interest in televised soccer may be noted around 1986, when the Danish national soccer team attracted (Danes') attention – to them, and to sports in general. Since then, academic interest in soccer (and other sports) has gradually subsided, and not even the Danish European Championship in 1992 could revive interest among the research community - perhaps because analysts failed to find much of interest on the aesthetic level in the 1992 coverage. Be that as it may, one of the more recent analytic works on sport and television, Kirsten Frandsen's dissertation, *Sportsjournalistik* [Sports journalism], is not about men's soccer, but about women's handball. References to "the real world" seem in many ways unavoidable when it comes to sport.

13. As mentioned earlier, soccer is the focal sport in this article. Most observations are applicable to other stadium sports, i.e., sports which take place in a confined space and which involve one or more objects or players operating in a well-defined arena. Such sports include most ball games, boxing, swimming and so forth. Other conditions apply in the case of sports which are less spatially confined: bicycle races, cross-country races, etc. In order to achieve satisfactory coverage of such events, the camera must be mobile in order to follow the object, and several cameras will be necessary inasmuch as several objects are of interest, and the objects are often relatively far apart. Cf. the individual starting points in Tour de France.
14. Writing with reference to Edward Buscombe's *Football on Television*, Margaret Morse (1983) makes this observation in a comparison of English and American football. English coverage, she notes, expresses a basic agenda-setting desire to report, to represent the event at hand, whereas American coverage evidences a desire to entertain.
15. We borrow the concept, "aesthetics of the instant" from Jørgen Stigel, who, in *The Aesthetics of Television, the Quality of Television*, deems it to be one of the most characteristic features and qualitites of the medium (Stigel 1997:7).
16. In the 1994 Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway, non-ambient music was added to slow-motion reviews of episodes from cross-country skiing races. This was – and remains – an exception, however.
17. For more on newscasts, see Peter Larsen's *Analyse af TV-avisen* [Analysis of the evening TV news], 1974.
18. This is the backcloth to the Monty Python sketch depicting a soccer match between teams of Greek and German philosophers: The camera follows the various "players" who absent-mindedly wander about on the field, when suddenly a ball comes bouncing into the picture, and the commentator exclaims, "... Oh, and there's the ball!"
19. The first and most famous commentator in Denmark, Gunnar "Now!" Hansen, is a case in point. His nickname "Now!" is a veritable ode to the medium which makes simultaneity possible (first radio, then television) and a fairly exact expression of the fascination of the aesthetics of the instant.
20. Cf. Peter Larsen's (1974) remarks on the hierarchy of utterances, which is largely applicable to televised sport.
21. This is one of the features of transmissions which has changed in recent years. Although the transmission of the match itself is largely the same, activities which previously took place in the studio have been moved out to the "here" of the event in order to achieve coincidence between the "here" of the sender and the "here" of the event. The absence of the "here" of the studio from the textual level in no way damages the sense of "event-ness". On the contrary, it tells us that this event is so important that even the manager of the Sports Department himself has gone out into the cold for its sake. In a metaphorical sense this is a step back toward the days of the rosy-nosed, bundled-up reporter who, pencil in hand, braved sleet and hail to fill us in on the latest scores.

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Television Performance as Interaction

PEKKA ISOTALUS

Face-to-face communication is usually considered as a fundamental form of communication. Therefore, all other forms of communication are often compared to it. Consequently, one-way direction and absence of a negotiable dimension, or in other words, lack of interactivity, have been seen to be characteristic for television communication. Interactivity is also said to be one of the most remarkable differences between the new communication technology and the traditional media (e.g. Rogers 1986). Traditionally television is, thus, considered as a noninteractive medium.

Currently, however, the notion of interactive television has been gaining attention. Normally, this notion refers to a combination of a computer and a television. Still, certain programs of traditional television are also called interactive. In these programs, a viewer is able to interact with a presenter, or participate in the program by telephone. The interactive programs have been reported to increase rapidly in Finnish television (Eerikäinen 1994, Hietala 1994) and they were also common in the US during the presidential election (Diamond, McKay & Silverman 1993, Newhagen 1994). Additionally, the television companies all over the world seem to believe in the capacity of the interactive programs to attract viewers, as new programs are being developed and their number increased. However, there is also evidence for the view that the interactive forms do not necessarily please the audience (Barwise & Ehrenberg 1988: 84, Isotalus & Pörhölä 1994, Jääsaari & Savinen 1995).

Poster (1994) has argued that, despite the telephone call-ins, television communication is still unidirectional, and thus, basically a monologue. Also Eerikäinen (1994) has criticized Finnish interactive programs for not being genuine conversations with viewers, as they follow a preplan, and the viewers have to adapt to the rules. Eerikäinen (1994) sees the present interactive forms of television as an opportunity of feedback or participation rather than as actual interaction. He also questions whether the interaction, in this case, indicates the media-relationship, or the relationship between persons. This relates to the fact that interaction can be considered from three different perspectives: interaction between persons, interaction between a text and a person and interaction between a machine and a person (e.g. Jensen 1997).

Evidently, there seem to be different viewpoints about what is interactive and what is not, and, furthermore where the television may be located on this dimension. However, it is fully possible to consider television from the perspective of interactivity. The aim of this paper is to develop a model to illustrate the interaction between a television presenter and a viewer. Therefore, the first and the most essential question is to try to define interaction.

What is Interaction?

Interaction is a widely used term and it is also used in the definitions of communication, although it clearly is an underdefined concept. There have been attempts to define interactivity by means of prototypical examples, by criteria which should be fulfilled in interaction or by describing it as a continuum in which case it is seen as a property which may be found to a varying degree (Jensen 1997). Rafaeli (1988) is one of the scholars who has tried to analyse the concept. According to him, in full interactivity the communication roles need to be interchangeable: role assignment and turn-taking are to be nonautomatic or nearly so. Interactivity also requires that the communicants respond to each other and there are two forms of responding. The first one is a regular response which means a reaction to previous messages. The other is a response which, itself, acknowledges the prior responses. In full interaction, the regular response alone is not

adequate, because it is also needed to be able to react not only to the previous message but also to the messages before it. Thus, according to him, there are three levels of interactivity: two-way (noninteractive) communication, reactive (or quasi-interactive) communication, and fully interactive communication. In reactive communication, later messages refer to earlier ones, but the full interactivity differs from reaction in the incorporation of reference to the content, nature, form, or just to the presence of earlier reference.

Also Thompson (1994) has distinguished three types of interaction. The first type is face-to-face communication which takes place in a context of copresence. In face-to-face communication, the flow of information occurs in a two-way manner and communication roles alternate. The participants also commonly employ a multiplicity of symbolic cues in face-to-face communication. The second type is mediated interaction which involves the use of a technical medium, such as telephone. In mediated communication, the participants are usually remote in space, in time or in both, and therefore they must always consider how much contextual information should be included in the communication. The third type is described as mediated quasi-interaction, and it usually occurs in mass communication media. It is oriented towards an indefinite range of potential recipients and it is monological in character, in the sense that the flow of communication is predominantly unidirectional. However, mediated quasi-interaction creates a particular social situation in which individuals are linked together in a process of communication and symbolic exchange. Furthermore, bonds of friendship, affection or loyalty can be formed by recipients.

In both definitions, interactivity is seen as a multi-level phenomenon which has different forms. This principle seems to be common in other definitions of interactivity as well (see e.g. Hansen, Jankowski & Etienne 1996, Jensen 1997). Thus, interactivity can not be seen as a dichotomy but, rather, as a continuum. Additionally, both definitions seem to consider interpersonal communication as the ideal form of interactivity. On one hand, Rafaeli's definition seems to be more useful, because it is theoretical and considers features of interactivity. It could, thus, be enforced to the analysis of all forms of communication. On the other hand, however, his definition is also quite vague and difficult to apply. In contrast, Thompson's levels are easy to understand, but he is satisfied in classifying forms of communication only and does not analyse features of interaction. Therefore, all forms of interaction do not fit perfectly to his categories. However, it is typical for most attempts of definition that they result in classifications only.

In terms of these definitions, television communication cannot be considered fully interactive. Rather, it can be seen as mediated quasi-interaction. As the genuine interactivity is thus impossible in the television communication, television only tries to simulate interaction. On the whole, it is typical for the mass media to try to simulate interpersonal communication and to personalize their communication (Beniger 1987). The interactive programs and the telephone call-ins are thus one means of simulating interaction, and one of the most important elements in this simulation is the television performance of presenters.

Simulated Interaction of Presenters

Already at an early stage it was understood in radio that talk should be addressed to a listener. This insight was also adopted to the television and it has modified broadcast talk to a great degree (Scannell 1995). Nowadays, the television presenter aims at creating an illusion of interpersonal communication for the viewer by simulating interaction. During the last few years, simulated interaction has been observed to increase in television (e.g. Camauër 1994, Hjarvard 1994, Isotalus 1996) and there have been increasing attempts to analyse its forms. The most typical form of simulation is to look into the camera and address the viewers directly. In German quiz shows, for example, a presenter has been observed to speak directly to the viewers 12% of the broadcasting time. This happens normally at the beginning or in the end of the program, or, when the situation changes (Woisin 1989:145-146). These addresses have also been called parainteractive lines (Rasmussen 1988) and, in the fictive programs, as 'breaking the fourth wall' (Auter 1992, Auter & Davis 1991). Moreover, simulated interaction can be both verbal or nonverbal (e.g. Terrenoire 1987) and it may be characteristic for the presenters or the programs that aim at increasing the intimacy (e.g. Hjarvard 1994, Mårtensson 1989). Consequently, simulated interaction has been discussed under different names, and it has been considered from several different perspectives.

In his study, Isotalus (1996) analysed the television performance of 190 Finnish presenters. The research focussed on analysing the forms of interaction simulation. First, the analysis demonstrated

that television presenters simulate interaction by such means as eye-contact, directing their gaze into the camera. Nearly all presenters looked into the camera at least once during the program, and over a half looked more into the camera than somewhere else. Presenters also used gestures and facial expressions that aimed at giving the impression that they could see the viewers in front of them. Simulated interaction also occurred when presenters greeted their viewers, used personal pronouns to address them, or mentioned their viewers by name. A presenter might also remind the viewers that they could contact the presenter by phoning him or sending him a postcard, or a telefax. Sometimes the presenters behaved as if there had been no screen at all between themselves and the viewers. A presenter could, for example, try to trick the viewers into believing that he or she is actually in the same room with them, and, consequently, able to see and hear them, respond to them, and know what they are doing. Presenters also often told the viewers when to expect their next program and, in this manner, reminded them of the continuity of their relationship. Additionally, an intimate communication style may increase the impression of the immediacy of the presenter.

Ultimately, interaction simulation appears to be a multi-level phenomenon. The simulation of interaction can also be observed in the interaction between on-screen presenters, or between the host of the show and his or her guest. Presenter may increase the immediacy of the other person by using his or her nickname or by employing other means of increasing the intimacy between oneself and another presenter. Also, the host and the guest may try to talk as if the viewer were a third party in their conversation (see Morse 1985). Simulation of interaction can also be seen in terms of a process. The intimacy or informality of the presenter may increase during the program. For example, results of Isotalus (1996) showed that the presenters typically greeted their viewers rather formally at the beginning of a program, while the closing remarks were frequently more informal.

In what is one of the most noteworthy analyses of simulated interaction, Mancini (1988) has studied the utterances that are used to presuppose and control the interpretations of the viewer. In contrast, Isotalus considered simulated interaction as an imitation of face-to-face communication. Some of the forms of simulated interaction mentioned above were also observed in previous studies (Camauër 1994, Haag 1993, Mancini 1988, Morse 1985, Montgomery 1986, Scannell 1991, Terrenoire 1987, Véron 1983), but most studies have not systematically analysed the features of simulation, or have not considered them from the point of view of both verbal and nonverbal communication.

Simulated interaction is primarily used to increase the attractivity of the program and to give an impression of a presenter's immediacy. However, it may be argued that the presenters do not necessarily simulate interaction intentionally, although they may gaze into the camera, or greet their viewers. Rather, these features may be mere conventions or behaviours according to the norms of television performance. Therefore, these features simulate interaction despite the actual goals of the presenter. Nevertheless, the presenters seem to success in their simulation quite well, because the viewers have been observed to respond to them (Levy 1979, Nelson 1989) and, even, to establish a relationship with them.

Parasocial Interaction

Although a viewer is unable to talk with a presenter, he or she may establish a relationship with him/her. A viewer may form an attitude to a presenter on a similar basis as to any other people, and this attitude may include some features of real social relationships. This one-sided and imaginary social relationship that the television viewers establish with a given presenter is called a parasocial relationship.

By parasocial relationship a positive affective relationship between a receiver and a media personality is indicated. It is not a new concept. It was first used in 1956 by Horton and Wohl (1986) and it is still widely used in a roughly similar sense. Parasocial relationship has been referred to as an illusion of a face-to-face relationship (Horton & Wohl 1986), as an illusion of an interpersonal relationship (Watson & Hill 1984), as media simulated interpersonal communication (Cathcart & Gumpert 1983), as pseudo-interaction (Hansen 1988), as an imaginary social relationship (Alperstein 1991), as having a quasi-friend (Koenig & Lessan 1985), and as pseudo-friendship (Perse 1990).

In the research, the question of how a parasocial relationship differs from just liking a television personality has not been discussed much. Normally, it has been studied as an attitude towards a favourite performer. However, Isotalus and Valo (1995) have criticized this view, because having a favourite performer is not a proof of the existence of a parasocial relationship. They argue that in order to be understood as parasocial, a relationship

has to involve such features as getting to know the performer better with time. Also, it must be a positive and an affective bond. However, a parasocial relationship seems to be both a common and a normal reaction to television viewing and it does not seem to be more typical for any special group of viewers (Grant, Guthrie & Ball-Rokeach 1991, Isotalus & Valo 1995, Perse & Rubin 1989).

It is also reasonable to hypothesize that there could be cultural differences in parasocial relationships, but the concept itself is American, as are most of the earlier studies, and the research methods (Isotalus 1995). Therefore, Isotalus and Valo (1995) devised a new questionnaire to study the characteristics of Finnish parasocial relationships. They found five dimensions which describe the parasocial relationship of Finns. The first was called an 'imagined friendship', which indicates that the viewer considers the performer to be similar to himself or his friends. The viewer may also imagine that he might become a good friend with the performer if they only would meet someday. 'Seeking companionship' refers to the second dimension, and it indicates that the viewers readily spend their time watching this performer's program, and look forward to seeing the program. The third dimension is labelled as 'empathy towards the performer'. The fourth one is called as 'reality of the relationship'. This means that the viewer does not think of the performer only when watching the program and that he would go to see the performer if he would happen to visit the neighbourhood. In addition, the fifth dimension, or 'the competence of a performer', appears important to the receivers. However, competence is not actually included in a parasocial relationship – as it is an evaluative dimension, not affective. It correlated poorly with the other dimensions. Further, it was found in the study that the viewers' relationship with the performers in various program types does not differ much. In all, the results suggested that parasocial relationships are quite common among Finnish viewers and that the characteristics of the Finnish parasocial relationship parallel those described in earlier studies. The dimensions also resemble the features which have been reported to be characteristic for friendship in general.

Furthermore, earlier research has primarily focused on television. A parasocial relationship, however, may equally well develop towards a radio performer. Isotalus and Valo (1995) also compared parasocial relationships in radio context to those in television context. The results showed that the parasocial relationship with television performers is significantly stronger than with radio performers. Television seems to emphasize the performer and person variables, which explains the stronger parasocial relationships.

Parasocial relationship and simulated interaction are related with each other. Often, also the term 'parasocial interaction' is used, which frequently seems to be used approximately in the sense of simulated interaction. Finally, simulated interaction is considered to have a positive influence on the development of parasocial relationship (Auter & Moore 1993, Grant, Guthrie & Ball-Rokeach 1991, Horton & Wohl (1956) 1986, Wulff 1996).

The concept of parasocial relationship has been criticized in various respects (see Isotalus 1995, Isotalus & Valo 1995, Wulff 1996). Thus, it is problematic indeed that the concept includes such assumptions that have not yet been properly discussed or empirically tested. However, the concept has been proved a functional instrument in the analysis of the viewers' affective bond with media personalities and it has also introduced new dimensions of the viewers' reception process.

Interpersonal Communication: A Starting Point for Interaction Model

Often, television communication has been compared to interpersonal communication. It has also been argued that it resembles interpersonal communication more than other modes of communication. Scannell (1991), for example, has argued that the norms of public speaking are not applied in television but, instead, those of ordinary, informal conversation. In addition, many North American scholars emphasize the fact that television talk resembles interpersonal communication more than it does public speaking (e.g. Hellweg, Pfau & Brydon 1992, Pfau 1990). Therefore, the communication style that is borrowed from interpersonal situations is also considered to be the most appropriate in television context.

Probably, television performance is seen to resemble interpersonal communication because nonverbal communication plays an important role in both. Television is able to efficiently convey the nonverbal messages of the performer, especially his/her facial expressions, which have a great influence on the communicative relationship and relational messages. Television also creates an intimate visual contact between a performer and a viewer.

The television performance of a Finnish television presenter may not be, however, as similar to interpersonal communication as, for example, that

of his/her English or American colleagues. Clearly, most Finnish television presenters seem to adhere to the Finnish tradition of public speaking. The features of this tradition include message-orientation, influence of the written communication style, a tendency to address large audiences, and the use of formal and elaborate language. However, a more intimate communication style and simulated interaction are rapidly increasing in Finnish television. The tradition of public speaking derives from Finnish communication culture as a whole, but also, from the programming policy of Finnish television which can be characterized as informative. On one hand, the tradition of informative programming policy may have fostered a style of public speaking, while, on the other hand, the aim to entertain and the competition between channels may have encouraged an intimate communication style. (Isotalus 1996.)

As television communication and interpersonal communication have many similarities, it is interesting to consider the communication between a presenter and a viewer in the framework of the interpersonal communication theories. First, interpersonal communication theories may be used to describe the relationship between the presenter and the viewer. Two central interpersonal communication theories, viz. the uncertainty reduction theory and the personal construct theory, have both been employed in the analysis of the parasocial relationship (Perse & Rubin 1989). It has been found that both theories also can be applied to the analysis of communication in television context. According to the uncertainty reduction theory, a relationship is expected to develop when an individual increases his or her ability to predict the other's behaviour. In a mediated context, however, only passive strategies can be used to reduce uncertainty, because the viewers are able only to observe. Perse and Rubin (1989) also indicated that people tend to apply their interpersonal construct systems in forming impressions of television performers. Both in mediated and interpersonal contexts, impressions were found to be based on the same construct domain.

Also, the theory of relational communication has been used in television research. According to this theory, in addition to its content, communication also always includes information about the nature of the communicators' relationship. Relational communication may be either verbal or nonverbal in character, but the nonverbal element has a particularly an important role as regards the relationship. As television conveys the nonverbal cues extremely well, the concept of relational communication could prove useful in the analysis of television communication. Relational communication has been observed to be especially important in the television performance of politicians (Pfau, Diedrich, Larson & Van Winkle 1993, Pfau & Kang 1991). Furthermore, Pfau (1990) has pointed out that relational communication is more important in television than in radio, print, or public speaking.

Also, the theories of self-disclosure, social penetration, and immediacy could be applied in television context to describe the relationship between a presenter and a viewer. Additionally, the expectancy-violation theory could explain how viewers react if a presenter follows or violates the norms of performance. The relation between the performance and the content of his speech could be considered in the framework of the balance theories, and, furthermore, attribution theory could explain the viewers' interpretations of the performers' behaviour. (See Isotalus 1996.)

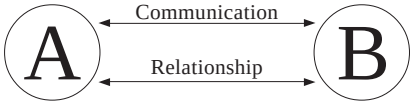
The use of these theories indicates that many can be applied to the television context indeed. The theories which explain evaluative responses, impression formation, and the development of relationships were the most suitable for the given context. However, some theories of interpersonal communication are only partly adequate and some do not seem to be suitable at all in describing the television context.

The attempts to apply the interpersonal communication theories thus show that the perception, interpretation and evaluation of the television performers' communication is similar manner to that of the persons involved in interpersonal communication. Therefore, interpersonal communication is a good starting point for developing a model of television performance as interaction. On the basis of interpersonal communication theories, communication and relationship thus seem to be central components in describing interaction. Both refer to a two-way character of interpersonal communication: there exists full interaction between the communicators and both communicators have a relationship with or an attitude towards each other. In Figure 1 (next page), the reciprocity of communication and relationship in interpersonal communication is illustrated.

Developing a Model

In television, communication is unidirectional: from performer to viewer as no immediate feedback is normally possible. But as talk is always directed to the viewers, they are inevitably the other

Figure 1. Illustration of Interpersonal Communication



participants of communication. The presenters try to create an illusion of face-to-face communication with viewers by simulating interaction. Also, the interpersonal relationships are one-way directed in television, but in this case, the direction is from the viewer to the performer. The performer is not able to establish a relationship with his or her viewers, because a presenter cannot see them in person and he or she does not know the individuals who are watching the program. A viewer, however, may conjure up an illusion of a social relationship with the performer. This one-sided relationship that the television viewers establish with a given presenter is termed a parasocial relationship. Of course, the viewers do not always have a positive relationship with a presenter, and neither do they have as strong a relationship that it could be called parasocial. However, a viewer necessarily has a relation or an attitude towards a presenter and in this sense the situation resembles interpersonal communication. Additionally, the presenters often talk as if they would know that the viewers have relationship with them.

The television screen keeps apart the viewer and the presenter, who are usually also remote in time and space. However, the presenters often try to behave as if they would share the time and the location with their viewers. In other words, they try to simulate the experience of shared time and space. In Figure 2, the television communication is described in terms of communication and relationship.

In television interviews, the modes of interaction are more complex. The interaction and relationship between presenter and viewer can be seen as presented above in Figure 2. Interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee resembles that in other face-to-face contexts. Although the interviewee speaks to the interviewer, simultaneously he or she also speaks, indirectly, to the viewer. Sometimes the interviewee may also address the viewers directly, but this is rare, at least on Finnish television. It is not exceptional either that the viewer may develop a parasocial relationship also with the interviewee. Morse (1985) has also shown that it is typical for the host and the guest of a television show to sit in front of the viewer and at times the viewer is included in the group by a look from the host. Therefore, the viewers are included in the same group as the host and the guest, and defined as a "we" group. Television interview is illustrated in Figure 3.

The interaction model can also be made more complex by considering the presence of the studio audience. One important function of the studio audience is to simulate interaction with the viewers (Loshitzky 1991, Mancini 1988, Peck 1995). A studio audience could also be called a pseudo-audience, because it represents a home audience at the studio. Because the studio audience has a genuine opportunity to communicate with the host, this may give a feeling of interactivity to the home audience as well. The home audience may feel that they are really witnessing what is happening in the studio. In addition, a live audience may help in creating the illusion of the viewers being performers as well, and this gives the home audience a chance to

Figure 2. Communication and Relationship in Television (P = presenter, V = viewer)

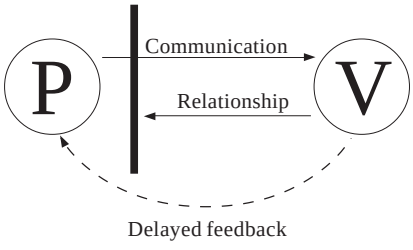
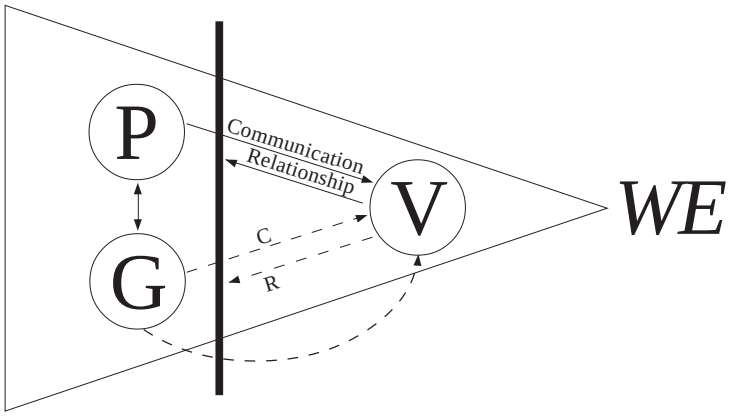
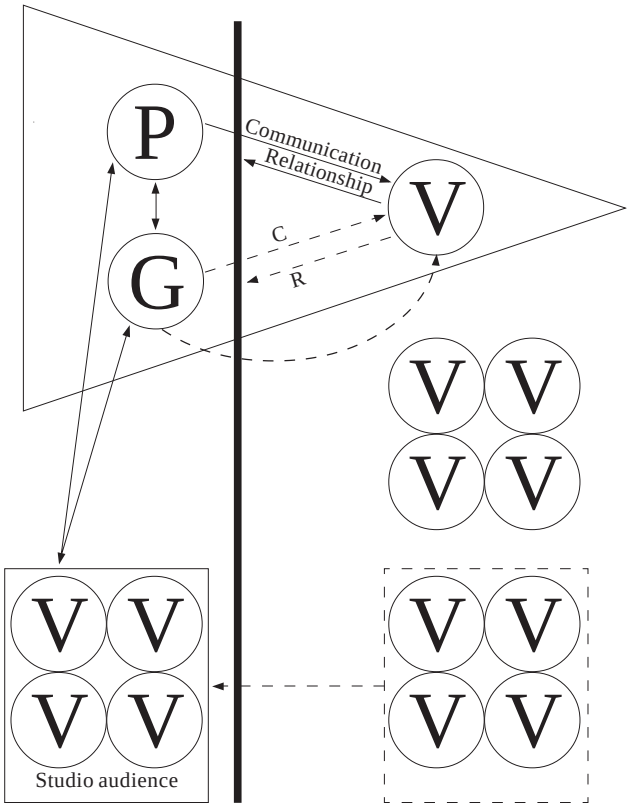


Figure 3. The Illustration of Television Interview (P = presenter, V = viewer, G = guest)



identify with them. By watching television, the viewer has also a possibility to sense that he or she is a member of a community of viewers. Thus the viewer has a possibility to share experiences with other viewers. In this manner, a viewer is connected to other viewers and to the world outside. The Figure 4 shows the influence of the studio audience.

Figure 4. Interaction Model with a Studio Audience (P = presenter, V = viewer, G = guest)



Conclusions

In this paper, interaction between a viewer and a television presenter has been described and a model has been developed to illustrate it. The purpose of the model is to clarify the features of the interaction. However, a model like this is unable to describe all the aspects involved in the situation, and is always, by necessity, simplified. It may, however, help to clarify the main features of a communication situation and their interrelationship. It may also concretize the issue of to what extent it is possible to consider television performance as interaction. Moreover, it can serve as a starting point of further analysis. In the analysis of new communication technology, for example, similar models could be developed to illustrate the modes and level of interactivity in different media.

The paper shows that it possible to consider television performance as interaction and to find several perspectives for its analysis. The model describes television performance as interaction between the persons involved, not between the medium and a recipient. It can also be argued that it is better to consider the interactivity as a negotiable dimension between persons rather than between a person and a technological device. However, television performance could be seen as a talk to a viewer or to the viewers. As the results of Isotalus (1996) show, the presenters seem to talk to the viewers in plural – at least in Finnish culture. The presenters seem to address a group of people who are watching television at home in their living room. In comparison, American scholars argue that television presenters usually speak to one person rather than to a mass of people. Additionally, Taylor and Mullan (1986) reported that the viewers do not feel that a presenter is looking them when looking into a camera. Instead, Terrenoire (1987) indicated that the sharpness of eye-contact affects how focused the viewers experience the address to be. Consequently, it would be interesting to study the experienced interaction. Furthermore, the camera shooting could be studied from the perspective of interaction, because it also has a strong effect on how the performer is seen by the viewers.

The application of interpersonal communication theories to television context demonstrated that it is not sensible to divide the communication categorically into interpersonal and mass communication, because, theoretically, they have several common features. Thus, interpersonal communication theories may give new instruments to analyse also the features of mediated communication. However, it must be noted that television performance is never identical to interpersonal communication. Despite similarities, television performance is a unique mode of communication and, therefore, the concept of televisual performance is justified.

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‘Interactivity’

Tracking a New Concept in Media and Communication Studies

JENS F. JENSEN

> ... interactivity is quintessentially a communication concept ... its time has come for communication research. Interactivity is a special intellectual niche reserved for communication scholars. (Sheizaf Rafaeli, 1988)

> in´ter.ac´tive
> 1. new technology that will change the way you **shop**, **play** and **learn**
> 2. a zillion-dollar **industry** (maybe)

The above quote is a quick, dictionary-like keyword definition of the concept ‘interactive’ as it appeared on the cover of *Newsweek* on May 31, 1993. Inside the magazine, under the title “An interactive Life. It will put the world at your fingertips...” readers were told that the ultimate promise of ‘interactivity’ was:

> a huge amount of information available to anyone at the touch of a button, everything from airline schedules to esoteric scientific journals to video versions of off-off-off Broadway. Watching a movie won’t be a passive experience. At various points, you’ll click on alternative story lines and create your individualized version of “Terminator XII”. Consumers will send as well as receive all kinds of data ... Videocamera owners could record news they see and put it on the universal network ... Viewers could select whatever they wanted just by pushing a button ... Instead of playing rented tapes on their VCRs, ... [the customers] may be able to call up a movie from a library of thousands through a menu displayed on the TV. Game fanatics may be able to do the same from another electronic library filled with realistic video versions of arcade shoot-’em-ups ... (1993: 38).

The cover and quote are in many ways characteristic.[1] In recent years, expectations of ‘interactivity’ and new ‘interactive media’ have been pushed to the breaking point in terms of what will become technologically possible, in terms of services that will be offered, in terms of economic gain, etc. Along with terms like ‘multimedia‘, ‘hypermedia‘, ‘media convergence‘, ‘digitization’ and ‘information superhighway’, ‘interactivity’ is presumably among the words currently surrounded by the greatest amount of *hype*. The concept seems loaded with positive connotations along the lines of high tech, technological advancement, hypermodernity and futurism, along the lines of individual freedom of choice, personal development, self determination – and even along the lines of folksy popularization, grassroots democracy, and political independence.

At the same time, it seems relatively unclear just what ‘interactivity’ and ‘interactive media’ mean. The positiveness surrounding the concepts and the frequency of their use seem, in a way, to be reversely proportional to their precision and actual content of meaning. Americans often use the expression *‘buzzwords’* to refer to words which, within a certain topic, appear to refer to something very important and which – for a given time – are heard constantly, but are often difficult to understand since in reality nobody seems to know what they mean. ‘Interactivity’ is currently one of the media community’s most used *buzzwords*. In that sense, it’s easy to agree with Sheizaf Rafaeli who starts his article on ‘interactivity’ by maintaining that, “Interactivity is a widely used term with an intuitive appeal, but it is an underdefined concept. As a way of thinking about communication, it has high face validity, but only narrowly based explication, little consensus on meaning, and only recently emerging empirical verification of actual role” (1988: 110).

Maybe this isn’t so surprising after all. The meaning of professional terms – including scien-

tific and academic terms – is often watered down once they win popular acceptance in daily usage. And with the explosive growth and decided success of interactive technologies and the interactive approach in recent years in the form of video recorders, videotext, telephone-based voice response systems, ATM cards, automatic tellers, on-line services, information kiosks, 'intelligent' household appliances and most importantly, computers and multimedia, Internet, intranets, WWW, networked computers – where it can be said that culture has lived out what we might call 'the interactive turn' – 'interactivity' has naturally entered common usage. And this watering down of the concept has not become less significant after the worlds of advertising and entertainment have annexed the term as a common, value added word in the effort to sell new products and services.

This kind of confusion of concepts is, however, inappropriate in an academic situation where it is necessary to know relatively precisely what terms refer to and which differences they make. At the same time, the concept of 'interactivity' (as will be shown) has a longer and more complicated tradition behind it than first meets the eye. There are, therefore, many good reasons to leave the *hype* and *buzz* behind and take a closer look instead at the background and construction of the concept of 'interactivity'.

The following is an attempt to track the concept of 'interactivity'.[2] First the concept's current placement in the fields of media and communication will be discussed, and its background in other traditions will be touched on. This will be followed by various representative attempts at definitions from academic studies and finally, based on this presentation, a new definition of 'interactivity' will be suggested.

'Interactivity' – Media Studies' Blind Spot?

> .... scholars are going to have to shift toward models that accommodate the interactivity of most of the new communication technologies. New paradigms are needed, based on new intellectual terminology. (Rogers & Chaffee, 1983)

While *Newsweek*, as previously cited, dared to publish a cover with a refreshing keyword definition, more serious definitions are harder to find in common reference works and handbooks from the fields of media and communication. Here the term 'interactivity' is most notable for its absence. The *Dictionary of Mass Media & Communication* doesn't list it. *A Dictionary of Communication and Media Studies* doesn't list it, nor does the *Handbook of Communication*. Even relatively new and updated handbooks like *Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies* (O'Sullivan *et al.*, 1994) are silent when it comes to 'interactivity'. It certainly looks as though the authors of the handbooks completely disagree with this article's introductory quote, which cites Rafaeli's opinion that 'interactivity' should be of central and essential concern to students of communication.

Naturally, this blind spot, when it comes to the concept of 'interactivity' and 'interactive media', has an explanation. One way to clarify what may be blocking the view – and at the same time establish a framework for understanding the various concepts of interactivity currently in circulation – is to use the media typology developed by Bordewijk and Kaam.[3] Their typology is based on two central aspects of all information traffic: the question of who owns and provides the information, and who controls its distribution in terms of timing and subject matter.

By cross-tabulating these two aspects in relation to whether they are controlled by either a centralized information provider or a decentralized information consumer, a matrix appears with four principally different communication patterns, as illustrated in Figure 1.

1) If information is produced and owned by a central information provider and this center also controls the distribution of information, we have a communication pattern of the *transmission* type. This is a case of one way communication, where the significant consumer activity is pure reception. Examples would be classical broadcast media such as radio and TV but also, for example, listservs, or live broadcasts of conferences, real time radio, TV, multimedia etc. via the MBone.

2) If the exact opposite occurs and information is produced and owned by the information consumers who also control distribution, we have a *conversation* pattern of communication. This is a case of traditional two way communication, where the significant consumer activity is the production of messages and delivery of input in a dialog structure. Typical examples would be the telephone but also e-mail, maling lists, newsgropus, IRC, etc.

3) If information is produced and owned by an information provider, but the consumer retains control over what information is distributed and when,

Figure 1. Bordewijk and Kaam's Matrix for the Four Communication Patterns: Transmission, Conversation, Consultation and Registration

	Information produced by a central provider	*Information produced by the consumer*
Distribution controlled by a central provider	**1) Transmission**	**4) Registration**
Distribution controlled by the consumer	**3) Consultation**	**2) Conversation**

it is a *consultation* communication pattern. In this case, the consumer makes a request to the information providing center for specific information to be delivered. Here the characteristic consumer activity is one of active selection from available possibilities. Typical examples would be various *on-demand* services or on-line information resources such as FTP, Gopher, WWW etc.

4) Finally, if information is produced by the information consumer, but processed and controlled by the information providing center, we have a *registration* communication pattern. In this communication pattern the center collects information from or about the user. In this case, the characteristic aspect is the media system's storage, processing, and use of the data or knowledge from or about the user. Typical examples would be various types of central surveillance, registration systems, logging of computer systems etc.

Among these four information patterns, *transmission* is the only one that is characterized by one way communication from the information providing center to the consumer. In other words, there is no return or back-channel that makes an information flow possible *from* the information consumer to the media system. Until now, communication and media studies has primarily based its models and insights on the transmission pattern because of the dominant role played by mass communication research. This model has also followed certain preconceptions and basic concepts such as: sender, receiver, intention, effect, channel, media, etc. Communication patterns of the conversational type have naturally been studied within the field of interpersonal communication, but actually the work has been based on models from the transmission pattern. The two last communication patterns (consultation & registration) have been left practically unexplored by media researchers.

Current media developments including the arrival of 'new media' (such as the Internet, intranets, networked multimedia, WWW, Gopher etc.) have been more or less singularly characterized by a movement away from the transmission pattern toward the other three media patterns. These new media, which open up the possibility for various forms of input and information flow from information consumers to the system, can hardly be described using traditional one way models and terminology. Seen from this perspective, it might well be claimed that as developments proceed, existing media theory is increasingly less able to explain current media phenomena. Or it could be said that the new media represent a growing challenge to traditional media and communication research that necessitates a thorough rethinking of all central models and concepts.

There are already many who have pointed out this situation. Aside from Rogers & Chaffee, whose quote leads this section, Carrie Heeter's article, with the telling title: "Implications of New Interactive Technologies for Conceptualizing Communication" speaks out for "a need to reconceptualize communication, in part because of changes brought about by new telecommunication technologies" (1989: 217). Rice & Williams points out that "new media may, in fact, necessitate a considerable reassessment of communication research. Intellectual changes must occur to match the growing changes in communication behavior" (1984: 80). And Everett M. Rogers maintains that "The Communication Revolution now underway in Information Societies is also a revolution in communication science, involving both models and methods" (1986: 213), and that "Driving the epistemological revolution in communication science is the interactivity of the new communication technologies" (: 194).

Another, related problem that stems from historical, institutional politics rather than logical reasoning or scholarship has led mass media and interpersonal communication to split into two separate research institutions and scholarly traditions. In

many ways, the new media provide mediation between, or a combination of, mass media and interpersonal media – a kind of 'interpersonal mass media' – which falls outside of (or into the no man's land between) the two traditional areas of research interest.

Perhaps for these reasons, among others, the established media and communication research community has developed blind spots in relation to new interactive media. This general problem can only be mentioned briefly here,[4] as we proceed to follow another, more specific trail ...

'Interactivity' – The Background Behind the Concept

As Michael Jäckel (1995), among others, has pointed out, the concept 'interactivity' extends – perhaps not surprisingly – from the concept of 'interaction'. A concept which generally means: 'exchange', 'interplay', 'mutual influence'.

However, if we focus on individual fields of scholarship, the concept takes on many, very different meanings. In medical science, 'interaction' describes the interplay between two medications given at the same time. In engineering, 'interaction' refers to the relationship between, and actions of, two different materials under stress. In statistics, 'interaction' represents the common affect of several variables on an independent variable. In linguistics, it refers to the influence on language behavior of bi-lingual children (Jäckel 1995). In other words, the meaning of the concept 'interaction' depends on the context in which it is used. Concepts are called *multi-discursive* "when they can be found with significantly different meanings or connotations according to their use within different discourses" and thus "depend to a very large extent on their context for their meaning to be clear" (O'Sullivan 1994: 190). 'Interaction' can certainly be said to be a multi-discursive concept.[5]

However, none of the above definitions are particularly relevant in this context. Of primary importance in establishing the concept of 'interactivity' in this case, is how the term is understood in three other academic fields (cf. Goertz 1995; and Jäckel 1995): 1) The interaction concept of sociology, 2) the interaction concept(s) of communication studies, and finally 3) the interaction concept of informatics.

1) What does sociology's concept of 'interaction' look like? *Wörterbuch der Soziologie* writes: "Interaction is the most elemental unit of social events, where people adapt their behavior to each other, whether or not they follow mutual expectations or reject them. As coordinated action is not pre-programmed, a minimum of common meaning and linguistic understanding is necessary" (Krappmann, 1989: 310, emphasis deleted). Similarly the *International Encyclopedia of Communications* writes: "interaction occurs as soon as the actions of two or more individuals are observed to be mutually interdependent", i.e. "interaction may be said to come into being when each of at least two participants is aware of the presence of the other, and each has reason to believe the other is similarly aware", in this way establishing a "state of reciprocal awareness" (Duncan, 1989: 325). Understood in this way, according to sociology, interaction makes up "a basic constituent of society" (: 326).

The basic model that the sociological interaction concept stems from is thus the relationship between two or more people who, in a given situation, mutually adapt their behavior and actions to each other. The important aspects here are that clear-cut social systems and specific situations are involved, where the partners in the interaction are in close physical proximity, and 'symbolic interaction' is also involved. In other words, a mutual exchange and negotiation regarding meaning takes place between partners who find themselves in the same social context. A situation which communication and media studies would call communication. Within sociology then, it is possible to have communication without interaction (f.ex. listening to the radio and/or watching TV) but not interaction without communication.

2) As regards the concept of 'interaction' in communication and media studies, there is no such clear-cut answer since there appears to be several different concepts of 'interaction' involved.

If we look at the dominant trend within current communication and media studies, what might generally be called the 'cultural studies' tradition, one recurring trait is that the term 'interaction' is used as a broad concept that covers processes that take place between receivers on the one hand and a media message on the other. For the sake of simplicity, attention will be drawn to an example, more as a source of inspiration to than as a central representative of the 'cultural studies' tradition:

Wolfgang Iser wrote an essay in 1980 actually entitled "Interaction Between the Text and the Reader". He starts by claiming that "Central to the reading of every … work is the interaction between its structure and its recipient" (: 160). In brief, his approach is that the work can neither be reduced to the author's text nor the reader's subjectivity, but

must be found somewhere between these two polls. And if "the virtual position of the work is between the text and the reader, its actualization is clearly the result of an interaction between the two". It seems fairly obvious[6] that this is not 'interaction' in the sociological sense. What's missing is genuine reciprocity and an exchange between the two elements involved in that the text naturally can neither adapt nor react to the reader's actions or interpretations. The concept of 'interaction', as it is used here, seems to be a synonym for more non-committal terms such as 'relation', 'relationship', 'interpretation' or 'reading' etc.

The question immediately becomes whether it is relevant to use the concept of 'interaction', with its strongly sociological connotations, in connection with these phenomena which are actually certain types of active reception. O'Sullivan et al. point out a related problem in this conceptual watering down process when in *Key Concepts in Communication and Cultural Studies* under the reference "interaction/social interaction" they warn: "The phrase 'social interaction' has perhaps been used too frequently within communication studies – to the point of obscuring any one agreed interpretation. It would be inappropriate, for example, to describe an audience as 'socially interacting' when reading a book, or witnessing the death of Hamlet within a hushed and darkened theatre … because of the lack of observable reciprocation from others the social criteria are not satisfied" (1994: 155).

There are, however, also traditions within media and communication studies, where use of the concept of 'interaction' comes closer to the sociological meaning. One example might be research in interpersonal communication, where the object of study by definition lies within a sociological framework of understanding (see f.ex. Corner og Hawthorn, 1993). Another example might be traditional media sociology which often takes over the sociological interaction concept and uses it in a sense that shows solidarity with the sociological, primarily in relation to communication within groups of (media)audiences (f.ex. McQuail 1987: 228ff).

A third example might come from sociologically oriented media effect research which arose in connection with the so-called 'two-step flow'-model (Lazarsfeld). It starts with a critical look at the more simple and mechanistic one way models of the transfer of messages to an audience and instead shows that media messages are transmitted and processed during several steps. At first, the information is transmitted to relatively well informed individuals (*opinion leaders*); and in the next phase the information is brought to a broader, less well informed public via interpersonal communication. This model combines a mass communication model with a model for interpersonal communication within a mass media audience where the later represents 'interaction' in a traditional sociological sense. Related understandings of interaction in connection with media can be observed in 'uses and gratification' studies, symbolic interactionism, etc.

And a fourth example is Horton and Wohl's concept of 'para-social interaction'. Horton og Wohl's (1956) central insight is that the new mass media – particularly TV – has an especially characteristic ability to create an illusion of apparently intimate face-to-face communication between a presenter and an individual viewer. This illusion is created by close-ups of the presenter's face and gestures, simulated direct eye contact, the use of a direct address**,** personal *small talk*, a private conversational style, etc. To a certain degree, the technique makes the members of the audience react – and participate – as though they were in a face-to-face interaction in a primary group. Together these conditions create what Horton and Wohl call "[the] simulacrum of conversational give and take" (: 215) or 'intimacy at a distance'. It is this relationship between the TV presenter and the viewer which they call 'para-social interaction'. Horton og Wohl are fully convinced that this new form of (media) interaction is different from traditional social interaction and that the significant difference is precisely that media interaction is necessarily "one-sided, nondialectical, controlled by the performer, and not susceptible of mutual development" and can be characterized by the lack of effective reciprocity" (: 215). Even so, their main point is that the relationship between TV performers and viewers is in principle experienced and treated in the same way as daily communication and interaction. In other words, para-social interaction "is analogous to and in many ways resembles social interaction in ordinary primary groups" (: 228), which is also why it can (and should) advantageously be studied as interaction in the sociological sense.

To review then, it can be noted that the concept of interaction in media and communication studies is often used to refer to the actions of an audience or recipients in relation to media content. This may be the case *even though* no new media technology is being used which would open up the possibility for user input and two way communication, but on the contrary, to refer to traditional one way media. These references may also occur *even though* they

(often) don't refer to social situations where an interactive partner is physically present and *even though* the social situations are (often) not characterized by reciprocity and the exchange or negotiation of a common understanding. This is why we cannot speak of interaction in the strictly sociological sense.

In terms of media technologies which actually open up for input from the user, media researchers have not used the concept 'interaction' for quite a while. Instead they have used concepts which more technically refer to this possibility, for example: two way communication or 'return channel' systems. It was first with the use of the interaction concept in informatics that this began to change, which brings us to the third and final tradition mentioned previously.

3) How is the informatic concept of 'interaction' constructed? The basic model which this concept uses as its starting point is, contrary to the sociological tradition, (even though the concept has been partially taken from there) the relationship between people and machines which in this tradition is often called human-computer interaction (HCI) or man-machine interaction. Historically, this terminology originated from batch processing, where a large amount of data or programs were collected before being processed by a computer. Using a so-called 'dialogue' function, it was possible for the user to observe partial results, menu choices and dialog boxes and thereby continually influence the performance of the program via new input to 'dialogue traffic' or – in what came to be called – an 'interactive mode' (cf. Goertz 1995). 'Interaction' in the informatic sense, refers, in other words, to the process that takes place when a human user operates a machine. However, it doesn't cover communication between two people, mediated by a machine, – a process often referred to as *computer mediated communication* (CMC). Within informatics then, (in contrast to sociology) it is possible to have (human-machine) interaction without having communication, but not (computer mediated) communication without also having (human-computer) interaction.

A central characteristic of the informatic concept of 'interaction' is that the process between the human and the machine is, to a large degree, seen as *analogous* with communication between people. Another important trait is the central placement of the concept of 'control'. For example, in 1979 when a number of the leading researchers in the field gathered in Seillac, France for a workshop with the title "The Methodology of Interaction" it turned out that there was considerable disagreement about the definition of the 'interaction' concept. After lengthy debate, they arrived at this consensus definition, "Interaction is a style of control" (1979: 69). This is another instance where the informatic concept of interaction has a complicated double relationship to that from sociology. As far as an understanding of human-machine interaction as being *analogous with* communication between people, it can be said to have a certain – if metaphoric – affinity with the sociological concept. On the other hand the 'control' aspect clashes with it since control can be seen as the opposite of mutuality, reciprocity and negotiation.

The informatic concept of interaction is, as suggested, the most recent arrival of the three. Even so, as a field of research it (HCI) is perhaps the most well defined and well established, with its own conferences, journals, and paradigms, and it has also had a major influence on the media concept of 'interaction'.[7]

In summary, it can be said that while 'interaction' in the sociological sense refers to a *reciprocal* relationship between two or more people, and in the informatic sense refers to the relationship *between people and machines* (but not communication between people mediated by machines), in communication studies it refers, among other things, to the relationship between the text and the reader, but also to reciprocal human actions and communication associated with the use of media as well as (para-social) interaction via a medium. Obviously, as far as the concept of interaction is concerned, there is already considerable confusion.

But now let's start to track the concept of 'interactivity'. While sociology doesn't usually use the derivative 'interactivity', the concepts of 'interaction' and 'interactivity' in informatic and media studies appear to be synonymous. At the Seillac workshop mentioned above, the two concepts were connected by the consensus definition: "Interaction is a style of control and interactive systems exhibit that style" (1980: 69). Synonymous usage that, in connection with the arrival of 'new media', has also become widespread in the field of media studies. In this sense, the concept 'interactivity' or the combination 'interactive media' is most often used to characterize a certain trait of new media which differs from traditional media. The question is, which trait is it?

'Interactivity': Prototype, Criteria or Continuum?

> INTERACTIVE. Media as a computer smorgasbord – and you get to vary the recipes. Customers control what they see and can talk back to their machines. (*Newsweek*, 1993)

Taking a look at the collection of existing definitions of 'interactivity' spread throughout media studies and computer science, it seems that there are three principle ways of defining the concept: 1) as prototypic examples; 2) as criteria, i.e. as a given feature or characteristic that must be fulfilled, or 3) as a continuum, i.e. as a quality which can be present to a greater or lesser degree.

1. Interactivity as Prototype

A representative of the first type – definition by prototypic example – can be found in Jerome T. Durlak's *A Typology for Interactive Media*, where among the introduction's qualifying definitions it says: "Interactive media systems include the telephone; 'two-way television'; audio conferencing systems; computers used for communication; electronic mail; videotext; and a variety of technologies that are used to exchange information in the form of still images, line drawings, and data" (1987, p. 743).[8] This type of definition is, by it's very nature, never very informative, partly because it doesn't point out which traits qualify a given media as interactive or which aspects connect them, etc. Aside from that, the definition raises another principle question.

Among the examples of 'interactive media' listed above are also media which are used for interpersonal communication, in other words, media using the conversation pattern, such as the telephone, e-mail etc. In certain academic traditions (and possibly national languages) it isn't readily apparent that this type of interpersonal media should be considered 'interactive'. However, it isn't uncommon in large parts of the English/American academic literature.[9] Durlak and many others claim that interpersonal communication and especially face-to-face communication is the ideal type of interactive communication: "Face-to-face communication is held up as the model because the sender and receiver use all their senses, the reply is immediate, the communication is generally closed circuit, and the content is primarily informal or 'ad lib'" (1987: 744). According to this way of thinking, media whose communication form comes closest to face-to-face communication are therefore also the most 'interactive', whereby conversational media, such as video conferencing are considered more interactive than consultative media such as, say, computer-based online services.

As seen here, and in upcoming examples, the concept of 'interactivity' refers both to media patterns of the consultative and the conversational type. It also becomes clear that the concept of interactivity, understood in this way (in the form of the conversation communication pattern), is related to the sociological concept of 'interaction', understood as 'actions of two or more individuals observed to be mutually interdependent' and (in the form of the consultation communication pattern) borrows from the informatic concept of interaction, understood as 'actions between a human user and a machine' (cf. Goertz 1995).

2. Interactivity as Criteria

Examples of the second type of definition – interactivity defined as criteria, that is as a certain trait or feature that must be fulfilled – can be found, f.ex., in Rockley Miller's writing. He offers definitions of the terms 'interactivity', 'interactive' and 'interactive media'. 'Interactivity' is defined as "A reciprocal dialog between the user and the system" where both sociology's (mutual dialog) and informatic's (user and system) conceptual constructions appear once again; the adjective 'interactive' is understood as: "Involving the active participation of the user in directing the flow of the computer or video program; a system which exchanges information with the viewer, processing the viewer's input in order to generate the appropriate response within the context of the program..."; and the compound term 'interactive media' is said to mean: "Media which involves the viewer as a source of input to determine the content and duration of a message, which permits individualized program material" (1987).[10]

The strength of this set of definitions is that it is relatively exact. It's weakness is that it is narrowly tied to specific technologies (computer and video); that it primarily looks at interactivity from within the consultation communication pattern; and that even within the consultation pattern it excludes a number of services which are commonly considered interactive – services in which choices can only be made from continual transmissions (primarily TV services such as *near-video-on-demand*, *be-your-own-editor*, *teletext*, etc.) but where there is no actual processing of the user's input. On a more gen-

eral level, there are problems with defining 'interactivity' as criteria, or a given feature, as this example certainly should have demonstrated. Such definitions have a tendency to include and exclude very differing types of media which today are commonly thought of as interactive, in a relatively casual way. And, by extension, they have a tendency toward obsolescence and being quickly outdated by technological developments. Finally, based on criteria definitions, it is impossible to differentiate between different forms or levels of interactivity.

Another, perhaps more useful criteria definition, can be found in the *International Encyclopedia of Communications*, where John Carey suggests the following provisions for the keyword 'interactive media': "Technologies that provide person-to-person communications mediated by a telecommunications channel (e.g., a telephone call) and person-to-machine interactions that simulate an interpersonal exchange (e.g., an electronic banking transaction)" (1989: 328). The last example is explained in more depth a little further on: "most of the content is created by a centralized production group or organization", and "individual users interact with content created by an organization" (:328). This conceptual construction points more or less directly toward the conversational media type and the consultative media type respectively (and as a result, at the sociological and informatic concepts of interaction) which collectively make up 'interactive media'.

Once again there is a certain vagueness to the definition of the concept. For example, when Carey exemplifies "person-to-machine interaction", and the user as 'interacting with content' he writes, "For example, in some interactive cable television systems, viewers can respond to questions posed in programming. Typically their response is limited to pressing one of a few alternative buttons on their cable converter box, thereby indicating agreement with one of the opinion statements set out by the program producers" (:328). This example doesn't seem to point to the selection of pre-produced content and thereby at a consultation pattern, but rather shows the possibility of creating input which the media system processes and is able to use. In other words, a registration pattern – a (pattern) example, which the general definition seems to ignore.

More problematic perhaps, is the fact that the definition also excludes services based on the transmission pattern, such as teletext, *near-video-on-demand*, *be-your-own-editor*, datacasting, which make up the bulk of some TV systems so-called 'interactive services'. Carey himself seems aware of the problem and asks the question whether or not it is possible to draw such narrow boundaries. He writes, "Most scholars would not classify as interactive media those technologies that permit only the selection of content such as a broadcast teletext service with one hundred frames of information, each of which can be selected on demand by a viewer. However, the boundary between selection of content and simulation of an interpersonal communication exchange is not always definable in a specific application or service" (: 328). This definition of the concept has some of the same weaknesses as its predecessor: the tendency to exclude various media which are generally considered interactive and an inability to use the definition to differentiate between various forms and levels of interactivity, etc.

3. Interactivity as Continuum

The third possibility, which solves some of these problems (but at the same time may creates others) is to define interactivity not as criteria, but rather as a continuum, where interactivity can be present in varying degrees. One possible way to structure this type of definition is to base it on the number of dimensions it includes, so that we could speak of 1-dimensional, 2-dimensional, 3-dimensional ... and n-dimensional interactivity concepts. This will be explained in more depth in the following section.

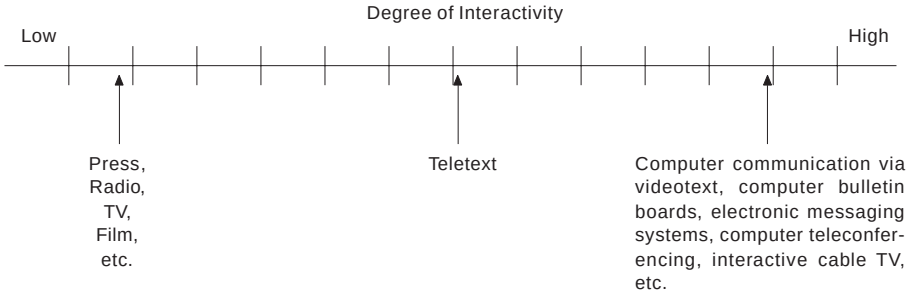
Interactivity's Continuum & Dimensions

> ...interactivity as it relates to communication technologies is a multidimensional concept. (Carrie Heeter, 1989)

1. 1-dimensional Concepts of Interactivity

One relatively simple model of interactivity as a continuum, which operates from only one dimension, can be found in the writing of Everett M. Rogers (1986). Rogers defines 'interactivity' as "the capability of new communication systems (usually containing a computer as one component) to 'talk back' to the user, almost like an individual participating in a conversation" (1986: 34). And – a bit farther down – "interactivity is a variable; some communication technologies are relatively low in their degree of interactivity (for example, network television), while others (such as computer bulletin boards) are more highly interactive" (: 211). Based on this definition, Rogers has created a scale, re-

Figure 2. E. M. Rogers' 1-dimensional Scale of "Selected Communication Technologies on an Interactivity Continuum" (1987: 34)



printed in Figure 2, in which he lists 'degrees of interactivity' for a number of selected communication technologies on a continuum from 'low' to 'high'.

As can be seen in Figure 2, Rogers primarily refers to the concept of 'interactivity' within the consultation pattern. The basic model is clearly 'human-machine interaction', understood in the context of interpersonal communication ('talking back'). It is also because of this consultative aspect (selection available between channels and programs) that classical transmission mass media such as TV and radio can be considered 'interactive' – although to a lesser degree. As is presumably also apparent, this attempt to sort and define is relatively rough and lacking in information – a trait that is intensified by Rogers failure to deliver explicit criteria for the placement of each media.

But there are several others – and perhaps more influential – uni-dimensional concepts of interactivity. As early as 1979, in connection with the development of videodisc technology, the Nebraska Videodisc Design/Production Group had already established a definition of various levels of interactivity. A classification, which was later accepted as an international ad hoc standard. The levels are as follows:

> *Level 0:* Linear playback only.
> *Level 1:* Linear playback plus search and automatic stops.
> *Level 2:* Videodiscs controlled by a computer program placed either directly on the videodisc or manually *loaded*. ... They include all of the level 1 capabilities plus program *looping*, branching and faster access time.
> *Level 3:* Videodiscs controlled by an external computer... More than one videodisc can be controlled by the same computer. Computer-generated text and graphics can be superimposed over videodisc images ... A variety of user input devices can be employed and user input can be registered and documented. (Lambert 1987: xi).

In this case, the definition and division of levels of interactivity are closely related to specific videodisc technology and, perhaps therefore, the concept of interactivity is primarily related to the consultation pattern of communication (although level 3 hints at the registration pattern).

Similar, but technologically more up-to-date, scales have since been defined by Klaus Schrape (1995), among others, who operates with 5 levels of interactivity:

> *Level 0:* Turn on/turn off and change channel (zapping).
> *Level 1:* A supply consist of more transmitted channels mutually displaced in time (parallel transmitted TV, multi-channel TV, multi-perspective TV), between which the viewer is able to choose.
> *Level 2:* Transmission of optional relevant supplementary information to the TV-signal, with or without relation to the program (f.ex. videotext).
> *Level 3:* Any form of stored content by individual request (passive user orientation).
> *Level 4:* Communicative interaction, active user orientation (direct return channel), two way communication: f. ex. videophone, interactive services etc.[11]

This division of levels and definitions also reveals close association with the technology of its time – now interactive and digital TV. However, it includes several types of information patterns, where the transition from level 0 to level 1 marks the

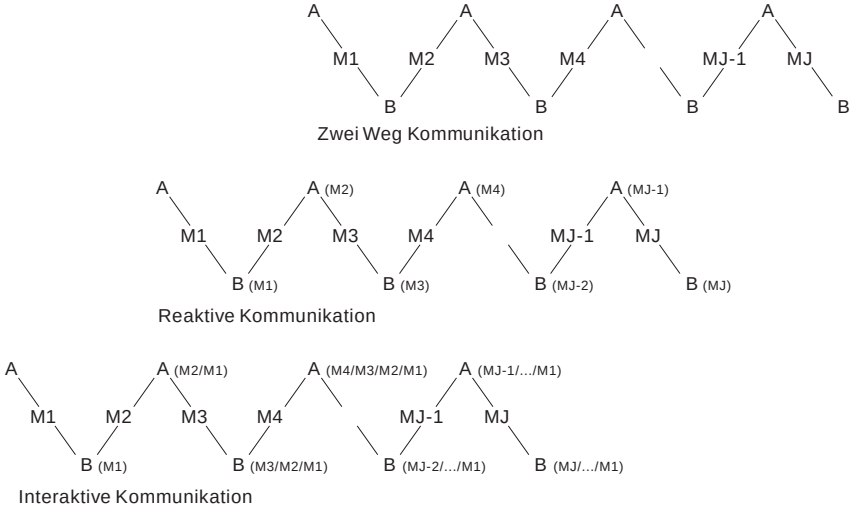
transition from transmission to consultation media and the transition from level 3 to level 4 marks the transition from consultation media to conversation media, referred to here as passive and active user orientation or stored content vs. communicative interaction. An obvious criticism of this model is that it places different types of interactivity, which don't appear to be similar, within the same dimension and on the same scale. It isn't readily apparent why a telephone conversation should be more interactive than searching an information database, since they involve very different types of communication traffic (conversation vs. consultation) with very different user goals and functions. If, f.ex., the purpose is to find exact, verifiable information, it obviously makes different qualitative and not just quantitative demands on the 'interactivity' than if the purpose is to negotiate a mutual agreement with a partner.

Sheizaf Rafaeli (1988) has also constructed a concept of interactivity based on one continual dimension, but with quite a different accent. Rafaeli's definition centers on the concept 'responsiveness', as a measure of a media's ability to be receptive and react in response to a given user, or more precisely, a measure of how much one message in an exchange is based on previous messages. This model uses three progressive levels in its continuum: 1) Two way communication takes place when messages are delivered both ways. 2) Reactive communication also requires that a later message reacts to a previous message. 3) Finally, full interactivity requires that a later message responds to a sequence of previous messages.[12] In this conceptual construction recursiveness plays a central role. A graphic illustration is shown in Figure 3.

'Responsiveness' obviously requires that the media registers and stores information about a given user's input and actions and can then adjust to the user's wishes and distinctive characteristics. This concept of interactivity refers therefore (contrary to f.ex. Rogers') primarily to the registration communication pattern. This aspect can be stated such that a media – in one sense or another – 'understands' the user, and in this way approaches themes related to 'smart technologies', 'artificial intelligence' etc. Once again, interpersonal communication functions as an ideal to be measured up to with characteristics similar to the sociological concept of interaction, and its requirement of reciprocity.

Finally, Jonathan Steuer (1995) represents the transition from 1-dimensional to 2-dimensional concepts of interactivity in that he has developed a 2-dimensional matrix based on a parameter of 'vividness' which refers to, "the ability of a technology to produce a sensorially rich mediated environment" (: 41) and 'interactivity', which refers to, "the degree to which users of a medium can influence the form or content of the mediated environ-

Figure 3. S. Rafaeli's 1-dimensional Concept of Interactivity Defined as 'Responsiveness' or 'Recursiveness' and Elaborated in Three Progressive Levels on the Continuum: Two Way Communication, Reactive Communication and Interactive Communication



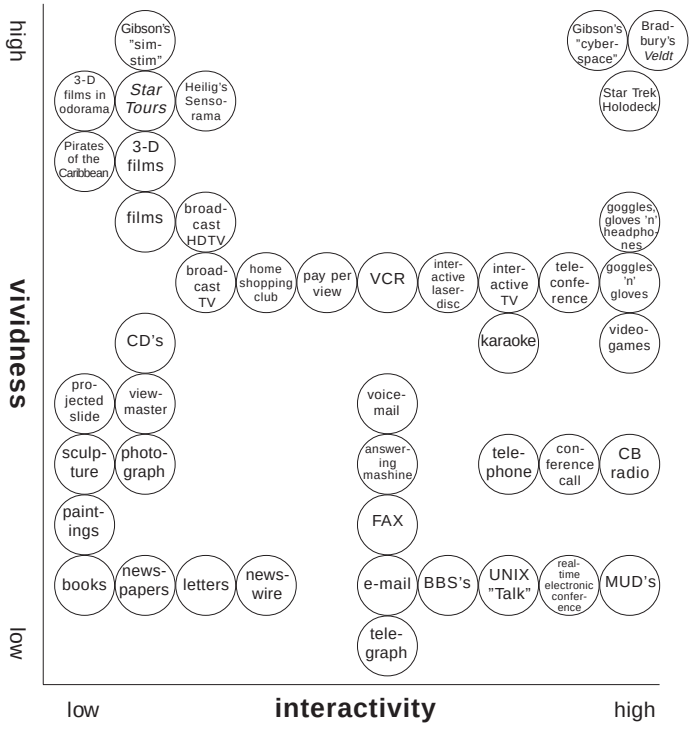
ment" (: 41). This definition focuses on the user's ability to input information (primarily the conversation pattern) which, among other things, means that the telephone and video games are considered much more interactive than *home-shopping* and *pay-per-view*. The reason that this 2-dimensional model has been placed as a subsection of the 1-dimensional concept of interaction is obviously that 'vividness' is not an aspect of interactivity but an independent dimension. Figure 4 shows Steuer's classification of a wide range of media technologies on the basis of the two dimensions. This chart also illustrates the classification's relatively noncommittal relationship to the empirical, since purely fictional media such as the 'Holodeck' from the science fiction movie *Star Trek* and 'cyberspace' from William Gibson's *Neuromancer* have been included on an equal basis with actual media (cf. Goertz 1995). Like many of the other attempts at systemization, Steuer's fails to deliver explicit criteria for placement on the continuum, but seems to follow more or less subjective – possibly arbitrary – criteria (: 51f.).

2. 2-dimensional Concepts of Interactivity

Bohdan O. Szuprowicz, among others, has presented a 2-dimensional concept of interactivity in *Multimedia Networking* (1995). Szuprowicz maintains that if you are to understand all the questions and problems in connection with what he calls 'interactive multimedia networking and communications', it's necessary "to define and classify the various levels and categories of interactivity that come into play" (: 14). For Szuprowicz, "interactivity" is "best defined by the type of multimedia information flows" (: 14), and he divides these information flows into three main categories:

1) 'User-to-documents' interactivity is defined as "traditional transactions between a user and specific documents" and characterized by being quite restricted since it limits itself to the user's choice of information and selection of the time of access to the information. There is little or no possibility of manipulating or changing existing content. 2) 'User-to-computer' interactivity is defined as "more exploratory interactions between a user and vari-

Figure 4. J. Steuer's (1995: 52) Classification of Various Media Technologies Using the Dimensions 'Vividness' and 'Interactivity'



ous delivery platforms" characterized by more advanced forms of interactivity which give the user a broader range of active choices, including access to tools that can manipulate existing material. 3) Finally, 'User-to-user' interactivity is defined as "collaborative transactions between two or more users" (: 14) in other words, information flows which make direct communication between two or more users possible, whether it is point-to-point, person-to-person, multipoint, multiuser, etc. This last form, contrary to the first two mentioned above, is characterized, among other things, by operating in *real time*.

Where the first dimension in the matrix is made up of these various information flows, the other is made up of other aspects, which these flows are dependent upon, here again divided into three categories: "access, distribution, and manipulation of multimedia content" (:15). Figure 5 unfolds Szuprowicz' 2-dimensional matrix and gives examples of how it might be filled out.

The description indicates that what Szuprowicz calls, 'user-to-user' interaction is related to the sociological concept of interaction, 'user-to-computer'-interaction is related to the informatic concept of interaction, while 'user-to-documents' interaction has an affinity to the interaction concept used by communication studies, as it is drawn up in Iser's text-reader model. Along the same lines, the 'user-to-user' information flow is similar to what has been called the conversation communication pattern. The 'user-to-documents' information flow parallels the consultation communication pattern, while the 'user-to-computer' information flow can be said to be a particularly elaborate version of the consultation communication pattern (or alternatively, to combine several communication patterns). From this perspective, it also becomes clear that Szuprowicz' differentiation between 'user-to-documents' and 'user-to-computer' is relatively unclear. In most specific cases, it would be difficult to determine whether the 'interactivity' is directed toward a document or toward a platform. The very formulation of the difference appears to refer mostly to the 'degree of manipulability' rather than an actual qualitative difference. This is why the difference is difficult to handle in practice – and to maintain in theory. Instead, this seems to be various forms of the consultation information pattern.

3. 3-dimensional Concepts of Interactivity

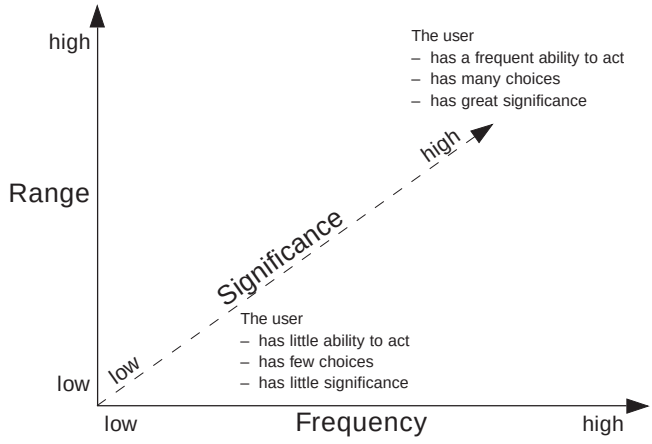
Continuing along the trail to the 3-dimensional concepts of 'interactivity', Brenda Laurel's writing gives us a privileged example. In several contexts (1986 & 1990), Laurel has argued that "interactivity exists on a continuum that could be characterized by three variables" specifically: 1) "frequency" in other words, "how often you could interact", 2) "range", or "how many choices were available" and 3) "significance", or "how much the choices really affected matters" (1991: 20).

Judged by these criteria, a low degree of interactivity can be characterized by the fact that the user seldom can or must act, has only a few choices available, and choices that make only slight difference in the overall outcome of things. On the other hand, a high degree of interactivity is characterized by the user having the frequent ability to act, having many choices to choose from, choices that significantly influence the overall outcome – "just like in real life" she adds (: 20).[13] Laurel doesn't provide a graphic illustration of the 3-dimensional continuum, but it might be illustrated by Figure 6. As the description of variables indicates, this concept of interactivity moves mostly within the

Figure 5. B.O. Szuprowizs' 2-dimensional Matrix Showing "Interactive Multimedia Information Flows" (1995: 15)

Object-oriented manipulation	Mail	Database	Groupware
Broadcast	newsletter	Information kiosk	Presentation
Interactive access	Hypermedia	Graphical user interface	Conferencing, training
	User-to-documents	User-to-computer	User-to-user

Figure 6. An Illustration of Brenda Laurel's 3-dimensional Continuum, Consisting of: 'Frequency', 'Range' and 'Significance'



framework of the consultation communication pattern since 'choice' is the recurring term. Understood in this way, the concept can be said to point out three aspects of 'interactivity' within the consultation communication pattern.

4. 4-dimensional Concepts of Interactivity

An example of a 4-dimensional concept of interactivity, in other words, where four dimensions of meaning constitute interactivity, can be found in the writing of Lutz Goertz, who simultaneously presents a considerably more elaborate attempt at a definition.[14] After a thorough discussion of various other attempts at definitions, Goertz isolates four dimensions, which are said to be meaningful for 'interactivity': 1) "The degree of choices available", 2) "The degree of modifiability", 3) "The quantitative number of the selections and modifications available" and 4) "The degree of linearity or non-linearity". Each of these four dimensions also makes up its own continuum which Goertz places on a scale. The higher the scale value, the greater the interactivity.

1) The "degree of choice available" concerns the choices offered by the media being used. There is considerable difference between, say, TV media where the receiver only chooses between various programs and perhaps the quality (sound level, brightness, etc.) of the program being received, and, on the other hand, a video game such as a flight simulator, where the user can select his position and speed in virtual space, various degrees of difficulty, opponents, points of view, perspective, etc. Goertz proposes the following scale for the continuum of choice:

> 0 No choice available except a decision about when reception starts and ends...
> 1 Only basic changes available in the quality of the channel (such as: light/dark, high/low or fast/slow),
> 2 As in 1, plus the ability to choose between selections in one choice dimension; choices occur simultaneously (such as television or radio programs)...
> 3 As in 2, but the selections available within the choice dimension are not time dependent (such as newspapers or video-on-demand),
> 4 As in 3, but there are two or more choice dimensions for a user to choose from (f.ex. video games with various levels of play, forms of presentation, forms of action and story lines to choose from). (Gortz 1995)

This dimension of interactivity falls within what has previously been described as the consultation communication pattern.

2) The "degree of modifiability" refers to the user's own ability to modify existing messages or add new content where these modifications and additions, it should be noted, are saved and stored for other users. In this dimension, there would be a great difference between TV media on the one hand, which doesn't offer any possibility of user input, and Internet news groups, on the other hand, which open up the possibility of letting the user

type and send any kind of written message which can then be read by all participants. Goertz draws up the following scale:

> 0 No modification possible with the exception of storing or erasing messages,
> 1 Manipulation or 'verfremdung' of messages is possible (f.ex. through the choice of sound or color),
> 2 Modification to some degree of random additions, changes, or erasure of content is possible,
> 3 Modification possible through random additions to, changes in, or erasure of any type of content (f.ex. computer word processors or graphics software, and in most media as a means of communication. (Goertz 1995: 486-7)

As the users possibility of input, the modifiability dimension falls within what has previously been described as the conversation communication pattern.

3) Besides the selection and modifiability dimensions the "quantitative size of the available selections and modifications" refers to the quantitative number of selections possible within each of the available dimensions. In this dimension, for example, there will be a significant difference between the choices available by terrestrially distributed television and the many choices and modifications possible in a word processing program. Goertz' scale is as follows:

> 0 No choice possible,
> 1 Some choice available (between 2 and 10 choices) within at least one selection or modification dimension (f.ex. television reception via terrestrial frequencies),
> 2 As in 1, plus more than 10 choices within one selection or modification dimension (A reader can choose from several hundred newspaper articles and reviews, teletext offers more than 100 pages though no other choices are available),
> 3 More than 10 choices available in *more than two* selection and/or modification dimensions (limited selection available as f.ex. in branched choices ...,
> or: an infinite or seamless selection available from *one* selection or modification dimension respectively (f.ex. video games which allow the user to write in a random name at the beginning),
> 4 An infinite or seamless selection available from all selection and/or modification possibilities (applies to media uses which allow participants random messages, f.ex. word processing programs, but first actually for all media which function as a means of communication). (Goertz 1995: 487)

4) Finally, the "degree of linearity/non-linearity" functions as a measure of the user's influence on the time, tempo and progression of the reception or communication. This dimension is to capture the difference between, f.ex., on the one hand a movie, where the movie goer doesn't have any influence on when the movie starts, where, or in which order the scenes are shown; and on the other hand a hypertext where the reader is free to determine what, when, and in which order something will be read:

> 0 The time and order of the material is completely controlled by the information producer or the sender (f.ex. television, radio, film),
> 1 The order of the material is determined by the information producer or sender, the user initiates the communication process and can stop or re-start it (video, records, other sound media),
> 2 As in 1, but the user determines the tempo of the reception (f.ex. books),
> 3 As in 2, the user can select single elements of information which have little or no connection to each other (f.ex. newspapers),
> 4 As in 3, the user can now retrieve elements of information which are highly connected (f.ex. references in an encyclopedia or via hypertext functions on a World Wide Web site). (Goertz 1995: 487)

Both the 3rd and the 4th dimensions refer primarily to the possibility of choice and thus fall into the consultation communication pattern.

According to Goertz, the actual (interactive) media landscape could be depicted in highly differentiated ways by using these four dimensions. As a simple multiplication also demonstrates, this 4-dimensional concept of interactivity results in no fewer than 500 different combination possibilities. Obviously, such a large number of possible combinations is impossible to deal with in actual practice. A system with more categories than actual media to put in those categories (where the map is bigger than the country to be mapped) is obviously not suitable. The purpose of constructing typologies or systems is to reduce the complexity, not to increase it. Aside from that, Goertz fails to observe one of his own premises. One of the fundamental preconditions specified is that the various interact-

ive dimensions must be selective but must not contradict themselves. As the above shows, the definition and scale for the 3rd dimension the "quantitative number of selections and modifications available" can't help but conflict with the two first dimensions which also apply to 'selection' and 'modification' possibilities, just as the 4th dimension the "degree of linearity/non-linearity" also expresses a certain aspect of the 'selection' dimension. This redundancy appears to be symptomatic when Goertz graphically illustrates the dimensions by means of 21 specific contemporary uses of media. In practice, only the first two dimensions, represented as 'selection' and 'modification' respectively are used. The resulting 2-dimensional matrix is shown in Fig. 7.[15]

Among many other things, this chart can be used to show that there are media which give the user a high degree of modifiability but a low degree of choice (such as e-mail) and, on the contrary, there are other media which give the user a low degree of modifiability but a very high degree of choice (such as multi-channel TV, pay-per-view, Gopher, World Wide Web). In this case as well, classical broadcast media such as radio and television are judged to have a certain – relatively low – measure of interactivity. And once again, media which use interpersonal communication (in other words, conversational media) are considered to have the highest degree of interactivity.

5. n-dimensional Concepts of Interactivity

Finally, there are concepts of interactivity which operate with more than four dimensions, only one of which will be dealt with here. In an article from 1989, "Implications of New Interactive Technologies for Conceptualizing Communication" Carrie Heeter starts by acknowledging the changes in new media technologies. Changes which according to the author necessitate a fundamental reconceptualization of the traditional communication models and understanding used in communication research. The auther especially points at "increased interactivity" as "a primary distinction of new technologies", and proposes to understand interactivity i relation to communication technologies as "a multidimensional concept", where six such "dimensions of interactivity" (: 211) are defined.

> The 1st dimension, also called "selectivity", concerns "*the extent to which users are pro-*

Figure 7. L. Goertz' Placement of 21 Specific Media Uses Based on the Dimensions "Degree of Selections Available" and "Degree of Modifiability" (1995: 489)

Selektions-möglichkeiten/ Modifikations-möglichkeiten	0	1	2	3	4
0	Kino Buch: Roman		TV, terr. TV, Kabel Pay-per-Channel Hörfunk Pay-per-View	Zeitung Videotext Buch: Sachbuch	information via Online-Dienst VR-Walk-through, z.B. virtuelles Museum
1					
2		SCALL		Homebanking	Videospiel
3		E-MAIL SEN-DEN		Mailbox	VR-Walk-through, z.B. Büroeinrichtung GESPRÄCH PC-Textver-arbeitung TELEFON VIDEOKONFE-RENZ

vided with a choice of available information" (: 222);

The 2nd dimension concerns *"the amount of effort users must exert to access information"* (: 223);

The 3rd dimension concerns *"the degree to which a medium can react responsively to a user"* (: 223);

The 4th dimension concerns "the *potential to monitor system use*" (: 224), understood as a form of feedback that automatically and continously registers all user behavior while on the media system;

The 5th dimension concerns "*the degree to which users can add information to the system that a mass, undifferentiated audience can access*" (: 224) ('many-to-many' communication).

And the 6th dimension concerns "*the degree to which a media system facilitates interpersonal communication between specific users"* (: 225) ('person-to-person' communication).

An interactivity concept of this type will naturally also allow a much finer division of interactive media, but once again the many dimensions and the high degree of complexity make it very difficult to deal with the concept on a practical basis. (Just illustrating a 6-dimensional graph leads to considerable difficulties.) It also becomes apparent that a number of the dimensions listed – as with Goertz – are not exclusive, but have a tendency to overlap each other. For example, there will be a fluid boundary between a user's ability to add information to the system (5th dimension) and several users ability to communicate with each other (6th dimension). The system's ability to monitor users (4th dimension) will be connected with its ability to respond sensitively (3rd dimension). The number of choices available (1st dimension) will unavoidably influence efforts to access the system (2nd dimension). This also implies that while the 5th dimension ('ease of adding information') and the 6th dimension ('facilitation of interpersonal communication') largely cover what has been called the conversation communication pattern, the 3rd dimension ('responsiveness') and 4th dimension ('monitoring of information use') are related to what has been called the registration communication pattern; and the 1st dimension ('choice available') and 2nd dimension ('effort users must exert') fall into the consultation communication pattern.

At the End of the Trail?

One possible and reasonably risk-free conclusion from this long tracking effort, might well be that the concept of interactivity (as well as the concept of interaction) is outrageously complex and has a long list of very different, specific variations. But it would be unsatisfactory to stop this tracking session with such a disappointing conclusion. In order to arrive at a more satisfactory narrative closure of our quest, a final attempt will therefore be made to suggest a more suitable concept of interactivity, based on the preceding presentations and discussions of the concept. Due to a lack of space, however, it will only be a brief suggestion.[16]

As indicated above there are good reasons to (re)establish a conceptual distinction between the concept of interaction and the concept of interactivity. Without being able to go into a detailed argumentation in this context, it would be expedient to retain the concept of 'interaction' in its original, strong sociological sense to refer to 'actions of two or more individuals observed to be mutually interdependent' (but not mediated communication), and to use the concept of 'interactivity' to refer to media use and mediated communication. Here derived concepts such as 'para-social interaction'- or perhaps even better 'social para-interaction' – may cover communication in media which in some way simulates interpersonal interaction.

The above review of the various concepts of interactivity has pointed out, among other things, the inappropriateness of definitions which are based too rigidly on specific historic technologies. It has also pointed out the inappropriateness of defining interactivity via a prototype or as criteria. A definition as a continuum appears to be more appropriate, and at least more flexible, in relation to the many varied levels of interactivity, the many differing technologies and rapid technological developments. It has also become clear that there are different forms of interactivity, which cannot readily be compared or covered by the same formula. There appears to be a particular difference in interactivity which consists of a choice from a selection of available information content; interactivity which consists of producing information via input to a system, and interactivity which consists of the system's ability to adapt and respond to a user. It might, therefore, be appropriate to operate with different – mutually independent – dimensions of the concept of interactivity. As it may have been apparent from the beginning, or has at least continually

been made apparent by this review, the various important aspects of the concept of interactivity can to a great extent be reduced to four dimensions which can be understood using the communication patterns: transmission, consultation, conversation and registration.

Based on this understanding interactivity may be defined as: *a measure of a media's potential ability to let the user exert an influence on the content and/or form of the mediated communication*. This concept of interactivity can be divided up into four sub-concepts or dimensions which could be called:

1) *Transmissional interactivity* – a measure of a media's potential ability to let the user choose from a continuous stream of information in a one way media system without a return channel and therefore without a possibility for making requests (f.ex. teletext, near-video-on-demand, be-your-own-editor, multi-channel systems, datacasting, multicasting).

2) *Consultational interactivity* – a measure of a media's potential ability to let the user choose, by request, from an existing selection of preproduced information in a two way media system with a return channel (video-on-demand, on-line information services, CD-ROM encyclopedias, FTP, WWW, Gopher etc.)

3) *Conversational interactivity* – a measure of a media's potential ability to let the user produce and input his/her own information in a two way media system, be it stored or in real time (video conferencing systems, news groups, e-mail, mailing lists etc.).

4) *Registrational interactivity* – a measure of a media's potential ability to register information from and thereby also adapt and/or respond to a given user's needs and actions, whether they be the user's explicit choice of communication method or the system's built-in ability to automatically 'sense' and adapt (surveillance systems, intelligent agents, intelligent guides or intelligent interfaces, etc.).

The difference between consultational and registrational interactivity is thus the difference between the user's choice of information content and the media system's choice of, or adaptation to, a method of communication, in other words, the *way* in which the communication system functions.

Since transmissional and consultational interactivity both concern the availability of choice – re-

Figure 8. The 'Cube of Interactivity': a 3-dimensional Representation of the Dimensions of Interactivity

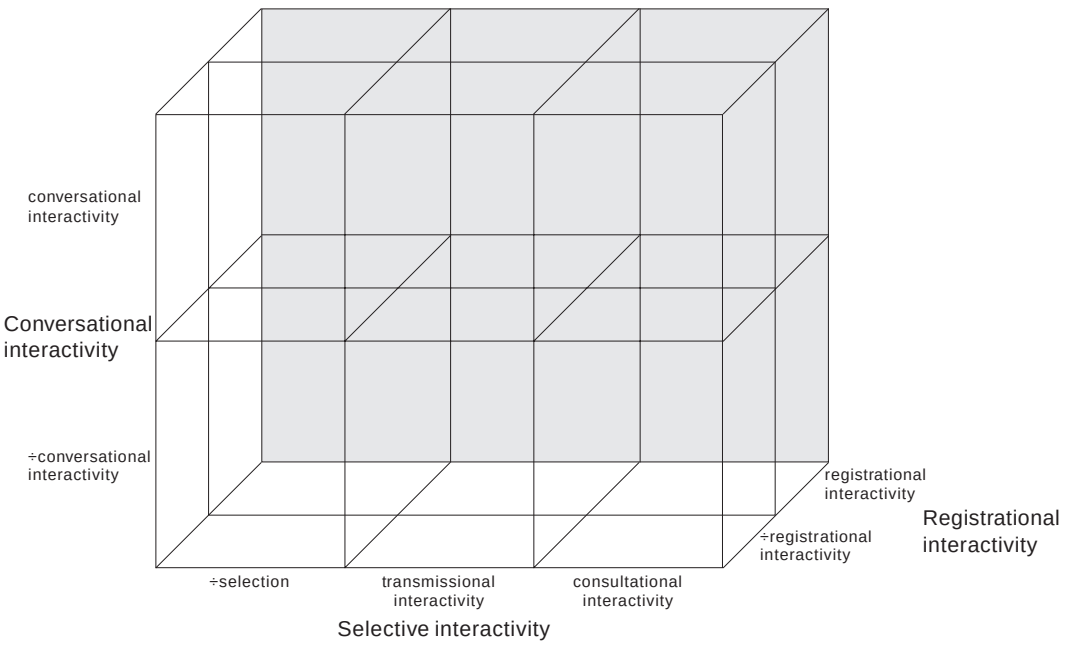
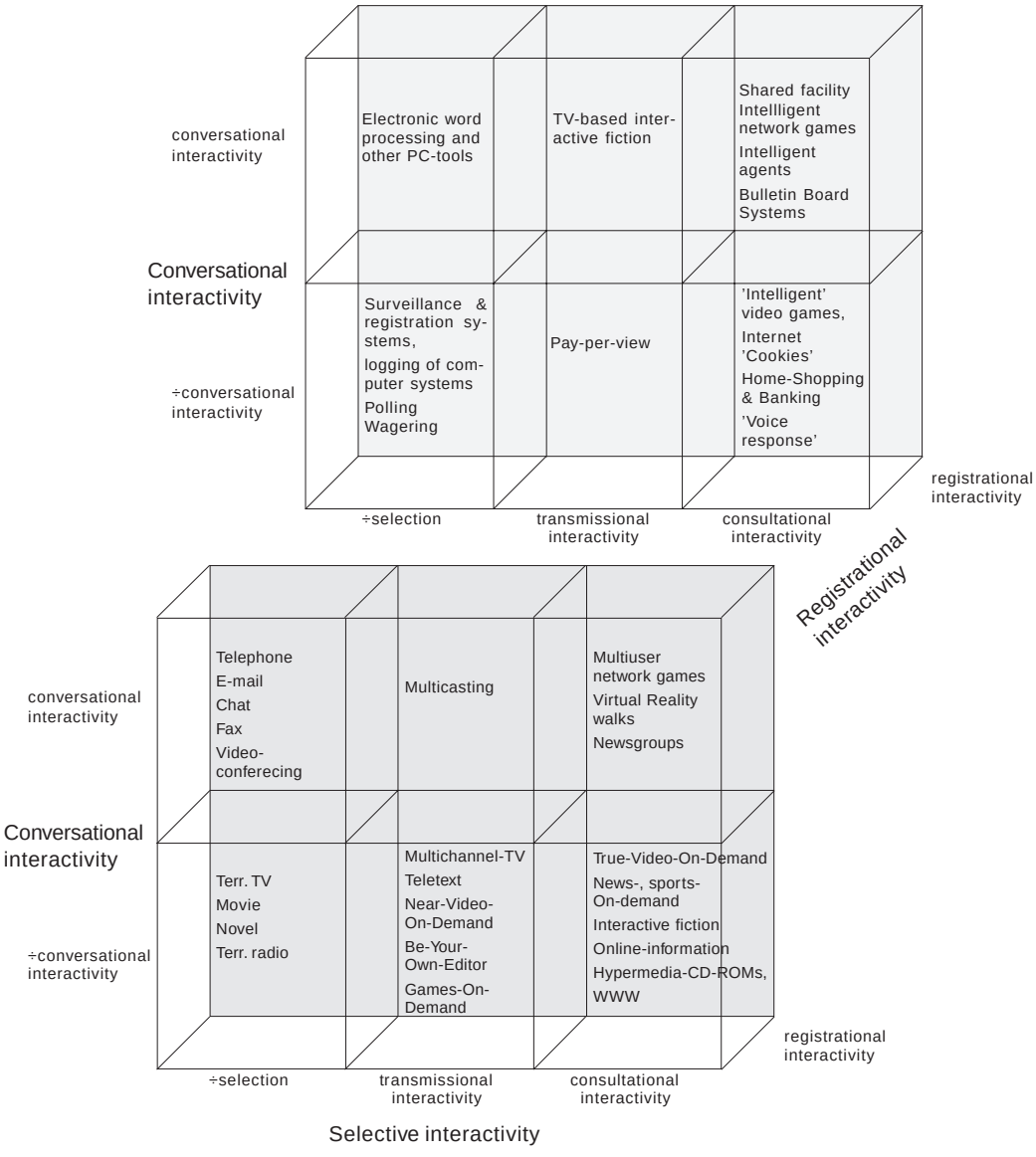


Figure 9. The 'Cube of Interactivity': a 3-dimensional Representation of the Dimensions of Interactivity



spectively with and without a request – it is possible to represent them within the same (selection) dimension. The four types of interactivity can then be presented in a 3-dimensional graphic model – an 'interactivity cube' – as attempted in Figure 8 and Figure 9, which in this form results in 12 different types of interactive media.

So this is where the trail ends, for the moment. Not a dead end, but not the complete resolution of our quest either, in the sense of finding the ultimate definition for 'interactivity'. Instead, this is a temporary and contemporary attempt at synthesizing a conceptual construction. Perhaps, more importantly, this is a contribution toward a hopefully greater understanding of the meaning of the concept of 'interactivity' in media and communication studies, and the importance of media and communication studies to the meaning of the concept of 'interactivity'.

Notes

1. Although in this case there is also a certain ironic distance.
2. There are several general articles which each deal with the concept of interactivity in different ways, f.ex.: Heeter (1989), Goertz (1995), Jäkel (1995) and Toscan (1995). Articles which I have borrowed from for this paper, in varying degrees.
3. The media typology can only be suggested here. See Jensen (1997b) for a more in depth presentation.
4. See Jensen (forthcoming) for more in dept treatment
5. There is an added finesse in the concept 'multi-discursive' here, since "the words used in other discourses will continue to resound, so to speak, in each case" (:190).
6. Which Iser also draws attention to – in an otherwise rather inconsistent argument – both by pointing out differences and similarities between social interaction and reading and thereby between the general (here: psychoanalytical) concept of interaction and the special text-reader relationship.
7. As seen in the above discussion of the 'multi-discursive' concept in note 5.
8. See also Rafaeli (1988:110f.)
9. Aside from Durlak (1987) see also Steuer (1995), Scharpe (1995) and Rafaeli (1988:110).
10. For examples of other criteria based definitions see Feldman (1991:8).
11. For similar scales see also Next Century Media's 7-level scale (Hackenberg, 1995).
12. Rafaeli's own more formal definition sounds like this: "*interactivity* is an expression of the extent that in a given series of communication exchanges, any third (or later) transmission (or message) is related to the degree to which previous exchanges referred to even earlier transmissions" (1988:111).
13. In *Computers as Theatre,* "Interactivity and Human Action", Laurel modifies this model in favor of a more intuitively based definition, as well as pointing out other dimensions of meaning (1991:20f).
14. Another 4-dimensional concept of interactivity can be found in Dunn 1984, who operates with 350 possible combinations.
15. It should be noted that in another effort Goertz does establish an index or measurement of interactivity based on all four dimensions. This is a so-called 'sum-index' which results from scale values for each of the four dimensions simply being added together.
16. For a more detailed presentation, see Jensen (forthcoming).

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Woman with a Gun does not Signify Man with a Phallus

Gender and Narrative Change in the Action Movie

RIKKE SCHUBART

> To see women strain against the world may be inspirational, but also at some psychic level unbelievable. (Richard Dyer)[1]

Within the traditionally male action genre there have always existed the subgenre of femme fatale action. In *Coffy* (1973), *Foxy Brown* (1974) and *Cleopatra Jones* (1973) Pam Grier and Tamara Dobson kicked serious ass in the black action cinema, in the Hong Kong action movie the female warrior has been a frequent protagonist since the seventies, and in the eighties the white action heroine finally entered the genre: Cynthia Rothrock, Brigitte Nielsen and Sigourney Weaver were action heroines in *Above the Law* (1986), *Red Sonja* (1985) and *Aliens* (1986).

The heroine of femme fatale action performs the masquerade of masculinity: She kicks ass better than the Terminator, shoots straighter than Dirty Harry and like Rambo she transforms torture into renewed strength.[1] But somehow she seems too good to be true. Renny Harlin's action movie *The Long Kiss Goodnight* made me return to an old suspicion of mine: that the action heroine is not what she pretends to be. Or rather, that she is much more than she pretends to be. Like the sphinx she is a figure of ambiguity: She is beautiful and feminine, yet active and lethal. And like the sphinx she presents us with a riddle: 'Who am I?' she asks, caressing her gun. 'Am I a woman or am I a man?'. Feminist film theory has not yet solved the riddle of the sphinx who claws her way into the debate about active women in traditional male genres. Some suggest that the action heroine transgresses traditional gender roles, and that the pleasure of identification with this woman is open to both male and female audiences.[2] Some suggest that she is really just a man in women's clothing, not a genderbender, but a crossdresser.[3] And some suggest that she is an uneasy response to feminism, an effort to both represent and contain the liberated woman within a traditional patriarchal system.[4] But neither of these answers have yet solved her riddle.

Just as she herself unites two genders, the key to her riddle is ambiguity: She may be in the same genre as the male hero, but she is not given the same story. The action hero fights to return to a utopian never-never land outside reality; his is a pre-Oedipal story, a narcissistic denial of the Law, of castration and, eventually, a triumphant refusal to enter the symbolic.[5] When woman becomes action hero not one, but two stories are told at the same time. One I will call 'her story': On the surface 'her story' is the story of the active woman – 'I can handle myself' says Ripley in Aliens – but looking closer we find three archetypes: The daughter, the mother and the amazon. In *Aliens, Red Sonja, Blue Steel, Nikita, Point of No Return, Terminator II, Cutthroat Island* and *The Long Kiss Goodnight* hers is a story of integration into society, a fight for a life, family, even children. 'Her story' is the very opposite of the hero's; not a refusal of but an entering into the symbolic. In 'her story' male identification cannot be with the heroine as a stand-in for the male audience, because she is clearly a female protagonist locked in a woman's world.

The other story I will call 'his story': In the figure of a woman with a gun we recognize the image of a woman with a whip – a woman whose actions belong to the male masochist drama. This is a woman who, as Freud has pointed out, borrows her 'masculine attributes and characteristics' from the

man.[6] Because 'his story' is hidden within 'her story' it is unseen and unnoticed by women, but enjoyed and discussed by a male audience. When we separate them we will see that femme fatale action is no gender masquerade. It does not invite cross-gender identification. And it is surely no playground for feminism.

I 'His Story'

'His story' comes to the surface in maybe the sleaziest femme fatale action movie ever made, Barb Wire (1996) with Pamela Anderson: The heroine is constantly dressed in s/m outfit: black leather or latex, corsets, high healed boots, chains, collar, no whip but always a gun. The woman with the gun belongs to the tableau of male masochism. She is the mistress punishing her male victim, and her 'masochisticness' has nothing to do with her being beaten, but with her beating men. She is cruel, yet maternal, dominant, yet dominated by his fantasies, castrating and phallic, yet only using weapons he has given her and taught her the use of.

Psychoanalytic theory has had little to say about her nature – as a *woman*, that is. Despite her heavy makeup and fetishistic outfit she has so far flaunted herself unnoticed. All attention has been devoted to the male masochist and his sufferings, and none to his female dominatrix, distributing pleasure and pain. Freud in his two essays about masochism[7] merely remarks that she represents the mother – and not, for instance, a lover, a whore or a daughter – and that she is the substitute of the father:

> So the original form of the unconscious male phantasy was not the provisional one that we had hitherto given: 'I am being beaten by my father', but rather: '*I am loved by my father*'. The phantasy has been transformed by the processes with which we are familiar into the conscious phantasy: '*I am being beaten by my mother*'.[8]

Freud admits that this crossdressing is a bit confusing, especially since both the conscious fantasy and the physical enactment of the perversion always cast a woman in the role of father: 'the persons who administer chastisement are always women, both in the phantasies and the performances. This is confusing enough...'.[9] He insists, however, that the beating woman represents the Father. As a woman and a mother, she represents nothing. Her nature is not even feminine, she is merely a marionette whose strings are worked by the male masochist staging his drama. This fantasy is not of heterosexual desire between son and mother, but homosexual desire between son and father.

Faced with her beauty Theodor Reik in his study *Masochism in Sex and Society* is bewildered for a short moment: On the one hand he agrees with Freud that 'the beating woman substitutes for the father'.[10] On the other hand he is infatuated with the 'irresistible charm' of his 'cruel mother-goddess' and plays with an alternative interpretation:

> Viewed genetically, does not the oldest stratum of masochism as phantasy and action regress after all to the mother-child relationship as to a historical reality? That would correspond to an age that has not yet reached the Oedipus situation and in which education had still other tasks than to master incestuous impulses. In this time of infancy the mother actually was the unrestricted ruler... (..) This is perhaps the place for the long line of cruel, mythical figures of women, such as Salome, Brunhild, Turandot, who threatened to kill or behead the man, and who are *substitutes of the primal mother* as seen in masochistic phantasy'.[11]

Could it really be that this lustful and evil woman after all represents some sort of 'real' femininity? Reik is exhilarated by the idea, but reluctant he finally abandons the theory of a primal mother and returns to the Freudian thesis: 'Whenever we had the opportunity to study a case we found the father or his representative hidden behind the figure of a beating woman.'[12] And because her origin and nature is not important to the drama it once again remains unexplored and unexplained.

The only important study of masochism to do more than shrug off the woman with the whip is Gilles Deleuze's K, a study of the Austrian novelist Leopold von Sacher-Masoch. Deleuze disagrees with Freud's explanation of masochism. The original conflict may be Oedipal castration, says Deleuze, but in masochism the conflict between father and son is replaced by the alliance between mother and son. In order to avoid the castration of the father the son turns to the mother for help. She becomes an important figure in Deleuze's study.

Deleuze calls the woman with the whip 'the ideal masochistic woman.' She is a complex figure composed out of three maternal figures that Deleuze – based on the fictions of Sacher-Masoch – identifies as central to masochism: the uterine mother, the Oedipal mother and the oral mother. The first figure, the uterine mother, is a hetaera, a Greek Aphrodite whose qualities are chaotic sensu-

ality and hermaphroditic pleasure. She loves both men and women, and her sexuality is polymorphous. The second figure, the Oedipal mother, is a cruel mistress; she is sadistic and cold, and next to her is often found her even crueler lover, a bloodthirsty father-figure who is not her victim, but her accomplice. The third figure is the oral mother; she unites elements from both the uterine and the Oedipal mother and she exists in the space between the two women:

> Masoch's three women correspond to three fundamental mother images: the first is the primitive, uterine, hetaeric mother, mother of the cloaca and the swamps; the second is the Oedipal mother, the image of the beloved, who becomes linked with the sadistic father as victim or as accomplice; and in between these two, the oral mother, mother of the steppe, who nurtures and brings death. We call her intermediate, but she may also come last of all, for she is both oral and silent and therefore has the last word.[13]

The uterine mother and the Oedipal mother are not masochistic ideals, but the extremities between which the oral mother is found. She is the ideal masochistic woman.

The oral mother, alternatively called the 'good mother' and the ideal masochistic woman', belongs to the mythical era of the Amazons. Drawing on the theories of anthropologist and jurist J.J. Bachofen, a Swiss contemporary of Sacher-Masoch, Deleuze outlines three historical phases corresponding to the three women: The first is the Aphroditic era of lustful chaos; in this maternal era 'the father was 'Nobody'', says Deleuze. Then comes the Demetrian era of the Amazons; here the father or husband () acquired a certain status but he still remained under the domination of the woman'.[14] Last is our present era, the Apollonian era; now matriarchy degenerates and disappears and is replaced by the sadism of the father's patriarchy.

Deleuze's mythical and rather abstract theory of the three maternal figures (the uterine, the oral and the Oedipal mother) and the three historical ages of Bachofen (the maternal, the amazonian, the paternal) correspond to three phases in the development of the child's relation to his mother: The first phase is pregnancy and early infancy where mother and infant exist in symbiosis and the breast is an internal (that is, fantasized) object of desire. This is what Deleuze calls chaos and sexuality, the cloaca and the swamps. We can say that the uterine mother symbolizes waste and primordial death, her liquids are shit and sweat. In the second phase the mother's breast becomes an external object of desire. Now mother becomes Reik's 'primal mother', an authority who overrules the father, who nurtures, yet also punishes. Her liquids are pure and noble, milk and tears. In the third phase the mother is cruel because she is associated with the Oedipal father. This is the wicked mistress accompanied by her cruel father-lover. She signifies sexuality and death, and her liquids are blood and semen. In masochistic fantasy these three maternal figures are thus not three women, but three fantasies of the same woman frozen at different moments. And just as fantasies may play with different versions of the desired object, the three figures morph into one another in the masochistic fantasies. Thus Wanda in Sacher-Masoch's novel *Venus in furs* begins her career as uterine mother, then transforms into first an oral mother and later a cruel Oedipal mother. The masochistic fantasy is not fixed on the oral mother, but floats freely within the limits of the uterine and the Oedipal mother.

Deleuze corrects both Freud and Reik: The woman with the whip is neither a father beating a child, nor a primal mother disciplining her infant. She is the 'good oral mother' who tortures and mistreats her son in 'preparation for a rebirth in which the father will have no part'.[15] She is indeed a paradox: She castrates in order to undue castration, she is 'the beating mother who possesses the ideal phallus and on whom rebirth depends'.[16] Her cruel actions lead not to humiliation and destruction, but to rebellion against the father, to the rebirth of a 'new man', to triumphant pleasure and independence. She wards off the attack of the father, she takes the cross from the shoulders of Christ, whips away the burning stigmata from his body, then heals his wounds.

This woman appears strong-willed, beautiful, proud. But there are conditions tied to her activities: The first of them is education. To make sure she fulfills his wishes and his goals, she is instructed in the correct attitude, she is educated, transformed and remodelled to fit his fantasies. In this universe of paradoxes, the slave trains his mistress to ensure her cruelty. The second condition is the contract, a formal document casting desire into language. Again a paradox: the contract of Sacher-Masoch and his wife Wanda is written by him, yet is in her name; she is mute and her tongue speaks his desire. After completing her education and dressing her up, the man hands her the script, the weapons and the 'ideal phallus'. She cannot be said to possess phallic authority since it is forced upon her. The phallic woman does not represent fe-

male desire, she serves only his autoerotic pleasures. Her duties are clear as crystal: *The ideal masochistic woman is a phallic woman created, educated and contracted by the masochist to serve a rebirth outside the Law of the father.*

To sum up: In **his story** we find a female figure (a good and cruel mother) whose torture serves the rebirth of a 'new man' out of reach from the father. **His spectacle** is a split screen: The passivity of male suffering and the activity of female torture. **His pleasure** is the creation of and total control over plot, spectacle and story. **His attitude** may appear feminine, however, as Deleuze demonstrates, there is nothing effeminate about this masochistic rebellion against male stereotyped sadism: It is both passive and active, both giving up and taking control, both regression to old and a creation of new pleasures. Sweat and shit, milk and tears, blood and semen.

Deleuze presents his theory as superior to Freud's account of male masochism. He insists that the mother plays the central part, not the father. But he is not looking deep enough: Even though the father is absent in this drama, his very absence dictates every move of mother and son within the masochistic drama. And regarding the question of mother or father, this cruel female figure is not the origin of the perversion, but merely a reaction formation. By returning to old mother-images the male masochist constructs his fantasy of a woman-lover-mother. What Deleuze has given is thus not an alternative explanation of male masochism, but a revealing study of the elements that Freud chooses to ignore: The nature of the beating woman and her relation to the masochist.

It is time to look at 'her story'. The sphinx is waiting impatiently by the abyss for an answer.

II 'Her Story'

> just as the absence of a penis need not indicate lack of the phallus, its presence likewise need not indicate possession of the phallu (Gilles Deleuze)[17]

Like the maternal figures in 'his story' the daughter, the mother and the amazon in 'her story' have a tendency to morph into one another, mixing their qualities in various combinations. Renny Harlin's *The Long Kiss Goodnight* from 1997 unites all three feminine archetypes and their themes in the story of sweet and gentle schoolteacher Samantha who after eight years of amnesia recalls her former life as CIA killer Charly. With private detective Hennesey Samantha Caine (Geena Davis) leaves her eight-year old daughter Caitlin and her boyfriend Sam to discover her past and confront the mystery woman she kissed goodnight eight years ago. As Samantha gradually transforms into CIA agent Charly she disavows her family – 'Samantha had the kid, not I' she snaps at Hennesey (Samuel L. Jackson) who wants her to phone her daughter. Charly decides to clear out with a fortune that has been waiting eight years for her in a locker. The key is tied to Caitlin's favourite teddy bear, Mr. Perkins, and while Charly steals the key, the CIA kidnaps her daughter. Now she must chose: Independence – or a daughter? Assassin – or mother? In a truly mythological scene *The Long Kiss Goodnight* unites all opposites: Charly saves her daughter, kills the corrupt CIA agents, saves a city from destruction, keeps her money, her daughter and her boyfriend, remains a mother and a femme fatale and is finally congratulated by the president.

The Daughter. To explain how Samantha became Charly the theme of the daughter is used. This is the theme of education, transformation, masquerade and prostitution. It is the theme of the father teaching a daughter to handle his gun, of man transforming woman into his mistress. Samantha first visits Waldman, whose dedication she has found in one of her books: 'Your name is Charlene Elizabeth Baltimore. You're an assassin working for the United States Government. I should know. I trained you', he tells her. Her father was a Royal Irish Ranger, and when he was killed Charly was adopted by Mr. Perkins – yes, the name of Caitlin's teddybear and also the name of the corrupt leader of the CIA. Samantha Caine was the fictional cover for Charly, who in this brief scene is presented as a product fathered by a line of men: her father/Waldman/Perkins and the CIA.

The daughter must first be educated and transformed. 'The masochistic contract implies not only the necessity of the victim's consent, but his ability to persuade, and his pedagogical and judicial efforts to train his torturer', says Deleuze.[18] Luc Besson's French film *Nikita* (1990) perfected the archetype that says it all: The young murderess Nikita is offered 'a second chance' by the government: to become an assassin serving the country. Her faked suicide has already been executed, and Nikita has no choice but to sign the contract. She must now 'learn. Learn to read, walk, talk, smile and even fight. Learn to do everything'. The first half of the film describes her education by a man who is teacher, father and creator. We find the same

education of the heroine in *Red Sonja* (1985), *Lady Dragon* (1992) and *Black Belt Jones* (1974). And in *Blue Steel* (1989) Megan is asked three times (by three men) what motivated her to become a cop. Her first two answers are 'I wanted to shoot people' and 'I like to slam people's heads up against walls'. Her third and final answer, the true answer, is almost mute: 'Him' she whispers, suddenly without a voice of her own. The theme of male creator and female creation is old; Ovid in his Metamorphosis tells the Greek myth of the king and sculptor Pygmalion who falls in love with his ivory creation: 'Meanwhile, in ivory with happy art/ A Statue carves; so graceful in each part,/ As woman never equall'd it: and stands/ Affected to the fabrick of his hands'.[19] Man creates his love. And sometimes man's love is a phallic woman. And aggression, although now in female hands, is somehow still male.

It is striking how Mother is always missing from the education of the daughter. We often find a Beautiful Woman next to the father, but she is controlled by the law: 'Could you just leave if you wanted to? Just get on a plain and disappear?' Maggie asks Amanda in the American remake of *Nikita, Point of no Return* (1993). 'To tell the truth, dear, I don't know. It's a possibility that never entered my mind', is the answer. Her job is to transform the surface of the phallic woman into stereotyped Female Beauty. Admiring the transformed Maggie in *Point of no Return* Bob exclaims: 'Wow. You look beautiful. You've really outdone yourself this time.' He is not speaking to Maggie, but to Amanda, who replies 'yes, about this one I am pleased'. The Beautiful Woman teaches the daughter to *appear as* 'man's perfect companion – a woman.' Those are the words of Amande, the older female agent who instructs Nikita in the use of the masque of femininity in the French original: 'Smile when you don't know anything. You won't be any smarter, but it's more agreeable to those who look at you'. Amande's words calls to mind Joan Riviere's classic essay 'Womanliness as a Masquerade': 'Womanliness therefore could be assumed and worn as a mask, both to hide the possession of masculinity and to avert the reprisals expected if she was found to possess it'.[20] There is a deep irony at play here: In Riviere's text the masque of femininity is used by masculine women as a protection against male reprisal. In the theme of the daughter the very same masque is an element in man's education of the masochistic woman. The Beautiful Woman simply echoes the wishes of the agency, and femininity is employed in the conscious creation of the phallic woman.

This masquerade is thematized as both drag and prostitution. While both women stare into the mirror Amande covers Nikita's hair with a wig. Later Nikita stares into the mirror, then pulls of the wig, rejecting her transformation. Kathy in *Lady Dragon* also puts on wig and make-up when she transforms from professional martial arts fighter into a whore in high heels and short dress: 'Since you like to act like a whore I'll be happy to accommodate you', says the villain before raping and torturing her. She thought her disguise would fool him, but of course the goal is always to accommodate him. When Samantha transforms into Charly she accepts this daughter of CIA as her true identity. But the scene accentuates the metamorphosis, the fakedness, the masquerade: Charly dies her dark hair blond, puts on heavy make-up, exchanges her feminine skirts for pants and a leather jacket – essentially remaking herself as a 'bitch'. Maggie, Nikita, Megan and Charly all look in the mirror when they don their costumes. The mirror has nothing to do with an original or natural woman; it is all about reconstructing a recognizable stereotype, about tapping into male fantasy. Contrary to Lacan's mirror stage, this mirror mocks female narcissistic identification. The mirror is turned against the woman, is used to steal her identity and image from her. This is an aggressive act followed by rape and prostitution: Kathy in *Lady Dragon* and Megan in *Blue Steel* are raped; Charly says 'no thanks, I am saving myself till I get raped' to a man making a pass – and her daughter Caitlin is revealed to be the result of a rape. The daughter is persuaded to impersonate a prostitute and as such she is raped: 'in masochism the woman assumes the function of prostitution in her capacity as honest woman',[21] says Deleuze. This female drag is a prostitute, her job is a 'dirty job' and her creator is the pimp cashing in on her activity. 'I know you and your sadistic game. You're sick, Bob', Nikita tells Bob. 'I'm happy to see you. I miss the time when I had you to myself every day', he replies and hands her another 'job'.

As all daughters Charly mistakes her new ability to 'handle herself' for freedom. But she quickly discovers, as daughters do, that when she no longer fulfills her role as obedient and cold-blooded killer there is no place for her. Deleuze insists that the woman is not an object in the contract: 'In the contractual relation the woman typically figures as an object in the patriarchal system. The contract in masochism reverses this state of affairs by making

the woman into the party with whom the contract is entered into (...) and one furthermore in which the woman is the master and torturer'.[22] But the daughter is not persuaded, she is forced against her will, and she is the true victim of the contract. Likewise Maggie in the American remake: 'I know that you like you made me into something different. But you're not looking close enough. I am different. Help me be better. Please, Bob, let me go'. The theme of the daughter openly acknowledges that she is forced to sign the contract, which she finally annuls. But these narratives can only represent her rebellion as an empty stare or a final absence – think of lifeless Megan in Blue Steel being carried away by a police officer, Nikita and Maggie leaving his territory, battered and empty. Here is no room for female realization. Charly's end is different, but that is only due to the next archetype, the mother.

The Mother. In the composite figure Charly/Samantha we find the theme of the good/bad mother. This theme began in femme fatale action with *Aliens* (1986) where the heroine Ripley wakes up after 57 years in space-sleep to find her biological daughter long dead. 'I promised her I'd be home for her birthday. Her eleventh birthday', she whispers, looking at a picture of her lost daughter. Promises, especially broken ones, always appear as the motivating force for the mother. 'When will you be back?' Caitlin asks Samantha. 'Before you know it. I swear', her mother promises. Ripley also swears to save the ten-year old girl Newt who is the sole survivor on a planet invaded by aliens. 'Cross your heart and hope to die?' Newt asks. 'Hope to die', Ripley replies. The movie *Aliens* turns Ripley into a good mother by confronting her with a 'bad' mother – the lethal alien queen.[23] This is the simple version of the good/bad mother. A more complicated version is found in *Terminator II: Judgment Day* (1991), where the heroine Sarah, who in *Terminator* (1984) was sweet and caring, has become possessed with fear of the future. In her fanatic preparations she emotionally abandons her son, who must discard her as a 'complete psycho' and 'total loser'.

The psychology of the mother is simple: the 'good' mother is warm, nurturing and sensitive. Her domain is home, she is Samantha baking cakes, smiling, laughing, the center of family happiness. She 'knows what it's like to really create life', as Sarah puts it in *Terminator II*. Conversely the 'bad' mother is cold, disciplining and insensitive. 'Stop being a little baby and get up!' Charly commands Caitlin, who is afraid of skating and has fallen on the ice and broken her wrist. 'Life is pain. Get used to it!' This is the first sign of the 'bad' mother in Samantha/Charly. The bad' mother will mistreat and abandon her children. Thus Ripley abandoned her first daughter (although not intentionally), Sarah abandoned her son both emotionally and physically by becoming a 'psycho' locked up in an mental hospital and Charly simply disavows her child: 'I didn't ask for the kid. Samantha had the kid. Not I!'.

In the bad mother we recognize Deleuze's Oedipal mother. She is phallic and sadistic, she castrates and tortures, like a black widow she may even turn to killing and devouring her own family. Thus Charly turns over Caitlin's room to find the teddybear with the key. Hearing the church bells she goes to the window and aims her rifle at Caitlin, who is in church dressed as an angel in white, complete with wings and halo. Mum is dressed in black leather, black rifle, all greed, no smile, no halo. Charly aiming her rifle at Caitlin is the pure image of the phallic and destructive Oedipal mother. Will Charly shoot her own daughter? Kill and devour her own family? As if making her wish come true the assassin Timothy abducts Caitlin from church. 'You're just gonna be written off as some crazy mummy who kidnapped her own kid and died with her in a blizzard', he says before locking Charly and Caitlin in a freezer room.

The point of the theme of the mother is not to glorify the good mother and disavow the bad mother, but to unite the two mother figures in the third mother that Deleuze calls 'the oral or 'good' mother':

> However, the transfer of the functions of the father onto the three mother-images is only one aspect of the fantasy. The main significance of the fantasy lies in the concentration of all the maternal functions in the person of the second mother, the oral or "good" mother. It is a mistake to relate masochism to the theme of the bad mother. There are of course bad mothers in masochism (the two extremes of the uterine mother and the Oedipal mother) but this is because the whole tendency of masochism is to idealize the functions of the bad mother and transfer them onto the good mother.[24]

This third mother is the masochistic ideal: Tender and maternal, yet phallic and cruel. Vindictive and aggressive, yet protective. She is Ripley saying: 'Get away from her, you bitch'. She is Charly promising her daughter 'we are not gonna die. They are'. Between freedom and her daughter Charly chooses not to become 'some crazy mummy'. She

sacrifices her life to save Caitlin. On her knees and deadly wounded she drags Caitlin out of a huge truck rigged with explosives. 'The truck is a bomb. It's gonna blow up. Go. I'm right behind you, baby. Go. Don't look back...'. Caitlin runs off, believing her mother will follow behind. 'Good girl', Charly whispers, then falls lifeless to the ground. Caitlin immediately returns to her: 'Mummy, no! It's okay. I'm sorry I left you. Please get up', she cries – apologizing and forgiving the 'bad' mother who left her – and she repeats Charly's former words: 'Life is pain. You just get used to it. So stand up right this minute, mummy'. Caitlin is more than a child; she is the element uniting opposites, the angel absolving the bad mother from sin and bringing the good mother back from the dead. Caitlin makes possible the impossible unity of Charly/Samantha.

Deleuze terms this unity the 'oral' mother: The administration of cruelty is taken over by the good mother and put to the service of the new phallic mother. Her mission is the rebirth of a new man and the disarmament of the father: The resurrected Charly/Samantha kills Timothy (Caitlin's father), she kills an endless number of corrupt CIA people and in the end the leader of the CIA, Mr. Perkins, is arrested. Charly/Samantha causes the rebirth of her partner Hennesey, the sleazy black detective who is a loser and a swindler, but ends up 'a new man' on the Larry King show, admired by his son and ex-wife. She even causes the symbolic rebirth of a nation, providing the films very maternal president (dressed in a night gown) with yet another argument for cutting down funding for the CIA: 'Where is your funding? Well, I'll tell you where it is: Can you say 'health care'!!'. In short, Charly/Samantha belongs to masochistic maternal utopia, punishing and correcting the father, redefining the limits of authority and power. And of course the good mother turns down the president's offer to return to the CIA; she has fulfilled her mission and the rest is now up to her breed, the new men.

The Amazon. In Greek mythology the amazons were a race of women warriors descendent from Ares, the god of war, and the nymph Harmonia. The amazons loved war and to fight without impediment they cut off their right breast – 'amazon' meaning 'those without breasts'. Men were merely tolerated as slaves, breeding took place once a year, and male children were either killed or mutilated; only female children were raised. The amazon is the last female stereotype in the masochistic trinity. She is the 'pure' Charly – the spy and assassin – who doesn't aim for the shoulders but shoots to kill. She is the fantasy of total and unnegotiable male submission. She is the picture the masochist sees when closing his eyes to imagine the ideal mistress:

> The blows fell thick and fast with dreadful force on my back, arms and neck; I clenched my teeth not to cry out loud. Then she struck me full in the face. The warm blood began to run but she laughed and continued to whip me.
> "I am only beginning to understand you," she cried. "What a treat to have someone in one's power, especially a man who loves one – for you do love me, do you not? My pleasure grows with each blow; I shall tear you to shreds. Go on, writhe with pain, cry out, scream! You cannot arouse my pity."[25]

Her sexuality is intimately linked with dominance, violence and death and her desire has nothing to do with romance or love. She cannot be won, owned or seduced, but takes what she pleases: 'When I want a man I just take him. Grab him', says Zula in *Conan the Destroyer* (1984). Likewise Charly making love to Hennesey, who resists her: 'It's love at first sight. Shut the fuck up', she tells him. Her pleasure comes first, his do not even count.

The amazon is neither a daughter nor a mother, but a figure located between the two. She is the result of the education and prostitution of the daughter, but has not yet turned into a good/bad mother. Violence is presented as her nature, but this is only an illusion; in reality she is a daughter suffering from amnesia, any memory of her education has been burnt away and now she mistakes her phallic role for her true female identity. To transform the daughter into an amazon you need this precariously balanced mixture of amnesia, sexuality and education. The daughter must be tortured to death to be reborn as an amazon purified through pain. Thus CIA agent Kathy in *Lady Dragon* is raped, tortured and dumped in the jungle to be reborn as a justified amazon. Red Sonja is also raped and left for dead, and Charly is brought back to life in a car accident that hospitalizes Samantha and kills a male friend. When Daedalus and Timothy torture Samantha in cold water Charly finally takes over completely. Torture cannot weaken the amazon, her sensuality and very existence is tied to pain, and the cold water baptizes a pale and furious Charly: 'Daedalus. I'll make you a deal. Let me go now and I'll leave you the use of your legs'.

This active and aggressive woman is a dangerous and lethal ballbuster, a phallic woman with a sword castrating those who challenge her. Her symbol is the scar: A comic scene in *Lethal Weapon 3*

(1992) has the hero comparing scars with a higher ranking female police officer who only surrenders to a man more scarred than herself. The scar is the memory of castration. Normally the hero's wound is a sign to be first awed and pitied, then later on avenged. However, on the female warrior the scar produces awe, fear and desire. Her scar is the mark of her education and the signature on her contract, it is a sign of her phallic power and her potential for male rebirth. Samantha looks in the mirror three times: First to wonder about and admire the many scars scattered over her body; then to face the scary memory of a bleeding and scarred Charly in the mirror, and finally she uses the mirror to re-create herself as Charly. The mirror is an apt metaphor; the amazon is a fantasy reflected in the mirror of male desire.

Like the good/bad mother the amazon can be split in two, a 'good' and an 'evil' amazon[26] appearing as hero and villain in femme fatale action: The good amazon Cleopatra Jones is thus cast against an evil Godmother figure in *Cleopatra Jones* (1973), in *Conan the Destroyer* the amazon Zula is up against evil Queen Taramis and in *Red Sonj*a Red Sonja has sworn vengeance over evil Queen Gedren, who killed her family and had her soldiers rape Sonja who rejected the lesbian queen. And Kathy in *Lady Dragon* has to seduce Susan, the villain's evil mistress, to accomplice her revenge. With this evil amazon the themes of Deleuze's uterine mother come into focus: She is chaotic sexuality, making love with men and woman, she is dangerously kinky and almost inevitably lesbian and connected to prostitution – thus Susan procures her lover Ludwig prostitutes that he beats and tortures, and Godmother in *Cleopatra Jones* keeps a harem of female prostitutes. Both the daughter and the amazon contain themes of the uterine mother, but the evil amazon is the extreme version of the masochistic woman who delights in her perverse pleasures. Her dominatrix-education has finally become part of her nature. Thus in the Hong Kong action movie *Princess Madam* (1989) the evil female gangster boss rapes, beats and tortures the husband of a 'good' female cop.

The stimulating sexuality of the amazon is so dangerous and perverse that it poses a threat to a male audience. It must be controlled, and an effective way to control a phallic woman is through phallic banter. 'Swearing acts out this double movement, which it is particularly adapted to do because language can both name something and deny it in the same breath', says Anthony Easthope[27] in *What A Man's Gotta Do*. Normally banter is used between men to cope with homoeroticism and homophobia, but in femme fatale action banter is deployed to deal with the phallic woman. The mother is controlled through her traditional mother role, here is no need for humorous banter. But the daughter and the amazon are both surrounded by banter. This is the joke that Megan in *Blue Steel* is served as she is suspended for overreacting when she shot and killed a robber on her first day on the police force:

> Stanley: 'Not now, Nick.'
> Nick: 'It'll only take a second: This guy comes to New York, it's saturday night, he's got a hooker in the back of his car, her head is buried in his lap, life is good, right. The taxi hits a whole in the road, her head pops up. What do you think? She's still got his dick in her mouth. So the guy, he's bleeding all over the place, but he don't wanna go nowhere, he don't wanna go to a hospital, because he's someone. The cabdriver he is pissed off because there is blood all over his back seat. The hooker pulls out a needle and thread. Stanley – she sews his dick on backwards!!'

This patronizing and degrading joke suggests that the daughter doesn't know how to handle a dick/a gun. The joke castrates the phallic daughter and it makes sure she knows that phallus is male and she is merely allowed to use it in his service.

The phallic banter surrounding the amazon is quite different. Here is no doubt about her ability to handle herself, but about *his* ability to handle himself. The amazon generates banter about male power, potency and desire, and the question of the phallus is reduced to this: Can he handle his dick/gun? When private detective Hennesey puts a gun in the pocket of his coat, Samantha comments: It makes a bulge for people to see!'. 'You want me to stick it in my pants and shoot my own dick off?' Hennesey asks. Samantha sarcastically replies: 'You're a sharp shooter?' Later Hennesey is chocked at the sight of Waldman's guns: 'Jesus, how many of these things you've got?' Waldman looks at him with disdain: 'Three. One shoulder, one hip and one right here next to mr. Wally. On those paddowns other agents are often reluctant to feel up another man's groin'. Just as Hennesey has no faith in his ability to handle a gun, erection and potency also pose a problem: 'Get real sweetheart. I ain't handsome, I ain't rich and the last time I got blown candy bars cost a nickel', he says, refusing a blow

job. Phallic banter circles around the question of dicks and guns. If men can't trust them, how do they perform in the hands of a woman?

To tell the truth they perform excellent. The amazon is not only granted a gun, she is also granted symbolic confidence in the phallus: 'Suck my dick everyone of you bastards,' Charly screams as she rides her truck over the cliff. She even ridicules male potency: 'Honey, only four inches', is Charly's comment to Timothey's knife. 'You'll feel me!' he promises. The amazon is granted a special status in femme fatale action, she remains on top of things (so to speak), in control of dicks, guns, the phallus and herself. But she is only granted her independence because his satisfaction depends on it. After her revenge she is not allowed to roam the streets on her own anymore and although she is never dominated, she is finally domesticated: Charly reverts into schoolteacher Samantha, Kathy in Lady Dragon acquires a new family in Grandfather and his son, the warrior Zula end up serving the new queen and Red Sonja finally surrenders to Lord Kalidor.

Conclusion: What is the Pleasure of all This?

> The favoured position of hardcore fans for watching action movies in the cinema is slumped in the seat with legs slung over the seat in front. This is an excellent position for anal sex as well as for cunnilingus and fellation. Come to think of it, for the male viewer action movies have a lot in common with being fellated. (Richard Dyer)[28]

Women have been action heroines since the beginning of the action cinema. But have they finally come to represent a progressive female image? I do not mean to destry or deny all pleasure on behalf of the female spectator (among which I am one), but neither do I want to keep up the illusion: The woman with a gun does not signify a man with a phallus. She is always daughter, mother or amazon, always a fantasy, always using a fetich offered by him. And she is always at his command, at his feet and at his service.

Some male critics naively claim that male audiences identify with action heroines '*in the same way*' they identify with male heroes.[29] And some women optimistically view femme fatale action as radical feminism. However, both these identifications are located on a narrative level dealing only with social conventions and gender stereotypes. Such readings are blinded by the bright utopian surface of 'her story'. But seen from a new angle it is clear that 'his story' structures and controls 'her story'. The daughter, the mother and the amazon are nothing but modern versions of ancient male myths of femininity. These phallic action heroines do not exceed the bounds of traditional gender roles, they cannot empower women and they do not pose a threat to male dominance. Male identification is never about 'being like them' but rather fantasizing about 'being with them'. His story' has nothing to offer women because it takes place on a level where women are agents of male pleasures.

We finally face the cruel and beautiful sphinx with an answer to her riddle: 'You are neither woman, nor man, but man's masochistic fantasy of a woman. You are the trinity of the maternal figures, the union of the daughter, the amazon and the mother. You are the ideal masochistic woman'. Her green eyes turn black with terror and – so it seems – relief. Absolved from her perverse duties she falls screaming into the abyss.

Notes

1. Richard Dyer, 'Action', in *Sight and Sound* no. 7, oct. 1994, p. 7-10, p. 9.
2. See e.g. Jeffrey A. Brown, 'Gender and the Action Heroine: Hardbodies and the Point of No Return', *Cinema Journal*, 35, no. 3, 1996, pp. 52-71.
3. See e.g. Carol Clover, *Men, Women and Chain Saws* (London: BFI, 1992).
4. Yvonne Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, genre and the Action Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 19, 20.
5. See Rikke Schubart 'Syndabock och hämnare: maskulinitet i actionfilmen', *Filmhäftet*, no. 1-2 (1997) for a discussion of the hero as scapegoat, and 'Passion and Acceleration: Generic change in the action movie' (in review for *Cinema Journal*) for a discussion of the development from a masochistic to a sadistic story in the action movie.
6. Sigmund Freud, 'A Child is Being Beaten' (1919) in James Strachey (ed.), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1978), vol. xvii, pp. 179-204.

7. Sigmund Freud, 'A Child is Being Beaten' (1919) and The Economic Problem of Masochism' (1924) in James Strachey (ed.), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1978), vol. xix, pp. 157-170. For a thorough discussion of psychoanalysis and masochism see Kaja Silverman *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (New York: Routledge, 1992).
8. Freud, 'A Child is Being Beaten', p. 198.
9. Ibid, p. 197.
10. Theodor Reik, *Masochism in Sex and Society* (New York: Pyramid Books, 1976), p. 214.
11. Ibid, my inversion, p. 215, 216.
12. Ibid, p. 58.
13. Gilles Deleuze, *Coldness and Cruelty in Masochism* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), p. 55.
14. Ibid, p. 52, 53.
15. Ibid, p. 66.
16. Ibid, p. 68.
17. Ibid, p. 68.
18. Ibid, p. 75.
19. George Sandys (translation), *Ovid's Metamorphosis: Englished, Mythologized and Represented in Figures* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), book X: 250-56.
20. Joan Riviere, 'Womanliness as a Masquerade' in Victor Burgin, James Donald and Cora Kaplan (eds.), *Formations of Fantasy* (London: Methuen, 1986), p. 38.
21. Deleuze, *Coldness and Cruelty*, p. 62.
22. Ibid, p. 92.
23. Although the alien queen is a good mother for her own offspring she uses her maternal power to impregnate and kill another race – humans.
24. Ibid, p. 61-2.
25. Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, Venus in Furs in: *Masochism* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), p. 223-4.
26. The enemy female agents in the Bond movies are evil amazons.
27. Anthony Easthope, *What A Man's Gotta Do* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 98.
28. Dyer, Action', p. 10.
29. Brown, 'Gender and the Action Heroine: Hardbodies and the Point of No Return', p. 69.

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Her Voices

Mediated Female Texts in a Cultural Perspective

HILLEVI GANETZ

Traditional media and communication studies are more concerned with television and newspapers and less with other media such as literature, computers or telephones. Studies of rock music and *phonogram* media are also rare within media studies, in spite of their presently important role within mass communication. My thesis (Ganetz 1997), which this article is based upon, studies a central aspect of rock music – its *lyrics* – and situates itself in the field of media and cultural studies.

Rock lyrics are *mediated communication*, symbolic expressions mediated through specific media (phonograms, as well as radio, television and video). They are also elements of popular music, which is a part of *popular culture* – a phenomenon closely connected to the rise of modernity. Popular culture can be defined as mass-produced cultural products which are used and spread among large groups of the population and which are generally classified by the dominant taste as having little value.

The popular, mediated genre called rock lyrics has a number of specific, formal traits, but its ultimate delimitation is its connection to rock music: rock lyrics do not comprise a genre of their own, but the verbal aspect of the genre rock *music*. Below, the concept '*rock texts*' will be used and not the more common 'rock lyrics', in order to emphasize that rock texts are not a subgenre to 'book' poetry, they are instead, as mentioned before, the verbal side of rock music. They are 'material for a voice', as Lindberg (1995, p. 61) points out.

The texts analysed in the study are written by three female artists, all of them central to the world of Swedish rock music. The two main questions of the study are: *what* themes and motifs can be identified in the texts – *what* are they about? – and *why*?

In order to understand what the texts say, it is necessary to examine how they are written, i.e. the formal structures according to which they are constructed. It is also necessary to reconstruct, through interpretive work, the *world of the text* (Ricoeur 1981), which points to the 'real' world outside the text. Explanations for the occurence of certain themes and motifs in the rock texts are sought for in the *contexts* of the texts, and in particular in their *cultural context*, of which the genre of rock music itself is only one of several ingredients. This study is not in the first place a work about *rock* texts, but a qualitative study of *mediated popular texts*, written by women.

The importance of the texts varies considerably in rock music: it is possible to find both 'rock poetry' and texts that are clearly subordinate to the music. I have chosen to analyse texts written by three women, all of whom work or have worked as singers, instrumentalists, text writers and composers. The artists analysed are all 'text centred', which does not imply that they are 'better' or more 'serious' than others who are not – a value judgement that has unfortunately affected many artists in the history of rock.

Turid Lundqvist was born in 1949, made her debut 1971 and released five albums under her own name. It is possible to label her as a singer-songwriter, inspired by folk rock. The last album she made of her own was released in 1980.

Eva Dahlgren was born in 1960 and started her career in 1978. She has released thirteen albums under her own name, moving between various popular music genres including 'mainstream' pop, the singer-songwriter tradition, new wave, art rock and art music.

Kajsa Grytt was born 1961 and made her debut as singer, guitarist and text writer in the new wave-band Tant Strul (Aunt Trouble) 1980. The band released three albums and some singles. She has furthermore released two albums together with an-

other female musician and two albums as a solo artist – eight albums in all. She has also moved between different popular music genres: new wave, the singer-songwriter tradition, pop and traditional guitar rock.

The study includes 203 texts written, performed and recorded by these three women between 1971 and 1995. The lyrics are analysed at two levels: first, a *survey of main themes* within each authorship; second, and most important, *close readings of some selected song lyrics* that treat these themes in a manner that is interesting or typical for each author. Music analyses have also been conducted with the aim of discussing how the music influences an understanding of the text.

These close readings are examples of how the author in question treats a specific motif. The purpose is to analyse what the 'I' of the lyrics 'speaks' of when carried by a female voice in a musical context. Biographical data has been used very restricitive because the aim of the study is not to analyse the persons but their *work*, their texts. Four main theoretical traditions has been used in order to interpret and understand the lyrics: Cultural Studies, theories about modernity (above all those of Thomas Ziehe and Anthony Giddens), psychoanalysis (mainly drawn from Julia Kristeva) and feminist literary and media theory.

Aesthetic Creativity, Women and Rock

In order to understand the themes of the texts, it is necessary to contextualize them, i.e. understand their relation to the discourses of rock and to women's aesthetic practices especially in the cultural public sphere.

In a historic perspective, religious and philosophical thinking regarding femininity and masculinity has created a cultural and social dichotomy with men, activity and the soul (or the mind) as one pole, and women, passivity and the body as the other. The latter position implicitly includes a perceived inability for aesthetic creativity. To be an author or a musician is furthermore to be a public person and the public life was something that was associated with the male sex. This division between the male public life and the female private sphere was established in the 18th century with the growth of the middle class, the bourgeoisie (Wolff 1990). This division between public and private life and the notion of woman as body, had a particular consequence for female artists. When women left their protected life in their homes to sell their products in public as authors and musicians to an anonymous, paying audience, they were regarded as every man's women, prostitutes whose bodies were for sale.

The history of literature, music and art, gives many examples of strategies developed by women in order to practice aesthetic creativity in the public sphere without being the subject of sexual objectification. The female author could for example hide behind a male pseudonym. She could also depriciate her work in a preface saying that her work was unimportant and written without any bigger ambitions. Another strategy was working in genres with low status, such as popular literature, fairy tales or literature for children.

The problems for women active in the public sphere are still with us today, but female participation in music is today riskier than in either literature or visual arts. According to Susan McClary (1991), this can be explained by the fact that Western music is an aesthetic discourse engaging both the body and the mind, and that the composer-performer often relies heavily on manipulating audience response through his or her enactments of sexual power and desire. This is true in both classical- and popular music. A male artist is able to stage his body and sexuality and still keep his status of a subject, but the same maneuvre is much riskier for a female artist, according to McClary: 'Women on the stage are viewed as sexual commodities, regardless of their appearance or seriousness' (McClary 1991 p. 151).

Music is also a non-verbal form of expression with strong bodily components. And it is not just the body of the artist that is involved in the expression, also the bodies of the audience are involved through the rhythm. The closeness between music and the body is maybe one reason why female singers dominate among female musicians – the lyrics are a possibility for women to 'hide' the body and emphasize the mind. But to make such a strategy successful, the female artist must have the capacity to transform the singing into an unearthly, poetic form of expression. The Swedish world famous singer Jenny Lind who lived in the 19th century, was an expert of this strategy: one of her fans wrote in the middle of the century, 'She sings like an angel and she also looks and behaves like one' (Öhrström 1987).

It is important to keep this historical background in mind when studying female cultural positions, not least female rock texts. Of course much has happend in favour of creative women, especially in literature, but in spite of all the positive changes in the 20th century concerning women's

circumstances, women generally speaking for a long time were reduced to only two positions in the world of rock – 'the rock whore and the (folksong) virgin' as the 1972 conference 'Women in Rock' arranged by *Melody Maker* put it (Steward & Garratt 1984). In other words, women are either body or mind, to be both is reserved for men since being both implies a full subject-status from which women were effectively excluded. But in the 90s a change has taken place, also in the discourse of rock: in the 1980s there has been a tendency among female rock musicians – with the artist Madonna as a precursor – to unite soul and body, mind and sexuality, which has created a new group of female rock musicians – the sex-subject.

But as late as in the 1970s the folksong virgin was one of two dominating female stereotypes in rock. However, it is important to notice that her maidenlike and humble appearance with an acoustic guitar, long hair and long skirt is a visual strategy of defence against sexual objectification. Also her high soprano voice can be seen as a strategy of defence, since it associates to soft femininity and harmlessness. Her performance on stage is bodily restrained and in the combination of text and music that characterizes rock, the text is emphasized. This musical maneuvre puts the main focus on the mind and the body is hidden. The themes of the lyrics are so to speak 'female' and include nature, mysticism, fairy tales and personal confessions. This text is made by Turid Lundqvist, a so called 'folksong virgin' in 1973.

Welcome-House (Välkomme-hus)
Music and text: Turid Lundqvist (1973)
Translation: Hillevi Ganetz

An everlasting flower in each trunk (verse 1)
to safetly show you the way
to a welcome-house
– a little light in the dark
I've laid a welcome-table
some food and wine
crystal and white china
Small bright words against the night

But I have no house (verse 2)
and my light is a candle
and the walls are made of concrete
– because this is an urban song
But I can offer you bread and tea
and I can sing and smile
a welcome-song
each time, if you want it

But this is not a merry song (verse 3)
though a tune from me to you
made of some morninglight
because a morning in the forest must wait
But you are welcome that day
we are able to leave the city made of stone
for a welcome-house
– a small light in a glade

The text is written in a naive, girlish tone, for example the words 'small' and 'little' return several times. The 'I' of the lyrics is very humble: she criticizes herself repeatedly; she has no money, no house and she has not written a merry song and she is even prepared for her song to be rejected. The theme of the lyrics is the opposition between nature and culture, where the city stands as a metaphor for culture and the little house in the glade as a metaphor for nature. The naive, girlish tone is in a positive way connected with the nature that is depicted as non-threatening, welcoming and beautiful. The pastoral idyll is fused together with the girl and becomes one: innocent, naiv, humble and kind.

Furthermore, women have not just been reduced to a very restricted number of positions in rock. Women have always been the Other in rock, but other Others, such as homosexuals or different ethnic groups, have also had major difficulties in being accepted in the discourse of rock. This is very clear from a critical reading of rock history, in particular Swedish rock history, which is very strongly centred around the white, heterosexual working- or middle class man. Rock history has to be re-written so that rock is concieved of as a discursive field in which a range of different positions, besides the 'malestream', are represented. Rock must be described as a continuous, dynamic process, where the 'malestream' is confronted with different Others, such as women, homosexuals and different ethnic groups, and also with different genres, such as classical music, jazz, folk music, blues and popular songs (called 'schlager' in Swedish). A discourse approach reveals that rock has always developed in interplay and contrast to the music of the 'Others'.

But there are also other explanations to the fact that there are so very few female rock musicians – in spite of that women listen to rock music quite as much as men. As mentioned before, the conception of the 'public woman' is still with us today, but rock music and in particular its 'malestream' is founded on the Western construction of masculinity and male sexuality (McClary 1991). This makes it much more difficult for a woman to be a rock musi-

cian than for a man. Furthermore, young women are not socialized into playing rock in the same 'natural' way as young men are in our culture (Bayton 1990). Nevertheless some women overcome these obstacles, but why? The answer is the same as the answer to the question why anybody at all likes and plays rock music. The power of attraction in this means of expression has to do with the fact that making rock music offers collective autonomy, alternative ideals and narcissistic enjoyment (Fornäs, Lindberg & Sernhede 1990). Women, as well as men, need to express and symbolise conflicts, feelings and identity partly beyond the symbolic and the Law of the Father (cf. Lacan). The writing of rock lyrics is a creative and pleasurable process, and at the same time a way of writing oneself into the world. A text is not only a cultural and social product – it is also a discourse expressed by an individual speaking subject. Texts are *polyphonic* (Kristeva 1974/1984) – they consist of a plurality of intersecting textual elements, joined together by a speaking subject who thus becomes herself a part of this polyphony herself.

Turid Lundqvist: Knowledge and Change

Turid Lundqvist's texts may be described as a *late modern enlightenment* project in the sense that *knowledge* is considered a path to *change*. This marks both her protest and confessional songs and comprises Turid Lundqvist's specific contribution to the singer-songwriter tradition. To understand the central position that protest and confession occupy in Turid's texts or creative world, it is also necessary to *contextualize* them, to discuss the importance of *folk culture and music*, *the Swedish music movement* and *the singer-songwriter tradition*, for the motifs in her lyrics.

Traces of the contemporary ideological construction of folk culture can be identified in both her texts and her music. This is particularly clear in those texts that address both the relationship between nature and culture and the advantages of folk culture and nature. The persona – the lady of the woods – Turid Lundqvist uses in certain songs should be seen in the light of the folk musical and lyrical elements that characterised aspects of the Swedish music movement (a non-commercial, alternative movement) in the beginning of the 1970s. The use of what are often referred to as folk elements was a way to indicate 'authenticity', which served as a positive antithesis to supposedly artificial, commercialised pop music.

In 1977 Turid Lundqvist changed record company from a record company associated with the music movement to a 'commercial' one. This 'defection' resulted in an animated discussion in a indignant tone in the journal of the music movement. On the surface it seemed as if it was the change of record company that caused the upset, but on a deeper level, the debate was also about Turid's assertion of the private sphere, of the importance of feelings and of individuals – what was called 'soppy' in the more political sections of the music movement.

This interest in feelings and individual experiences may be explained by Turid's profound dependence on the singer-songwriter tradition, one of the few rock music genres in which women were well-represented at the end of the 1960s/beginning of the 70s. At the core of this tradition were texts that conveyed a *protest* of some sort, that revolved around a *fable*, often written in the same style as old folk ballads, and *confessional* texts – all given a personal expression through a very clearly pronounced subject. The singer-songwriter tradition's texts were – and are – not confined to the male world of experience, as were for instance the 'malestream' texts, and so the door is left open for women artists. The norm applying to stage performance within the genre facilitated the entry of a new and large group of women into the world of rock. Since such performance does not emphasise physical sexuality, there were greater possibilities for white middle-class women to enter the stage since they did not run the risk of being considered primarily 'public women'.

Turid Lundqvist's *protest songs* are remarkably often centred around what is for western culture a typical binary opposition between nature and culture. This should be viewed in relation to the interest in and debates on the environment thar flowered in the 1970s – a debate that not only had antimodern, nostalgic and conservative elements, but also often expressed a *reflexive modernity* (Beck 1986, Giddens 1991). 'Ödegårdar' (Abandoned Farms) from 1973 contains a melancholic backward glance at a time when people lived in harmony with nature, but discloses a belief in change in the last verse. In the song there is also an *ontologising tendency* – in Ziehe's sense of the phrase (1989) – i.e. a quest for superior wisdom and meaning.

'På tredje dagen uppståndna' (On the Third Day Risen) (1975), which also focuses on nature/culture, is more offensive and a critical message pervades the song. Instead of looking back, the text looks ahead towards the future. It is a generational

text in which the parental generation, guilty of imperialism and destruction of nature, stands accused by its children. It is these very children who are spearheading the changes, based on knowledge, which must take place in order to save the world. The text can be read as written in a *prefigurative* culture, a culture where parents learn from their sons and daughters (Mead 1970/1978). However, even if 'On The Third Day Risen' seems to be a more politicised text than 'Abandoned Farms', sharing as it does the perspective of the student movement, it actually strikes a balance between this movement and the perspective of bohemian youth. This is revealed primarily through words that can be traced to one bohemian youth movement in particular – the hippies.

On a cultural level, the *confession* can generally be taken as the aesthetic practice of *subjectification*, a cultural orientation that attempts to cope with the modern. Ziehe (1986) states that in retrospect, the 1970s can be seen as the promised decade of subjectification. However, the confessional texts that we usually associate with the 70s are written by women. Viewed from the perspective of social psychology, the confession can also be seen as the result of a gender socialisation that 'encourages' women's orientation towards relationships and the gender-specific language socialisation that renders women specialists in creating and maintaining close relations through language. Thus Turid, who worked in a music genre largely revolving around confessional texts, is in no way unique in writing confessional songs in the 1970s.

Two of Turid's confessional texts are directed towards the mother and the father respectively. The text on the mother, 'Personligt brev' (Personal Letter) (1975 & 1980) is more ambivalent in its feelings towards the song's main person than the text about the father, which is more idealised. This way of viewing parents was shared by many during the 1970s and the literature written by women at that time is replete with criticised mothers and idealised fathers. Mothers stood for everything that the young women of the 70s neither wanted to be nor have, whereas the fathers stood for professional careers, the world at large and adventure. The ambivalence towards the mother and the idealisation of the father can also be interpreted from a psychological point of view. The love-hate conveyed in 'Personal Letter' can be interpreted in the light of the ambivalence embedded in the symbiotic mother-daughter dyad, and which is based in the often problematic balancing in this relationships between autonomy on the one hand and intimacy on the other. The father, however, represents difference for girls and consequently a less problematic autonomy; it is on this difference that the idealisation of fathers is based. 'På din motorcykel' (On Your Motorcycle) (1977) is about a daughter's attempts to become a separate individual in relation to her mother, with her father in the role of liberator.

The texts pertaining both the mother and the father have an educational tone; in prefigurative cultures, the child possesses the knowledge needed to improve the parents' lives. In the song about the mother the potential for change lies in the woman's role in the nuclear family, the family that had been under attack for several years when 'Personal Letter' was written. Work will liberate the life force and creativity that have been suppressed by the mother's role. In creative work, mother and daughter meet beyond symbiosis in an adult relationship. In the song on the father too, it is aesthetic creativity which breaks the father's passivity after his wife's death and his daughter's separation from him and which facilitates a new adult companionship between father and daughter. At the same time, the elevation of aesthetic creativity functions as a defence of the daughter's own life choices.

In 'On Your Motorcycle', the persona which has been present throughout Turid Lundqvist's production, the 'lady of the woods' appears for the last time. This persona, mythical, unearthly and pure, makes possible a position of an innocent, neutral observer of human folly. At the same time, this persona, who in various guises was and is shared by other women in rock, functions as 'a room of one's own' in the world of rock, a room reserved for women in which men neither can nor want to enter. The 'lady of the woods' gradually disappears as Turid Lundqvist writes fewer and fewer texts of her own and instead records others' more markedly political songs. It is as though when a woman's own room no longer exists, her own voice also grows silent.

Eva Dahlgren: Authenticity and Ambivalence

Eva Dahlgren's texts are centered around the experiences of living in the late modern world, on a psychological, social and cultural level. A longing for *authenticity*, genuineness, as regards human relationships, the self, views of life and communication runs throughout her songs. But this longing is coupled with a consciousness – stemming from her own reflexive knowledge – of the absence of any-

thing fixed or constant and an awareness that modern people live in a time of instability regarding culture, society and the subject. Dahlgren's songs thus not only express a longing for authenticity but also an insight into its instability. This insight is conveyed, for instance, when the song's 'I' says she would like to know but can do no more than *believe*. This belief, however, is not ontological but attached to the text's self, in its own reflexive knowledge. Eva Dahlgren's lyrics are characterised by *ambivalence*; they are not anchored in any absolute attitude or safe answers, but pose various questions which are answered in different ways.

Eva Dahlgren's route into rock music went via the *schlager*, or popular song, a musical genre – like the singer-songwriter tradition – in which women have long been active. The large number of successful women in this genre may be explained in part by the low status of the schlager within popular music. However, Eva Dahlgren has never been a 'typical' schlager singer: from the beginning she has written her own material and her texts lay claims to authenticity. On the other hand, she participated twice in the Swedish competition for the Eurovision Song Contest (1979 and 1980) and her work neither originates in nor is directed towards any specific subculture or age group. This lack of defined public initially helped Eva Dahlgren's career in two ways. It gave access to a *mass audience* since she invited everyone to listen, so to speak, without reservation. And it helped her artistic ambitions to be 'Eva Dahlgren', a unique, *individualised voice*, free from genre-bound demands as regards words and music.

Eva Dahlgren's work contains two very broad themes: one concerns *identity* and the other *relationships*. The identity theme encompasses three aspects: social identity, subjective identity and cultural identity. That all these aspects overlap each other is clear in the song 'Ung och stolt' (Young and Proud) from 1987. Thematically, this song tends most towards *social identity*, but it is not only a defence of youth as a social category; it is also an *adolescent text* (Kristeva 1990). Using the persona of the warrior woman, Dahlgren describes an oceanic condition and the oscillating between impotence and omnipotence so typical of adolescence. These experiences also influence the form of the text; it is ambivalent, with an open structure – reminiscent of Edith Södergran's poem, 'Vierge moderne' (1916).

The text's of Eva Dahlgren that are more concentrated to *subjective identity* are possible to analyse as texts dealing with *the self as a reflexive project* (Giddens 1991). It is not only these texts but also Eva Dahlgren's production as a whole that comprise such a project: the 'I' of the songs continually examines itself, its motives, actions and goals. 'Ingen och alla är du' (No One And Everyone Is You) (1978) presents the late modern experience of an all-encompassing fragmentation and meaninglessness which express themselves in several questions posed in the first verses, which are never answered. The 'I' of the text tries to deal with this lack of contingency through attempts at the cultural orientation Ziehe (1989) calls subjectification, which involves the search for closeness and psychic intimacy. This can be identified in the song's title, directed towards an intimate 'you', which is actually the audience – 'no one and everyone'. Yet at the same time that the song's 'I' seeks closeness and authenticity, these are undermined in a way typical for Dahlgren's texts – 'what is right for you/ I see as a lie'.

In 'Mitt liv' (My Life) (1987) the perspective has narrowed, pointing more exclusively to the self and especially to the experience of a split, fragmented 'I'. There is no 'you' here; the song's I reflects upon its unique subjective identity. The text focuses upon the experience of a fragmented self and the simultaneous longing for wholeness and permanence. Questions remain open, the ambivalence remains. The song's 'I' seems to understand the difficulties involved in living in late modernity, but also so the advantages of the uncompleted.

Relations between people is another clear theme in Eva Dahlgren's songs. The context of the songs on close, intimate *love relations* are placed is comprised by the changes in those very relations which are typical of late modernity. According to Giddens (1992) there has been a shift from *romantic love* secured in marriage to *confluent love* as part of a *pure relationship* in which love is only one – albeit very important – part. Dahlgren's songs can thus be described as more about relationships than about love. 'Bara en väg ut' (Only One Way Out) (1984) describes a failed close relationship, characterised by lack of lust, genuineness and mutual open communication – basic components for a pure relationship. The song's 'you' also idealises the song's 'I'. This distancing idealisation belongs to the world of romantic love and not that of confluent love, which is based on intimacy and the ability to be open. The title, 'Only One Way Out' may be interpreted to mean that the only possible solution to problems in a relationship is to end it when it is not worth maintaining, since neither partner gets enough out of it. But the title can also be interpreted more act-

ively, less pessimistically – meaning that there is actually a way to get the pure relationship to function. The song does not describe this alternative, but in 'Jag klär av mej naken' (I Undress Myself Naked) (1987) it becomes clear that the way is *authenticity*. This song argues that close relations must be based on mutual giving and receiving of genuine feelings and a straight and honest view of the other which encompasses both good and bad sides. It rejects the idealisation which the song's 'you' also expresses, which has its roots in the tradition of romantic love, viewing the woman as a soul without a body – the one pole in the dichotomy of madonna and whore. Instead, the song's 'I' claims – as do many other border-crossing female artist in rock music – that body and soul are one.

Eva Dahlgren's songs about *social relations* can be analysed in the context of the *risk society* (Beck 1986, Giddens 1991). In this society everyone is confronted – as individuals as well as citizens of the world – with various possibilities for action in their daily social existence. Dahlgren's texts concerning social relations reflect the *risks* involved in meeting and relating to other people as well as the *trust* needed if inter-personal relations are to function. In 'Människor gör ont' (People Hurt) (1982) the negative sides of the risk society prevail: the text's 'I' describes the people as essentially evil, and no explanations are given for their malevolent actions. Trust is totally vanquished and the 'I' retreats wounded back into itself with the words, 'never more/ will I trust anyone else'. Subsequent albums contain songs in which trust is more prominent. 'Skeppet' (The Ship) (1987) expresses a more ambivalent attitude towards the question of basic human evil or goodness: on the one hand, the 'I' wants to believe in people's innate goodness, on the other, the 'I' knows that social conditions determine how people act towards each other. This ambivalence is maintained in Dahlgren's texts thematising social relations. People are seen as both good and bad, the texts' 'I' balances the awareness of risk with trust.

Kristeva (1987/1989) sees *melancholy* as a modern discourse that leaves traces in people's texts. Melancholy is not one of Eva Dahlgren's themes, but it sets a tone, a linguistic tone that can be perceived in the texts. A text can never be melancholic in a clinical sense since a deeply depressed person rarely speaks much less writes. However, a text can have *melancholic elements*, and such texts always entail a temporary visit to melancholia and a simultaneous victory over it since language, at least partly, symbolises the sorrow of loss. But sorrow can never be wholly expressed in a text with elements of melancholy. Instead of openly talking about the causes or reasons for the loss, such a text conveys the *feeling* of loss, emptiness, longing and powerlessness.

'Guldlock' (Goldenlocks) (1991) is suffused with a vague tone of loss and impotence which characterises Eva Dahlgren's melancholic songs. 'Goldenlocks' expresses a longing for a child, but this longing seems to issue from a psychic vacuum, from the 'black hole' of melancholy.

Although melancholy as a rule is not a theme but a tone, 'Blå hjärtans blues' (The Blue Heart Blues) is the exception to the rule. It is a text about melancholy, about the melancholy that comes from a 'blue' heart. In the song, the listener, the 'I' and Peggy Lee, who the text's 'I' is listening to, are united in a bittersweet pain that is never transgressed, where the feeling of melancholy is central – that type of melancholy that Kristeva (1987/1989) posits as characteristic of women. But among Eva Dahlgren's texts with melancholic elements, there is also one describing the surmounting of melancholy. Unlike the other songs, 'Du som älskar' (You Who Love) is written in the past tense, and the 'I' of the text speaks from a position *outside* the crypt of melancholy, which is locked from the outside with the key of language.

Kajsa Grytt: Body and Feelings

Kajsa Grytt's texts are imbued with a strong ambition to construct an alternative femininity, a female rebel. The 'I' who narrates and the 'she' who is sometimes described in the texts are not always strong and independent, but they always show their real *feelings*, which in itself is presented as an act of resistance. These feelings are anchored in the *body*, which also forms the source of a pleasure-filled and openly expressed sexuality. This emphasis on body and feelings can in part be explained in the light of their time and their subculture – the punk culture.

Punk music and, later, new wave music dominated the alternative rock scene in Sweden and the western world at the end of the 1970s and into the 80s. When the group Tant Strul was formed in Stockholm in 1980, a large, lively music scene was already established. As with their British counterparts, there were some differences between the Swedish punk bands that can be traced to differences between the underground youth traditions. Swedish bands as Tant Strul, Eldkvarn and Dag Vag belonged to the *bohemian youth tradition*,

while bands like Ebba Grön and KSMB were more involved with the *radical tradition*. Bohemian rock is associated with the ideals of romanticism – emphasising feelings, originality, integrity and subjectivity – which can be detected in Kajsa Grytt's texts. However, Tant Strul worked not just in the bohemian tradition but also in its 'female' variant. At the end of the 1970s the number of women rock musicians increased with punk, which can be explained by the widening influence of the *women's movement*, punk's emphasis on *everyday experiences*, including sexuality, and by the *'do-it-yourself' creativity* that paved the way for women who had never held an electric guitar in their hands before. Female punk and the new wave music also often presented femininity symbolically as a masquerade and thereby de-mystified the conventional images of gender. Tant Strul worked in this way as well.

Thus, rooted in a bohemian tradition, the woman rebel is created in Kajsa Grytt's texts. There is already a glimpse of her in Tant Strul's first album (1982), in the song 'Hetta' (Heat). The text's 'you' – who is both the audience and Tant Strul – proudly dances on the hard city streets. What is notable about this 'you', in contrast to the surrounding empty, unfeeling people with their sharp looks, is a strong physicality coupled with genuine and pure feelings. The stress on inner experiences is derived from one of the song's contexts – the bohemian tradition – but can also be interpreted in relation to the opposition between the so-called *care rationality* and the so-called *use rationality* (Halsaa 1988). This is even more evident in the rhetorically normative 'Vår tur nu' (Our Turn Now) (1990), where care rationality – in our culture associated with femininity – is pitted against the 'masculine' use rationality. Feelings, weakness, life and love are placed in a positive polarity opposed to material wealth, lovelessness, coldness and power; the one pole is posited as wholly incompatible with the other. If Turid Lundqvist's texts describe change anchored in the right knowledge, Kajsa Grytt's may be said to be about change anchored in the right feeling. In Grytt's texts, feeling is synonymous with resistance.

'Rosa' (1983) depicts a female rebel with a long history – a witch. In the witch Rosa, body and feelings combine in a way that suggests to the listener/reader the bohemian rebel glimpsed in 'Heat'. But what distinguishes Rosa from the urban rebel is that body, feelings and *nature* are linked together. The witch Rosa can be read in a context of neo paganism: she is an example of a 'feminine' spirituality which is conveyed through bodily experience, dance, sexuality and movement.

The witch is not only the strong, feminine model that the modern women's movement and women in rock set forth, but also a *contrast*. The witch, the female monster, the she-devil, etc. is the opposite to and thereby indissolubly connected with the virgin, madonna, the female angel – a dichotomy that has influenced the view of women for centuries. That this latter view of femininity is still necessary to take into account and examine is evident in the fact that Kajsa Grytt, Turid Lundqvist and Eva Dahlgren have all written songs about *angels*, albeit in different versions. Kajsa Grytt's angels in 'Som änglarna' (Like Angels) (1983) are cold and lack feelings, while her witch/rebel is warm and full of feeling: the witch's characteristics are elevated into goodness and the angel's degraded to evil. Turid Lundqvist's angel in 'Stjärnor och änglar' (Stars And Angels) (1975) falls on bad times, but she has a chance to change, and as in other Turid Lundqvist songs, this change will be based on knowledge. In Eva Dahlgren's 'Ängeln i rummet' (The Angel In The Room) (1989), good and evil are not split among various people as in the other texts mentioned above; the angel symbolises the good and evil that exists within every person. In this case, there is no either/or but instead a both/and – an ambivalence typical for Eva Dahlgren's songs.

All three rock songwriters use imagery taken from nature, which should be seen in relation to the great significance of nature in the Swedish poetic tradition in general. However, they use this imagery in different ways. In 'Amazon' (1983) from Tant Strul's album with the same name, the woman rebel is constructed through an augmented physicality which is melded with nature and expressed through a powerful ecstasy concentrated in the text's 'I', who is both a warrior woman and a great river. It is not only the body's boundaries with nature that are challenged but also its boundaries with the audience. The song describes an oceanic condition, conjured up not least by its water symbolism. The infinite, oceanic feminine 'I' and the female body 'without an end' is discussed by Cixous in her famous essay 'Sorties' (1975/1986), where she claims that the 'newly born woman' comprises the basis of a feminine discourse that challenges the phallo-centric order. The unbounded rebel in 'Amazon' also resists the Law of the Father. However, there are also problems with a position that merges nature and the woman as pre-

cisely this association is used in the argument that women are, for instance, less suitable than men for participating in public life. Nevertheless, neither 'Amazon' nor a pantheistic text like Eva Dahlgren's 'Jag är Gud' (I Am God) (1991) is clearly traditional in this sense as the fusion of nature and the woman also serves as a symbol for power and strength. In comparison with a text like Turid's 'Välkomme-hus' (The Welcome House) (1973) above, in which nature/the woman is presented as small, modest, and self-effacing, the aforementioned texts indicate that cracks have begun to show in the cultural construction of femininity.

In Kajsa Grytt's texts about *relationships*, *sexuality* plays a central role, one that should be seen in the context of punk but also in relation to that part of the women's movement that emphasises women's sexual pleasure and pleasure in their own satisfaction. One text that highlights a pleasurable sexuality that needs not lead to anything other than pleasure is 'Kom hit in' (Come In Here) (1985). The song's 'I' is active, demanding and enjoying and she is the one who sees instead of being seen as in so many other rock texts. Sexuality often functions as an element in a *quest-romance* (Giddens 1992) in Kajsa Grytt's texts: sexual encounters are seen as detours on the way to the goal – a consummate love relationship. The quest-romance is central in 'Drömmar' (Dreams) (1990), where through experience, the 'I' is entirely aware that the pleasure she feels is not permanent ('there's always a worm somewhere'). The text also contains romantic idealised love and confluent love. At the same time as a close love relationship is considered worth maintaining so long as both parties get enough out of it, the 'I' also maintains a dream of the idealised 'Mr Right', of the dream man and sublime love. This coexistence is, according to Giddens (1992), typical for late modernity.

The emotional rebel is also present in 'Dreams', in the words 'the one who dares not love/ dares nothing'. But she is also 'frustrated/ and searches so fixated', which can also be interpreted to mean that it is not just a question of looking for love, but also a fear of emptiness, tristess and repetition that drives her – that attempt at orientation in the late modern which Ziehe (1989) calls *potentiation.*

Kajsa Grytt's texts thematise not only being in a relationship but equally, being without one. The *losses* of the other – but also changes of residence and work – comprise a sort of passage in the late modern life course, according to Giddens (1991). The individual must be capable of mourning these losses in order to develop further. The grief that follows the dissolution of a love relationship is a prominent theme in Kajsa Grytt's texts – from the first album to the last. The loss of the other does not have melancholic elements – it is about sorrow and not melancholy – but the texts that thematize the loss of self do have such elements. These texts fill Grytt's latest album (1995) but it seems as if the destabilising of the identity that is outlined there not only produces feelings of emptiness but also points ahead to something new, as if one passage in the lifecourse were completed and the 'I' of her songs – enriched by experience – is ready for the next one.

Conclusion

In terms of themes and motifs, there are more differences than similarities between the three authorships. I have not found a female rock text but a *textual polyphony*. It is also obvious that I have not found a female voice but a *polyphony of female voices*. The 'I' of the lyrics speaks from different and continually shifting positions, both within the same authorship and compared between the three textual universes. It is not possible to find one delimited femininity in the texts; rather they construct a web of plural femininities. I have also found many examples of intertextuality between 'high' and 'low' in the lyrics. This supports Jameson's (1979) assumption that the limits between the two cultures – elite and popular – are subverted in an ongoing process. But as the example with the symbol of the angel points out, it is not only a matter of intertextuality, but both cultures also use symbols from a common cultural reference library. In other words, I have not found one popular culture but a *cultural polyphony*.

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Male Norms and Female Forms

The Visual Representation of Men and Women in Press Images in 1925, 1955 and 1987

ANJA HIRDMAN

The mass media's production of the obvious – their construction of common sense – can be said to largely characterise the institution of journalism. By naturalising a special way of thinking in their descriptions of the world, society and its people, this common sense seems to be the only and most natural one (Ekecrantz & Olsson, 1994). Gender is a fundamental part of this production of the obvious. The categories man and woman are "filled" with different meanings which vary depending on context, time and societal conditions.

Daily papers and weekly magazines can be viewed as elements of a specific cultural and historical time, in which they both represent a certain "spirit of the times" or mentality – what people talk about and how – and, at the same time, contribute to the construction of this reality – to the very images of the world and the sexes they convey.

The purpose of this investigation is to examine the gender ideology of journalistic products as it has been expressed in the visual representation of men and women during 1925, 1955 and 1987 in a number of Swedish daily papers and weekly magazines.[1] Which codes are used to create meaning? How is the image of men different from that of women? What are the functions of men and women in the interplay between text and image?

By studying these years, some insight into the various periods of the 1900's can be gained, thereby constituting a wide platform on which to base a perspective on different historical changes. The content of the images is analysed in relation to the journalistic event construction which has dominated during these years.[2] Event construction refers to the following:

> (..), the various journalistic artefacts (text, pictures, sounds, articles, papers, programmes). These artefacts are not mere representations of the outer world, but (re-)constructions of social, political and cultural realities. (Ekecrantz & Olsson, 1997:5)

Today, the representation of men and women in the mass media is one of the primary elements in the construction of femininity and masculinity. Norms concerning what, during a certain time period, constitutes or should constitute "manly" and "womanly" are created by highlighting and emphasising certain behaviours and features as being typical gender ideals. Here, representation is not viewed as a reflection of reality, but rather as an active process of selection and presentation which creates meaning. Thus, the focus of this investigation is not on *what* the media show us, but rather on *how* meaning is produced and constructed.

That which denotes the masculine versus the feminine is based on various codes in the visual image. These codes are culturally familiar and, thus, recognisable. It can be said that a society's dominant ideology is seen in just these familiar meanings. According to Gramsci, this ideology appears as something we already know, something we have seen before. Thus, the ideological concept imbedded in the photograph or text does not produce new knowledge about the surrounding world or ourselves, but instead *recognition* of the world as we have learnt to perceive it (Hall, 1973).

The construction of femininity and masculinity can be seen as a *process of naturalisation*. Pictures are a crucial part of this process, as they show us

"how it is" and frame the template within which the daily and weekly press conduct their gender discourses.

Methods and Materials

The papers examined are the largest Swedish morning paper, *Dagens Nyheter* (Dn), and one of the largest evening papers, *Aftonbladet* (Af), as well as a selection of weekly magazines (approx. 4-5 per year and week). All of the weeklies were either family or women's magazines. The weeklies serve primarily as comparison material to the images of the daily press, allowing us to ascertain the role genre and target public might play in shaping pictorial conventions through the years: What is the interplay between the contemporary journalistic pictorial concept and the various paper genres? What are the commonalities and differences in the gender ideology depicted in the pictures?

For both the daily and weekly press, a product perspective was employed in which the papers were examined as a whole and in their original context. Thus, the picture analysis is not limited to only photographic representations, but also includes illustrations and advertisements, which constitute an increasingly important feature of the picture milieu during the 1900's. This increased use of images in a purely commercial context also affects representations and valuations of other images in society. Thus, I think it is futile to try to maintain distinctions between the various media genres, although such efforts are common in analyses of picture contents.

Because the picture material is extensive, I have focused on recurrent and continuous *patterns* of how men and women are presented at a certain point in time. This type of research, in which so-called "pattern-perception" is central, allows a mapping of how meaning and ideas are shaped within various areas – in this case the journalistic image.

Representation and Construction of Gender

Realism as Visual Style – Journalistic Narrative

One concept that has been discussed within the context of image theories and in relation to the importance of press pictures for journalistic text is "realism". The view that realistic images are inherently truthful and objective has a long and firmly rooted tradition. This is largely the result of the institution of journalism's legitimation of itself as just a mirror of reality. However, realism is a conventional form of representation which depicts cultural and political ideologies and values, especially through its power of visual "objectivity":

> The fact that a photograph seems to speak for itself, as do realistic forms of representation in general, ought to call our attention to the way in which ideology always naturalises the cultural (Solomon-Godeau, 1993:151).

This view of the realistic photograph's status as 'objective' – as a reflection of a surrounding reality without subjective values – is receiving more and more criticism. Several researchers have illustrated the ideological use of the image and the importance of its social role in various contexts (Tagg, 1988; Sekula, 1992).

Realistic visual media such as news photographs are crucial tools for legitimation and representation of the political and ideological social climate. News images have the capacity to make social identities visual, to privilege some and deny the existence of others (Kozol, 1994). In this way, vision becomes a way to frame differences and form boundaries in order to define the societal norm. Realism, therefore, should be seen as a historically variable form of representation.

One convention in the creation of the realistic image is the metonymy technique, in which so-called "regular people" are used in order to represent wider social conditions and circumstances. Through portraits of regular people, complex or abstract problems, questions and events are explained. Even if they are strangers as opposed to known personalities, these people serve an important purpose in the news. As representatives, they are made familiar by their social roles.

With the addition of 'commercial realism', the concept of reality is widened to include even those situations in which the spectator is consciously involved in a fabricated world as if it were real (Goffman, 1979). Those images referred to by Goffman are advertisement and commercial pictures. Even if they cannot be said to represent real behaviour, what is important is that the images are perceived as natural and that we can quickly localise ourselves in what is happening or expected to happen. In contrast to the (commercial) image in which the event (depicted or expected) is in focus, we have the portrait image in which the subject is in focus. According to Goffman, portrait images require *recognition of the subject* for ritual use, while

commercial images require that *the event* in the picture is understandable. This distinction can, however, be questioned. The meaning of the image of an anonymous person can be derived from the context in which the person is placed in the picture's narrative. Thus, recognition of that which the person represents in the picture (not recognition of the person as a subject) is crucial to the observer's understanding.

Of course, the genre can play an important role in how the image is "read", but a basic understanding requires that we perceive the image as "natural". The ability to understand what we see and how we see is formed and determined by the contemporary, cultural pictorial conventions. The language of image and form is largely characterised and influenced by the intertextual relationships between a number of different cultural forms of expression, such as advertisements, tv, film, documentary photographs, etc. As Barthes (1977) points out, our understanding of a text (in a wider sense) always depends on our earlier knowledge about and use of other texts. Thus, image conventions should be understood as the constructed way in which people and environments are viewed which, at a certain historical point in time, appears to be the most 'natural' and general. Based on this line of reasoning, it is difficult to differentiate weekly from daily press images, as well as advertisement from article pictures, as regards analysis of the visual representation of gender.

In the traditional division of construction and representation, the two notions constitute different perspectives on the function of the mass media. Representation is seen as a more factual, real *rendering* of the world (and individuals), while the idea of construction stands for a wider approach in which the media's role as the producers of reality is emphasised. However, within the area of constructivist, feminist media research, these two notions are not differentiated. Representation is seen as a form of *description* – how the media choose to describe men and women.

How groups are presented in various cultural forms of expression – whether or not an individual is identified as a group member – is determined by the representation, the form of which is limited by codes and conventions. The relationships between 'differences' (meaning in difference) are constructions belonging to a social order which consists of power hierarchies. In order to clarify these hierarchies, the question of the masculine must also be addressed:

> (..) exempting the masculine from the visual representation, helps to preserve a cultural fiction that masculinity is not socially constructed. (Kibby, 1997:1)

Studies of the masculine lead, without exception, back to questions about femininity, race, class and national identity – to the construction of individual subjectivity. Like femininity, masculinity should also be understood in terms of the relational creation of meaning and within the context of gender relations in general.

Gender does not primarily represent individuals, but instead a social relationship. Thus, definitions of gender are based on the *representation of a relationship* – of what it means to belong to a group, a class or a category. Because gender is not considered to comprise essential categories, we can not differentiate a representation (description) of gender from the constructions (complex of ideas) on which it rests: *The construction of gender is both the product and the process of its representation.* (de Lauretis, 1987:5)

Therefore, what is central here is the connection between representation and construction. We must change our perspective from analyses of the representation of "actual" gender differences to analyses of gender differences as (re)presentations.

Representation can be found at two levels. At the first level, representation is equated with *speaking for* someone or for a certain group. Emphasised at the second level is, instead, the rhetorical and ideological transformation, in which representation consists of *the forming of the subject* (Ganguly, 1992). If we continue to develop this division of representation, we can see that the first level contains more aspects of presentation. Events, happenings are presented, using as actors individuals involved in the events. Thus, this context is more individual-related – the person in the picture is directly and personally relevant to the text and his/her statements, actions and behaviours give rise to the reporting. In contrast, the second level contains more aspects of symbolisation. The person in the picture primarily symbolises/represents something outside him/herself – a condition, an event, or in the form of a metaphor, an image-of something. In this case, it is not the individual who is important but rather his/her role as a representative of something or someone. Thus, representation is more a question of formation of the subject of interest.

Because representation necessarily implies a form of construction, these two levels are not al-

ways isolated. However, this division has proved to be relevant when examining how the sexes are visualised in the picture material. During the years, men, more often than women, are shown as individuals with direct relevance to the text – often in the form of (political) decision makers. The tendency for women is that they are more often used as symbols for various conditions and events. Throughout history, women have signified different symbolic values and have been the bearers of ideas/meaning outside themselves:

> Men often appear as themselves, as individuals, but women attest the identity and value of someone or something else (Warner, 1985:331).

One way to understand this difference in levels is to use a power perspective based on the dichotomy public versus private. In which of these spheres do we find men and women? What are their functions in the pictures and texts? According to Yvonne Hirdman (1988), the two basic logical assumptions of the gender system are the separation of the sexes and the establishment of masculinity as normative. Taken together, this separation and the balance of power between men and women legitimate the male norm. Are these "gender logics" seen in the representations of men and women in press images? If so, how are they conveyed?

1925 – Talking Men and Woman as Image

Within the project *Journalism's roles* (JMK), it has been shown that, in 1925, the type of event most dominant in Swedish journalism was the spoken address. Representatives from various institutions delivered their messages or made speeches. Thus, the papers were a forum for many individual (male) voices. The statement or address itself constituted the main event, most often in the form of an account without commentary. The dominant event type can, thus, be characterised as *the speech event* (Ekecrantz & Olsson, 1994).

In the papers, men dominate both the text and pictures. They make statements, deliver monologues and the text is flanked by portraits – the so-called talking heads form. The pictures show serious men wearing clothes which signal the connotation of importance and (public) power. In the picture legends, title, profession and first and last name are consistently included. It is the statements and actions of these men which represent events and the world in 1925. /Picture series 1/

In this year, the portrait picture is given an important ideological meaning in that it represents, and is largely exclusively tied to, the image of masculinity.[3] In such a composition, where body and surroundings are not included, the function of the image is to utilise the men's faces in order to highlight Male aspects (Hall, 1973). However, it would seem that the portraits are better characterised by non-expressiveness. The serious, unmoveable face becomes an image of formal power and public life, where political and social events are construed and visualised using the subject – the formal man.

Visual Femininity – Actresses and Ad Girls

In 1925, women were visually represented as actresses and in the illustrated advertisement material. Here, the New woman – young, unmarried, beauty and fashion conscious – dominates. /Picture series 2/

This decade was a period of changing systems. The First World War had thrown aside old notions of morals, and ingrained ideas and talk about the New were characteristic features – the New woman, the New sexual morality, etc. For the post-war woman, new models were also created, in which the hetaera was mass produced:

> ...young girls (..) began training in arts other than the domestic, the art of make-up, attraction and seduction; that which is womanly was, in all traditionally indicated areas, "professionalised" (Hirdman, 1992:173).

There are clear parallels between the two areas in which the New woman was represented: ads in the daily press (beauty consumption) and acting (the cultural public). Women's function in both spheres was primarily to symbolise *the image* of the feminine. The actresses task on the scene was to publicly display and symbolise the external, visible femininity (Ericsson, 1994). In reviews of the actresses' performances, it was often the "female" aspects of the actress that were stressed and not the character portrayal itself.

The new consumption aspects of the beauty culture, in which appearance became an increasingly important symbol for female identity, were also introduced early and by using actresses. They were the first group of women to be used for advertising beauty products. The visibility of cosmetics became

legitimate in a context in which women consciously *represented themselves for others*. That is to say, contexts in which they carried out a role or acted as "spectacles" in advertisements. Thus, actresses played a crucial role in legitimising and constructing female publicity based on the new beauty and consumption ideology. Actresses and film stars from this new era were also important for the image of femininity that was introduced in films, books and in daily and weekly publications.

Earlier signifying the publicly "fallen woman", rouge and powder became more and more accepted in public milieus in which women appeared: parties, various events and, later on, the workplace (Peiss, 1996). In the new public space for women, their function was to represent a pure, ideal femininity, which to a great extent was dependent on and tied to the visual presentation.

No considerable difference was found between the picture material from the two papers (Dn and Af). However, the evening paper (Af) did stress the entertainment world (film and theatre) in its coverage, and as a result a greater proportion of pictures of women was observed, although the content of the pictures was similar.

Idols of Consumption

Sometime around the turn of the century and afterward, the Swedish weekly press changed its gallery of personalities. This shift in image motif went from predominantly mature men from the public sphere, *the idols of production*, to young female film stars and actresses, *the idols of consumption* (Larsson, 1990). The breakthrough of Hollywood films greatly affected the choice of images in the other media, primarily where visual representations of women were concerned. The way in which central love scenes were arranged at that time, as well as camera techniques including close-ups of women's faces, induced a radical and abrupt change in the look of the weekly magazines. This change was not only due to the fact that images from films were reproduced and used as eye-catchers on the covers of the weeklies, but also because these pictures were eventually used in a broad range of contexts – from articles about films to beauty care, exercise and food reports, etc. The conventions of film aesthetics spread and left their mark on almost all visual material within the weekly press and on a large part of the daily press. Actresses and film stars became the idols of the new era, and fixation on appearance, cosmetics and fashion became increasingly tied to the image of what it meant to be a woman. The visual image itself became the definition of femininity – women-as-image. /Picture series 3/

Talking Heads and Silent Bodies

If, during this year, the spoken address was the dominant event type, shaped and portrayed by powerful men expressing themselves, then the image of femininity was represented, or perhaps primarily established, as the visible woman-as-image. This visual image also emphasises the professionalisation of femininity, in which care for appearances became a more and more essential part of the definition of "woman".

The talking head form constitutes a representation of the masculine which is based on an authoritative, formal male role as interpreter of and actor in the public life of the community. This image of men as serious and formal provides a sharp contrast to the image of women. As opposed to the portraits of men, the ad girls and actresses were shown as whole body figures.

To come to the point, we could say that in the representation of the masculine and the feminine in 1925, we see the construction of *the talking heads* versus *the silent bodies*. In advertisements, it is often the *girlish body* which symbolises the visual image of the New woman – a woman who is depicted as coquettish and narcissistically self-absorbed. Self-contemplation is a common picture form in the beauty ads of this time. Such an image establishes the myth of the narcissistic, self-involved woman, whose only interest is inward – this in contrast to the outward looking and socially active man. Additionally, the role of the actresses in the public culture is characterised by lack of earnestness and lack of involvement in serious activities.

In 1925, the women depicted in the press images were not there because they as individuals had done or said something newsworthy, but instead they were there to serve as representatives for the areas they dominated – the public culture and the new ideology of consumption. The feminine public was a cultural public, in contrast to the social and scientific contexts in which men were found. It is also apparent that, for the most part, this public culture links the feminine to entertainment and leisure time, value features which characterise the culture of consumption.

1955 – The Swedish Welfare State and Household Democracy

In 1955, Swedish journalism, in its description of reality and of society, was characterised by consensus. A social order was construed and depicted in which consensus reigned – or at least the image of consensus. Both in text and pictures, the papers focus on communication and discussion, and symbolic events in the form of large-scale, forward looking projects dominate the material – bridges are opened, roads are built, etc. (Ekecrantz & Olsson, 1994).

In terms of pictures of individuals, the talking (hu)man from 1925 has been replaced with the conversing (male) elite group, which is seen as being synonymous with society. The images create and fortify the prevailing production of consensus on several planes. The relationships between the pictured people are often relatively physically intimate; their arms are around each other, they are shaking hands, etc. /Picture series 4/ Now, with this arranged picture form, even the photographer plays an active role – the groups, clearly conscious of the camera, positions themselves for the picture, sometimes objects are held up. This picture convention (the posed photograph), and the cooperation between subject and photographer on which it is based, clearly reveals the photograph as a representation for and of consensus (Becker, 1996). More often than in any other of the observed years, men and women in 1955 are seen together in article pictures as well as advertisements. In the picture material, women are primarily represented in their family role as wife and mother, but they are also seen as models in the context of beauty/fashion.

The Family Image and Consensus Between the Sexes

The family played a crucial role in the growing welfare state, not only as a metaphor for society as a whole, but also as the foundation for the project of consensus implied by the welfare state. The family symbolised the welfare state on the private plane, but also in a public form, as private social order represented and legitimated public order. The Swedish welfare model was an ideological project in which the respective functions and roles of the sexes were clearly crystallised and given a socio-functional perspective which can clearly be read in the press images. Notions about the little and the big world can be observed in building plans (with "hers" and "his" rooms) as well as in public discussions (Hirdman, 1992). In 1955, private and public are distinct spheres, but at the same time, and perhaps more so than in any other year, these two spheres are co-dependent; the private public (the family) reflects the public public (the welfare ideology) and vice versa.

The notion of the nuclear family as a basic social unit is firmly anchored in the picture representations of 1955. In the pictures, various behaviours and arrangements are used as physical expressions in order to show the family as a unit and, simultaneously, to establish the balance of power between the man and the woman. The man/father is often found in the periphery of the physical circle, thus depicting a relationship in which protectiveness is bound and requires distance. The so-called "shoulder-hold", which dominates pictures from this year, necessitates an asymmetric pose in which one person is taller or is placed in a higher position than another person who is accepting of the situation (Goffman, 1979). The placement of the sexes in the family picture in 1955 serves as a gestalt for the form of consensus production which dominated the papers – a male authority in the family as well as the community and, not least, a woman's (visible) cooperation in this arrangement. /Picture series 5/

By making connotations about values such as stability and responsibility – important characteristics associated with the right to govern – the home was construed as a metaphor of the nation, thereby revealing an obvious correspondence between men's power position in the family and their appropriateness for political/social leadership. Thus, the pictures give masculine primacy an aura of legitimacy by visualising gender as a 'logical' extension of 'natural' family positions – the father/husband/man as provider for and protector of the family (Kozol, 1994).

The self-evident authority shown by the male decision makers involved in discussions in male group pictures – an authority on a par with the society, the public – is also secured and construed by images of the "obvious" family roles.

Parents and Children

In 1955, the constellation women-children was a relatively common motif. In this case, physical closeness is stressed, and this intimacy depicts them as a unit. The women are always observing their children (their main interest) and/or are in a child-adjusted physical position: bending down, crouching, touching the children. These arrange-

ments naturalise the connection woman-mother. In other words, the women are depicted as the children's equals; they are not taller, positioned higher or at a distance. Non-equal positions, however, are characteristic of the relationship between the woman and the man in the family picture. /Picture series 6/

In general, pictures of parents and children are a common motif in both the daily and weekly press, however always in sex-bound forms – fathers and sons, mothers and daughters. Thus, the connection is not only based on the bond parent-child, but instead the pictures strengthen and construct a gender affinity. This shows the importance attached to the traditional, sex-bound transfer from adult to child of what were then considered typically masculine versus feminine activities/characteristics. This division into father/son, mother/daughter symbolises a mythicisation of the idea that different bonds exist between them. Women tend to be shown as having more familial likeness to their daughters – and to themselves when younger – than men have to their sons (Goffman, 1979). The physical closeness depicted between mothers and daughters is conspicuously absent between fathers and sons.

Getting and Keeping a Man

Getting and keeping a man is clearly the dominant theme in the women's magazines after the Second World War. During 1925, the content of the weekly press was more likely to focus on film and stage actors. However, thirty years later, the focus had shifted to tips and suggestions on how women should manage their homes, bodies and men – this theme was observed in most of the material. The topic of personal care was, in 1925, found mostly in advertisements, but by 1955, it had spread to the rest of the material. Thus, the role of the weekly press in establishing norms about and definitions of femininity was more secure than earlier.

Picture techniques derived from film continued to develop. In the fashion illustrations, women pose like actresses in a film report. The comics look like film "strips", and, just as in the film images, the illustrations accompanying fictional stories are dominated by large female faces and kissing pairs in profile. /Picture series 7/ The young, beautiful woman and her face is seen in ads, short story illustrations and in reports about how She lives. Tips and beauty columns, in their turn, give advice about how to achieve the same "smooth and silky skin" and clear eyes, etc., as She has.

In the dominating discourse on marriage, the woman's role is presented as the altruistic "pleaser", whose job it is to ensure that everything is functioning properly on the home front. This is stressed in the pictures through close-ups of smiling women looking straight into the camera. From this picture form, femininity can be read as unproblematic, pleasant and easily accessible (Ferguson, 1978). The family portraits found in the weekly press follow the contemporary, prevalent picture conventions observed in the morning and evening press.

On the beauty pages, the most common values expressed are self-control, responsibility and duty. Duty is two-fold, thus directed towards oneself and others: you should make yourself beautiful and pleasant, but for the sake of others. In contrast to today, when beauty and self-care are presented as self-rewarding, the beauty message of 1955 was altruistic. Care for one's own appearance filled a function for others. Beauty became a valued trait in discourses about coexistence – discourses in which possible marital problems were laid on women's shoulders.

Men and Women of the Ads

In comparing the different paper genres, no remarkable difference in the appearance of the advertisement material was found. In 1955, the major focus was on the woman as homemaker – a vital and always enthusiastically busy woman. The rhetoric accompanying the ad pictures contained terms such as "easy", "a breeze" and "fun". Continuous reference is made to the notion of difficult house work, a notion which is later negated (Larsson, 1990). The woman's domestic undertakings were defined as a science or profession – thus giving them a new ideological status. After her efforts during the war and employment, the middle class woman should return to the home, back to her domestic career. If the ad girl of the 20's represented the new modernity defined in terms of the ideal of consumption (beauty, fashion, leisure and entertainment), then modernity in the 50's was represented by the woman as homemaker in a well-equipped kitchen. /Picture series 8/

The occurrence of the mother-daughter theme is considerable in the advertisement material from all of the publications. In these ads, household activities constitute their 'natural' bond – the female 'logic'. This bond is depicted as they, together, wash clothes, iron or pause while baking. /Picture series 9/

One type of ad picture that was not found in 1925 was pictures of a man-woman pair. However in 1955, the relationship depicted between men and women was consistently that of the established pair, either preparing to be married or as part of a family, where he is father and she is wife and mother. Also in this year, men appear with women in the beauty ads for women – they are either present in the picture itself (perhaps only a hand or neck, etc.) or mentioned explicitly in the text as those to whom women should appeal. /Picture series 10/

In 1955, the girlish body that dominated the ads in 1925 has largely been replaced by the body of the mother, as the prevailing definition of femininity in and outside the home. We see her as mother and wife, either taking care of the children – feeding, dressing them – or doing the house work. The other type of woman in advertisements is more lightly dressed, often in underwear and selling laundry soap, dish washing detergent or underwear. A new concept also appears in which women are used in ads for products unrelated to the women themselves, that is, in which the woman's only function is obviously to attract and catch the reader's eye.

When men appear in the ads, they are mostly depicted with cars, car parts and watches. The rhetoric stresses the products' function as a part of the male logic – success – how using these products can get you there quicker or help you in your career advancement. Overall, the advertisement rhetoric is tied to the image of masculinity which, to a large extent, dominated journalism – an image including public appearances, conduct and work. /Picture series 11/

The products can be said to largely symbolise the Swedish welfare state's vision of a new rational, technological society and to also reveal the prevailing segregation of the sexes: The man and the car, the woman and the kitchen (as well as beauty products).

Male Homosociality and Female Altruism

In the gender discourse which dominates the images from 1955, the connection between masculinity and power is construed and secured in two forms. In the group pictures of decision making men, male homosociality is shown by visualising understanding and consensus between men. In the family picture, the physical arrangement confirms the man's role as protector, provider and (political) leader, as well as the woman's approval of his role. Thus, the images depict two forms of consensus which are related to and dependent on one another: private consensus (the family pictures) and public consensus (the male group pictures). On the other hand, the image of femininity in 1955 is dominated by the altruistic "pleaser" – the smiling wife, mother or the "put together" woman on her way to catch a man. This in contrast to the more "dangerous" image of the sexual, single woman found during the 20's.

The activities and statements of men are the journalistic events, his welfare is her responsibility and duty, and the woman's function and role (as wife and mother) are defined in relation to the man. We also find Him in the beauty ads, as the reason for her personal care. The dominant gender discourse seen in the content of the picture is striking. The fact that men dominate the images which represent society – images of the discussing, decision making group – reveals the "natural" connection made between the masculine and the public (power). Consensus production is framed, construed and secured through the visual image's message of relational agreement, in which the pictures naturalise the ties between woman-family-home and man-husband-public representative.

1987 – The Representative and Symbolic Image

In 1987, the overriding message is that the political and social systems are out of order and that, as a result, people are *vulnerable and affected* in various ways. Now, the social idyll, discussion and communication are gone, and with them the image of society as a community. Societal systems cause trouble and conflicts which in one way or another affect the "common man". Thus, the journalistic event construction dominating in 1987 can be characterised as involving *system events* (Ekecrantz & Olsson, 1994).

This is clearly depicted in the visual images in which society appears largely in the form of metaphors. Pictures of single individuals have increased, at the cost of the group – the collective. If society in 1955 can be defined by the public group picture of posed, decision making men, caught up in their mutual welfare project, in 1987 it is the portrayal of representatives of the system (*politicians and decision makers*) versus the so-called common (vulnerable/affected) man which largely determines the image forms. Characteristic of the first category is the realistic, *metonymy technique*, in which 'regular people' are used to represent and

explain social conditions, circumstances and events. Politicians, both men and women, are commonly pictured in both the morning and evening press, and, in this case, close-ups are often utilised – the camera comes closer and closer.

Representatives of the System – Politicians, Leaders of Industry

In 1987, a common constellation is the close-up of a group of male politicians, conveying their mutual commitment and drive. Common to these pictures are also captions in citation form, which increase the visualisation of the "here and now" in which the picture was taken, and simultaneously give the people depicted greater authoritative weight. The pictures express intimacy, but on another plane than in the arranged photographs from 1955. The profile motif is common, as well as one in which one of the subjects looks at another – no gazes are turned to the camera. /Picture series 12/ This shows how the male homosociality dominating the image of masculinity in 1955 has taken on a more informal and 'spontaneous' form. When the pictures show men "making things happen", masculinity is firmly tied to action, community and activity – to the very *visualisation of decisions and power*.

Pictures of individual male politicians or decision makers often contain elements of movement in the form of an open (speaking) mouth and/or hand gestures. Hand arrangements are characterised by two forms: gesturing from the body, which expresses commitment, control, power and movement, and the hand held against the face, often on the mouth or chin, a gesture expressing concentration and seriousness.

In general, this 'near' bodily rhetoric is of great importance for what the picture is "saying". Now, as the camera comes closer to the subject, mouth and hand movements become an essential part of the visual rhetoric. The open mouth shows the ongoing speech, which itself construes the image's sense of "here and now". Since moving mouths are not found in depictions of the common (quiet, voiceless) individual, this can be seen as a (symbolic) highlighting of the powerful voice of the system's representatives. /Picture series 13/

Female politicians are regularly the subject of press pictures, however, they do not give the same impression of power as do the male leaders – nor are they found together in group pictures. Pictures of single, female decision makers also often contain moving hand gestures, although not poses with the hand positioned on the mouth or chin. /Picture series 14/ Another observable pattern is that female politicians are shown when smiling more often than their male colleagues. One explanation for this might be the common visual tradition of depicting women as more approachable and unproblematic. The similarity between images of the male and female elite is primarily the feature of the talking, moving mouth-portrait.

The 'Common' and Affected – The Individual and the Group

In 1987, the image of the private (affected) individual does not reveal significant gender variation. Instead, it is vulnerability which is visualised and which guides the picture convention. Now, men are also often found in the role of the "common man", who is affected by (suffers as the result of) bad decisions and societal or legal injustices. In the series of articles *Fighting for the Children*, cases are discussed of fathers whose children have been taken from them by authorities or maternal grandmothers on the grounds that men are considered unfit to raise children. In the picture motif from 1955, the man as father was included, but in the context of the family. Now, in 1987, we find an image of the man and the child against society – an image which stresses the father-son relationship in the absence of a woman. In this series, the pictures of the pair reveal an intimacy not previously seen. In 1955, the man depicted was often showing something to his son – a ship in a bottle, etc.; their relationship conveyed a type of ongoing instruction, and, thus, a more distanced form of transference of the masculine. In 1987, we see instead father-son pictures in which physical touch and closeness form the ties that bind them. /Picture series 15/.

The observed difference between *Dagens Nyheter* and *Aftonbladet* is that men depicted in the latter paper are more likely to appear in the role of "regular people" and in the context of more 'feminised' accounts – alone, and as representatives of a condition or event, or together with children. Mothers and children are not a common picture motif in 1987, nevertheless, it is only in these motifs women are not alone – besides when they are part of the "affected" group. More common, however, are pictures of women and children in more public contexts – women in their professional careers as school and day-care teachers. Conflicts between people and the system are more individualised in *Aftonbladet* than in *Dagens Nyheter*, probably due to evening paper journalism's tendency to work from a more privatised perspective.

In 1987, when men and women are pictured together in *Aftonbladet* and *Dagens Nyheter* it is no longer in the context of the family, but rather the context of the vulnerable/affected group. These pictures are often taken from above, with the subjects standing, looking earnest and into the camera. The subjects are not physically arranged with respect to each other, but arranged in relation to and in a position more or less under the camera. /Picture series 16/ As was the case with the picture conventions regarding representatives of the system, there were no major differences between the morning and evening press in terms of how they portrayed the "common man".

Realistic Fiction and the Fellowship of the Weeklies

Since the post World War Two era, Swedish 'personal' journalism – characterised by descriptions of people from a private, intimate perspective – has developed as an ideal template within the special media form of the weekly press. In the women's magazines, the traditional material of the weeklies – personal reports on "regular" people and personalities – has been reduced, and room made for a new main character – the Reader. With this shift, a new sub-genre has been created – realistic fiction – in which the reader, as opposed to personalities, royalty or short story characters, is in focus. It is You that matters and You to whom advice, tips and suggestions are given – advice concerning everything from how you should "take care of" your own body to how to act in various situations with your family, boyfriend, husband, lover, friend, workmates, etc. The dominating images are of young, beautiful women depicted in theme issues in which different body parts are in focus – you and your tummy, you and your breasts, etc. (Hirdman, 1996).

Instead of the private individual, it is the common group (friends, spouses, loving couples) which constitutes the focus of the more family oriented weekly magazines. The main theme is the realistic everyday drama in which people's problems, and threats to their common happiness, are always solved. The narrative is built upon past problems and tragedies that have now come to a happy ending. If it is the vulnerable individual and the destructive system which characterise the event construction and steer the picture conventions of the morning and evening press, then it is the victory over threats to human community and happiness which dominates the text and pictures of the family magazines. The pictures show people together and in different constellations (adults-children, couples-families) and, like *Aftonbladet*'s family pictures, no physical differentiation of positions can be found. While text and headings relate the various tragic events (which later turn out well), the pictures consistently depict the happy ending. An exception to this pattern is when the black and white picture is used to visualise a tragedy for which there was no happy ending, e.g., actual criminal events.

Men and Women of the Ads

In the morning and evening press of 1987, car advertisements dominate, and when people are present they are men, alone with their cars. The man and the car (technology) rule over nature. At the same time, the pictures express freedom, an eye towards the future, speed and mobility. The masculine ad rhetoric from the 50's which tied men to work has been replace by a rhetoric of leisure and freedom.

Advertisements containing women, to the extent they exist, are mostly beauty ads, and the rhetoric is based on the notion of personal pleasure. Gone is the message of the 50's that personal care belongs in the context of family and society. In 1987, the ads are directed toward the female ego. A common motif is one in which the products, which are the focus of the pictures, have labels on which women's faces are used as decoration. The female face has been moved and placed directly on the product in question, coupling the product more strongly to femininity and depicting a reification in which the human (here female) personality itself is invaded by the "raw material" (Williams, 1983). /Picture series 17/

Masculine Power and Feminised Men

Now, in 1987, the pattern of the picture form in the morning and evening press is largely determined by the image of the system's representatives versus the "common man". This can be seen in the light of the increased individualisation which took place during the 80's, in which the private individual, in various ways and in the form of the vulnerable/affected individual, serves as a gestalt for different events. This focus on the person is even found in portrayals of representatives of the system (there are still, of course, group pictures of male decision makers, but these are less prevalent than in 1955). The close-up technique is common and can be seen as an expression of the "logic" of the mass media –

a logic in which we see a constant increase in the illusion of "closeness". This process of intimatising is closely associated with picture conventions and vision.

In the morning and evening press, the "common man" is the vulnerable/affected individual who represents the dualism existing between the system and the individual, and who guides the journalistic construction of events. The use of the so-called metonymy technique is common, and no direct gender variation can be observed in this picture form.

In contrast to the years 1925 and 1955, there is now, in 1987, a clear division of different forms for the masculine. As representatives for the "common man", men are depicted according to more traditionally feminine patterns and conventions: they are portrayed alone, as being vulnerable (affected) and defenceless, they represent a condition or an event which is not primarily individual in nature, and they are even shown often with children.

The individual is also in focus in the weekly press, but in a completely different form and with a different function. In this case, the person does not represent the symbolism surrounding the individual versus the system. The topics here are about the private and relationships which instead bring people together. The reader, in the shape of the "common man", and his/her life story constitute another form of "You", in which the notion of human fellowship is central. Conspicuous in its absence is the public, and those problems which are presented are individual, both in their origin, explanation and revealed solution. When the reader is the main character, the concept of You is more abstract, and the material consists of advice and tips about beauty, body and appearance – advice aimed at increasing personal happiness. The absence of men in the beauty material (in contrast to year 1955) reveals two things: That female beauty (narcissism) is being integrated as a part of women's self-concept, and that men are the Goal and not the means. Another interpretation is that this absent man implicitly represents the opposite of the private world – the public world (Hirdman, 1996).

Final Discussion – The Visual Representation of Men and Women

As mentioned in the introduction, representation is always a form of construction – a depiction guided by convention, culture and ideology. I see two patterns in the visual representation of the sexes which are indicated in the title: *Male norms and female forms*. Women, to a much greater extent than men, are portrayed as representatives *for* something outside themselves and in contexts not directly related to the individual. Form has several meanings here: partly as the form of/for something, where the representation is symbolic in nature, and partly femininity per se as form – the woman as image. According to Goffman, certain "scenes" or characters become so stereotypically linked to a specific activity, engaged in by a large part of the public, that they are quickly recognised and become useful as symbols. The visual representation of women in commercial contexts itself conforms to a so well-established pattern of connotations, that the very form has a symbolic (and mythical) value which is independent of the particular woman depicted. The image's ideological meaning is derived from the recognition of the picture's subject and the subject's "performance" as Woman. Given this, we can broaden Goffman's concept of "scene" as the representation of a course of events – of narrative action – to even include the iconised portrayal of the subject (the woman) as a "scene", thus, both as an image in itself and an image of something.

This representational status has different meanings and has been expressed variously through the years: During the 20's, we see the growth of the ideology of consumption and the cultural public, with women as *silent bodies*. During the 50's, a decade characterised by a domestic ideology, we see an *altruistic pleaser* in the private public (the family), and women's importance/function is defined in terms of their relationships to others (men, children). The 80's are not as uniform. We see women as representatives of the system (decision makers, politicians), although pictures of elite female groups are lacking. Also, compared to their male colleagues, female politicians are more often shown smiling – a form of portrayal in line with femininity's traditional status of accessibility.

However, throughout the years, men are chiefly found in more individually based representations as actors, where the image of the masculine is used to (re)present power and decision making. Nevertheless, the visual conventions take on different forms of expression over the years, and thus reveal the time-bound nature of the meaning and rhetoric of imagery: In 1925, the private individual (the formal man) is depicted (the talking heads), and it is he who construes and visualises the political and societal event – the spoken address. In 1955, the group in the arranged photograph constitutes the symbolic event, visualised by decision making men and male community/homosociality. In 1987, men are even found in non-elitist pictures as the vulner-

able/affected individual. At the same time, in pictures of the system's male representatives "in action", masculinity is tied to the very visualisation of resolution and power.

Goffman's scene-concept can even by carried over to the image of masculinity and public power which dominates the press pictures during all of the years studied. During the different periods, the images constructed using various conventions tie the image of power to certain types of time-bound, masculine codes. It is important to note that it is a certain type of masculinity which constitutes the norm – hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is a variant of masculinity which implies the subordination of women and other groups (homosexuals, blacks) (Hawke, 1992). Given this, the scene-concept refers to the special view or model of masculinity operating in the areas of 'common sense', which defines what it is to be a man and which ensures the dominance of power within the gender system. Hegemonic masculinity is defined relationally, not only with regard to femininity, but also to other subordinate forms of masculinity. This is clear during 1987, when the non-masculine man (the "common" man) is portrayed using feminised patterns – alone and as representative for a condition, an event and/or together with children.

The relational condition between men and women which is based on the separation of the genders and the construction of a normative masculine hegemony is what creates the so-called 'meaning in difference'. Gender is a fundamental category which structures and organises people into sexes, and which is even co-determined by class, ethnicity and sexuality. At the same time, gender is a dynamic category which is always changing. The representation of gender can be seen as an indicator of a mental and political state and as a part of the process of historical change. Despite this potential for change, there are certain basic features which seem to be recurrent. These features are based on the dichotomically built-up meanings of gender – private/public, etc. – and they confer on the sexes their respective positions.

With respect to the interplay between journalistic discourse and the various paper genres, the visual imagery is not appreciably different between the morning, evening and weekly press. Various social arrangements in the pictures, such as gestures, poses, looks, etc., characterise the sexes' social positions at a certain point in time. During the years studied, a clear concordance is also found between the different image types – advertisement, news and entertainment – which shows that the pictures' composition and meaning were not only determined by the genre. That which determines the visual gender discourse – which is, of course, a part of the textual discourse – is instead the journalistic institution's contemporary pictorial conventions.[4]

Pictorial conventions characterise a given period and are, therefore, culturally and historically specific. At the same time, however, certain basic elements can be observed in the representation of gender over the years – woman as a representation for/of something and men in representations more related to the individual. The establishment of masculinity as norm and the emphasis on the feminine as a form symbolising various values can, thus, be considered to be one of the "logics" which has guided, and which still controls, the gender ideology of press images.

Although the focus of this study has been on the Swedish press, the present results can also shed light on more general questions of how meaning is created in images at a certain period. This is especially relevant in terms of the maintenance of the distinction between the news media and the popular culture media, a recurrent distinction made by the media themselves and common in a large part of media research. The weekly press picture, which has been developed from the photography forms of the tabloid press, has become the criterion for 'popular press', and is, thus, not the subject of discussions about the serious press or the 'serious' image (Becker, 1992).

The fact that the different genres reveal such a time-bound similarity in their visual representation of the sexes provides a sharp contrast to the self-image of the 'serious' press. It also shows the problems related to maintaining this distinction between the various types of media and between different types of images when the focus is on the journalistic institution's (visual) gender ideology. Instead, what is important is the investigation of how, during different time periods and under different societal and economic conditions, recurrent pictorial conventions intertextually create and construct 'gender logics' in the media.

Notes

1. This study is part of the project *Journalism's Images*, led by Karin Becker at the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication (JMK), Stockholm University, and is funded by HSFR (Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences). This project is conducted in collaboration with another project, *Journalism's Roles*, led by Jan Ekecrantz and Tom Olsson, JMK.
2. I follow, or rather relate to, those results already obtained in the project. Ekecrantz/Olsson/Pollack/Sahlstrand (eds.) (1994) *Three Time Tables. Journalism as Communication in 1925, 1955 and 1987.*
3. Portrait pictures are studio photographs which offer the subject more control over the image of him/herself that is conveyed (Becker, 1996). In most cases, the face is turned toward the camera, i.e., full frontal portraits were seldom used. This portrait form was one way in which the middle class established it social standing, and it arose from the 18th century portraits in oil which were both a description of an individual and of a social identity. Portraits of this kind differ from frontal poses, which Tagg (1988) denotes as the "burden of frontality" – a pose used, e.g., in criminal records and in order to define the Others.
4. This concordance concerns *the pictures' content*, and not the number of pictures of men versus women, which tends to vary as a function of target readership. Because the purpose of the study was to investigate the journalistic ideology of gender, is it precisely the aspect of content that is crucial.

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Picture series 1

Picture series 2

Picture series 3

Picture series 4

Picture series 5

Picture series 6

Picture series 7

Picture series 8

Picture series 9

Picture series 10

Picture series 11

Picture series 12

Picture series 13

Picture series 14

Picture series 15

Picture series 16

Picture series 17

Direkte Lykke!

A Naivist Parody of Old-Time TV Hosted by a Transgressive Woman

WENCKE MÜHLEISEN

What openings does Norwegian public service television offer for new and different 'stagings' or enunciations of the female programme host? What makes an attractive woman host, and what makes a 'monstrous' one – and whose finger is on the trigger?

This analysis of the youth entertainment series *Direkte Lykke!*[1] is part of a doctoral project which focuses on how 'femaleness' is staged among programme hosts in Norwegian television. The focus rests on women programme hosts who break with the conventions of programme hosting and who transcend conventional gender constructions. In certain programmes – like *Direkte Lykke!* – one may even speak of what seems to be an explicit deconstruction of traditional media representations of women. Interestingly, in this era of keen competition between channels the greatest leeway for experimentation with constructions of femininity among Norwegian channels appears to exist within the national public service broadcaster, Norsk Rikskringkasting (NRK) and even more so on NRKs supplementary channel, NRK2. This in a competitive situation where it is important for channels to innovate and to attract strategically important groups of viewers, such as youth, intellectuals and women.

The analysis is based on an interpretation of Anne Kath Hærland's female enunciation in her role as programme host of *Direkte Lykke!*. A comparison of Hærland's style in *Direkte Lykke!* with the various conventions for women's hosting role reveals a number of idiosyncratic and paradoxical features of her enunciation. The analysis pays special attention to sexualization as a visibility strategy as opposed to the politically correct construction of femininity emanating out of the gender equality discourse. How does this relate to the current trend whereby the male body has become an object of the female gaze?

Finally, I inquire whether the programme host's playful and seemingly naive personal style may be understood as a naivist strategy for exploring the 'true' naivity, viz., the unreflected stereotype of femininity. Since both (postmodern) irony and naivism are characteristic features of Hærland's enunciation, I ask which of the components of femininity are retained and gain in emphasis as a result of the distancing mechanisms. What, in other words, are the limits of the redefining potential of parody in this case, and which symbols are most vital to the sign play of femininity?

Contemporary Television

Direkte Lykke! is an hour-long entertainment programme on NRK2. It was carried Monday evenings at 9 PM in the Fall 1996 and Spring 1997 seasons. Its intended target audience comprises viewers between the ages of 15 and 25. Central to the legitimacy of public service television in Norway is the offering of special-interest programming to 'minority groups' such as youth and intellectuals (Ytreberg 1996:157). NRK2, which came on the air in Fall 1996, was conceived to serve as a targeted supplement to NRK; as such, it has a special 'duty' to attract and serve such groups. The goal of 'winning back' younger viewers has been paramount for NRK in the mid-1990s (Syvertsen 1997:182).

The form of address in special-interest programmes intended for intellectuals or young people is characterized by an anticipated coincidence of

interest and a community of (sub)cultural knowledge between the text-internal sender and the receiver. Another characteristc of these programmes is that the form of address is distanced, satirical and parodic in relation to the relatively authoritarian or paternalistic forms of address that have traditionally characterized public service television (Ytreberg 1996:162f). Above all, *Direkte Lykke!* parodies numerous genres and forms of address used in Norwegian television over the years.

In other words, the programme is a manifestation or thematization of a conflict between 'old-time' and 'modern' television (Ytreberg 1996:173). The humour 'works' thanks to the sense of intimacy and 'initiation' the programme cultivates among its viewers. In an article on the text strategies used in television vis-à-vis youthful audiences, Espen Ytreberg characterizes youth appeal like this:

> The appeal to ... young people is characterised by a form of authority denial, establishing a parodic distance towards the authority of address generally, and towards the traditional authority markers of public service television specifically (Ytreberg 1996:177).

The Concept

Direkte Lykke! may be termed an entertaining talk-show in magazine format. It should be viewed in the context of the central role entertainment and intimacy have come to play in commercial television. In response to the challenge commercial channels represent, NRK has launched a number of new entertainment programmes (Ytreberg 1996:158). *Direkte Lykke!* has the three constitutive elements which media researcher Hanne Bruun (1997:18) sets out for the talk-show: The studio is the main arena, 'the here and now' of the programme. The programme host's function is focal. Anne Kath Hærland's personality (as well as her co-hosts') is a vital element in the programme content – and a key to the success of the show. Hærland's flirtations with the audience (camera) is an important element in her staging of herself.[2] Third, the interview and its emphasis on personality and 'relationships' is a significant element in the programme. But, as we shall see, it is the parody of these central features which constitutes the 'actual' content and fascination of the programme.

Each programme consists of between thirty and forty segments of varying length. These are take-offs on traditional programme formats: talk-shows, magazines, roundtable discussions, cultural magazines, music video-clips and quiz shows. The many changes of scene and genre make for a rapid tempo and rhythm. Each programme has a theme, e.g., "youth and drugs and alcohol" (10th February), "youth and morality" (3rd March), "youth and racism" (10th March). A typical programme might consist of a sketch on the overall theme (played by actors portraying a politically correct 'model family'), a dramatic piece on the theme (played by the programme hosts in the studio), discussions, video reportages, interviews with invited guests, short clips in which the individuals involved in the production tell viewers what 'happiness' means to them, video clips with the house band, Kåre & The Cavemen, an animation, *Robin*, and a Swedish comedy series, *Snutarna*. Thus, live, studio-based segments alternate with video recordings throughout.

The programme hosts link the segments together via introductions and 'roundings off'. The linking techniques are several. Although Anne Kath is the main programme host, her colleague, Nils Petter, shoulders most of the linking function, marking the passage from one segment to the next and introducing what is to come. The house band, too, helps mark the transitions and provides continuity musically. All the programmes are structured around these elements, which fosters recognition/ familiarity and gives the programme a definite 'image'.

The 'talk show' and the themes treated are 'artifices' in the sense that the programme hosts *play at* hosting a programme. The entertainment value resides precisely in the take-offs on familiar programme genres and formats. In other words, the programme may be seen as a dramatization of 'making a programme'. In this sense one might also characterize the programme as a live, studio-based sit-com. Each 'episode' in *Direkte Lykke!* is about the relations between the caricaturized characters (programme hosts) and their recurring and familiar frictions and conflicts. The studio itself forms the framework in which the drama takes place. The semblance of reality is greater in *Direkte Lykke!* than in traditional sit-coms inasmuch as the programme hosts appear under their own names, and guests and interviewees appear on account of their status 'in real life'. The comical aspect of the interviews resides in the collision between the playful nature of the programme and the guests' (presumed) expectation of taking part in a 'regular' programme, and the resulting confusion they experience when they are not treated as they expected.

In a theoretical analysis of the talk-show as a genre Bruun notes that the sit-com takes place on the edge of the fictional universe and bears a resemblance to the talk-show in terms of both camera work and style of performance. She notes that the sit-com departs from the accustomed fictional universe in that the leading characters often appear under their own names rather than a role. Take, for example, *Rosanne* or *Ellen* (Bruun 1997:27).

Dramatis Personae

The main programme host and star of *Direkte Lykke!* is Anne Kath Hærland. Anne Kath is an embodiment of the narcissistic personality, political incorrectness and value relativism, not to say cynicism. She is 'the boss' to five male co-hosts, who play caricatures of distinct, more or less 'classic' personality types throughout the series. Wiggo, second-in-command after Anne Kath, is a hippie-type with long, unkempt hair; he is unshaven and wears glasses. He worships the counterculture of the 1970s and is crazy about red wine, candles and old LPs. Erlend plays a student; he wears suspenders and is forever upset with Anne Kath, who doesn't give him the recognition he feels he deserves. He is a 'do-right' and moralist, passionately 'PC'. Wiggo and Anne Kath represent some kind of 'parents' in their relation to Erlend: Anne Kath a harsh, cynical and ruthless 'mother-figure'; Wiggo, a more pedagogically inclined 'Dad'. Nils Petter is a parody of an ever-optimistic and cheerful 'Believer', always looking on the bright side, turning the other cheek, and ready to smooth over whatever friction or discord that may arise. He's a boy with wholesome interests and a "sweet" fiancée. Geir and Tonny are twin-like cousins who speak the same peculiar dialect. Both have long hair, beards and are overweight. They are forever appearing with a clipboard and pencil; their interest in the various themes and interviewees is strictly quantitative. That is to say, they spout figures, weights, statistics on anything and everything that comes up. Geir and Tonny have a 'nerdish' preoccupation with figures and seem to be devoid of metacommunication skills and social graces.

Anne Kath's is a more versatile, complex repertoire. She is snide, commenting and criticizing her colleagues' performance and ideas – albeit on a totally superficial plane. Part of the humor of *Direkte Lykke!* arises out of the naive ardency with which the characters play their roles. It is comical when, for example, Anne Kath plunges into an intense discussion with Erlen, trying to convince him of the fact that the Lappish people are not savages, but actually have contact with ordinary Norwegians and live in regular houses, or when she tries to enlighten him as to the difference between coffeine and cocaine.

A Parody of Television

Distancing is a key concept for our understanding of television today, says Ytreberg (1997). He points to a trend from information toward entertainment and sees in it a rejection of traditional signs of authority, which consequently is open to ridicule. An important precondition for communication based on distancing is a new generation of viewers who lack the respect for the medium their elders once had. Their extensive TV competence, combined with distanced modes of narration, like irony and parody, gives rise to a 'covenant' between narrator and viewer at the expense of the content or the subject of the narration (Ytreberg 1997).

These distanced modes of narration are characteristic of *Direkte Lykke!*. The themes of the programmes are reduced to a backdrop for the programme host's self-staging, and the theme of the programme is 'actually' a parody of the medium. *Direkte Lykke!* follows the recipe for parody, as defined in relation to literature:

> ... signifying an imitation of works of art with exaggerated (or malplacé) emphasis of the peculiarities of the work or the artist's manner to comic or satirical effect (Aarnes 1977:181).

Direkte Lykke! resembles television genres "to comic, satirical effect", and the parody is especially trained on attitudes, forms of address or "manners" common to the medium. If we proceed further with Aarnes' definition, we find the description fits the programme's approach to its objects quite well:

> Some parodies require prior acquaintance with the work in question since the comic effect is largely dependent on the perceived deviations of the imitation from the original. Here we have a number of so-called travesties (literally 'disguises') which represent the august theme or style of the original work dressed in sack-cloth (Burlesque) (Aarnes 1977:181).

In the case of *Direkte Lykke!* the "august theme or style of the original work" is what Ytreberg refers to as "traditional signs of authority", which presumes that viewers are familiar with the original. Young people who have grown up with television

as part of the woodwork make fun of their parents' respect for the medium, its authorities and dominant forms of expression.

Objects and Attitudes

"The 'seventies" is a frequent theme of the parody in *Direkte Lykke!*. The programme vignette, the houseband, and Wiggo, the superannuated hippie, all refer back to that period.

Following the vignette and presentation of the week's theme, each programme carries a dramatization of the theme in a family setting. The sketch calls to mind, *1/2 7*, a Saturday-night series on NRK in the 1970s. It, too, addressed youthful audiences and discussed current topics in a manner we today would find excessively moralizing. Dramatizations were frequently employed to get the message across. These educational, politically correct 'mini-morality plays' are easy marks for the darts of *Direkte Lykke!*'s humour.

Recent or current programmes which are made fun of include a consumer magazine (*Refleks*), a debate forum (*Til Debatt*), and a documentary series (*Brennpunkt*), all offered on NRK. A cultural magazine on NRK radio, *Kulturnytt* (P2), is also held up to ridicule in a series of 'kangaroo court' reviews of 'Latest Books'. All in all, the parodic style of *Direkte Lykke!* is that of burlesque travesty, in Aarnes' sense of the word.

Each week, the programme ends with an episode of a tongue-in-cheek Swedish detective series, Snutarna. It, too, is a humoristic parody of the 'crimi' genre per se, as well as of the 1970s. Yet another expression of *Direkte Lykke!*'s fascination with the period.

The take-offs on genres and conventions take the form of exaggerations and perversions of the forms of address and underlying attitudes typical of television culture. Continuity in magazine programmes is maintained through a hierarchy of discourses, where the programme host links the various segments together to form a unified text by virtue of his/her authority as host, which can be referred to as a 'master discourse' (Ytreberg 1996: 173). The programme hosts in *Direkte Lykke!* perform the linking function, with the 'master discourse' falling to Anne Kath. But the programme is forever 'breaking the rules' as to how a programme should be hosted. For example, it is the privilege of the programme host to speak into the camera, i.e., directly address the viewer, but it is not customary for the host to use that privilege to ridicule or rebut what his or her colleagues say or do. Anne Kath establishes a close relationship with viewers by looking into the camera and attracting its attention in the middle of a colleague's presentation. She shakes her head, rolls her eyes in disbelief, or uses the opportunity to flirt with the camera in seemingly narcissistic joy over being on camera. She turns some segments over to others on her team, declaring that she's "simply not interested", thinks "it's stupid", or she asks viewers not to send their answers to her because she doesn't care much for quizzes. Comical situations also arise when the proramme hosts pretend they don't know how to handle technical apparatus like microphones and cables.

The distanced attitude to authority is expressed in parodies of the stately, paternalistic style that is part of the Norwegian public service broadcasting tradition, and of the intimate contact-seeking style of newer programme formats. Hærland's distancing from the conventions of the programme host role is often manifested in her rejection of the empathetic and receptive attitude that is expected of 'serious' programme hosts. She introduces programme segments in an impatient, indifferent tone of voice as though she were being forced to read what the teleprompter tells her. This attitude is most apparent when Hærland interviews the week's guest. She does this following a standard formula. At the end of each interview, she suddenly calls out to Wiggo, who tosses the guest a bouquet of flowers. She then pronounces with unmistakeable finality: "It's been fantastic to have you here, and what are your plans after this?" She parodies the worshipful tone many hosts acquire when talking with stars and individuals who have done amazing things as well as the lengths some programmes go to to find 'extraordinary', 'admirable' or 'crazy' individuals to people their sofas.

Erlend's interviews are parodic, as well. His speciality is to take on guests who represent idealistic organizations – environmentalists, animals rights, etc. The most such guests can hope to say is an occasional "Yes" or "No" in the midst of Erlend's almost incomprehensible harangue on what he thinks of the organization or problem in question. The guest either becomes frustrated, or he/she tries to bear with it and play along with the joke. Some even try, against all odds, to use the opportunity to present their cause to the television audience.

The humour is dependent on the interviewee's taking an authentic position vis-à-vis the interviewer, i.e. playing the straight man. If and when he/she breaks the 'contract' and begins to meta-

communicate with the interviewer, the fun is over. The guests seem naive, i.e., seem not to be aware of the 'contract'; whatever the case, their authenticity and confusion are most convincing. We viewers know the rules of the game and can laugh at the guest's (seeming) innocence. Guests, interviewees and viewers alike are turned into spectators to a media-circus celebrating itself, its power, and its ability to set the agenda. It is this 'logic of the media' which *Direkte Lykke!* exploits and makes fun of. Well-known and highly placed figures are embarrassed when their secrets are revealed in a situation over which they have no control. Such breaks with television protocol are entertaining, and the distancing from authority figures establishes a special rapport with younger viewers.

Female Programme Hosts and Competition

The advent of commercial television has given women greater visibility on television (Skretting 1996; Pedersen 1995). In their role of consumers, women are an important target audience for commercially financed channels; consequently, the channels especially address women in the audience both by featuring women prominently in the programmes they offer and by discussing topics known to be of interest to women: beauty, fashion, health and child-care, etc., romance and relationships (Skretting 1995:5f). It appears that NRK has chosen to meet the competition commercial channels pose by adopting a new target-audience orientation in programme scheduling *and* by featuring women programme hosts who transgress the bounds of some traditional television representations of feminity. NRKs relatively young two-channel system (Fall 1996) may mean that more programmes will specifically address women.

Although 'unique', Anne Kath Hærland is not alone in breaking with convention. Media researcher Kathrine Skretting establishes that whereas feminist film researchers speak of women in traditional Hollywood films as icons, placed before the male gaze, the fact is that women in television have *discursive power*. Programme hosts rank high in the hierarchy of speakers on television (Skretting 1995:3). She notes a difference, however, in the leeway for assertiveness allowed in entertainment and factual programmes. Women are frequent as 'anchors' in news programmes, and many weather forecasters are women. These are presenting roles, where neutrality is the norm. In entertainment programmes, on the other hand, programme hosts can be witty; they have an opportunity to display "clear and distinct personalities" . Most entertainment programmes on Norwegian television are hosted by men (Skretting 1995:9ff).

Enter a new kind of transgressing female. The first such programme host in Norway was Synnøve Svabø in Baluba, a tumultuous, carneval-like entertainment programme aired on NRK in Spring 1996. Besides *Direkte Lykke!*, the Spring and Fall 1997 line-ups featured five other entertainment programmes hosted by women.[3] Although not all of them are exactly 'tumultuous', the programmes do indeed allow their hosts a free play of wit and personality (the terms Skretting used with regard to male hosts of entertainment programmes earlier). Thus, women seem to have gained some of the characteristics formerly associated with male programme hosts.

Referring to research showing differences between men's and women's conversational patterns, where men's style of expression is seen to be more hierarchical and control-oriented and women's, more democratic and mutual[4], Skretting points out that even though the characteristics women's conversation patterns display would seem to be well suited to television, statistics show that women have not had the same success as men in television in the current decade (Skretting 1995:3).

Anne Kath Hærland's style of conversation in *Direkte Lykke!* is hardly "democratic" or "mutual". On the contrary, Skretting's description of men's style fits her much better; Hærland's speech is both "hierarchical and control-oriented". Bossing a stall of five male co-hosts, her role in the 'sit-com', *Direkte Lykke!*, is, one might say, to be arbitrary, authoritarian and cynical. A far cry from the conventional feminine virtues of empathy, feeling and caring. This, together with her star status in the programme and her conscious self-staging as an erotic object, makes her an unconventional woman programme host, indeed.

Kinds of Programme Hosts

Pedersen (1995) defines three categories of women hosts in the prevailing competition between channels in Denmark: *Soaps*, *Pins* and *Burlesques*.

Soaps

The soap opera is an embellishment on the melodrama. Pedersen's term, "soap", which she uses to describe female programme hosts, refers to common themes in soap operas, having to do with the private sphere and emphasizing romance, feelings

and emotional intensity (Pedersen 1995:163ff). In this connection Pedersen refers to the French film theorist Raymond Bellour, who shows how women's faces are used to effect on the screen. Close-ups of women's faces are typically used to display emotional intensity. Consequently, Bellour notes, female figures in classic film are more than erotic objects; they are also backdrops for the projection of emotional intensity (Pedersen 1995:180).

In her analysis of *Damernes magasin*, a women's programme hosted by Camilla Miehe Renard on Danish public service television (DR) in 1991, Pedersen points out the frequency of close-ups and a focus on subjects belonging to the intimate sphere – features typical of soap opera aesthetics. The programme emphasizes feelings which are treated, not as something belonging to the private sphere, but as subjects to be discussed openly (Pedersen 1995: 186). The close-ups of Anne Kath Hærland in *Direkte Lykke!* are a function of her status as a figure endowed with the 'master discourse'. Thus, the frequent use of close-ups has another function besides conveying or underlining emotion. Hærland is spontaneous and playful, but can hardly be said to be either sensitive or particularly emotional – two of the principal ingredients of the soap opera. On the contrary, she eagerly makes fun of emotions and exposes the vicarious motives behind sentimentality. For example, she often confronts her colleague Erlend with the suspicion that he is actually trying to say something else, is lying, or is insincere, i.e.,just pretending. Let us consider an example of her cynical self-staging: a sketch in which she 'just happens to' meet Erlend's 'little brother' and fills him in on the real picture, contradicting everything his parents ever taught him – that smoking is bad for his health, that 'negroes' and whites are equals, and so on. In the programme on racism (10th March 1997), she regales him: "Have your Mom and Dad been telling you that all men and women are created equal? What nonsense! I mean, negroes are enormously well-hung, as every girl knows and dreams of, and you're not a negro and you'll never get a girl. And if you do, she'll probably be a pitiful little thing. Just think about that!"

The parody of the programme host's role consists of mimicking the function, but filling it with unconventional content. The role contradicts the conventions of the female programme host as typified in programmes dealing with subjects in the intimate sphere. Indeed, part of Hærland's fascination lies in her blatant indifference, which gives her considerable room for maneuver. *Direkte Lykke!* is emphatically not a parade of emotions. But, in that case, what function does the camera's constant focus on Hærland's face serve?

Pin-up

The pin-up is the second of Pedersen's three categories of programme hosts. Pin-up signifies the classic staging of the female body as, for example, Laura Mulvey (1975) discusses it in relation to classic film, i.e., an image which especially appeals to the male gaze. Pedersen writes:

> It seems as though the female studio host who plays on her 'good looks' and her sexuality has greater leeway for breaking with female stereotypes than women in the more confined role of conveying emotional intensity (Pedersen 1995:189).

Pedersen would appear to perceive a principal difference between being displayed as an erotic object and *displaying oneself* as one; the act of self-staging implies a distancing from object status. In other words, the *distancing or meta-commentary*, expressed in one or another form, introduces a subversive or critical element into what might otherwise be a conventional representation of a woman reduced to passive erotic object. We shall return to this point in relation to sexualization as a visibility strategy.

Hærland behaves and dresses as the star of the show. Her clothing (ultra short-short), make-up and coiffure express an explicitly sexy style. She flirts, but – significantly – hardly ever with her co-hosts or guests. She flirts with the camera. She basks voluptuously in the limelight, smiling into the camera even when she 'should' be paying attention to the goings-on on the show. She stages an erotic game in which she 'lures' the camera to focus attention on herself. Despite the fact that the pin-up – being displayed as an object – indisputably is a stereotyped female role, Hærland's playful, highly self-aware manner creates a distance which allows her to explode the "dumb blonde" stereotype while caricaturizing it. She is not satisfied with being displayed passively as a kind of visual object, but insists on actively catching attention. Thus, she would seem to confirm Pedersen's thesis that women programme hosts who capitalize on their 'looks' can signal a distancing from prevailing stereotypes.

Burlesque

It is this conscious self-staging as meta-commentary which forms the core of Pedersen's third category of female programme host; the burlesque. As Pedersen points out, the burlesque relates to com-

edy and parody, but particularly to shows in which women perform in ways that combine satire and striptease (Pedersen 1995:195).[5] Close-ups of Hærland often convey deliberate provocations on her part, in which cases her face hardly serves as the kind of iconic image which invites emotion. Her gaze is all too self-aware and manifestly manipulative for that. The traditional distinction between active gaze and passive *icon* is accentuated by her voluptuously narcissistic pleasure (Pedersen 1995:32). Discussing classic cinematographic representations, film theorist Kaja Silverman (1988:1) has shown how the female body, when objectified, can be used to stage oneself narcisstically. This unobliging form of self-pleasure and burlesque exaggeration are cardinal features of Hærland's rendition of the programme host, viz., the wilful, ruthlessly arbitrary 'boss' of the show.

Thus, the programme reproduces television's traditionally staged, paternalistic style of address, while Hærland also draws attention to the artificial nature of femininity as commonly constructed. Her parodic recirculation of signs of female sexuality marks a sharp break with convention.

The scenography in *Direkte Lykke!* also contributes to the artificiality, the 'stagedness', of the programme. It is difficult to orient oneself in relation to the location and spatial extent of the studio. The viewer cannot grasp the structure, just as the various segments and their respective loci – the studio, somewhere on the city streets, in cars and so forth – seem to lack all manner of logic relating to an overarching structure. Instead, the moment, the situation, and the visual sensation are the dominant elements in *Direkte Lykke!*; they are not subordinated to any coherent narration. As others have pointed out, this is fairly typical of the 'postmodern condition'- a situation of ambivalence, shifting surfaces based not on 'reality', but on self-quotation and references to other 'surfaces' (Kaplan 1987; Pedersen 1995:199). The kaleidoscopic structure, in which apparently unrelated items and episodes follow one another pell-mell, is consonant with Hærland's style – it, too, lacking 'coherence and meaning'. Hærland plays with the signs and attributes of power and control. It is the attributes themselves she is interested in, but to signal her dominance rather than to convey meaning.

Sexualization as a Visibility Strategy

Pedersen observes that every channel, every programme in the television landscape is anxious to establish a distinctive 'profile'. Women, Pedersen argues, assume especial significance as visual emblems, with the budding media masquerade plays on the masquerade of femininity (Pedersen 1995:196). Pedersen makes an interesting observation concerning a number of 'burlesque' female programme hosts when she, referring to the work of film theorist Anne Doane (1984) points out that desexualization is not a good strategy for the representation of women. As Doane (1984:80) puts it: *"In a patriarchal society, to desexualize the female body is to deny its very existence."* Some programme hosts, Pedersen observes, create subject positions for themselves, not despite their being staged as arousing visual objects and sexual creatures, but in fact thanks to it (Pedersen 1995:198). I consider Anne Kath Hærland such a host. In Pedersen's view, the distancing effect of self-irony, playfulness and self-staging plays a crucial role here. (Doane also points out that the ability to distance oneself is important for the female spectator, too, so that she does not over-identify herself with the figure in question, but rather participates in the theatrical aspect of femininity as a construct.)

A recent dissertation from the University of Oslo, *Tegnet på kroppen* [The sign on the body] (1995), also casts some light on this subject. Here, Dorte Marie Søndergaard calls attention to the relatively liberated significations which what she calls "gender-citing practices" can produce. But, she points out, no matter how transcendent or iconoclastic the representation, all such significations must necessarily refer to certain shared conceptions of what gender means: to gain 'recognition' one must first be recognized. If we consider gender as a system of signs, the meaning of which is subject to negotiation, some components of the conventional codes must be retained, otherwise one places oneself outside the pale of the negotiation. Thus, even though Anne Kath Hærland may stage a highly unconventional rendition of femininity, she actively directs attention to the eroticized body. Her sovereignty, her independence of codes and conventions, and her claim to power and control would hardly arouse the same degree of fascination and amusement were she a de-sexualized figure. By retaining signs of femininity, expressed through her sexualized body and its theatrical attitudes, her sexedness becomes a focal point, which both confirms conventional notions of femininity and gives her considerable leeway to deconstruct other traditional elements in the construction of gender.

Gender differentiation is encoded through visible anatomical differences; gender as the aesthetics of appearances. By staging oneself as an erotic

object that is connotative of femininity, i.e., by sexualizing one's body, the woman becomes visible. In the cultural context the anatomical differences between the sexes serve as ostensibly irreducible symbols of all that is natural. This concept of sexual differences is in itself an ideological frontline – or, in any case, open to negotiation. Here an effort is made to collate the proper discourse and meaning of (biological) sex, (social) gender, gender identity and object-choice. Although the anatomical differences within each of the binary categories 'Man' and 'Woman' may be considerable, the genitalia are privileged signs in the field of meaning relating to sex.

Søndergaard uses an objectifying jargon in order to draw attention to the degree to which the sign system of sexuality influences our culture, and to point out how components within the signifying system are changing. She refers, for example, to women as *persons who are marked feminine or persons having feminine body signs*. In her discussion of sexuality she speaks of the *orientation of desire*, desire being directed either toward *opposite-sex persons or same-sex persons*.

> Thus, the concept of 'body signs' affords a means to verbalize gender without falling into the fallacy of essentialism. . The body as sign is a concept which is meant to objectify a phenomenon which is so self-evident as to be virtually invisible to us... This is not to say that men or women are invisible. What we cannot see are the constructions of men and women, i.e., all the things that men and women might be and do, and all that they cannot be and do because they are men and women (Søndergaard 1996:59ff).

The 'Authority Uniforms' of the Sexes

It might seem as though a strategy of de-sexualization – playing down the female body as visual object – might be more consonant with the ideology of equality of the sexes. If women divest themselves of the attributes of the feminine sexual masquerade, it might give them access to the commons, including the regions having a male connotation. How women such as current Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and former Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland stage themselves are good examples of a normative 'uniform' for women in high places. Generally speaking, one may say that the closer to the vortex of power, the more uniform and neutralized women's personal expression. Tordis Borchgrevink interprets the phenomenon in positive terms:

> ... and the more power [men] have, the more they look alike. Women, on the other hand, are required to dress to express a personality. One can see men's stereotyped dress as a sign of their liberty to be themslves when it suits them. And we can see 'the feminist uniform' as a signal on the part of women that they are allowing themselves that same liberty (Borchgrevink 1994:102f).

The neutral 'authority uniform' or 'feminist uniform', as Borchgrevink calls it, is not a universal standard, but varies in appearance. Søndergaard notes that body, carriage and mastery of ritual are important aspects of social participation in various arenas. Thus, it is a question of one's choice of dramaturgy:

> Engineers with big breasts present a disparate, fragmented image. It does not contribute to their credentials for participation in the arena. Engineers with large feet, broad shoulders, deep voices, etc., present a unified image. A serious 'man of science' with a bust line? Does that add up? One's body, carriage and mastery of ritual – these are all factors in the dramaturgical aspect of the actor's ability to establish his/her credentials, perhaps credentials which may qualify him/her for participation at top levels in the hierarchy, in the academic arena (Søndergaard 1996:235).

Theoretically, we might reason that the norm of toning down individual and erotic expression which prevails in the 'corridors of power' might create an arena in which sex/gender would seemingly be of little consequence. This by virtue of the overarching norms of the public sphere, which should not privilege any group and should remain separate from the private and intimate spheres (Pedersen 1997; Habermas 1962/1974).

Eroticization and sexualization are hardly the exclusive privilege of women. It is just that *other*, different meanings connote male attractiveness. Among men, proximity to power, knowledgeability, reliability and authority traditionally produce the erotic effect. Men's occupational identity is largely bound up with their erotic charge: the greater their 'power', the 'sexier' they are. In other words, it is not (only) men's appearance, but their participation in power which constitutes their attraction. In her novel, *Three Guineas* (1938) Virginia Woolf makes fun of the masculine pomp which characterized

bourgeois public servants in England of the 1930s. Every button and stripe was laden with meaning. Women did not have access to the public sphere, and their apparel has traditionally served only two functions: to decorate and to attract attention (Pedersen 1995:193). Lacan proposes a counter-concept to the feminine masquerade, the purpose of which, he presumes, is to compensate for women's lack of phallos.[6] The counter-concept is the masculine parade, the purpose of which is to disguise the fact that penis is not equivalent to phallos: *"Men dress to demonstrate their power and to disguise their impotence"*.[7]

The Feminization of Men

These different, gender-related structures of desire are part of a sluggish cultural process. They do not correspond to or follow the equality discourse. We see, however, that components of masculinity are beginning to transcend the conventional construction inasmuch as men, particularly youth, are taking part in the aestheticization of the body and adopting so-called 'feminine' attributes and traits.

The prime strategy of contemporary youth is to construct identity propositions and a culture which distinguishes itself from that of the preceding (parental) generation. Contemporary youth culture is highly conscious of symbolic meaning and play with signs. A playful nonchalance vis-à-vis authenticity and things natural is expressed, for example, in the 'House' sub-culture's emphasis on the artificial and a freedom of citation which subverts the traditionally romantic aura that surrounds creativity and the Arts. A penchant for illusionism and superficial play are other characteristics. Vinyl, metals and imitation furs are popular attributes of youth culture today.

Men nowadays put more emphasis on their appearance and their sexuality and in doing so approach a traditionally feminine position. The phenomenon has long been apparent in advertising and fashion, where the male body and the male as sex object have been in focus. It is also a popular trend in some urban youth cultures for adolescent boys to dress 'transsexually', use eye-catching accessories and make-up.

In a Nordic study of women programme hosts Swedish sociologist Ulla B. Abrahamsson (1996) identifies a new brand of youthful male programme hosts who are used to heighten channel profiles in Swedish television. By means of a self-ironic homosex-humor they make fun of the traditional virile male role and display themselves in spectacular, attention-getting attire. Well aware that they are borrowing traditionally feminine characteristics, they comment on the absence of women from entertainment genres (Pedersen 1997). Their appearance is not that of men in the corridors of power. One may well wonder whether the phenomenon is a sign of the times, an expression of changes in society at large. We hear again and again mention of young, unemployed men with little formal education as one of the most vulnerable groups in contemporary society. Given the recent trend toward explicit sexualization/eroticization in this group, the question arises if it might not be a response to their vulnerability and social marginalization. Quite conceivably it may.

The requirement of neutrality and uniformity grows stronger, the closer one comes to 'power'. Femininity – read: traditionally subordinate position – decks itself with tinsel and plays explicitly on sexuality as a form of capital, given the absence of other empowering discourses (Mühleisen 1996).

Thus, we can say that men become visible as subjects by cloaking themselves with power and its attributes. It may be difficult, as we have seen, for a woman to de-sexualize her appearance since doing so means that she will to some extent appear as a 'masculine' subject and thus, if nothing else, lose her heterosexual attractiveness. Visual attraction is an important role females play in television, however. Consequently, with Anne Kath Hærland's self-staging as a case in point, we may suggest that assuming this role in a self-aware, playfully distanced manner can afford a woman considerable leeway as an unconventional programme host.

The Men of Direkte Lykke!

When we consider the versions of masculinity Anne Kath Hærland's male co-hosts represent, it is striking how the parody has virtually obliterated whatever masculine attraction they may possess. Each of them is a 'hopeless case', albeit different. They are totally inept, comic at best. In contrast to Hærland, the men of *Direkte Lykke!* are relatively de-sexualized. Tonny and Geir represent a crypto-homoerotic 'couple'; Nils-Petter is totally absorbed in his 'mousy' fiancée. Erlend suffers from repressed sexuality. Wiggo, the 'withered flower-child', is too 'old' to be attractive in the eyes of young viewers. Thus, all five male programme hosts are more or less sexually defused; more precisely, their respective sexualities connote homoerotic bonding, repression, a prim straightlacedness, and 'old age'. Nor is there the least sugges-

tion of flirtation between Queen Anne Kath and the members of her court. In terms of the conventional configuration, whereby the attractive male positions himself in the aura of power, none of the men of *Direkte Lykke!* is 'worthy' of Hærland's construction of femininity. If anything, Hærland uses her sexuality to embarrass Erlend, who, we are led to believe, is highly inexperienced. In one episode she, to his obvious chagrin, frankly (and in unmistakably graphic terms) questions his manliness. In the programme on sex, Anne Kath drags him along to a therapist-sexologist. The session is most humiliating for Erlend – to Anne Kath's great amusement.

And so *Direkte Lykke!* presents us with a striking contrast: a chorus of de-sexualized or 'neutered' men versus the explicitly sexual Hærland. The men in the programme occupy positions of 'impotence' and thus, judged by conventional criteria, are de-eroticized objects. Hærland's aggressive, patronizing and openly derisive attitude toward them underlines this. Her flirtation is, as mentioned above, directed exclusively toward the camera and the viewer. As a result, by virtue of the kind of sovereignty, power and independence she represents, Hærland is the sole figure capable of arousing viewers' identification. The manifestation of her sexuality renders her an object of desire; the liberties she takes as programme host makes her an attractive subject, whom viewers may identify with.

Sexual, Romantic Confirmation

The staging of gender is focal in our culture. This is because sexuality and romantic love are considered among the most important things in our lives. Thus, it is not surprising that achieving confirmation of oneself as a successful object of others' desire is important.

De-sexualizing the body in relation to the cultural codes for sexuality was, however, a plank in the platform of feminism of the 1970s. In feminists' view, the so-called 'sexual revolution' of the late 1960s had become commercialized, with the result that women became the victims of 'availability' and the re-assertion of 'sexist oppression' and coercion. This perception led to their rejection of the cultural tradition whereby women stage themselves as sexual objects. Some years into the 1980s, the question arose as to whether this rejection of tradition might not constitute a new – this time feminist – norm regarding women's appearance which was equally confining with respect to women's freedom to express themselves sexually *in a cultural context*. It was not just a question of reinventing codes of sexuality, femininity and romance. Thus, it became legitimate to recycle and 'quote' codes for femininity, but in new permutations and with new *distancing mechanisms*. As a result, women of the late 1980s and 1990s find it easy to combine a frankly masculine black leather jacket with net stockings and fire engine-red lipstick.

As noted earlier, conventional femininity is signalled through the eroticization/sexualization of the female body. If a woman refrains from this sexualization, she tends to seem pale, her 'subjectness' is neutralized, or she may even connote masculinity. Sexualization of men, on the other hand, conventionally takes place through positioning in relation to power. We have noted that men in the corridors of power are not (yet) free to aestheticize/eroticize their apperance very much, albeit it is currently the fashion among young men to stretch the bounds of the masculine register (Mühleisen 1996). We might venture to posit that women in positions of dominance have to compensate for the degree of 'masculinization' their position implies by being especially attentive to their appearance. This calls to mind an observation Joan Rivière makes in her classic article, "Womanliness as a Masquerade", where she suggests that 'femininity' is something one can don or doff like a mask. Women may adopt this strategy to diguise their 'masculine' position under a veil or façade of femininity. This makes it possible for 'powerful' women to defuse her potentially threatening position vis-à-vis a male subject (Rivière 1986). In an analysis of women rock groups' lyrics, Hillevi Ganetz (1997) sees *heterosexuality* as the prize of the masquerade in Rivière's theory, noting that there are alternate theories as to what the masquerade is hiding. Among postmodern theorists who reject the notion of a feminine essence, the mask hides *'emptiness'* rather than the 'masculinity' Rivière – inspired by Freud (1933/1989:162) – posits. Judith Butler, constructivist in the extreme, is unwilling to accept even 'emptiness'; she defines gender as performance, so that gender itself *is/becomes* its own mask with no underlying meaning – not even emptiness.

Anne Kath Hærland, for her part, makes no attempt to hide either her aggressiveness, her competitive spirit or her individuality. On the contrary, she expresses these positions, connotative of maculinity as they may be, explicitly and emphatically. It would seem that the excessive signs of femininity which she so flagrantly indulges in may

in a sense legitimize the position of manipulative power which she occupies in the programme.

"Pretty Women on TV"

It is a delicate balance. Speaking in Oslo at a 1996 conference on "Gender in the Media", media researcher Kathrine Skretting discussed "pretty women on TV" and problematized thefunction of 'decor' which women commonly serve. In Skretting's words: "*Whereas journalistic competence seems to be a prerequisite, it is not a sufficient qualification for the woman who wants to become a programme host"* (Skretting 1996:170). Her comments aroused vehement protests among some female programme hosts.

Thus, it is a question of combining professional/dominant ('masculine') and attractive object of desire ('feminine') in a legitimate fashion. On the one hand we have the Scylla of being an explicitly erotic visual object, which may undermine one's professional integrity; on the other the Charybdis of being professional, competent, but 'un-feminine'. Put somewhat drastically, the conventional poles may be described in terms of being powerful, but sexually unattractive or sexually attractive, but powerless. Both positions are paradoxical; neither invites identification.

That the discussion of women's appearance is a veritable minefield of opinions is quite apparent: witness the recurrent indictments of advertising, the cosmetics industry and media portrayals of women. Women's decorative function seems to appear threatening to some in that it is perceived to undercut their professional qualifications and skill. It is not entirely legitimate to say what everone knows, inasmuch as the official, 'politically correct' ideal is that women's appearance should not be a decisive factor in their careers. Hærland's emphasis on sexualized signs of femininity may be seen as a comment on this official disavowal of the importance of 'good looks' in television.

Hærland's playful, naivistic and sexualized staging forms a stark contrast to what we generally think of as the "pretty woman" on television. Most of these women – news readers and programme presenters in particular – appear in something approaching a 'uniform'. Moderation reigns: clothing (the perennial tailored jacket), coiffure, jewelry, make-up are elaborate, but tastefully impersonal (Skretting 1996:172). A sexualized body and playful distancing works as a visibility strategy which both calls attention to traditional elements in the construction of femininity and transcends them.

The 'Monstrous' Hærland – Femme Fatale in Reverse

It is quite clear today that there is both a collective (equality discourse) and an individually experienced need to stage femininity in ways that are neither weak/helpless or in the position of object. This raises the question of what cultural connotations, collectively recognized images, are available.

Three stereotypes present themselves: First, we have the 'good' woman, the madonna figure or angel. Second, there is the professional, the woman of power who has desexualized her body or balances on the neutral, masculine-connotated norm. The third position in our collective repertoire is the powerful/dangerous and sexualized woman: the witch or whore. *Femme fatale* or the *monstrous woman* present themselves as cultural connotations which embrace this third position. Women with power and sexual attraction have shifted, so to speak, from madonna to femme fatale, who indulges in the feminine masquerade in order to conceal her power under a seductive façade. Feminist film theory, following a psychosemiotic approach, has shown how classical film affords the male spectator a view of the female figure which neutralizes her potentially threatening position. In psychoanalytic terms, film narratives alternate between two strategies, both of which take their starting point in the proposition that the image of woman is potentially threatening in that it arouses castration anxiety. The one strategy consists of averting or denying the potential threat by making a *fetish* of the image of the woman as either an idealized or a glamorous figure. The second strategy, the *voyeuristic/sadistic strategy*, consists of punishing the 'monstrous' woman (Mulvey 1975). One may say that the (sexually) threatening and powerful woman occupies a *phallic position* in the sense that she desires a male-connoted position of power, which potentially poses a problem, for which classical film has found its own 'solutions'.

Since making a fetish of the female image serves to dissolve the perception of a 'lack' of 'phallos' or, in a cultural sense, the lack of power, men who decorate themselves or make a fetish of their bodies wish in a sense to call attention to their 'lack' or to the vulnerability of their position. Silverman accuses Freud of an ingeniously constructed projection: He shifts what the male subject cannot tolerate, 'castration' or 'lack', over to the female subject. According to Freud's description of the male castration complex, it is through sight that the female subject is established as both different

and inferior. These are mechanisms the male subject uses to assure himself that it is not he, but the other person who is 'castrated' (vulnerable, inferior). The male subject demonstrates his symbolic potence by iterating the female subject's symbolic impotence (Silverman 1988:18). In other words, aspects of the human condition like vulnerability, separation and absence are traditionally projected onto a female position, which comes to assume these connotations. Here we may have the reason why sexualization/aestheticization of men is not very common in or near the seats of 'power'.

In a discussion of the fetishist strategies of classical film, Anette Kuhn (1995) observes:

> ... the film makes it clear that to adopt a narcissistic position in relation to the cinematic image is to run the risk of identifying with woman-as-fetish: of identifying, if not with her over-idealisation, certainly – and more commonly, perhaps, in the cinema of the 1980s – with her victimisation and punishment (351).

This line of reasoning runs counter to Pedersen's and Doane's conclusion that de-sexualization of the female body is a bad strategy and that the female programme hosts Pedersen refers to assume a subject position, not despite, but rather by virtue of their function as visual objects.

The final episode of *Direkte Lykke!* may be à propos: In the last segment Hærland lashes out at her colleagues, snarling her frustration over having to work with such pitiful individuals, how sick she is of the sight of them. She then pulls out a pistol and shoots them down, one after the other. As noted earlier, Hærland occupies a highly narcisstic, playful position, while she is also the one 'in control' and by far the most aggressive figure in the programme. She is, in other words, a 'monstrous' female figure. Thus, her murderous foray in the final episode reverses the familiar cinematic formula: it is she who liquidates her disgusting colleagues. She manages to insist on her 'phallic' and 'fetishized' position and get away with it. The 'dumb blonde' defies cinematic convention, exacting her vengeance without being 'punished'. The 'phallic' programme host dramatizes the narrative without being tamed or domesticated, as so often is the fate of femmes fatales after a brief, intoxicating taste of power.

Naivism

Direkte Lykke! is thus above all a parody of 'old time', conventional television. The tone of the parody is playful and seemingly naive rather than intellectual. In a graduate thesis on postmodern film aesthetics, Dag Asbjørnsen (1994) discusses naive perceptions and reactions. Referring to Umberto Eco's essay, "Innovation and Repetition: Between Modern and Post-modern Aesthetics" (1985), Asbjørnsen identifies the aesthetics of negativity with modernist aesthetics: a normative aesthetics which applauds breaks with tradition. Consequently, the modernist aesthetic inspires iconoclastic innovation as a means of achieving new insights and understandings of the world around us (Asbjørnsen 1994:62). Among other things, this aesthetic programme implies a break with empathy. Modernism encourages the receiver to penetrate the surface and grasp deeper structures in reality. The postmodern aesthetic may be understood as a new attitude which, alongside the rational, emphasizes sensuality and emotion (Asbjørnsen 1994:23).

One of the distancing techniques in postmodern aesthetics is irony, which, Asbjørnsen asserts, lets empathy and distanced awareness be combined. In line with Asbjørnsen, I interpret naivism as an important mode of expression in *Direkte Lykke!*. As I see it, 'naivism' must be understood as a component of postmodern irony, but also as a limitation on the intellectual cynicism inherent in the ironic attitude.

Naivism has been identified as the trend in young people's culture which has succeeded irony, the hallmark of 'Generation X'. In March 1997, *Puck*, a young people's programme on Norwegian television (NRK2), carried a roundtable discussion on 'naivism', which one participant characterized as irony in an exaggerated form. The discussion suggests that naivism may in fact be an expression of an ironic attitude toward a (then-predominant) distanced, ironic metalevel and elements of postmodern irony. Inasmuch as the naivist trend has been staged in the context of the marketplace and is therefore subject to the logic of the market, the participants in the *Puck* roundtable agreed on naivism as a more adequate term for the trend than 'naivité. Current naivistic expressions may be taken as comments on or explorations of primordial naivité.

Postmodern irony/naivism

One characteristic element in postmodern aesthetics is nostalgia. Asbjørnsen describes the "nostalgic style" in postmodern film

> ... not as an expression of a longing to go back to [a particular] era, but rather a longing for the mode of sensual experience belonging to that

> era: Nostalgia may thus be seen as an expression of our sentimental relation to a mode of experience which is lost to us (Asbjørnsen 1994:34).

Thus, 'nostalgia' allows us to be naive yet maintain a distanced, self-aware position. Asbjørnsen sees this as a postmodernist strategy as we savour the apple, that is, after our original, genuinely naive sense has been lost.

Asbjørnsen goes on to describe postmodern irony as *"... delivering a message while signalling an awareness that the message is a cliché"* (Asbjørnsen 1994:90). That is to say, postmodern irony involves the same kind of 'equivocalness' as parody. In contrast to traditional parody, however, the ironic element here is not expressed at the expense of the original message, and therefore it does not fit the traditional dictionary definition of 'irony' as "the use of words to express . the opposite of the literal meaning" (The New Penguin English Dictionary, 1986) The duality, Asbjørnsen points out, allows one to indulge in naive experiences without risking whatever reputation for intellectual sophistication one may enjoy. Against this background, one may see 'naivism' as the part of postmodern irony or the postmodern mode of expression which emphasizes naive forms of experience and expression more than intellectual distancing mechanisms. We might say that naivism distances itself from those aspects of postmodern irony which retain some of the modern disdain for immediate sensation and pathos.

Naivist Elements in Direkte Lykke!

In an undergraduate thesis, Lindis Hurum (1997) discusses naivist elements in *Direkte Lykke!* and mentions a number of features which may be interpreted in that perspective. The title itself, which might be "Happiness [brought to you] Direct", refers to the fact that the programme is transmitted 'live' (*direkte*), but, in my reading, it also hold the promise of direct, naive access to 'happiness' (*lykke*) Hurum discusses the childish, playful character of the programme's vignette – both Kåre & The Cavemen's music and the visual motifs: jump-rope, cowboys and Indians, playing with a beach ball, etc. References to play, children and childishness recur throughout the programme. Hurum interprets scenes showing Anne Kath Hærland surrounded by children as a sign of identification with, or a desire to be associated with children. To this I might add that such a connotation may express a desire for the freedom, naively expressed, which children seem to have. Otherwise, she shows no interest in children whatsoever. Her 'emphatic lack of interest' is all too apparent in, for example, her encounters with Erlend's 'little brother'. Her antagonistic behaviour toward him should, I think, be read in the context of Hærland's desire to contradict politically correct norms; it is a part of her 'transgressive' programme – an issue to which I shall return.

Other naivistic elements which Hurum identifies are the animated series, Robin, and Kåre & The Cavemen's decidedly 'retro' repertoire (1960s and 1970s). Direkt Lykke! emphasizes direct, immediate sensual experience without mitigating reflection. The recirculation/parodies of past programmes may also be seen in a nostalgic light since – as Hurum also notes – the object of the irony is at once the object of nostalgic affection – as is possible in postmodern irony.

Does Anne Kath stage a naivist form of femininity – and if so, why? Does she use a naivist approach to distance herself from or to explore what is actually naive, namely, a stereotype of femininity lacking perspective or reflection?

Naivist Femininity

In the televised roundtable discussion mentioned earlier, Danish fashion and media scholar Christa Lykke Christensen spoke of the naivist trend as an "aesthetics of understatement", which she associates with the general resurgence of attention to the body, an interest which she sees as a reaction to the fact that people today feel like free-floating signs in our culture. Christensen focused particularly on the trend for young women to stage themselves as little girls wearing undersized sweaters that leave their navels bare, the revival of the teddybear and childish hairstyles like pigtails and ponytails. She points out that staging oneself as a little girl is not the same as being one. The difference is perspective. Furthermore, she points out, young women who indulge in 'little-girl' fashions are sending out signals that their sexuality is not developed as one might expect of a career-oriented, mature woman who takes what she wants in life. She calls the tendency *"an elusive sexuality on the aesthetic plane, a form of auto-eroticism, or a different kind of seduction"* (Christensen in Puck, 16 March 1997).

Christensen speculates that the 'little-girl' fashion trend may be a reaction to the sexual ideal of womanhood. The naivist 'little girl' insists on an undeveloped, pre-pubescent sexuality – a refusal to

come out of her 'little girl's room' – it, too, sexualized. I wonder if this trend may rather be an exploration of the eroticization of young women, understood in the context of naivism as *irony in an exaggerated form*. Seen in this light, a refusal to leave an eroticized child-hood may represent an exploration of the landscape of cultural meanings girls are socialized into. The process of objectifying and trivializing young women, making them cute 'baby-dolls' in pastel-coloured clothes, 'little girl'-hairstyles and (indirectly) inviting them to gain 'recognition' via a narcissistic, mirroring position are part of the construction.

Cultural attitudes toward children are essentially ambivalent, combining a denial of children as erotic beings and a powerful eroticization of the pre-pubescent (female) body. Such ambivalence – a focus on the forbidden – generates erotic fascination. This, then, is the dominant cultural framework into which young girls are introduced. Perhaps the naivist 'little-girl' trend is at once a nostalgic return to the relative 'innocence' of childhood and an exploration of/calling attention to these very same phenomena. It allows girls to indulge in the pleasures of nostalgic recognition by underlining the premises of the sexualized aesthetic of girlhood as well as distancing themselves from the same, via exaggeration.

Hærland's naivist self-staging plays on a more or less vulgar interpretation of (adult) femininity. Seemingly naively, she enacts stereotypes of femininity, centred on woman as visual object. In a sense she lustfully mimics elements in the construction of femininity, as can be done within the framework of the feminine 'masquerade': here, a naivist ironization of 'natural' womanhood. Her exaggeration is at once comic and releasing, vulgar and confusing. The naive style of enactment discounts, namely, the calculation and distance on which the strategy of seduction is based. Coupled with Hærland's unrelenting insistence on being the controlling vortex, calculation is nonetheless the prime ingredient in her naivistic strategy, which plays on ambiguities and presumes knowledgeable 'readers' who are familiar with cultural (sub)codes and trendy references which play dually on distance and fascination.

A Politically Incorrect Rendition?

Hærland stages a kind of politically *incorrect* femininity. Political correctness, "PC", is a term coined by the political Right in American politics. In its original context, the word "correct" was a sarcasm aimed at political opponents. The difference in Norway – and perhaps Europe – is that here "PC" has become a buzz-word of the so-called 'ironic generation'. The earnest political involvement of '1968' has been suceeded by an ambivalent self-reflexivity, and one may well ask whether the 'PC' accusation is no more than a labelling of 'untrendy' views and standpoints – a kind of reflexive cynicism (Gundersen & Marstein 1995:10-13).

Clearly, *Direkte Lykke!* itself is hardly immune to this kind of finger-pointing. On the other hand, it is an entertaining talk show/sitcom which borrows its meanings and its comic effects both from making fun of PC attitudes, via parodies of what might be called the 'bastion of PC', namely, Norwegian public service broadcasting, and from self-ironic comment. Hærland turns some of the dominant television genres, from the 1970s as well as the present – magazines, 'true confessions'-type talk shows, public affairs debates and reportage, all of which give the illusion of access to 'reality' – upside down. But she also parodies herself, toying as she does with her 'naive' lack of a point of view. *Direkte Lykke!* attaches the 'PC' label not by means of reflexive cynicism, but through mimicking a naive, politically incorrect unconcern (which is in danger of becoming politically correct among young people...) – in sum, a naivistic strategy.

Hærland's calculating naivism, playful exhibitionism and blatant self-centred nonchalance may be taken as a jab at the politically correct brand of femininity posited in the ideology of equality of the sexes. This, I believe, may be a key to the fascination she arouses and to the cult status she seems to attained.

Transgressions

As noted earlier, both the parodic and the naivistic strategies involve a simultaneous fascination with and celebration of what is parodied, or the 'primeval and pure' objects being explored. This raises the question of what this parodic citation leaves us with and may even confirm. Or, more simply, what is 'off limits'? What components may not be made fun of? The answers should tell us something about which components in the construction of femininity are 'privileged' in the present context.

In both the parody of 'old-time TV' and its forms of address and the parody of conventional femininity distancing mechanisms predominate. But these same distancing mechanisms spare some components, thereby giving them renewed effect. Even if I have argued, based on Doane and

Pedersen, that sexualization of the female body can be a strategy for asserting a distinct female subject position, the strategy also involves a risk of a reduction, which would keep Woman in her function as Icon and visual object. Obviously, it can be a difficult balancing act for anyone, and it results in symptoms which elicit diagnoses having little to do with subjective power and burlesque stagings.

Another important dimension or 'limit' is the heterosexual component. Even though Hærland with undisguised disdain avoids all manner of flirtation which might risk her becoming an object, her (distanced) staging nonetheless confirms traditional heterosexual codes for sexualization. In a cultural sense, it appears that Rivière's masquerade operates here to privilege or legitimate heterosexuality. This component is not made the object of parody or naivistic effects. With that the question arises, whether an attractive negotiable position in this case – despite distancing – nonetheless presumes the recirculation/citation of the heterosexual code, i.e., whether femininity is woven into meanings as sexualized image and participant in the hetero-romantic project. As Pedersen (1995:215, 1997:30) points out, postmodernism is ambiguous in this regard.

By retaining this component, which maintains her comprehensible and 'attractive' femininity and allows her to avoid being perceived as a 'monstrous' woman, Hærland shows an innovative potential in relation to several other components relating to the medium and the staging of femininity.

Notes

1. Perhaps "Instant Happiness" or "Happiness [brought to you] Live".
2. Hærland may be seen as a 'creature of television'. She has no background in journalism, but worked as a sound technician for NRK TV before she was offered the job of programme host. Her performance in *Direkte Lykke!* has made her a star.
3. The programmes are *Jakten på det gode liv* with Nadja Hasnaoui (TV2), *Bugge og damene* with Lill Marit Bugge (NRK2), Dameavdelingen (NRK), *Bombay Surprise* (NRK, a follow-up to *Direkte Lykke!*), and Vera og Vera (NRK).
4. More specifically: Andenæs, E (1994) Språklig konstituering sv sosial identitet [The verbal constitution of social identity]. In *Konstituering av kjønn fra antikken til moderne tid*. Oslo: Norges forskningsråd, and Tannen, D (1991) *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*. London: Random House.
5. Pedersen refers in turn to Robert C Allen's *Horrible Prettiness: Burlesque and American Culture*. Chapel Hill/London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991.
6. More on the concept of masquerade under the heading, "Sexual, romantic confirmation" below.
7. Jacques Lacan: *Séminaire I: Les Ecrits techniques de Freud.* Paris: Seuil, 1975, as cited in Pedersen (1995). (Translation from the Danish.)

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The Well-Organized Competition

On the Development of Internal Competition in the Swedish Television Monopoly

ANNA EDIN

Like other public service companies, Sveriges Television (SVT) currently finds itself in a highly competitive situation. However, competition is not entirely foreign to Swedish public service television. At an early stage, a system of internal competition was established in the public television monopoly, which from a Scandinavian perspective, imparted a unique character to the development of Swedish television.

The objective in combining competition and monopoly was to appropriate the "positive" effects of competition (direct rivalry in producing quality programs and the offering of program choices) without acquiring "negative" effects in its train (advertising and the pursuit of audience ratings). For the program company, which until 1978 was known as Sveriges Radio (SR), the introduction of the system meant that it now had at its disposal a doubling of broadcast volume and two competing channels with identical program policy responsibilities. As a result, the company was able to experiment with competition under laboratory-like conditions within the monopoly framework. It sought to achieve the best results through careful planning and meticulous supervision and evaluation of every detail in the new system. This quest imbued the project with the characteristic Swedish "spirit" of the period.

The basis of this article is a retrospective examination of Swedish television, when satellites and outside competition were far removed, and it closes by linking to the current situation. The article treats the issue of internal competition from a policy perspective and the standpoint of the audience. In addition it analyzes the content and aesthetic dimensions concerning program production and scheduling. The aim is to illuminate the experiences that developed from the two channel system and the consequences they bore for Swedish public service television. It focuses on both the purely practical problems and the more principal conflicts that arose between the overall program policy goals and the viewers' preferences.

The Political Context

In the 1960s the viewers' freedom of choice was the principal issue of debate concerning Swedish television. This was due to several factors. One factor was the existence of strong interests urging the establishment of commercial television in Sweden at that time, especially business interests and advertisers. When Sweden was allotted extra space on the UHF frequency band, spokesmen for commercial television argued that it would be natural to use this space to establish a free and commercially financed television channel. Their main argument was that the audience would be served better with a system based on competition. They found two main dangers associated with the television monopoly system. Without competition there was no incentive for those responsible for programs to pursue excellence. There was a risk that they would take the easy road and rely on old, well-proven program formats. Moreover, they could remain oblivious to criticism or dissatisfaction and thereby risked ignoring the viewers wishes.

However, with the Social Democrats in control of government, there was no political will to relinquish the principal of non-commercial television. Yet they did take notice of the intensive debate and criticism directed at the monopoly form, and they

stressed there was a strong need for vitalizing program work. They acknowledged that the current system could develop certain negative results as described by critics. With two channels at its disposal and a new organization based on internal competition, program production could become more extensive and varied, and the viewers' freedom of choice could be expanded.[1]

With the explicit goal of increasing freedom of choice, Parliament decided in 1966 that a two channel system for television would be introduced by the beginning of 1970.[2] The channels would have identical programming assignments and compete with each other. This was not a question of establishing a "narrow" and a "broad" channel, as in Britain with BBC1 and BBC2.[3] On the contrary, it was important that competition between channels took place under as similar conditions as possible.

With two channels, the volume of television broadcasts increased greatly and automatically gave the viewers an expanded freedom of choice. However, the parliamentary decision emphasized that this freedom of choice would be real only if the increased broadcast volume was also matched with greater variation in program scheduling. For that reason some form of collaboration between the two channels was required. Without coordination there was a risk that the two channels would focus on popular programs, which could lead to partiality and diminished quality. Hence, it was stated that the scheduling of program time slots would be coordinated according to a so-called contrast principle. Similar programs would not be broadcast at the same time on both channels; instead the viewers would have the opportunity to choose between two different program formats at any specific time. It was hoped that this system would lead to changes not only in program schedules but also in the audience's viewing habits. The point of this competitive strategy was not to maximize audience viewing as in the case of external competition. Instead, the idea was to adjust the "surplus" or "shortage" of viewers associated with different program formats (entertainment and fiction in relation to factual programs) so that television viewing would become more varied and more "targeted". The new system was supposed to function not only as a means for providing viewers greater freedom of choice, but also as a contribution to achieving certain program policy goals.[4]

As a result of this decision, SR set up a special coordinating organ whose task was to balance program schedules on the two competing channels. A contrast model for program scheduling was implemented based on policy directives, where factual programs (news, reporting, documentaries, politics) were assigned time slots opposite entertainment and fiction programs.

The Viewers

SR initiated a comprehensive audience survey activity as part of the establishment of the two channel system. Systematic and regular audience surveys became a necessary adjunct to a system that planned and coordinated two channels within the same company. The division for audience surveys grew rapidly and soon became an independent division within the company, answering directly to the Managing Director for SR.[5]

After nearly a year of the new system, the audience survey statistics revealed results that upset both politicians and company management. They revealed that viewers used their new freedom of choice to watch primarily entertainment and fiction programs at the expense of factual programs. If a factual program was broadcast concurrently with an entertainment program the latter would attract a substantially larger share of the viewer base. The so-called "surplus" of viewers watching entertainment programs increased as the two channel system developed.[6]

This phenomenon was called the "slalom effect" and resulted in massive complaints at SR. The audience statistics were interpreted both internally and outside SR as the result of a deliberate pursuit for audience ratings and commercialization. SR was accused of consciously sabotaging serious programming. According to the indignant critics, the channel that broadcast entertainment was destroying the other channel's information; and the channel that placed its information program in a time slot opposite the neighboring channel's entertainment program was accused of being irresponsible for its information programming.

To remedy this situation, SR quickly drafted a defensive philosophy that sought to protect newscasts from competition with popular programs in the neighboring channel. This was monitored closely by audience surveys. However, these showed that newscasts actually maintained themselves very well in competition and were "threatened" only by a few entertainment successes. The surveys also revealed that program times had a great influence on audience size. Unsuitable broadcast time slots were in actuality more decisive for viewer statistics than competition. But it was discovered that the programs that needed "protection from competition"

were the other factual programs, especially those dealing with society, politics and culture.[7]

Thus in 1974 SR attempted to devise another model for coordination. The contrast model obviously did not deliver the desired results. Instead SR tried to create a system where certain program formats would be protected (news, factual programs, children's programs, and in-house productions) while the various program formats would be placed in different broadcast time slots on different days. The governing principle now focused on the coordination of specific individual programs rather than program formats. Nonetheless, after all modifications had been made to the coordination model, the audience surveys again came up with unexpected results. The various solutions with a defensive philosophy and a new coordination model had been implemented to influence the viewers to watch more factual programs and less entertainment and fiction. These had achieved only marginal effects in practice. The longer newscasts received a slightly larger audience share. But the audience for cultural and social programs continued to shrink. It became obvious that viewers assigned higher priority to certain programs than SR and that in practice they had chosen a different program profile than that for which the channels had been established.

An early evaluation of the situation maintained that this was a symptom of "system error". The problem was unavoidable since the new system "forced the audience to choose".[8] The critics in the public debate were harsh and argued that SR was not only responsible for program production but also for program consumption. It was primarily in this sense that SR was accused of irresponsibility and commercialization.

SR management was troubled about the consequences of this massive criticism; at the same time their dilemma was obvious. If SR tried to satisfy critics by producing more factual programs and fewer entertainment programs, or by systematically removing a large portion of entertainment programs from prime time, this would obviously conflict with the viewers' desires. The risk was that people would either choose not to watch television at all or reduce their viewing radically.

Events show that SR attempted at first to adapt programming to mollify the upset critics. They tried different program scheduling strategies, with "easy" and "tough" competition, with the aim of strengthening factual programming. They also increased production of factual programs by nearly 100%, whereby they comprised at most a 22% share of broadcast time. Entertainment programming also increased, but its share of broadcast time declined from 10% to 7%.[9]

Mixed Programs

Despite the various attempts at fixing the "problem", audience viewing patterns changed only marginally. A more accessible route developed in practice with the introduction of new program formats where the boundary between information and entertainment became ambiguous.

So-called mixed programs became the most notable intrusion into the program schedule in connection with the two channel system. Mixed programs, which were just a mix of information and entertainment – infotainment – comprised more than 10% of the total viewing time. They captured between 25% to 30% of total audience viewing time on the days these programs were broadcast and the most popular mixed programs achieved viewing figures of 30% – 40%.[10]

This type of program was not an entirely new phenomena in Swedish television, and it had a history that extended back to the early days of television.[11] During the one channel era, it had predecessors in such programs as *Hemma med Ria* (At Home with Ria), *Timmen* (One Hour) and *Storforum* (Main Forum). What was new was the regular and daily broadcast. They were now sent on specific days at specific times; they were broadcast live, and they were categorized as an independent program format. Examples of this new mixed program format were *Halvsju* (Six-thirty), *Sveriges Magasin* (Swedish Magazine), *Ikväll* (Tonight) and later editions of *Storforum* (Main Forum) and *Kvällsöppet* (Night-Open).

The "new" mixed programs were strategically created for scheduling independently of what program format was broadcast in the neighboring channel. The program *Halvsju* (Six-Thirty), one of the most successful programs in SR's history, was started mainly as an attempt to find a program format that could be broadcast in the same time slot as news and children's programs while complying with coordination rules. Since it transcended the holy boundary between information and entertainment, it could not be conclusively demonstrated that the rules were being broken.

The critics in the ensuing public debate were brutal; they maintained that the *Halvsju* program was consciously created to drive out serious programming. Mixed programs in general were received with harsh criticism and accused of trivialization and commercialization, destroying quality

standards and representing a one-sided pursuit of audience ratings. The openly folksy tone of the programs, the mix of entertainment and facts and the programs personal and emotional aspects were regarded as acts of treachery and sabotage. The critics claimed that serious debates in Swedish television began to resemble "Polish parliaments"; that television betrayed social debate and presented it as "a spectacle"; and that the manner in which it did present facts and serious material functioned as an alibi for SR to avoid taking its social responsibilities seriously. The actual presence of various issues in these mixed programs meant they would not be treated in other programs. Since the programs anticipated the issues, these could be subsequently precluded as program subjects in other contexts; or a program proposal could be rejected because the issue had been previously treated in a mixed program. The critics maintained that information and analysis in the mixed programs were situated in such a trivial context that they became neutralized and "distorted".[12]

But mixed programs were actually just the opposite to a certain extent. That is, they "conformed to reality" in their ambition to increase the viewers interest for factual and information programs. The common element in mixed programs was the presentation of information and selected issues in a way that the viewers could identify with them. They tried to achieve this through the program leader's monologue and his "dialogue" with the audience, and by situating reporting and debates in everyday environments with reference to the man on the street. The programs differed in their specific choice of events in the political and social spectrum but they shared the element of situating current social debates in a socially-oriented context. The subjects and issues presented were the viewers' "property". In addition the programs featured song, music, and entertainment in varying degrees, which were considered necessary for the programs to be "palatable" to the public. The various program features were also consciously formed with the idea that the viewers could come and leave the program without experiencing a break in content. The entertainment features had a dual role in this aspect, serving as a natural pause for those who must attend to something in the middle of a program, and as a means of attracting people to the program. They were designed to meet the viewers' needs in the early evening hours, a time characterized by meal preparation, child care, etc. in addition to watching television.

The generally high audience ratings for mixed programs was not only an expression of their alleged disregard for quality in information, as the critics maintained, but they were also a sign that the programs with their "canvassing activity" reached people who otherwise would have not chosen the information from the regular program schedule. According to critics, this program form consisted of a "myriad of features" that did not allow viewers to create a meaningful pattern even of the subjects and issues that were treated quite frequently. Yet, at the same time it was obviously a form well-suited to people's everyday lives and their multitude of responsibilities, interests and needs.

The "new" mixed program was a strategic program format, created to evade the coordination rules and adapted to the audience's criteria. It was also a program format that exploited the television medium's most effective mode: dramatic and emotional tensions were created to capture the viewers' interest and involvement. SR drew the consequences of the increasing disinterest for factual and information programs as documented by audience surveys. They found it necessary to "snap the circus whip" when broadcasting information and to create programs on the premise that people lived in a "cultural mixed economy" where television viewing could not be taken for granted.

Conclusions

A significant outcome of the two channel system and internal competition was that SR gained access to extensive empirical knowledge of the viewers' television habits through the regular audience surveys that had been institutionalized in connection with the reform. SR learned what viewers watched and prioritized. In addition they gained concrete experience of the importance of program scheduling for audience ratings. They also gained the valuable experience that they could not "steer" viewers from entertainment programs to factual programs by coordinating program format schedules in a particular manner. They were unable to achieve this result even through a parallel increase in the production of factual programs.

The experiences also revealed the importance of softening the sharp dichotomy between factual and entertainment programs on which the public service authorization was based. Mixed programs played a key roll. By transcending the limits between information and entertainment, it was principally important in resolving the program policy conflict

between "serving society" and "serving the audience". Mixed programs also had a more strategic and practical importance by functioning as a program form that could avoid rules and resolve conflicts that were inherent in the new television system.

A further significant outcome of the establishment of the two channel system was that it led to the consolidation of the Swedish television monopoly. Once the first panic reactions in the public debate had subsided, the pressure on SR and its monopoly form also subsided. The threat from strong commercial interests had been averted and Swedish public service channels had become stronger from the experience.

The last, and perhaps the most important result, can be glimpsed in today's competitive situation. By experimenting with competition under the protective shield of monopoly, SVT gained knowledge and insights that made it possible for it to appreciate the situation when *true* competition became a fact. In the present situation, the two channel system has strengthened SVT's competitiveness while also providing better conditions for delivering a satisfactory public service activity. With two channels at its disposal, SVT has automatically a large exposure range that gives the company an advantage over the competition. Viewed from a public service perspective, the two channel system imparted a position of strength to SVT. By virtue of its double broadcast volume, it can practice flexible program scheduling and more easily satisfy both demands for variety and for the broadcast of special interest programs without coming into conflict with competitive mechanisms.

In closing, we can say that history has played a larger role in the present situation than immediately meets the eye. The system that had been originally introduced to preserve the television monopoly also provided valuable experience and structural advantages for the situation following the dissolution of monopoly.

Notes

1. see SOU 1965:20.
2. Prop. 1966:136.
3. cf. Curran and Seaton, 1988.
4. see SOU 1965:20; Prop. 1966:136.
5. cf. Abrahamsson, 1990
6. Audience statistics, reported within SR: PUB (Department for audience surveys) 1970, 1971.
7. see Sveriges Radio's evaluation *Tvåkanalsystemet i TV. KANUT*, 1975.
8. SR: *Annual Report* 1971, s, 18
9. For the period 1965-1975. Program statistics published in *The Swedish Radio och Television Schedules 1925 – 1995*. Foundation for Broadcast Media in Sweden, 1996.
10. Audience statistics reported in Sveriges Radio's evaluation *Tvåkanalsystemet i TV. KANUT*, 1975.
11. cf. Kerr, 1990.
12. From op-ed pieces in three major Swedish daily newspapers: *Dagens Nyheter, Aftonbladet* and *Expressen*, as cited in SR: Annual report 1971, 1973; and SR: *Tvåkanalsystemet i TV. KANUT* 1975.

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Making Media Visible in Teacher Education

SIRKKU TUOMINEN

The ability to create and read different kinds of media products is seen as an important skill for citizenship. In Finland media education (in communicational education) has been taken into the official curriculum as a cross-curriculum subject in 1994 at the primary school level, after the first finnish dissortation in media education had been published (Härkönen 1994). At the same time finnish schools got more authority to make their own curriculums. Since then media education has played bigger and bigger part in these curriculums. In primary school teacher education, it was quite silent in this theme area until 1995, when visual media education begun as an experiment with ministerial funding in the University of Tampere. To evaluate this course is now current, when developing media education in Finland.

The experimental course, 35 credit points of visual media education, was organized co-operatively with the Department of Primary school teacher education and the Department of Journalism and Masscommunication in the University of Tampere. 15 student teachers and in-service teachers attended the course. The focus of my research is on evaluating the experimental course: what kind of understanding do these student teachers acquire about media education? Media broadens the learning environment out of the university to the personal environment concerning also the childhood and thoughts about the future. I am focusing on the development of the students as media consumers and as media teachers.

Media educational course needs evaluation which can take account both private and public factors and the communicative nature of action which it emphasizes. That means also new kinds of evaluative techniques (see also Buckinham & Sefton-Green 1994). In this case the critical evaluative approach in teacher education is communicative evaluation (more Niemi 1996) and the method is educational media lifestudy.

In media education, visual and written autobiographies has been used also as a method in learning (for ex. Buckingham & Sefton-Green 1994). Educational media lifestudy is the main means to evaluate the student teachers' and in-service teachers' development during the course. Here I have examples from two lifestudies, a male student teacher and a female in-service teacher. It is also interesting, what kind of evaluative knowledge can educational media lifestudy provide?

Towards Media Consciousness

The history of media education has a commitment to the development of media and educational research. The behaviorist approaches saw media negatively as a threat against citizens. People had to be innoculated, protected from this kind of disease by teachers. The later humanist and constructivist approaches have taken the media as a chance for better living and lifelong learning in a continually changing society. Media belong to our reality, and they must be seen as a part of contemporary culture. People ought to be taught media competencies which include wider understanding and self-reflection (see Buckingham & Sefton-green 1994, Masterman 1994, Craggs 1992)

In the 1980s the markets and consumption of new media such as video, satellite channels and informational technology spread. There was a sudden change in the middle of the 1980s from monopoly to competition and from one-way communication to interaction and dialogue. As a whole, the number of media has increased and finally the multimedia were here: all the old media united together in mi-

crocomputers. Pictures, sounds and texts together construct media performances, the audiovisual culture belongs to everyday life (see more Varis 1995).

The aim of media education in the 1980s was to become critical with media: to learn about selection, media constructions and representations of reality (see, for example, Masterman 1989 and Craggs 1992). In the 1990s Masterman calls for critical autonomy. David Buckingham speaks about media consciousness. It is criticalness in two dimensions, individual and social. The social dimension can be seen as a distribution of power within society. The subject dimension means individual power and control over thought processes. These two processes are not separate, there is an interplay between them (Buckingham & Sefton-Green 1994, 182-183, see also Sihvonen 1995). Media consciousness or critical autonomy is seen as empowering in one‘s life: freedom to make choices, hope for better future or inside micropower (Masterman 1994, Buckingham & Sefton-Green 1994).

Masterman speaks about media texts: they include texts, pictures and sounds. He broadens literacy to media and behind them to the producers and social constructions. Buckingham (1994) speaks about postmodern literacy, which is broader than media; it is the whole popular culture with current social and technological changes. Literacy is not only a skill, but an act of individual cognition in the different social contexts with different technologies. He speaks about “trans-media intertextuality” which means disappearing boundaries between texts and media. Media are parts of texts and belong to the cultural literacy (see p. 213-214, compare McCarthy 1984, 280-281: the universal pragmatics of Habermas).

In Finland a work group in the Ministry of education (OPM 2: 1996) has launched a concept of medialogy meaning unified media and cultural sciences. The aim in the memorandum is to develope media literacy among citizens. This defining of media literacy includes the traditional literacy skills plus media technological and cultural skills to “write” and to “read” different kinds of media texts. Media education that develops these skills is seen as a part of current liberal education (see p. 29).

In Finland media education (in communicational education) is a cross-curriculum theme at the primary school level. It has been in the official curriculum since 1994 (OPS 1994). Finland belongs to the advanced stage of media education with Australia, Canada, England, France, Norway, Scotland, Sweden and Switzerland. In these countries media education is in official curricula and in teacher education (see Bazalgette et al. 1992).

Active Learning with Media

The specific skill demands in media literacy depend on the context where it is needed and used. To work as a teacher is one specific professional context, and the level of the primary school makes it even more specific. Primary school teachers need understanding to teach media literacy and skills to initiate active learning with children (Werner 1996, Craggs 1992).

Media literacy at the level of primary school means learning about media texts: production, representations and reception. Children ought to learn how materials and knowledge are selected for media texts and how these texts are constructed in the process of production in different media. Regarding representations, children should learn narrative techniques. Learning about reception means getting a sense of the audience. These are not separate levels, but interrelated to each other. And everything starts from the understanding that children already have about media texts. The aim is to make media more “visible” to children. At first media should become visible also to teachers (Craggs 1992, 14, also Tufte 1992).

Media education is based on child-centered learning. Issues are raised up from children’s life, and materials relevant to children. That means popular culture entering the classroom. The working methods are experiential: simulation exercises and investigation and reflective dialogue in activity groups. Typical to media education is cooperation instead of competition, which shows among teachers too: in cross-curricular teaching and integration with subjects, in projects’ for example (see pp. 4-7, 20-22). Masterman (1994) adds parent-teacher collaboration and cooperation with media institutions as essential features of media education. The teachers’ mission is to help children to question, investigate and question again (more about active learning in Niemi & Kohonen 1995a).

These definings about media literacy education has worked as fundamental principles in planning the experimental course for primary school teacher education in visual media education in the University of Tampere. Definings about media literacy and media education can be called as teacher’s media competence, dimensions of it.

Teacher's media competence

Media literacy in strategies of
- media production
- performancies and representations
- reception

+

Media education as active learning
- experiential
- cooperative
- current materials
- investigative, encourages for asking and learning

Teachers ought to learn at first themselves academic knowledge about media literacy and academic, also practical knowledge about media education. Media literacy means then knowledge about media culture, in media studies. Media education is knowledge about educational sciences, methods of active learning. These two aspects are not necessarily separate in action, but they must be distinguished, media education belonging to teachers professionality carriyng out active learning about media in class room. It is an essential feature in teachers' communicative competence with media in school (compare communicative competence in Habermas 1987, McCarthy 1984).

About the Course in Visual Media Education

The experimental course for primary school teachers in visual media education started in autumn 1995 at the University of Tampere. It was the first course as long as 35 credit points in teacher education in Finland. Now in 1998, the course is going on regularly and media culture and communicational education has it's own professorship in the University of Tampere from the beginning of last year.

In teacher education, media education has visual arts as a partner subject. Student teachers take the course as an additional subject, while their main subject is educational sciences. Six student teachers and nine in-service teachers took part in the experimential course in 1995.

Arts and media were studied both separately and in integrated form. Students earn 15 credits arts, 15 credits media studies and 5 credits doing integrated coursework specializing different aspects of visual media education. Student teachers took the whole course in two years, but in-service teachers took it in a year, because they had already taken the arts course as part of their M.A. degree.

The aim of the course was to enhance student teachers' and in-service teachers' interest in working and developing themselves with media education. That means in the first place learning to understand the academic concepts and techniques in media education and media literacy so that they can produce active learning in classrooms and develop their own curricula and learning environments. Because the partner subject was arts, the emphasis was on visual aspects in media literacy.

Media literacy was learned through exercises, projects, textbooks and workshops. Media education was learned mainly through books, workshops and student teaching. Cooperation with media houses included visites and research in media text production. The strategies of publicity were experienced through a workshop where the students arranged the opening day of the course, and their first group analysis about a television program came out. The whole course was based on cooperation with teacher trainers: two arts lecturers, media studies teacher and an important co-teacher was the lecturer on information technology in workshops about digital picture manipulation and producing hypermedia.

About Communicative Evaluation

According to Hannele Niemi (1996) communicative evaluation belongs to the critical paradigm of evaluation. The evaluator is seen as a tutor, a subject in the process of evaluation. The approach relys on Habermas (1987) and his theory of communictive action. Social phenomenons are considered as different communicative subsystems with own cultural understandings and horizons. The problem in modern society has been the differentiation of these subsystems, that includes citizens differentiation from the society and social actions. Teacher education can bee seen as one subsystem and teacherhood can bee seen as an important profession to promote communicative skills for citizens to take part and communicate in postmodern society, which is a mosaic of subsystems. Teacher education should produce professionals for open discussion with partners, and cabable to communicate with people with different cultural, movable horizons (Niemi 1996, 17-18).

Niemi differs the knowledge in the communicative evaluation of the effectiveness in three qualitative levels. Revelation means the knowledge about

the quality of learning, barriers to achievements, expectations for teacher education, and new objectives to be set. Anticipation is knowledge about the historical and socio-political context and future: how teachers/ students can make their impact on the development of society. The third level is aiming for communication and partnership. That means evaluative knowledge about cooperation, partnership and interaction with teachers, working life, schools and local communities (Niemi 1996, 21-24). These three levels of evaluation of effectiveness can be applied to the evaluation of the visual media education course. (Figure 1)

Revelation here means the quality of knowledge and growth both in private sector and public sector as a teacher. Did the course advance students' media literacy? What kind of progress did the course enhance in media education as active learning? Anticipation is about changes in students attitudes and their own aims for future. What is their personal interest in media after the course? What kind of commitment and autonomy as media teachers do they have for the future? Aiming for communication and partnership is about creating communicative culture. Here I am looking for student teachers' own communicative culture, trajectors from childhood: what kind of communicative microcultures or styles there are developing? (see about trajectors Kauppila & Tuomainen 1996)

The evaluation of visual media education course here is primary evaluation, because the study is done right after the course has ended in autumn 1996. Then the in-service teachers got the whole 35 credits done and the student teachers continued with other studies in their M.A. degree.

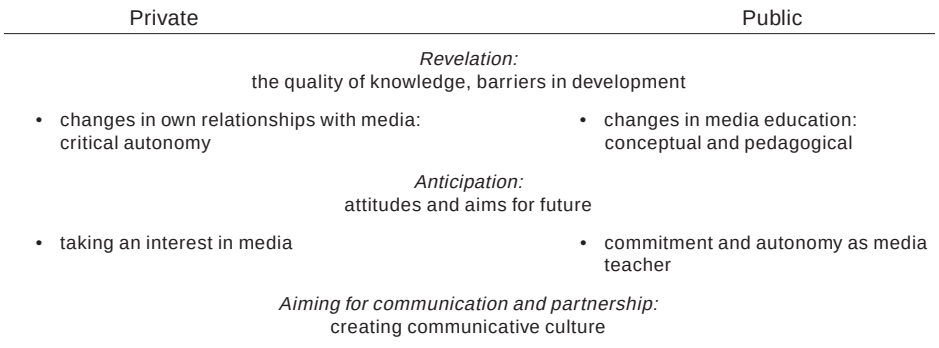
Evaluation with Educational Media Lifestudy

My main method can be called educational media lifestudy, because it is one educational method among others as well. Educational media lifestudy belongs to the biographical methods which are considered as a means of critical reflection and transformative learning (Dominicé 1994). Studying one's life means studying both the private and public (compare Antikainen 1995 and Fiske 1994). My students wrote their first media lifestudy while entering the course in 1995. During the course they kept learning diary and in winter 1996-97 I made a thematic lifestudy interview with 5 students.

Tuomo Turja (1992) has written an autobiography studying his own media educational environment from childhood. Ari Antikainen (1996, 1995) studies the learning life courses of Finns. His emphasis is on the significant learning experiences in the lives of Finns and their significant "others": for example, people, ideologies and institutions that have affected learning during their lives. He questions what meaning education has for Finns and if it has provided empowerment to the lives of Finns.

Ivor Goodson (1991) argues that studies about teachers' lives focus on the deeper knowledge about the relationships of teachers' work, professional growth and schooling. He says that a teacher's background and history shape the practice and are thus important in data collection in educational research. Important in formulating teachers' careers are all the critical incidents in their lives (pp. 143-149).

Figure 1. Communicative Evaluation in Visual Media Education



Joseph Lukinsky (1994) and Pierre F. Dominicé (1994) have used educational life history as a self-study in adult learning and in the universities both as a teaching method and studying method. In Lukinsky's model lifestudy is a part of a learning diary. It includes important "steps" of life: people, incidents, work, questions and definitions. Students can use this kind of diary during the courses, reflecting upon what special information have they learned and through what kind of learning "steps" (Lukinsky 1994, pp. 241-243, 248).

Through biographical methods "self" and "others", "private" and "public", "personal" and "professional" can be reflected as in the examples above. Especially when the aim is to define different typifications of life styles or living courses, biographical methods are useful, as they also are when typifying some special qualifications (see Roos 1987, Antikainen 1995, Raehalme 1996).

The students came to the course with their first lifestudy written or came to me for a thematic interview. The interviews lasted about 1-2 hours and written papers were 3-10 pages. This educational media lifestudy produced knowledge of revelation and anticipation before the course: with what kind of understanding did the students enter the course?

The students, both men and women, are from 22-44 years of age (only two of them are over 30). Students tell about their life with the media through family habits, different ages, hobbies, friends and living places. Big news events, like crises in Russia, were remembered as significant situations when the media had an influence on the whole family media habits. Family habits include memories about times to stop watching tv and go to bed and also memories about not having this kind of control from parents. Almost everyone remembers television first at a preschool age. Radio is recalled in the 1980s, when private radio stations were begun in Finland after the states broadcasting monopoly was broken. Newspapers have belonged to the everyday rutine since high school, as have special hobby magazines. The microcomputer is mainly a new friend, dating from university entrance. The concept of media was mainly understood in the papers, but media education was rearly mentioned. Only two students mentioned some lessons at school where articles or videos were made. Only three students discussed media education and its future. The visual dimension appears in few papers: most of the writing is merely about pictures and the visual media. Perhaps expectations for the course beginning?

The revelation knowledge was about students media environment in which they had lived, the media educational approach at home and school in childhood, and own relationships with media. At the beginning of the course these all reveal for me as a media teacher about students hidden media literacy skills. Media education should make these visible for students themselves, and develop skills further towards critical autonomy (see Tufte 1992).

During the autumn the students kept learning diaries. Before Christmas they wrote down headlines in small groups about the significant learning experiences or steps in this course. At home everyone added under these headlines: what had they learned and how? What more do they want to learn? What did the first part of the course mean in their lives?

In winter 1996-1997 I made thematic interviews about students' lives: from the basis of their first educational media lifestudies and their headlines about significant learning experiences during the course year. This second part was a longer project. It had instructions beforehand: main questions to answer. Before the second part I sent them copies of the first lifestudy, and their esseys, exams etc. as well.

About Changes During the Course: Media Coming "Visible"

The male student teacher, age 24, comes from the country, grown up in a farmer family with two siblings. His cultural trajector is socially critical from the childhood: he has had a home where social issues has been on converse daily. The male student teacher negotiates and debates a lot about media also during the course. The female in-service teacher, age 29, comes from little town, grown up in a residential area with neighborhood children and a younger sister. Both her parents were working outside the home. Her cultural trajector from childhood is aesthetic and very visual: the significant others in childhood were other children, books and pictures. Teacher education had not been her dream, but she had not got in to the Arts College, although she had tried many times.

At the time of the second lifestudy interview the male student teacher was in the fourth grade in teacher education doing his M.A. research. His personal life was in big change: he had a total break with his girlfriend, he started a new relationship with another girl, his mother got cancer and died during the course. The female in-service teacher

was working as a teacher her fifth year with second class pupils and she had already settled down as a married woman in justbought little house with a teacher husband.

As revelation knowledge they mention significant learning experiences during the course. The male student teacher mentions his research, final student teaching, film workshop and a course in graphics. The female in-service teacher mentions a lot of awakenings she has had with course books, teaching practicies in her class and exercices with visual media. Both of them tell me about media production, selection, narration, genres and reception coming "visible" for them. Development has occurred as media consumers. They tell me also about projects they have carried out in the class rooms with media. The female in-service teacher more and with more strict aims than the male student teacher.

As anticipative knowledge, they tell me about their personal interests in media and as media teacher. The male student‘s interest has increased so, that he doesn‘t know whether he wants to be a teacher yet. He has token additive courses for example in documentaries and animation. The female in-service teacher speaks about feeling guilty with popular culture before the course, but not anymore. She has got also a lot self confidence working with media projects in classroom.

What has prevented their development and growth? The male student teacher tells about conflicts with peers and teacher trainers. He didn‘t also like that in-service teachers took part in the same course, because it meant teaching in weekends. The female in-service teacher tells about her technological lacks that prevented her to concentrate in visual manipulation course where technological support was too small. She thinks her own aims for the course were also too visual and aesthetic.

The trajectors of the both students got more towards one another during the course. The male student teacher‘s social and critical trajector got some aesthetic dimensions and the female in-service teacher‘s aesthetic trajector got social dimensions. The male student teacher loves now doing the arts work also. The female in-service teacher speaks a lot about the social representations that media performances offer to us.

The evaluative knowledge about the effectiveness of these two student cases is not countable, but qualitative. Media consciousness have developed, media has became visible instead of myth anymore, in both cases. They have both got understanding about media education, the female in-service teacher a bit more than the male student teacher. Both have changes also in attitudes: the interest in media culture and popular culture has increased. Cultural trajectors have not changed but got unifying dimensions during the course about (visual) media.

Lifestudy in Evaluation, Conclusions

While the data analyzing is going on with other lifestudies, I can still make some observations about the method, its advantages and limitations.

Already the students' first media lifestudies and the significant learning headlines in learning diaries show that in these interpretations both private and public aspects can be present. The learning environment appears to be broader in students' lives than the department of primary school teacher education is and it makes evaluation of the effectiveness also more complexive. For example the male student teacher has had so much going on in his private life at the course time, that the effectiveness in his case is very complexive. The female in-service teacher has more stabile personal life situation and the development can be seen more clear in her case.

The knowledge of childhood and students' everyday life make possible interpretations about why and how students' study. Cultural trajectors come visible to students themselves also and help them think where are they coming and where going. Lifestudy produces especially knowledge about feelings and attitudes.

The method itself creates a communicative culture, and belongs to the level of aiming for communication and partnership. When educational media lifestudy is a thematic interview, it is a communicative situation between two persons. The researcher can take a role as a tutor and help the student think questions further. It is a question of dialogue, with researcher and student and student with himself. The evaluation situation is a situation for growth, too. I felt myself as a midwife giving birth to the narrative and self reflection.

There are also limitations. The life narratives vary in depth. It is a question about staking oneself as Dominice (1994) says. One limitation is also the double meaning creation in media lifestudies: students create meanings of their lives in their narratives and then I create interpretations about these narratives. In this case the second and third meeting is necessary: students read and check if they want to change the story. To support revelation

knowledge in the public sector, educational lifestudy needs supportive methods in evaluation. Changes in students' pedagogical development need to be studied in accuracy from their diaries of student teaching as well.

The effectiveness of the course here means more than achieving or not, strict countable learning outcomes. It means beginning of growth towards something, here as media consciouss person and as primary school teachers.

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Multimedia in Distance Education

Implication of Using CD-ROM

JØRGEN BANG

What is Multimedia?

The term 'multimedia' has become an educational 'buzz-word' of the mid-1990's. This year the EU has launched a large scale multimedia programme and most European countries are starting programmes of their own, aiming at a national development of multimedia and information technology. But what do we really understand by the term 'multimedia'.

A Danish dictionary from the 1960's gives the following definition:

> Multimedia = combined use of educational radio or television on the one hand and printed material on the other.

This is a media mix which may look rather old fashion, but, nevertheless, still refers to an everyday situation for learners in most open universities. In the latest edition of EDEN's electronic newsletter *Andrea* (vol. 4, no. 5) Jack Koumi (former BBC Open University producer, now a private consultant) writes a position paper on appropriate educational technologies in which he refers to the present situation at the Open University:

> The UK OU tries to select that medium which best benefits the nature of each topic or learning task. This results in a media mix in which UK OU students spend:
>
> 5% of their study-time working with television
> 15% working with audio (or audiovision)
> 80% working with printed materials.

As a hidden argument behind this emphasis on the right choice of media for different learning situations one recalls Tony Bates' rather well-known diagram from 1989 dealing with the differences in the symbolic systems between media (Diagram 1.) (Bates, 1989):

Bates' suggestion was to consider such parameters as voice, written language, colour, still pictures, animation, dramatic events and full movement when we make the choice between media such as lectures, audio (radio), print, computer and television (video).

Diagram 1.

Lecture	Audio	Print	Computer	Television
voice	voice	no	no	voice
written language	no	written language	written language	written language
colour	no	?	?	colour
still picture	no	still picture	still picture	still picture
no	no	no	animation	animation
?	events	events	no	events
no	no	no	no	full movement

? = usually at higher cost, or only occasionally, or with difficulty.

From a pedagogical point of view these consideration are still valid and the parameters still of the highest importance to consider when we design learning materials. The different symbolic systems do support different communicative actions and, in that way, stimulate different aspects of the learning process.

From a technological point of view the diagram is an illustration of how fast some technologies change. In relation to the computer all Bates' 'question marks' and 'no's' are outdated! At the moment the computer is able to support communication in voice, written language, colour, still picture, animation, dramatic events and full movement almost at the same level as television.

Furthermore, the computer offers the student an opportunity to interact physically with the learning material on a symbolic level, whereas the other media – at the physical level – only allow for browsing and repetition (turning the pages and winding-rewinding the tapes).

This possibility for interaction on the symbolic level is what makes the computer unique. The computer is no longer one option or one choice of media among others in a media mix as it was considered a few years back, when computers primarily were used for word-processing, e-mail, computer conferencing and running of CBT-programmes. The computer has other options because it relies on a new language using a binary code (0 and 1) which is able to handle both signs, visuals, sounds and other kinds of formal systems in approximately the same way as the alphabet supports print and written language (Finnemann 1996).

The computer is an integrated medium for

- production (paper, pencil, typewriter, brush, etc.)
- preparation (content, form, layout, etc.)
- storage (book, library, database, etc.)
- copying (printing, copy machine. etc.)
- search (index, catalogue, etc.)
- distribution (mail)
- communication (telephone, fax)

of knowledge or symbolic formulated content.

Due to this integration of previously disintegrated functions and operations the computer has become the vehicle for multimedia. But this development has not been supported so much by 'the computer as a machine' similar to the radio and television monitor as by 'the computer as a medium' using a digital communications system different from the analog system used in other media.

To clarify the term 'multimedia' further a recent Danish publication on 'multimedia and the development of technology' (Jensen, 1995) has drawn up a diagram with a separation between multimedia and non-multimedia on the one hand and interactivity (symbolic interaction) and non-interactivy on the other (Diagram 2).

Following this diagram it becomes obvious

- that not every application which runs on a computer is a multimedia, e.g. text-based programmes – hyperstructured or not,

Diagram 2.

		Non-Multimedia	**Multimedia**
Non-Interactivity		television, radio, film, print, books, dias, etc.	linear presentations, and demos, etc.
Interactivity	**Non-Hyperstructure**	wordprocessing, desk-top publishing, spread sheets, database, etc.	computer games, computer fiction, etc.
	Hyperstructure	hypertext	non-linear presentations, WWW, etc.

- that the term multimedia is used also for application which are non-interactive, e. g. linear presentations or demos which may run on computers,
- that within interactive multimedia there is a dividing line between hyperstructured and non-hyperstructured applications.

Learning Media for the Future

The advantage of the computer is the use of digital information processing, but this way of handling data is about to be integrated into other media. At the moment most telephone communication is digital – at least in the Western world, and television will become digital within a few years offering the users High Definition Television, a multiplication of available programmes and several interactive services. Especially, families connected to cable-television will have these new options and providers of cable-television are at the moment exploring the possibilities of offering telecommunication facilities as telephony, e-mail and internet access through the cables exchanging the remote-control with a small key-board.

From an educational point of view one of the important questions is: will the home-based PC and interactive television merge into one medium? In that case we – as providers of education and learning materials – would only have to develop for one platform: the digital interactive television with integrated two-way communication.

Some statistics on the penetration of communication hardware in Danish households may give an indication of the direction in which the development is moving. Denmark is in this matter on line with the other Scandinavian countries and in the upper end of Europe as a whole.

Communication Hardware
in Danish Households 1996 (percent)

Television	97
Text-tv	69
Video	66
Cable-tv	56
Satellite-receiver	11
Telephone	96
Mobil-telephone	43
Home based PC	47
Modem	9

The low penetration of modems put severe limitations on the use of computer-based communication in learning and especially in distance learning. In practice it restricts the possibilities of using multimedia in home-based education to stand-alone systems like CD-ROM and excludes facilities like the WWW and e-mail – at least for the next years. Compared to the situation in the United States the amount of modems should have been doubled. Probably, the low penetration is caused by the relatively high level of local rates on telephony in Europe.

As a consequence of these limitations for computer networking the educational providers may place confidence in digital interactive television. Not least, because this development will be pushed foreward by the apparently never declining market for entertainment. A small Danish co-operative company with interests in local television has launched its visions for this coming piece of hardware – a 'TVPC 2005 Digital Standard', which could be available on the market for Christmas year 2005 (AEM Invest, 1996). A selected list of the imagined specifications look like this:

TVPC 2005 Digital Standard

Hardware:	*Software:*
Sony Colour Monitor	MS Windows
Intel Processor	Electronic Programme Guide
Digital Video Drive (music, video, CD-ROM)	Children Safe
Remote Control	*Television:*
Nokia Digital Desk	10 National channels
Nokia Mobile Phone (hand-free)	20 European channels
Build in stereo speakers	
Sony Web (modem)	
Extra equipment:	*Extra programme packages:*
Key board	A European package
Multi-room server	An American package
Video phone recorder	A Global package
Phone exchange	
Room surveillance	*Pay television:*
Heath and light regulation	International News:
Surround sound link	Sport, Nature, Children
Colour printer	and Music programmes
Scanner	FilmNet
Microphone	SEGA (games)
Joy stick	
Karaoke	*On-line services:*
	Alta Vista
	Opasia
	Newspapers on-line
	National Information Service
	TicketNet
	Home-shopping:
	Banks, etc.

Certainly, this is an impressive piece of equipment – 100% digital, independent of cable-network for

interactive communication, instead, using mobile telephony and satellite desk receivers. On the software side the user will have a running on-line update of the latest version of any programmes he or she signs up for.

Nevertheless, I am skeptical towards this cloning of an interactive television set and a home-based computer as the sole educational medium for the future. No doubt, the TVPC will supersede the television set and extent the learning options for distance learners by supplying two-way communication. But in many homes we will also find the fully equipped home-computer with net-cards for high speed communication and a CD-ROM drive. The two pieces of hardware may even run on the same network – cables, satellites or mobile telephony.

My confidence in the survival of the home-based PC is based on the observations that we interact very differently with the computer and the television. The working distance towards the computer is 50–60 centimeters, towards the television screen the normal distance is 2–5 meters depending on the size of the screen. In front of the computer you sit in a upright position similar to the one at your desk, in front of the television you sit relaxed in an armchair. These differences has to be respected. Consequently, students following courses in their leisure time, but as a part of a career programme will prefer the home-based PC which opens up for integration with the workplace, whereas people participating in education out of pure personal interest will be more likely to use the TVPC already in the home.

My main point is that the TVPC and the home-based PC are two different media. They relate to each other in approximately the same way as films relate to television. Films may be shown on television, but the experiences of watching in the living room are very different from that of going to the cinema.

On television – and also on educational television – the presenter, normally, is photographed from an angel slightly below giving him or her authority. But try to present these images on a computer and you will have the feeling of the presenter speaking down to you. Educational material on the computer has to respect the equality between the learner and the learning material – the computer supports an anti-authoritarian mode of communication in learning.

The aesthetic principles applied in the production of learning materials for the computer (WWW and CD-ROM) and the digital interactive television (CD-I and video) have to be different!

Learning via CD-ROM

The CD-ROM as a medium contains both signs, visuals and sound organised in a way open for interactive processing by the user/learner. At the same time the CD-ROM also is a medium for storage of huge amount of data (information) and for distribution via sales or mail of these data. In other words CD-ROM is a multimedia, but it is not the only one, CD-I is another which may soon merge with the CD-ROM, and WWW is a third option at the moment.

To illustrate the educational potentials of multimedia and especially the CD-ROM I have previously worked out the following diagram showing the different forms of educational interplay between the learner and the learning materials (Diagram 3).

The diagram focus on three levels of communication (media) specific interplay in learning, reflecting, at the same time, the different types of educational communication – synchronous and asynchronous (stored and delayed) communication.

Presentation, in this educational context, is referring to the level of discourse, viewing presentations as, basically, sender dominated one-way communication of information in one of two formats – didactic or narrative.

In a didactic presentation information is told by an expert, organised according to logic and displayed in a sort of 'eternal' tense with no clear separation of past, present and future. The competence of the presenter is never doubted and the receivers are offered the possibility of identification with the position from which the discourse is formulated.

In a narrative presentation the narrator takes up a profiled position as intermediary between the narrated and the receiver. The narrated is organized as a story according to time – out of the continuum of time a sequence of events is given direction by being presented with a beginning and an end. The interplay between the time of narration and the time of the narrated creates a 'space' of reflection in which the learner may reflect upon (contemplate) the narrated together with the narrator. The receivers are offered the possibilities of identification both with the narrator and the protagonists of the narrated story. Narration (storytelling) has become the medium – at least in Western civilization

Diagram 3.

Interplay in Media Supported Learning	**Synchronous** *(contemporary communication)*	**Asynchronous** *(delayed & stored communication)*
Presentation	'lectures', broadcast radio &TV	*(stored communication)* print, audio & video cassettes
Interaction	'role-plays' (?)	*(stored communication)* interactive video, CDI, CD-ROM, WWW, CBT-Programmes
Dialogue	'lectures' telephony, audio & video conferencing, audio graphics, CSCW	*(delayed communication)* telefax, e-mail, computer conferencing, voice mail, CSCW

since the beginning of modernity in the eighteen century – for reflecting upon man's relation to past, present and future.

Interaction in educational communication is also, basically, dealing with presentation of information. Although, the learner has a possibility to interact with the learning material the communication is one-way. Interactive media are stand-alone systems in which all the information is stored before the interaction begins.

Interactive media are more suitable for presentation of information organized along logic-didactic lines than for presentation as narratives. The hierarchic and ramified structures which are used to present material in interactive media correspond more easily with logic. Both are speaking in a discourse of 'eternal' tense.

Interactive media may be ranked in four categories according to levels of possible interaction:

- browsing
- consultation
- games
- hypothesis testing

Interaction organized as browsing and consultation are primarily used in sender oriented presentations of information in which the user may choose between certain routes through the material. Consultation allows for more sophisticated search options than browsing.

Interactive systems organized as games or built for hypothesis testing are more user oriented allowing the user to follow his own path through the material. Games create a closed world of its own in which the players move around following different paths according to the rules of the game. But in a perspective of learning this becomes problematic because the absorption in a game is contra dictionary to reflection and contemplation which are the goals of learning.

Systems targeted at hypothesis testing have to be rather big, containing lots of information, to reduce the user's risk of meeting the limits of the system. When the learner is confronted with these limitations he or she is thrown back into a position similar to traditional didactic learning in which the sender (the author) becomes the authority.

Dialogue is not a learning mode in its own right – unless we follow a Socratic model – but an option to combine with any dissemination of information. Both didactic and narrated presentations as well as interactive materials may be integrated with dialogue – especially on the synchronous level, but through telematics also at the asynchronous level.

The possibilities for dialogue between learner and tutor/teacher and/or between learners themselves turn 'closed' learning situation based on stored material into 'open' settings in which the

learner in collaboration with a tutor/teacher or fellow learners may explore dimensions not already embedded in the learning material. At the same time dialogue improves learning by creating a situation in which the learner is encouraged to negotiate with the learning material as an aspect of the on-going discussion.

By integrating dialogue in the learning concept the learner may be placed in the center of attention – not overtaken or overwhelmed by the situation, but engaged, in control and ready to negotiate the concepts and ideas presented in the learning material. In this position he or she has command over the learning material, has time to reflect on the presented problems and the possibilities to reformulate or test the new knowledge in a dialogue with others.

At the moment it is not possible to integrate a communication dimension directly in interactive multimedia such as the CD-ROM and the WWW. References to educational material in these formats can only be circulated as quotations which puts rather heavy limitations on a possible (wanted) dialogue. Of course, this does not deprive the CD-ROM and other interactive multimedia of their excellent qualities when it comes to displaying data (information) in a format where it is easily retrieval.

CD-ROM and WWW are especially important for the transference of knowledge – learning – within subject areas in which the knowledge may be organized according to logical and hierarchic principles. The hyper structure of these media supports the interaction between the learner and the learning material, while, at the same time, the learner remains in a position where he or she controls the learning process.

Although, interactive media offer learning options which we have never experienced before, they are not an answer to all educational problems. We have to use them with consideration for dissemination of information within subject areas for which they are suitable. From a hermeneutic point of view the most sever limitation of interactive media is the lack of immediately support for a narrative dimension. Without narrative presentations with a beginning and an end we may loose the possibility of reflecting time which will reduce the historical dimension of civilization to chronology. The relationship between past, present and future is integrated in the interplay between the time of narration and the time of the narrated. At the same time the narrative presentation creates a 'space' in which the learner may reflect together with the narrator – or guided by the narrator – upon the events and characters in the narrated story. This leaves the learner with an option for a virtual, but guided interaction with the story which from a learning perspective is comparable to the physical interaction in interactive media.

As providers of education and learning materials we have to remember that media are not neutral vehicles for dissemination of knowledge to the learners!

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This paper has been presented at the AECS congress in Oslo on 'New Markets and Opportunities for Distance Education' in the session dealing mainly with 'the opportunities' and referring to the conference subtheme: 'New technologies and added value'.

The Authors

Jørgen Bang, Associate Professor, Department of Information and Media Science, University of Aarhus, Niels Juelsgade 84, DK-8200 Aarhus N

Tom Carlson, Researcher, Department of Social Sciences, Åbo Academy University, Vörågatan 9, FIN-65100 Vasa

Göran Djupsund, Associate Professor, Department of Social Sciences, Åbo Academy University, Vörågatan 9, FIN-65100 Vasa

Anna Edin, Researcher, Department of Journalism, Media and Communication, Stockholm University, P.O. Box 27861, SE-115 93 Stockholm

Jan Ekecrantz, Professor, Department of Journalism, Media and Communication, Stockholm University, P.O. Box 27861, SE-115 93 Stockholm

Johan Fornäs, Professor, Department of Journalism, Media and Communication, Stockholm University, P.O. Box 27861, SE-115 93 Stockholm

Hillevi Ganetz, Senior Researcher, Department of Journalism, Media and Communication, Stockholm University, P.O. Box 27861, SE-115 93 Stockholm

Barbara Gentikow, Associate Professor**,** Department of Media Studies, University of Bergen, Fosswinckelsgt. 6, N-5007 Bergen

Jostein Gripsrud, Professor, Department of Media Studies, University of Bergen, Fosswinckelsgt. 6, N-5007 Bergen

Heikki Heikkilä, Researcher, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Tampere, P.O. Box 607, FIN-33101 Tampere

Anja Hirdman, Researcher, Department of Journalism, Media and Communication, Stockholm University, P.O. Box 27861, SE-115 93 Stockholm

Pekka Isotalus, Associate Professor, Department of Communication, University of Jyväskylä, P.O. Box 35, FIN-40351 Jyväskylä

Jens F. Jensen, Associate Professor, Department of Communication, University of Aalborg, Langagervej 8, DK-9220 Aalborg Ø

Ullamaija Kivikuru, Professor, Swedish School of Social Science, University of Helsinki, P.O. Box 16, FIN-00251 Helsinki

Risto Kunelius, Senior Researcher, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Tampere, P.O. Box 607, FIN-33101 Tampere

Håkan Lindhoff, Senior Lecturer, Department of Journalism, Media and Communication, Stockholm University, P.O. Box 27861, SE-115 93 Stockholm

Wencke Mühleisen, Researcher, Center for Women's Studies, University of Oslo, P.O. Box 1040, Blindern, N-0315 Oslo

Bo Mårtenson, Senior Lecturer, Department of Journalism, Media and Communication, Stockholm University, P.O. Box 27861, SE-115 93 Stockholm

Preben Raunsbjerg, Researcher, Department of Communication, University of Aalborg, Langagervej 8, DK-9210 Aalborg Ø

Bo Reimer, Associate Professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Göteborg University, P.O. Box 713, SE-405 30 Göteborg

Seija Ridell, Researcher, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Tampere, P.O. Box 607, FIN-33101 Tampere

Johann Roppen, Researcher, Department of Media Studies, University of Bergen, Fosswinckelsgt. 6, N-5007 Bergen

Henrik Sand, Researcher, Department of Communication, University of Aalborg, Langagervej 8, DK-9210 Aalborg Ø

Rikke Schubart, Researcher, Department of Film & Media Studies, University of Copenhagen, Njalsgade 80, DK-2300 Copenhagen

Eli Skogerbø, Associate Professor, Department of Media and Communication, University of Oslo, P.O. Box 1093, Blindern, N-0315 Oslo

Sirkku Tuominen, Researcher, Department of Teacher Education, University of Tampere, Erottajankatu 12, FIN-13100 Hämeenlinna

Tapio Varis, Professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Tampere, P.O. Box 607, FIN-33101 Tampere

Working Groups Papers in English

Group 1. Media Education

Chairman: *Carsten Ljunggren*
Vice Chairman: *Ola Erstad*

Hankala, Mari: *Newspapers: An Useful Learning Material in the School of 1990's*. Jyväskylä, University of Jyväskylä, Institute for Educational Research, 1997, 8 p.

In her paper, the author examines the use of newspapers as educational tools in Finnish schools.

Tuominen, Sirkku: *Evaluating Media Culture in Teacher Education with Educational Media Lifestudy*. Tampere, University of Tampere, Department of teacher education in Hämeenlinna 1997, 17 p.

The author evaluates an experimental course in teachers' media education: what kind of understanding do the student teachers acquire about media literacy and media pedagogy?

Varis, Tapio: *Media Culture and Communicative Competency in Europe*. Tampere, University of Tampere, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, 1997, 20 p.

The author examines development trends of media and communication technology in Europe.

Group 2. Local and Regional Media

Chairman: *Ole Prehn*
Vice Chairman: *Helge Nyström*

Arvidson, Peter: *Going Local: Some Preliminary Thoughts*. Lunds universitet, Medie- och kommunikationsvetenskap/MKV, 1997, 7 p.

A first sketch of a theoretical counterpart of essentially an empirical project on local television in Sweden, where the arguments for local entities like local media, and local communities is discussed.

Hujanen, Jaana: *Regional Media's Changing Borders:* (a draft version). Jyväskylä, University of Jyväskylä, Department of Communication, 1997, 18 p.

The author aims at relating the question of the relationship between the mass media and collective identity to sociocultural change, both physical and symbolic.

Moring, Tom; Salmi, Jussi: *Public Service Radio Programming for a Minority Language Audience in a Competitive Market: The Case of the Swedish-Speaking Minority.* Helsinki, University of Helsinki, Swedish School of Journalism; Finnish Broadcasting Company, 1997, 21 p.

The authors examine the future of Swedish-language radio programming suggesting that it can retain its importance provided that the Swedish-speaking population is offered programs which serve the same function as programmes nowbroadcast in Finnish through the major commercial stations.

Group 3. Mass Media Images and Visual Rhetoric

Chairman: *Erling Sivertsen*
Vice Chairman: *Karin Becker*

Becker, Karin: *The Picture's Place in 20th Century Journalism: An Overview of the Swedish Press.* Stockholms universitet, Institutionen för journalistik, medier och kommunikation/JMK, 1997, 14 p.

Discusses the place of the image, in particular the photograph, in Swedish twentieth century journalism. The paper is based on an investigation of the relationship of pictures to the development of the Swedish press from 1915 to the present.

Fetveit, Arild: *The Digitalized Screen: Revisiting the Issue of Indexicality.* Oslo, Universitetet i Oslo, Institutt for medier og kommunikasjon 1997, 15 p.

The author discusses how the relation between film and reality is affected by changes in the indexicality of the film image. Drawing on evidence from international and Norwegian feature films, he discusses possible changes viewed both from a production side and from the viewers experience.

Pettersson, Rune: *The Credibility of Pictures.* Älvsjö, Ericssons Utvecklings AB, 1997, 18 p. + 2 app. 2 p.

Starting with notes on the pictures in European medieval churches, pictures printed in early books, and the importance of various literacies, the author discusses the credibility of pictures and pictorial messages in the information age.

Seppänen, Janne: *A Short History of British Photography Theory*. Tampere, University of Tampere, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, 1997, 24 p.

The author outlines central themes characteristic to British photography theory. He focuses on questions concerning the notions of history, ideology and representational practices in the thinking of Victor Burgin, John Tagg and Jo Spence, among others.

Group 4. Reception and Audience Studies

Chairman: *Mirja Liikkanen*
Vice Chairman: *Kim Schrøder*

Andersson, Magnus; Jansson, André: *Media and Cultural Identity: Results and Reflections From an interview study in two different parts of Gothenburg.* Göteborgs universitet, Institutionen för journalistik och masskommunikation/JMG, 1997, 25 p.

Presents some initial results, generated from the research project Cultural Identities in Transition (CIT), from qualitative interviews concerning on the one hand what kinds of media and media contents people use, and, on the other hand, how people use the media, made in the city and the affluent western suburbs of Gothenburg.

Brorholm, Lars: *Mediated Cultural Encounters: Foreign Eyes on Danish TV Screens*. København, Københavns Universitet, Institut for Nordisk Filologi; 1997, 26 p. + app. 9 p.

This paper deals with television as an entrance gate into a foreign culture (the Danish one) as seen from the viewpoint of immigrants and political refugees in Denmark. The objective is to create a more profound comprehension of what happens when a foreign eye meets the national TV screen.

Gentikow, Barbara: *A Rhetorical Approach to Reception Theory and Analysis.* Bergen, Universitetet i Bergen, Institutt for medievitenskap, 1997, 20 p.

The author wants to extend the field of text research with a rhetorically oriented reception theory and empirical reception studies. She sketches some ideas which may be used for this purpose.

Gentikow, Barbara: *Communication as Contest: An Evaluation of Dominant Concepts of Media Reception in a Rhetorical Perspective.* Bergen, Universitetet i Bergen, Institutt for medievitenskap, 1997, 17 p.

The author wants to extend the field of text research with a rhetorically oriented reception theory and empirical reception studies. She examines two main concepts of communication which are important in media studies in relation to the rhetorical way of dealing with speech acts, namely transfer model and interactive models.

Jääsaari, Johanna; Sarkkinen, Raija: *Gender Counts?: Gender in Finnish Broadcasting Audience Research.* Helsinki, Finnish Broadcasting Company, 1997, 14 p.

Resting their case on extensive audience research, the authors discuss how the importance of gender and how to persuade media executives, often hostile to gender questions, that focusing on gender is worthwile.

Lindegaard, Lotte Køhler: *Audience Research in "Danish Broadcasting Corporation" (DR)*. København, Danmarks Radio, TV-Chefredaktionen, 1997, 4 p.

On audience research as an integral part of the programme production and development in Danish Broadcasting Corporation. Describes the audience's evaluation of programme trailers, image trailers and trailers presenting several programmes from both DR1 and DR2.

Reimer, Bo: *Crisis? What Crisis?: Analysing Audience Studies.* Göteborgs universitet, Institutionen för journalistik och masskommunikation/JMG, 1997, 18 p.

Discusses the ways in which the "crisis" within the dominant paradigm in communication studies, adressed by Stuart Hall, affects audience research.

Ridell, Seija: *Beyond the Pendulum: Critical Genre Analysis of Media-Audience Relations.* Tampere, University of Tampere, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, 1997, 15, p.

The author argues that the meaning potential of media texts is structured according to genre conventions and that their use and reception both operate on highly conventional lines. The conventionalized aspects of meaning have a major role in power relations underpinning the social world.

Schrøder, Kim Christian: *Audience Discourses and Social Change: A Critical Reappraisal of the Encoding/Decoding Model*. Roskilde, Roskilde Universitetscenter, Institut for Sprog og Kultur 1997, 28 p.

The paper attempts to discuss the usefulness of Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model for the study of media reception, i.e. it addresses only the way in which the model has been used to explain processes of "decoding".

Steeg Larsen, Bent: *Hearing and Listening to the Radio in Everyday life*. København, Københavns Universitet, Institut for Film- og Medievidenskab; 1997, 16 p.

This paper presents some of the results from qualitative research on radio listening in Denmark. The research was carried out in 1994 and 1995 in collaboration with Danmarks Radio, the national broadcasting corporation in Denmark. The research consisted of 15 focus group interviews with radio listeners all over Denmark. The main task for the research was to identify the basic functions of the radio in everyday life. The focus of this paper is to identify some of the general use values of listening to the radio in everyday life.

Tufte, Thomas: *Gaucho Lives in Times of Global Communication: An Interdisciplinary Case Study on Culture and Society, Media and Identity*. København, Københavns Universitet, Institut for Film- og Medievidenskab 1997, 19 p.

This paper intends to present the aim, content and overall structure of an interdisciplinary research project that empirically seeks to study a variety of aspects concerning the interrelation between: 1) The political economy of the media and the city; 2) Social and cultural practices of everyday life; 3) Family histories and the formation of cultural identities; 4) Cultural discourses, media discourses and reception analysis. The case study concerns the city of Porto Alegre in Southern Brazil. Within this overall project the paper gives special emphasis to the subproject "Television and Technology: a media ethnography in the era of cable tv". Focus here will be on the theoretical and methodological challenges related to the author's ethnographical study of 4 Brazilian families.

Group 5. Media Constructions of Gender

Chairman: *Vibeke Pedersen*
Vice Chairman: *Elisabeth Eide*

Eliasson, Dagny; Ivarsson, Gunilla: *Equality in the Broadcasting.* Stockholm, Sveriges Radio, 1997, 9 p.

A summary of a transnational project which aims to raise awareness within the world of broadcasting and focuse on training of women journalist to ensure they are not left behind in new technologies.

Melin-Higgins, Margareta: *Is there a Feminist Methodology?: Or is it Simply Old Wine in New Glass?* Göteborgs universitet, Institutionen för journalistik och masskommunikation/JMG; Queen Margaret College, Department of Communication and Information Studies, 1997, 21 p.

The first part of the paper discusses what constitutes a feminist research and theory, and the second part deals with the question if there is a feminist methodology.

Savolainen, Tarja: *Gender and the Commercialization of Television in Finland*. Helsinki, University of Helsinki, 1997, 18 p.

The author presents methods, concepts, data and results of her study "Gender and the commercialization of Television in Finland" and discusses them. One of her arguments is that the positioning of women on the screen depends on genre and context and that this is related to womes's possibilities go get a voice of her own on different channels.

Siivonen, Jonita: *The Construction of Femininity in Newspaper News*. Helsinki, University of Helsinki, Department of Communication, 1997, 15 p.

The purpose of the author is to discuss an attempt of an empirical study on how women are constructed in newspaper text. The idea is to study how woman is constructed through conscious and unconscious choices of words and composition of text.

Group 6. Children, Youth and the Media

Chairman: *Ulla Johnsson-Smaragdi*
Vice Chairman: *Thorbjörn Broddason*

Drotner, Kirsten: *An Integrative Future?: Empirical Trends and Research Strategies in the Juvenile Media Field*. København, Københavns Universitet, Center for Børne- og Ungdomsmedier; 1997, 7 p.

In addition to "innovation", what characterises juvenile media culture is "interaction" between different

genres and different media and "integration" of the media into everyday culture. Together, these characteristics – innovation, interaction and integration – call for new research approaches. Based on quantitative and qualitative empirical evidence culled at the Centre for Child and Youth Media Studies, University of Copenhagen, the paper has two related aims: 1) To disclose important trends in Danish teenagers' mediated cultures; 2) To discuss which research demands these trends enforce and enhance.

Group 9. The Language and Rhetoric of the Media

Chairman: *Per Ledin*
Vice Chairman: *Finn Frandsen*

Aslama, Minna; Valtonen, Sanna: *In the Search for Dialogue Between CA/CDA: "A Mission Statement"*. Helsinki, University of Helsinki, Department of Communication, 1997, 36 p.

The authors examine how contradictory and competing realities are produced in discoursive practices and what kind of power structures are to be found within and between discourses.

Hellsten, Iina; Renvall, Mika: *Metaphors and Paradoxes in Journalism*. Tampere, University of Tampere, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, 1997, 7 p.

The authors describe theoretically how a conventional metaphor may function in political communication. They apply Gregory Bateson's term 'a double bind' for interpretation of situation where different kind of positions are offered. The paper is published in Nordicom Review 1997:2.

Karvonen, Erkki: *Projecting a Positive Image of the Information Society: A Rhetorical Approach*. Tampere, University of Tampere, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, 1997, 26 p.

The aim of the study is to examine the rhetoric of social impacts of technology, espeacially the official EU rhetoric concerning information society.

Group 10. Popular Culture

Chairman: *Göran Bolin*
Vice Chairman: *Michael Forsman*

Moring, Inka: *Detecting the Difference, but who Watches the Watchman?: Metaphors Guiding Qualitative Media Research*. Helsinki, University of Helsinki, Department of Communication 1997, 15 p.

The author's purpose is to make remarks concerning qualitative media research, competing paradigms, metaphors and analogies which are used when talking about qualitative research.

Muhr, Gunilla: *High, Low or in-Between: Style and Aesthetics in Disney's 1930's Cartoon Symphonies*. Stockholms universitet, Institutionen för journalistik, medier och kommunikation/JMK, 1997, 15 p.

In order to study how established forms of art at a particular point in history are combined and distributed through a medium intended for a mass audience such as animated cartoons, the author looks at how modernist traits appear in a selection of Disney short films from the series Silly Symphonies (1929-1939) and the feature film Fantasia (1940).

Schubart, Rikke: *Woman with a Gun Does not Signify Man with a Phallus: Gender and Narrative Change in the Action Movie*. København, Københavns Universitet, Institut for Film- og Medievidenskab, 1997, 18 p.

A study of the action heroine in the action movie, discussing the following questions: 1) Does the action heroine transgress traditional gender roles, and is the pleasure of identification with this woman open to both male and female audiences? 2) Or is she really just a man in women's clothing? 3) Or is she an uneasy response to feminism, an effort to both represent and contain the liberated woman within a traditional patriarchal system?

Group 11. The Structure and Economics of Mass Media

Chairman: *Antti Paasio*
Vice Chairman: *Staffan Sundin*

Roppen, Johann: *The Problem of No-Effects of Media-concentration: a Critique of Current Research.* Volda, Høgskulen i Volda, Institutt for medievitenskap; 1997, 10 p.

The author points to lack of empirical findings conveying solid evidence of the effects of concentration of ownership in the media, and explains this by criticising existing research.

Salokangas, Raimo: *Context Comes First: or does It?* Jyväskylä, University of Jyväskylä, Department of Communication, 1997, 22 p.

In the article, the author outlines Finnish research on media history. His main argument is that content always needs a context. The media is not primarily a source material for historical research but an object

of research itself. It is a functioning part of society, both reflecting, affecting and constructing it.

Group 12. Historical Perspectives on the Media

Chairman: *Lars-Åke Engblom*
Vice Chairman: *Raimo Salokangas*

Skovmand, Michael: *What's on at the Globe*. Århus, Århus Universitet, Engelsk Institut, 1997, 13 p.

How effective was the kind of communication that informed people about what was on at the Globe Theatre in London at the age of Shakespeare? Does it in fact make sense to view Shakespeare's theatre as part of, perhaps even constitutive of, a pre-mass media early form of a "bourgeois public sphere" in the Habermas sense of the term? The paper shall argue that the theatres between 1567 and 1642 played an important part in the formation of an early, pre-mass media "public sphere" or "Öffentlichkeit" with London as its primary focus.

Group 13. Mediated Interpersonal Communication

Chairman: *Pekka Isotalus*
Vice Chairman: *Maili Pörhölä*

Isotalus, Pekka: *Television Performance as Interaction*. Jyväskylä, University of Jyväskylä, Department of Communication, 1997, 16 p.

The author describes interaction between a viewer and a television presenter. With the help of a visual model, the author illustrates the communication situation and various interrelationships connected to it.

Group 15/18. Media and Political Communication/Media and Global Culture

Chairman: *Oddgeir Tveiten*
Vice Chairman: *Bengt Johansson*

Alhassan, Amin: *Ethnicity and the Media in Africa*. Tampere, University of Tampere, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, 1997, 15 p.

The author discusses ethnicity and media with particular reference to Ghana and Nigeria. In the author's view, the chance to communicate in mass media in one's native language must be seen as a democratic necessity.

Pietiläinen, Jukka: *News Flow to Finland: Stable Structures in a Changing*. Tampere, University of Tampere, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, 1997, 17 p.

The paper presents results of a quantitative content analysis of Finnish data of a 1995 news flow study and compares them with previous foreign news studies done in Finland.

Tveiten, Oddgeir: *A Hard Reign's a gonna Fall*. Bergen, Universitetet i Bergen, Institutt for medievitenskap, 1997, 23 p.

Ten days before the allied forces began their ground offensive in the Gulf war in 1991, president Mikhail Gorbachev presented an alternative to military action. The author gives a narrative comparison of seven newspapers' coverage of this. The newspapers are Swedish, Norwegian and from the USA.

Group 16. Multi-Media and New Media Technology

Chairman: *Bo Fibiger*
Vice Chairman: *Pertti Hurme*

Mayer, Paul: *Computer Mediated Interactivity*. København, Københavns Universitet, Institut for Film- og Medievidenskab, 1997, 18 p.

The paper begins by reviewing the thinking of a few significant writers whose works have been important for the literature on computer media and interactivity. Thereafter, it will recast and extend some of their conceptions of interactivity in reference to a social semiotic analysis of computer mediated interactivity.

Group 17. Public Service Broadcasting in Transition

Chairman: *Henrik Søndergaard*
Vice Chairman: *Olof Hultén*

Skogerbø, Eli; Syvertsen, Trine: *Television in Scandinavia, Netherlands and Belgium: The New European Order.* Oslo, Norges forskningsråd, ARENA; Universitetet i Oslo, Institutt for medier og kommunikasjon, 1997, 18 p.

The authors gives an outline of the television systems in Scandinavia, Netherlands and Belgium; their background and their history.

Group 19. Journalism Research and Critical Analysis of Journalism

Chairman: *Lars Rosenblad*
Vice Chairman: *Svein Brurås*

Heikkilä, Heikki; Kunelius, Risto: *Access, Dialogue, Deliberation: Experimenting with Three Concepts of Journalism and Representation*. Tampere, University of Tampere, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, 1997, 24 p.

The authors examine three ideas in journalism research: access, dialogue and deliberation with the view of reconsidering some of the basic notions on which journalism and journalism research are basically built on.

Mörä, Tuomo: *Behind the Media Content: The Liane Model.* Helsinki, University of Helsinki, Department of Communication, 1997, 5 p.

The author aims at creating a model in order to analyze processes behind media content. The model is meant to be a tool in understanding why and how reality is represented in mass media.

Uskali, Turo: *A Need to Study: Foreign Correspondents*. Jyväskylä, University of Jyväskylä, Department of Communication, 1997, 4 p.

The author deals with foreign correspondents, particularly with Finnish correspondents in Moscow and their work there.

Group 20. The Sociology and Aestetics of News Reporting

Chairman: *Stig Hjarvard*
Vice Chairman: *Jan Ekekrantz*

Sirkkunen, Esa: *In an Electric Tram: Journeys from Text to Context (and back again)*. Tampere, University of Tampere, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, 1997, 12 p.

The author studies the genre of reportage as a part of journalism of a certain period and in a broader textual world. He uses a framework of threefold typology: the world of the text, the world of the genres in a newspaper issue, and journalistic institution.

Tveiten, Oddgeir: *The Meaning of Modernization: US media and the Sandinista Story.* Bergen, Universitetet i Bergen, Institutt for medievitenskap, 1997, 30 p.

The author discusses the US media coverage of the 1990 election in Nicaragua. He uses the concept of modernization to explain the picture of the Nicaraguan political scene.

Ytreberg, Espen: *Discourses of Egalitarianism in Popular Journalism: The Case of Norwegian Prime-Time Combined-Genre Shows*. Oslo, Universitetet i Oslo, Institutt for medier og kommunikasjon, 1997, 27 p.

The author analyses the way in which the rhetoric of egalitarianism is expounded by programme hosts and guests in two prime time combined-genre shows on Norwegian television (”Par-i-bol”, 1992 and ”Rondo”, 1994-5). He focuses on these programmes’ social roles and relations of interaction, explaining them in terms of the social settings that the programmes construct.

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Nordic Council of Ministers.

NORDICOM
Göteborg University
Box 713
SE 405 30 Göteborg, Sweden

Telephone: +46 31 773 10 00
Fax: +46 31 773 46 55
E-mail: nordicom@nordicom.gu.se

Director: *Ulla Carlsson*
Telephone: +46 31 773 12 19
Fax: +46 31 773 46 55
E-mail: ulla.carlsson@nordicom.gu.se

Assistant: *Eva Gidsäter*, subscriptions
Telephone: +46 31 773 12 16
E-mail: eva.gidsater@nordicom.gu.se

Technical co-ordinator: *Claus Kragh Hansen*
NORDICOM/University and State Library
Universitetsparken
DK-8000 Århus C, Denmark

Telephone:+45 89 46 20 69
Fax: +45 89 46 20 50
E-mail: ckh@kumsb.dk

Publications and Media Statistics

NORDICOM
Göteborg University
Box 713
SE 405 30 Göteborg, Sweden

Ulla Carlsson, editor
Telephone: +46 31 773 12 19
E-post: ulla.carlsson@nordicom.gu.se

Eva Harrie, media statistics
Telephone: +46 31 773 46 58
E-mail: eva.harrie@nordicom.gu.se

Bibliographies and Databases

NORDICOM
State Library
Universitetsparken
DK-8000 Aarhus C, Denmark

Claus Kragh Hansen, co-ordinator
Telephone: +45 89 46 20 69
Fax: +45 89 46 20 50
E-mail: ckh@kumsb.dk

International Clearinghouse on Children and Violence on the Screen

NORDICOM
Göteborg University
Box 713
SE 405 30 Göteborg, Sweden

Cecilia von Feiltizen, scientific co-ordinator
Telephone: +46 8 16 28 64
Fax: +46 8 661 03 04
E-mail: feilitzen@jmk.su.se

Pia Hepsever, documentation
Telephone: +46 31 773 49 53
Fax: +46 31 773 46 55
E-mail: pia.hepsever@nordicom.gu.se

National Information Centres

Nordicom-Denmark
University and State Library
Universitetsparken
DK-8000 Aarhus C, Denmark

Peder Grøngaard, documentation
Telephone: +45 89 46 20 68
Fax: +45 89 46 20 50
E-mail: pg@kumsb.dk

Nordicom-Finland
University of Tampere
Box 607
FIN -33101 Tampere 10, Finland

Eija Poteri, documentation
Telephone: +358 31 215 70 45
Fax: +358 31 215 71 50
E-mail: tieipo@uta.fi

Nordicom-Norway
Institute for Mass Communication
University of Bergen
Fosswinckelsgt. 6
N-5007 Bergen, Norway

Borghild Gramstad, documentation
Telephone: +47 55 58 91 40
Fax: +47 55 58 91 49
E-mail: borghild.gramstad@media.uib.no

Nina Bjørnstad, media statistics
Telephone: +47 55 58 91 26
E-mail: nina.bjornstad@media.uib.no

Nordicom-Iceland
University of Iceland
IS-101 Reykjavik, Iceland

Hilmar Thor Bjarnason, documentation
Telephone: +354 525 4519
Fax: +354 552 6806
E-mail: hthorbj@rhi.hi.is

Nordicom-Sweden
Göteborg University
Box 713
SE 405 30 Göteborg, Sweden

Roger Palmqvist, documentation
Telephone: +46 31 773 12 20
Fax: +46 31 773 46 55
E-mail: roger.palmqvist@nordicom.gu.se

Catharina Bucht, media statistics
Telephone: +46 31 773 13 06
Fax: +46 31 773 46 55
E-mail: catharina.bucht@nordicom.gu.se

Information about Nordicoms current activities is available on internet via WWW address:
http://www.nordicom.gu.se

NORDICOM

Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research
Göteborg University
Box 713, SE 405 30 Göteborg, Sweden
Telephone +46 31 773 10 00
Fax +46 31 773 46 55

E-mail: nordicom@nordicom.gu.se

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