



Center for Open Access in Science

Open Journal for
Sociological Studies

2017 • Volume 1 • Number 2

<https://doi.org/10.32591/coas.ojss.0102>

Special Issue:

Theatricalization of Politics in Contemporary Media and Arts

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ISSN (Online) 2560-5283

OPEN JOURNAL FOR SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES (OJSS)

ISSN (Online) 2560-5283

<https://www.centerprode.com/ojss.html>

ojss@centerprode.com

Publisher:

Center for Open Access in Science (COAS)

Belgrade, SERBIA

<https://www.centerprode.com>

office@centerprode.com

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Theatricalization of Politics: Aspects of Politics in Media Scenes – Introduction

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Received 31 October 2017 ▪ Revised 10 November 2017 ▪ Accepted 22 November 2017

Abstract

Theatricalization is an important aspect of social life in general, of political life in particular. Aspects of the political scene and action are given in *mass and new media discourse* as well as in mass cultural productions (as “*narratives*” of the contemporary reality). Given that people understand reality first of all on the *symbolic* level, the analysis of these narratives is an ideal approach of the meaning given to politics and communication nowadays: images of the economic crisis, of the migrants and/or refugees, of identities (given by media discourse or by mass cultural productions), constitute a basic imprint of the expressions of the current “*social myths*”. We emphasize on the concept of *theatricalization as a constitutive social (and political) symbolism* and on the importance of *theatricalization in the contemporary communication*. Because diverse narratives symbolize our reality, we focus on particular *contemporary social myths*; myths may be not real but they influence reality because they symbolize it (they explain it, they justify it and eventually they could make it change). In this sense, we consider this thematic volume as quite revealing for the contemporary communicational trends and for the contemporary (globalized) society.

Keywords: presentation, social representations, social myths, narratives, symbolization, communication, media.

Theatricalization is (and has always been) an important aspect of social life in general, of political life in particular.

First of all we should clarify the choice of the term “theatricalization” used in this thematic edition: it is understood in the sense given by E. Goffman (1959) to “presentation” (better attributed by the French term *Mise en Scène*). This choice was done in order to emphasize the particular aspect of political communication which is associated to its symbolic appearance and presentation; given the fact that in media everything is primarily “representation” anyway it was meant in order to avoid the current confusion due to the importance of media representations nowadays. We also would like to mark out the importance of social representations (those dominant “images” which define the frame in which reality is understood).

1. Theatricalization as constitutive social (and political) symbolism

“Presentation” is a major social feature in everyday life¹ and becomes a parameter of an utmost importance in “political life” (from Royal Sacraments to Electoral Campaigns). Depending on specific societies and on historical conjuncture political “staging” (theatricalization), is supposed to impress, reassure, mystify or terrify the audience, indicating the different responsibilities of a government, trying to give advantage to a political frame or personality (including misinformation – just like propaganda does).

Closely linked to this “theatricalization” is the issue of “legitimacy” of power (emphasizing the appearance and using techniques similar to the techniques of “theater” - of spectacle in general). Some “kinds of theatricalization” continue for many years (such as Royal Sacraments) while some others are only a fashion (such as the contemporary fashion of presentation of a politician’s private life). The role of different technologies (printing, photography, cinema, television or internet) may be different as far as it concerns the degree of control that authorities possess on their “image” (they give possibilities and at the same time may surpass one person’s or one party’s control).

The necessity to “show” a democratic “front” characterizes most of the modern republic states imposing an appearance of “simplicity” accompanying political actors’ life (even the presence of those working on the leaders’ personal security, as body guards, is meant to be “discreet”, at least in most cases, in order to “present” the leader’s not exceptional existence in everyday life: appearing familiar is thought as a very good feature of a political profile).

Thus by “political theatricalization” we understand a kind of practice of the “professional politics” asking for popularity and influence on the public (practice which nowadays is realized in terms and conditions of the mass media representations). The politician is confronted to the problem of a convincing staging of authority, diligence, principles fidelity, competence, and of every political characteristic positively connoted, which make other people believe to him/her² and consider him/her as the best solution possible. According to Machiavelli’s theory a politician ought to present an image which will help him (and nowadays “her”) to access to the government; to succeed as political person means not to have illusions but on the contrary be able to give illusions to the audience (see Ronald Hitzler, 2014).

Consequently, in order to understand the relation between symbols and reality, we must analyze the “presentation” (and the “illusions” it contains which are important for the audience). We could then better understand the political symbols, dynamics and rituals in the frame of the global context (Abélès, 1990), if we followed the “anthropological” point of view.

¹ As indicated by E. Goffman (1959): in this famous book, Goffman describes the theatrical performances that occur in face-to-face interactions. He holds that when an individual comes in contact with another person, he attempts to control or guide the impression that the other person will form of him, by altering his own setting, appearance and manner. At the same time, the person that the individual is interacting with attempts to form an impression of, and obtain information about, the individual. Goffman also believes that participants in social interactions engage in certain practices to avoid embarrassing themselves or others. Society is not homogeneous; we must act differently in different settings; this recognition led Goffman to his dramaturgical analysis. He saw a connection between the kinds of “acts” that people put on in their daily lives and theatrical performances. In a social interaction, as in a theatrical performance, there is an *onstage area* where actors (individuals) appear before the audience; this is where positive self-concepts and desired impressions are offered. But there is, as well, a *backstage – a hidden, private area* where individuals can be themselves and drop their societal roles and identities.

² Nowadays there are women in politics, although their percentage is very low.

In this sense, we believe that it is relevant to refer to Bourdieu's analysis of the meaning of a very important practice, the practice of the "rites of passage", as defined by Arnold Van Gennep (Bourdieu, 1982). What does the rite of passage separate? A "before" and an "after" — he gives as example the "ritual/act" of circumcision — or in other words, those the rite concerns and those it does not (in the example of circumcision men are concerned but women are not). In the *crossing of the line*, should one consider most important the "crossing" (as the "rite of passage" implies), or on the contrary the *line* itself? We understand the *arbitrary limit* which the rite of institution (in the active sense of "instituting") consecrates and legitimates.

It is thus understood, how the instituting rite, an act of "social magic", owes its *symbolic efficacy* to the fact that it signifies to a man what he is and what he has to be. The work of institution is a process of inculcation which treats the body as a memory so as to induce a *second nature* which is *the social function of "nature"*.

In the same way, the rite consecrates a "difference" approved by the institution symbolically (this is the difference between a "leader" and the "others") and includes coded behaviors; but this "representation" obliges also the "leader" to adopt a certain behavior as well, in order to be conform to the "idea". In other words there exists a *common belief* to which people in a given context are conform (in this sense Goffmann, 1959, also explains the importance of the conformation to the codes and symbols necessary for existing in a given society).

The symbolical work is complicated including several practices in the public sphere, such as the games of antagonistic or not relations among groups. We should then understand "rites" (symbols represented) as constitutive of the political space, as anthropologists use to do. Thus we can understand the *major relationship* among *symbolization, representation and interpretation of reality* (and of political reality of course): although "staging" is thought to contain some kind of "lie"³ it also indicates some primary elements of symbolization (absolutely necessary in order to understand a society and be able to act in it); it so happens also in the contemporary (political) world.

2. Theatricalization in contemporary communication

Although theatricalization was always important in social life, it seems particularly dominant nowadays because of three supplementary characteristics: (1) the importance of image in the so called "spectacle society" (2) the supremacy of some theoretical trends (such as behaviorism and systemic analysis in communication theory); (3) the transition from the Freudian to the Communicational Culture.

- 1) ***The Society of the Spectacle*** refers the well-known work of Guy Debord (1967), who traces the development of a modern society in which authentic *social life* has been replaced with its representation: "All that once was directly lived has become mere representation". Debord argues that the history of social life can be understood as "the decline of being into having, and having into merely appearing". This condition, according to Debord, is the "historical moment at which the *commodity* completes its *colonization* of social life".

The spectacle is the inverted image of society in which relations between commodities have supplanted relations between people. "The spectacle is a social relationship between people

³ Given the vulgar meaning of the word "hypocrite" which in theatrical terms (ancient Greek drama) only means the person who replies in a dialogue.

that is mediated by images”. We could add here that in this context, the “onstage” area (as explained by Goffman) takes much more importance, given the fusion between the “public” and the “private” sphere in the so called “social media”.

In his analysis of the spectacular society, Debord notes that *quality of life* is impoverished because of the lack of authenticity; *human perceptions* are affected, and there's also a *degradation of knowledge*, with the hindering of *critical thought*. Debord analyzes the use of knowledge to assuage reality: the spectacle obfuscates the past, imploding it with the future into an undifferentiated mass in a kind of never-ending present; in this way the spectacle prevents individuals from realizing that the society of spectacle is only a moment in history.

- 2) Some theoretical trends (still dominant in communication studies) advantage the overvalue of the “surface” (the outside visible features of phenomena becoming synonyms of “objective reality”) disadvantaging the importance of “subjectivities” of what was initially called behavioral “black box” (emotional or sentimental “intelligence”); behaviorism for instance (and the systemic analysis) treats all psychological phenomena in terms of stimuli, responses, and stimulus–response associations (Watson launched the system in 1913, with his behavioristic manifesto). The human mind is given like a *black box*: It’s sealed, closed, and inaccessible and you can’t see inside. To Watson, what goes on in the box is unimportant and psychological states can be explained by reference to the objective and observable components of behavior. Early mass communication theorists, who saw the media as providing external stimuli that caused immediate responses, frequently used behaviorist notions. Although pure behaviorism is no more dominant in communication theories, it seems that the contemporary communicational trends do stay very much on the surface of the communicational process (they stay much more on the external contemporary cultural characteristics such as for example the “Selfie attitude” and the “look culture”, the extreme simplification of messages which are in general understood in terms of mostly surficial analyses⁴): so the “*appearance*” seems to become the most important communicational element and thus, *theatricalization – or the formal moment of a communication procedure – becomes more “central” than ever or elsewhere.*

We would also like to remind Sherry Turkle’s first worldwide known book “The second self, computers and the human spirit” (1985). In brief, what was exposed there, concerns the contemporary socialization in a world where computers are dominant: young adolescents (at the age of socialization) learn to consider the “other” as their own reflection due to computer mediation. This would represent a transition from the Freudian Culture (where one’s self had reaction with the others) to the contemporary “Communicational” Culture (where communication is computer mediated and becomes in reality communication with one’s own self: the “other” conversing with us, being the supremacy of the self⁵) conducting to what Lucien Sfez (*Critique de*

⁴ There are of course opposite (and critical) theories (ex. authors like Philippe Breton, 1990, 1997, 2000, or Lucien Sfez, 1990, 1991) which in the flow of media studies seem rather “marginal” (they are not translated in English!).

⁵ In *The Second Self*, Sherry Turkle looks at the computer not as a “tool”, but as part of our social and psychological lives; she looks beyond how we use computer games and spreadsheets to explore how the computer affects our awareness of ourselves, of one another, and of our relationship with the world. “Technology”, she writes, “catalyzes changes *not only in what we do but in how we think*”. Turkle talks to children, college students, engineers, scientists, hackers, and personal computer owners — people confronting machines that seem to think and at the same time suggest a new way for us to think — about human thought, emotion, memory, and understanding. Her interviews reveal that we experience *computers as being on the border between inanimate and animate, as both an extension of the self and part of the external world*. Their special place betwixt and between traditional categories is part of what makes them

la Communication, 1993) had named “autistic society” (this kind of “communication” tending to become dominant nowadays). Of course this trend, favors to consider “presentation” as the utmost characteristic of nowadays (giving to it a bigger symbolic importance for the contemporary mentality very much universalized – because of the importance of media in the everyday life but also because of the international political and economic system implying the so called “globalization”).

3. Contemporary media narratives: symbolizing our reality

If we keep in mind the above three characteristics, we understand that the “show” becomes even more important and that consequently, this affects the contemporary “narration” of reality (on “identities”, on “borders”, on “human rights” and on “possibilities”).

In this way, important aspects of the *political scene and action* are given in *mass media discourse* and in the so called “*new, or social media discourse*, as well as in mass cultural productions (mainly cinema and TV series) as “*narratives*” of the contemporary social and political reality. Because people understand reality first of all on the *symbolic* level, the analysis of these narratives is an ideal approach of political communication nowadays: not only as far as it concerns governmental and state (namely political) affairs but also as far as it concerns ideas and attitudes which sustain the contemporary *formation and/or perpetuation of diverse powers*. Images of the economic crisis, of the migrants and/or refugees, of diverse identities (as framed by media discourse or by mass cultural productions) constitute a basic imprint of the contemporary “*social myths*”.

Some aspects of these contemporary myths are analyzed in this volume; more specifically there is: an analysis concerning the reporting of the Crimea War, an approach of cultural journalism and the representations of the crisis in culture; a study of the representation of relational power in a successful TV serial, and an essay on the meanings of visual narratives nowadays. We think that this concerns an interesting approach of the contemporary “political” representations (including elements of the contemporary agenda but also symbolisms proposed by fictional discourse to the big audience). All the approaches are focusing on *contemporary social myths*: myths may be not real but they influence reality because they symbolize it (they explain it, they justify it and eventually they could make it change). In this sense, we consider this thematic volume as quite revealing for the contemporary communicational trends and for the contemporary (globalized) society.

compelling and evocative. Why we think of the workings of a machine in psychological terms — how this happens, and what it means for all of us is the fascinating subject of *The Second Self*.

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Digital Media Narratives at the Era of Postmodernity: Theatricalization of Politics and Hybrid War

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Received 31 October 2017 ▪ Revised 10 November 2017 ▪ Accepted 17 November 2017

Abstract

Our contribution deals with specific character of contemporary hybrid war represented in digital media. The main element of actual political performances is such ambivalent narrative construction like narratives of crisis reflecting political postmodernism in media spheres. Actual political narrative encompasses all crucial components of postmodern ideology: relativity of truth, truth and lies are defunct as antipodes, when reality is shaping itself as fiction, fact-checking of breaking news is absent as far as its bare necessity is arguable. The Ukrainian case, “the Crimea issue” and Russian-Ukrainian hybrid war is one of such illustrative example of theatricalization of politics which can have rather crucial effects. Sociological content-analysis of Ukrainian and Russian media narratives concerned with “the Crimea issue” helped to reveal principal components of information hybrid war that took place in traditional and digital media: hidden mechanisms of political confrontation, new “soft power” as a kind of misinformation creating the phenomena of dissociated consciousness and controlled personality.

Keywords: digital narratives, hybrid information war, theatricalization, the Crimea issue.

1. Introduction

The main element of actual political performances is creation of ambivalent narrative constructions such a narrative of crisis which reflects political postmodernism in public and media spheres.

Basically, throughout the 20th century, society has passed, at least, through three systemic crises. The first – from 1905 to 1917 – was a crisis of those times European system. The second – from the late 20’s to the early 30’s – that was a crisis of capitalism and of the world security system. The third crisis swept through the mid-1970s and became the industrial society crisis that had already exhausted itself. Every civilization crisis societies been passing has its own context and content. Crises of the 20th century were connected: first of all, with the exhaustion of the potentials and drives of the industrial society, its economy, and the mechanisms of political representation as well as foreign policy institutions regulating the nations’ interactions on the world arena. The rest of the components of these crises, such as the decline of empires, even added new sharpness to the main crisis causing factor.

The 1970s opened the chapter of post-industrial society, neo-liberalism, globalization and the gradual movement toward postmodernism. The withdrawal of world communism and the

end of the ideological struggle gave impetus to the global proliferation of postmodernism as a cultural and political outlook and the formation of appropriate political regulators on its basis. Postmodernism has seemed like the time of fatigue from Progress. The Western elites have done away with their passion for Western values. There came the realm of relativism and faith in relativity of everything around - both life and politics. Taboos, restraints and traditional beliefs were discarded. The eclecticism and ambivalence prevailed both in the approaches to the individual and to social development.

- Political performances are narratives of crisis reflecting political postmodernism.
- Information hybrid war engender soft power influenced consciousness and deformed personality.
- Russian hybrid war technology is a typical postmodernist effective rhetorical method of mixing and amplifying.
- Ukrainian information war technology is less effective “unambiguous and unbiased” reporting of reality.

Actual political narrative encompasses all crucial components of postmodern ideology: relativity of truth; truths and lies are defunct as antipodes, reality takes shape in fiction, fact-checking of breaking news is lacking as far as its necessary is arguable. Thus, the boundaries between law and lawlessness, between sovereignty and interference in internal affairs, between war and peace, reality and fiction began to dissolve. Situations of postmodern in politics concede whether the same political actors are combatants, arbiters and moderators of peaceful settlement.

We have entered the era of world disorder, and it feels like not only in the terrorist attacks’ increasing that swept the EU; not only in an enormous number of refugees, - but also in the centrifugal trend launched by Brexit; but also the intensification of the anti-liberal separatist movements in the countries of the Old Europe and the rising nationalism in the countries of the New Europe.

New mechanisms of confrontation in the post-modern era are using of principal components of information hybrid war that had been caught by traditional and digital media, hidden mechanisms of political confrontation, new “soft power” as misinformation creating the phenomena of dissociated consciousness and controlled personality. The Ukrainian case, “the Crimea issue” and Russian-Ukrainian hybrid war is one of the illustrative examples of theatrical rather than crucial effects in politics.

2. Theoretical discussion

So, our contribution deals with specific character of contemporary hybrid war represented in digital media. In order to understand how exactly these components are functioning, it is good to recall some classical theories of mass media mechanics.

Accordingly, that recollection allows us to mention the main normative approaches to media, historically presented, of course, by the press (Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, 1956). The oldest one is the **authoritarian theory** that arose in the authoritarian “climate” of the late Renaissance, simultaneously with the birth of book-printing. The authorities used the press to inform the people not only about what they’d permitted as acceptable in communications, moreover, to explain, what kind of policies the people should support. In contrast, **the libertarian theory**, originated in the 17th century, but fully developed only in the 18th and 19th centuries, stated that a man to be free in his opinions concerning the state. Mass media, therefore, are not an instrument of the government, but the form of facts and arguments’ presentation on the basis of which any people can monitor the government and express their own opinion about politics. In the twentieth century, libertarianism was transformed into the theory of “**social responsibility**”. The presence of a lot of minor media, representing different political views to

user's choice, ceased to be typical. As in the old times, media still is being handled by limited number of people, who are not the governors, the owners of media. Those who own and operate the media, nowadays decide what people, facts or versions of facts could be presented to the public. That type of business, according to the "theory of social responsibility" generates the belief that the authorities and monopolistic position of media makes them to be socially responsible and to ensure that all parties are fairly represented and consequently, the public has enough information to form their own opinions. And, finally, it was a **communist theory**, in other words, the authoritarian theory, brought to life by the cold and information war, needing to support and to legitimize one party and one point of view of one leader, found its place in a strictly totalitarian form. Although, since the publication of the book of Fred Seaton Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm, the geopolitical configuration of the world has undergone significant changes, nevertheless, all 4 media theories still have been reviving and finding their place in the modern world.

We had identified four main models modern basic interpretations of the social media mission, based on foreign and domestic sources. The first model of professional media mission can be provisionally called "the fourth power model". The journalistic corporation is regarded here as an independent and relatively autonomous social institution involved in the management of society, whose members perform certain functions within the framework of checks and balances between all branches of power. In the former post-Soviet and post-communist countries, the metaphor of the "fourth power" is often obtaining a literal meaning when the media is viewed either as a direct partner of state power, or as a "counterweight", a weapon against it. This reflects, in the final analysis, the underdevelopment of the institutions of power and civil society and the lack of a kind of "social contract" between them.

The second model - the model of social engagement of journalism - considers media as an instrument for protecting the civil rights of individuals or social groups, a means of expressing the interests of different structural links in civil society. That is, various social nongovernmental organizations and volunteer movements, with the help of information provided by the media, who are aware of their interests, and through, are able to control the power and ultimately ensure the realization of their rights and interests.

The third model is the information model itself, based on the premise that the main function of the media is to inform without evaluation. Thus, so-called, "objective journalism", provides the reliable reports from the scene without author's opinions and assessments. However, it should be noted, that this model is quite difficult to implement in practice, as far as any social communication is already a latent assessment, as a matter of fact, social communication, by the easy hand of Jürgen Habermas in his "Theory of Communicative Action" is considered as not "true", but "correct", that is, corresponding "the rules", adopted in a certain society or community. On the other hand – when casting the audience, the actual information passes through a set of evaluative filters in the minds of recipients, who often ignore information not relevant to their personal beliefs.

And, finally, the fourth model is "media as an intermediary". According to this model, the media represent a "platform" at which a permanent public dialogue is organized and maintained with the aim of achieving a balance of power in society. Such a model is more likely to be inherent in new, social media, involving interactivity and a lively participation in the communicative process.

Summing up the various media concepts and models, I would like to dwell on the theoretical grounds that characterize the power regimes in modern society and the place of media technologies in them.

Power as domination. In this case, it deals with not only the ownership of symbolic capital and influence on the audience's minds, but also with the struggling "physical" human

presence. Thus, the physical presence of the audience is necessary for reproduction of the status of the media. It is a matter of such a traditional and influential intermediary as television. The power of television most visibly manifests itself as domination, manifests inequalities and generates preferences' structures. Television broadcasts the main social discourse, having a kind of monopoly on the formation of public opinion. This was, particularly mentioned in 1996 by P. Bourdieu in his famous work (Pierre Bourdieu, 1996). "Interpreted actions" are beginning to be implemented in reality, and that allows us to talk about a certain "programming" of reality. The inner side of such domination is the diminution of trust in television, (they are watching, but they do not trust). The rates of confidence in television in Ukraine do not exceed 30%.

The power of media as a social order. That way, electronic media become a kind of "influential and final institution of socialization", especially in a situation where traditional institutions of socialization, such as family and school, lose their significance. E-media are legitimized as expert systems representing the views of specialists or reporting to their own correspondents, as well as "moral referees", practiced by various TV shows. The social order can also be interpreted here as "the rating of social meanings". With the help of traditional media, "protective codes of order" produced by society, any incorrect decoding is being blocked, or its existence in interpretation conventions, could be expressed as generally accepted and competitive projects of reality.

The power of media as communication, understood as a of total, embracing, and ubiquitous practice: in this case, the power of words becomes more vulnerable, while the status of visual images is directly associated with reality and plausibility. At the beginning of the 2000s, we gloated on "the omnipresent media" that cleverly entered our lives by exploiting our personal choices, by changing the structures of power, but also the configuration of perception, interactions with people and institutions (Featherstone, 2009, pp. 1-22).

Ontological or technical power of media is revealed in the theories of Lash and Humbrecht. Thus, Lach (2007: 55-78) proposes a new conception of the "post-hegemony" of the media, which no longer representing simple symbolic domination, or legitimized power, but "the politics of intensity". This was firstly defined as transition from the "epistemological regime" of power to its "ontological regime". The first type of "regime" is realized as the reproduction of the symbolic order through the speech, through the predicative properties of the language defining the object in the set of its attributes. Power in ontological regime manifests itself at the level of existence and facticity in the Heideggerian sense. Second type, is about the mutation of power, which ceases to be "over" domination and becomes "inner" domination. Power as the might and the force generates all that exists in real world daily - in everyday practices of language, bodies, objects, in the permanent production of differences, rather than in reproduction of the symbolic dominant. Third, there is the general shift of norms towards factual information in the political process. And, finally, the extensive regime of the representation of social relations integrated into symbolic representations transformed into an intensive regime of communications legitimizing performativity, that is to say, automatically to everything that is in its orbit (Lash, 2007: 56-68). Thus, we can say that an attempt to differentiate and oppose epistemology and the ontology of domination appears in the sociological theoretical discourse. It is a question of "catching up on reality", or discovering its traces in the multi-layered and mediatized spaces of human life, of reaching what is not expressed, but determining behind the scenes the choices and actions of daily life. Technical power - and more broadly - material power - is manifested even in the usual context, which, apart from meaning, also possesses "material objectivity", and physically influences our body by communicating to its rhythms, sonic and visual fluctuations and realizing, accordingly to the metaphor of Gumbrecht (2006: 110), "the lightest touch of the real world", offering us real contacts with the reality, "sensual and intellectual pleasure". And this is extending other groups of machines and equipment - objects, technology, visual environment, everything you feel, everything you taste. In other words, Gumbrecht (2006: 111) insists on a new power – "an effect

of presence”, achieved through the physical presence of objects (the text, the voice, colours on canvas, and the game of sports). It is not a question of reducing the effect of meaning, but of showing this power coexisting with it.

So, summarizing the main sources of media power in modern society, it seems logical to stress the following: creating a new reality of authority, decentralizing power and thereby weakening it, reducing the trust in power by various means of exposures and journalistic investigations, and finally, a kind of deconstruction of ideologies and a critics the position of journalists opposite to any authority. All of the above, therefore, are the models indicating the changes that have occurred in society and caused a two-way process - the mediazation of politics and politicization of the media.

3. Method and empirical database

Thus, the analysis of the newly emerging armed conflicts, hybrid wars and new information wars that we can observe today in Eastern Europe, in particular between Ukraine and Russia, allows us to compare the types of journalism in these countries and note the fact that most media of modern Russia is drawn towards to the authoritarian model of media with the interspersing of strongly totalitarian technologies to protect pro-government opinions and legitimize one leader, while Ukrainian media still try to stay within the framework of libertarian models of social responsibility without imposing predetermined propaganda techniques, which, incidentally, has drawn criticism from the part of the population and from experts, as well as statements that the lack of “hard” information policy in Ukraine, provoked its defeat in the information war with Russia.

Sociological content-analysis of Ukrainian and Russian media narratives concerned “the Crimea issue” enabled to reveal principal components of such informational hybrid war that took place in traditional and digital media.

The empirical database of our research we chose two Internet journals: the Ukrainian one – “Ukrainian Truth” (*Ukrainskaya Pravda* and the Russian – *Vesti.RU*). The choice of these sources was determined by following factors: the high rating of publications and relevance, that is, the presence in them of a significant number of articles reflecting the issues of interest to us. The time period of the study was 2 months – March and April 2014, which was the period of the annexation of the Crimea.

Social categories of narrative analyzing such as “agenda settings”, “types of content’s general modality”, “presence/absence of imperative modality”, “special visual ways of influence”, “character of conflict”, “heroes/committees of conflict” permitted us to construct and compare two opposite models of postmodern hybrid information wars: authoritarian and libertarian ones accordingly to “authoritarian and libertarian” media conceptions.

4. Results

To conclude the analysis, we have identified significant differences in the way that events were presented. The first issue, attracted our attention was evaluation type concerning the same events. The Ukrainian journal regards events on the peninsula in mostly negative way (58.6%), at the same time; the Russian journal sees the situation differently: in 6 from 10 publications have positive or neutral characteristics of the events.

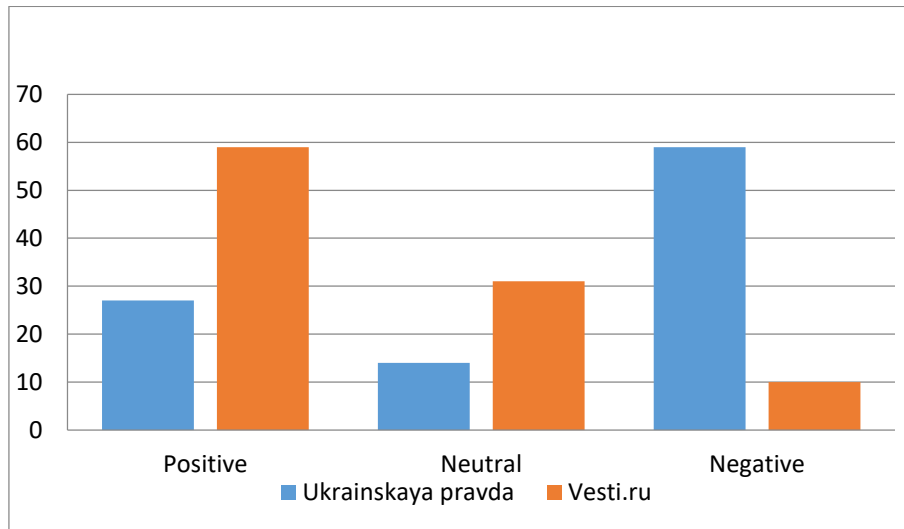


Figure 1. Affective character of information

Quite interesting and sometimes unexpected results have been revealed concerning “factors” of real conflict events. In addition to the fact that the Ukrainian journal was accusing the Russian side of the aggravation of the situation on the peninsula, we have found a rather interesting information technology, which was used by Russian media in question. The Russian journal suggests an interpretation according to which the local population of the peninsula are the originators of the conflict in the Crimea (55.1%), as like as people whose origin is hard to determine - 24.1%. At the same time, the Russian side has been presented as "rescuers" of the local population from illegal actions of the Ukrainian authorities.

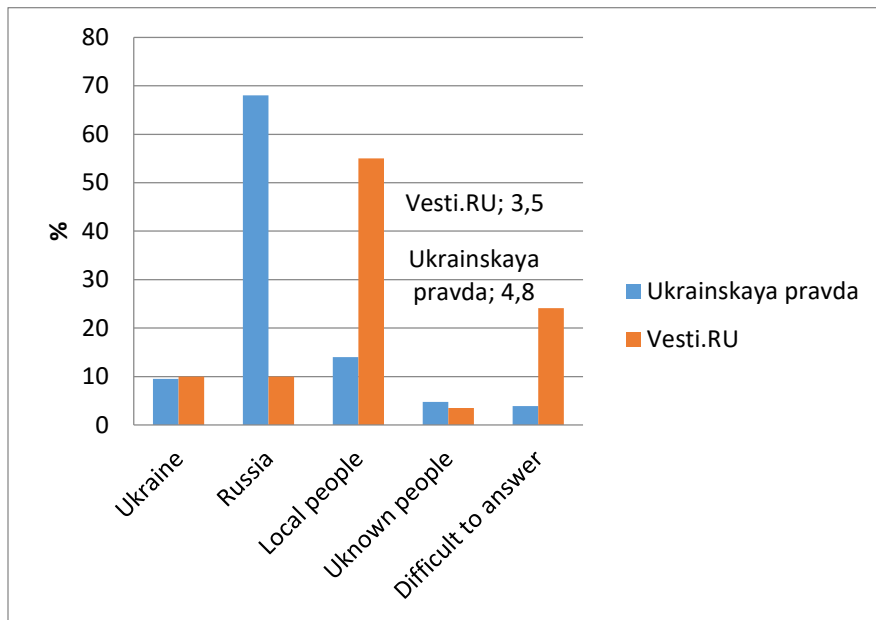


Figure 2. Heroes/committees of conflict

The analysis of correlations between different categories also helped to discover some additional interesting trends. Thus, comparing the categories “heroes/committees of conflict” and

“affective character of information”, we had found two clear scenarios representing two different mise-en-scenes of the same event, which was considered as the “annexation” of a part of sovereign territory from the point of view of international law. In the Russian journal, the main trigger of the conflict is the local population, whose actions were more likely to be assessed as positive ones. That does not allow us to identify the categories of “heroes/committees of conflict” in Russian media discourse, while the Ukrainian side, whose actions are more likely to be assessed as negative, may well be identified with the “culprit of events”.

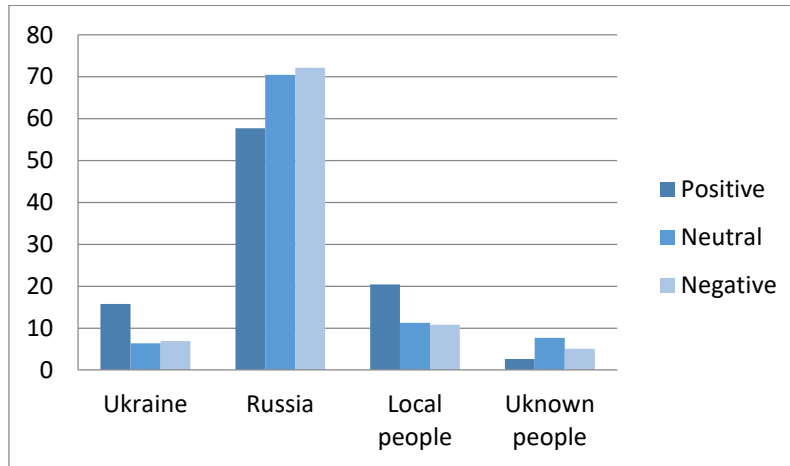


Figure 3. *Ukrainskaya Pravda*

At the same time, the Russian side as a “cause” of events is presented more neutrally, which gives a clear image of “non-interference”, and this image is also strengthened by the idea that “unknown people”, those famous “green men” according to Russian Internet journal, were not presented – this was no more than a fiction of Western media. At the same time, for a significant percentage of messages, the affective character cannot be identified, and that allowed us to talk about creating another technology - the “neutrality” of messages. We see here a typical postmodernist rhetorical method of mixing and amplifying, when the introduction of elements of neutrality sets up opportunity to completely change the character of the message, otherwise, “to call black as white is getting rather easy enough” if we dilute the boundaries between the lie and the truth by using neutral judgments and as a result we managed to shift text accents.

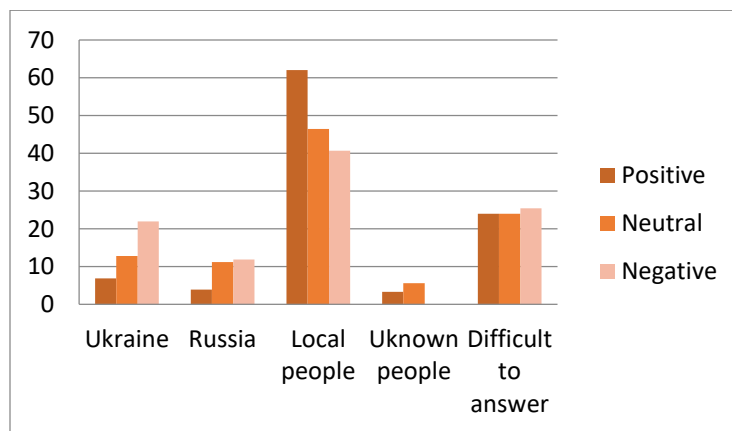


Figure 4. *Vesti.RU*

As for as technologies used in the Ukrainian Internet journal, we see a more simple and less effective technology of “unambiguous and unbiased” reporting, when Russia is seen as the main cause of the conflict on the Crimean peninsula, the local population is practically eliminated from the conflict, as like the Ukrainians. At the same time, the emphasis on the presence of “unknown people” is presented more unambiguously.

5. Conclusion

So, why does such a strategy seem to us some less effective? It’s dealing with how information appears, in other words, what might be a force, becomes a weakness. I’m saying about the desire of Ukrainian media to function within the framework of the “libertarian” model of media, that is, to present the most balanced and most neutral image without becoming a mouthpiece of either the state or any of the parties. The basis for putting forward this hypothesis is the existence of a significant number of neutral judgments, an attempt to balance the interpretation that might be a strong point of Ukrainian media in the situation of sustainable development of the country, but in the situation of crisis and hybrid war, we state that the “libertarian” model is not adapted or much little adapted for information warfare, which causes the loss of information campaigns of Ukraine in comparison with Russia, even in the situation of an explicit and unambiguous geopolitical conflict, such as the “annexation of the Crimea”. At the same time, the “postmodern technology of striking borders” becomes more effective, and the lack of free media, that is, the adherence to the “authoritarian model” does not contradict, and even enhances the influence of this technology.

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Producing a Drama for the Common Good: The Theatricalization of the Crisis Discourse on Cultural Journalism

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Received 31 October 2017 ▪ Revised 18 November 2017 ▪ Accepted 20 2017

Abstract

This article examines the discourses in the coverage of cultural journalism and its alleged crisis. The economical, technological, cultural and social transformations of the 21st-century media landscape have been translated into a crisis narrative that is sustained even by the practitioners themselves. The journalistic coverage concerning cultural journalism in general-interest news outlets in the period 2010–2017 includes a variety of representations of the crisis in culture and cultural journalism in the Nordic countries. By analysing the crisis in journalistic approaches as an operative concept for debating the topic in the public sphere, the study traces the functions of the crisis discourse. In this study, they are considered by applying the Aristotelian concept of *thaumaston*, which reflects both the inevitability of a catastrophe and the opportunity to create a reaction. The crisis narrative thus could be productive by increasing the accountability and openness in journalism while staging a drama that promotes a pessimistic representation of the topic.

Keywords: crisis, theatricalization, cultural journalism, metadiscourse, public sphere.

1. Introduction

When they are addressed in public, or referred to as societal institutions, cultural phenomena such as cultural journalism, criticism and the arts tend to be met by a certain amount of pessimism. Cultural criticism, or the reviewing of the arts, for example, is typically thought to be dying, if not already dead, or undergoing a “permanent crisis” (Frey, 2014; see also Elkins, 2003; Elkins & Newman, 2008; Rubinstein, 2006; Jaakkola, 2015a). Similarly, it has been observed that the professional narrative of cultural journalists, art reviewers and critics draws on this kind of cultural pessimism. As shown in previous studies, the public metadiscourse of cultural debates is to a large extent connected to the idea of a crisis: when cultural journalism is publicly addressed, it is framed by the concepts of crisis, deterioration, or less favourable development (Jaakkola, 2015a).

The articulation of a crisis in cultural journalism encompasses wide-ranging links with cultural theory, particularly the theory of criticism, the professional ideology of journalism and its connections to the democratic society, and the sociology of art. By exploring the discourse on cultural journalism through the lens of performance theory, we may learn how this crisis is constituted, staged and used to the advantage of the actors involved. Within the frame of the

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sociology of professions, in which professionalism is seen as a historical project based on an on-going struggle to maintain autonomy and integrity vis-à-vis external intervening factors (Freidson, 2001; Blank, 2007), it seems peculiar that the professional crisis is acknowledged and sustained by the practitioners themselves. The practitioners of traditional professions, such as medical doctors, lawyers, priests and teachers, would not refer to themselves by lamenting the poor foundations of their profession or exposing their inferiority to other professions. Or would they?

- The study of discourse on cultural journalism in the daily press is to a high extent connected to the idea of crisis (“the death of cultural journalism”).
- Theatralization of the crisis discourse can be seen as an entry point to the public space, or a way to make the issue journalistically interesting, topical and relevant.
- Theatralization of the crisis also serves as defending the autonomy of the institutions of arts and cultural journalism, which are interconnected, and the common concern for the crisis debaters is thus the loss of autonomy of cultural journalism.

In this article, I address the professional metadiscourse of crisis and cultural journalism in the Nordic countries in order to examine its uses and gain insight into its transformative power in society and public debate. By examining the metadiscourse on the contemporary characteristics and state of cultural journalism during the second decade of the 21st century, which has so far remained unexamined in the Nordic scholarly literature, I intend to determine how the crisis is presented and dramatised in the public sphere. The theatrical approach, which according to Meyer (1992: 66) “seems almost ready-made for the media stage”, may help in determining the reasons that the idea of crisis is used to address the state of cultural journalism. With the help of the concept of theatricalization, I will follow the presentations of the crisis to understand how it is staged and used to convey a message.

Specifically, I intend to find answers to the following questions: How is the idea of “crisis” presented in journalistic news coverage that discusses the contemporary cultural journalism? The object of the study is the public metadiscourse concerning cultural journalism in the public sphere of general interest, that is, the daily press created for large audiences.

The Nordic countries, or the geopolitically constructed region of “Norden” (Jukarainen, 1999), has been found to be a relatively culturally and politically homogeneous region. With their strong journalistic professionalism, state interventions and the welfare state ideology, as well as high the circulation of newspapers and high rates of newspaper reading, the Nordic countries show strong similarities in their media systems (Hallin & Mancini, 2004) and journalism cultures (Hanitzsch, 2007), which are supported by their similar systems of journalism education (Hovden et al., 2016). In these countries, cultural journalism has a common basis and thus a similar, established tradition in producing quality dailies (Kristensen & Riegert, 2017). Because cultural performances such as the metadiscourse explored in this article are essentially local (see e.g., Reinelt & Roalch, 1992), it can be assumed that discussions concerning the institution of cultural journalism are rooted in a consistent definition of the phenomenon. Thus, they provide us with possibility of analysing the professional metadiscourse beyond one local or national community.

2. Crisis and the theatricalization of discourse

Journalism has been studied in terms of its content or according to the notions of practitioners (e.g., the professional identity of perceived changes in journalism) rather than examining journalistic self-coverage. The object of study in this article is a discourse that represents the discourse of journalism. According to Fiske (2010, 1989: 19), culture is “the active

process of generating and circulating meanings and pleasures within a social system”, and cultural journalism refers to the journalistic process of carrying out this process within the conventional understanding of cultural journalism (for definitions, see Jaakkola 2015a). In cultural journalism, the coverage is metadiscourse because it is discourse on the discourse produced by a discursively produced object. Those involved in producing the discourse on the discursive object are part of that object. In news and feature articles, which rest, to use Gaye Tuchman’s classical vocabulary, on the epistemology of the strategic ritual of the objectification of knowledge (Tuchman, 1972), journalism produces objectified presentations of itself in the public sphere. The relationship to the object of reporting, however, is not entirely disclosed; the articles do not typically position the writers as “we” or cultural journalism as “our” habitat. They elude this direct relationship by referring to sources.

The metadiscourse examined in this study is exercised in a public space that is created for relatively large audiences. The audience of general-interest daily newspapers includes all citizens within the circulation area, whereas special-interest magazines and niched online outlets try to reach readers with an initial interest in the subject area. However, they all represent public discourse about a public phenomenon. Metadiscourse is largely connected to performativity; it is produced discourse that is per se independent from whether the conditions discussed are factually true or not. In this context, the production of metadiscourse is a performance, a cultural practice and a practice of presentation in which individuals who are socially embedded in distinct socio-cultural and physic-material environments establish an imaginary relationship with their conditions of existence. Hence, imagining a crisis is a performative fact based on a selected discourse, through which an actor tries to impose his or her worldviews on others in public debate.

The prevalence of the idea of crisis plays a distinct role in cultural journalism, which is a type of journalism that is based on criticality, particularly the systematised and institutionalised forms of criticism, arts criticism and reviewing. Since its beginning, modern cultural journalism has been conceived of as providing a forum of free thought and opinion-making and an intellectual free zone manifest in the frequent occurrence of historical culture wars related to the formation of canons (see e.g., Gates, 1992). This normative ideal is still valid. For example, when the new culture chief of the regional newspaper *Göteborgs-Posten* in Sweden entered his post, he defined cultural journalism as ‘the haven of the open mind’ (Werner, 2017), which resonates with the argument that cultural journalism is a sanctuary for thoughts that cannot be expressed in other parts of the news outlet. Cultural journalism thus fulfils a fundamental function in a democratic society not only by mediating information, informed opinions, tastes and lifestyles to large audiences but also by both reflecting society and participating in its production. An important part of cultural journalism is the substance area of arts and aesthetics, which formed the core of modern cultural journalism (Jaakkola 2015a).

The word crisis is profoundly etymologically connected to cultural journalism. In the classical Greek theatre, *krisis* was the rigorous mental activity of judgement that was exercised by the audience and the judges, that is, *kritai* who dispensed verdicts about the plays. The criticism of the arts, which is the institutionalised form of publicly evaluating cultural products, is still a central ingredient of cultural journalism. Reflected in the idea of being a haven for free thought, cultural journalism is permeated by the idea of criticality. Indeed, critical cultural journalism is equated with quality cultural journalism. According to Olsen (2014), critical cultural journalism has five features, which are reflected in several discussions: it is investigative, knowledge-based, critical, independent and engaging. By “investigative”, he means that journalists are interested in economic and power issues instead of artistic expression and form or the arts as an isolated area of social life. By “knowledge-based” he means that facts rather than taste should be used as guiding principle in journalism. He understands “criticality” as the norm according to which the cultural journalist creates distance from the art world, which is also reflected by “independence”, according

to which cultural journalists should set their own agendas instead of following those of the art world. By “engagement”, Olsen means the ability to find relevant issues. All these features point to the journalists’ ability to create a cultural (or critical) distance from the primary field of cultural production while seeking cultural proximity to the audience.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term crisis is derived through Latin from the Greek root of the noun *krísis*, a “decision, event, turning point” and the Greek verb *krinein*, “to decide”. The term has medical origins that refer to the turning point in a disease after which the patient’s state either improves or deteriorates (Koselleck, 2006). This definition of crisis thus describes the alleged status quo of journalism as a stage in a sequence of transformational processes, thereby establishing journalism in a temporal context in which the old system can no longer be maintained. It also implies the need for change (Jaakkola, 2014). Indeed, in its most effective state, crisis is described as a surprise. According to Aristotle (350 B.C.E.), “tragedy is an imitation... of events inspiring fear or pity”. The effects of a tragedy are “best produced when the events come on us by surprise”, and “the effect is heightened when, at the same time, they follow as cause and effect”, as “the tragic wonder will then be greater than if they happened of themselves or by accident”.

The etymology of the term crisis, which originally referred to the diagnosis of a patient’s condition, reveals that the concept is not neutral but presupposes the identification of normative accounts: first, an evaluation or an assessment of a situation to determine whether a turning point exists; second, to determine the direction in which the development will proceed (Jaakkola, 2014). In other words, labelling a critical incident or a specific point in a process as a “crisis” requires a degree of judgement by the communicator. The failure of the critical function of cultural journalism has been described in terms that can be juxtaposed with the term theatricalization, which has been adapted to the basic concept of this issue (for the definition of theatricalization, see the introduction of this special issue). Theatricalisation and the derivative term theatricality have been used in both a metaphorical and heuristical sense and as a systematised cultural model in different disciplines. It also occurs in a variety of different formulations in cultural studies (Fischer-Lichte, 1995). Theatricalisation is typically bound to the sensualisation and carnivalisation of culture (Takacs, 2017), but in the public sphere, the influential narratives of cultural processes have been the restructuration or colonisation of the public sphere (Habermas (1991, 1962) and represented, for example, in the forms of the colonisation of politics by the media (Meyer, 1992). Theorists of crisis, such as Agamben (2005) and Koselleck (2006), view the colonised public sphere as a state of exception.

In general, theatricalization can be said to mean failed seriousness in which ambitions and high standards are not fully met. Takacs (2017: 22) has described theatricalization in the frame of historical studies on popular culture as “an increased emphasis on image over essence, style over substance, fantasy over reality, and emotional gesture over reasoned analysis or discourse”. In the context of media and communication, similar understandings of “theatricalization” have been both detailed and limited as descriptions of processes labelled as commercialisation (see e.g., Papathanassopoulos, 2001), popularisation or the taking-over of entertainment (Kersten & Janssen, 2016), the “dumbing down” of culture or civilisation (Ursell, 2001), or the de-professionalisation of professions (see e.g., Nygren & Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015). Crisis discourse then could be viewed as an umbrella term for developments that are perceived as unfavourable. They are powerful because they are largely regarded as counter-processes of desirable narratives, such as the professionalisation and canonisation of different types of cultural journalism (Baumann, 2007; Lindberg et al., 2005). These terms accentuate the role of crisis in different ways and combine it with different kinds of processes. However, they have in common the observation of a process that leads to something that is less preferable from the perceiver’s

point of view. Another implication is that because the point of breakdown is close at hand, an immediate reaction is required.

In the light of the concepts discussed in this introduction, I see crisis as a *staging concept*. When it is used as part of discourse or a narrative it leads to a game that requires the positioning of the agents involved, which may expose some fundamental structures of how culture is epistemologically constituted within journalism or how it becomes the ontological object of cultural journalism.

3. Method

The data consists of newspaper articles collected from the largest newspapers, magazines and online sites in the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden – during the period 2010–2017¹. The sample was retrieved using the digital media archive Retriever Research (Mediearkivet), a digital Nordic archive, owned by the Swedish News Agency TT, that includes material from newspapers, magazines and other Nordic news outlets. The database contains several millions of articles that are searchable as pdfs or full text (html). The major daily newspapers in each country, which are typically referred to as the metropolitan press, were included in the search, in addition to several other minor sources ranging from local papers to professional magazines.

In the archive Retriever Research, only online sources were available for the Danish and Finnish press. As for the Danish press, the results turned out to include many online articles of the daily printed press, and, as no open online archive was found to complement the results, the Danish results were limited to the online coverage only, based on an assumption that they would reflect the central national debates under the period of study. The retrieval of Finnish sources was based on a combined use of the digital archive Suomen media-arkisto² and the archive of the Sanoma-owned daily *Helsingin Sanomat*, as well as the reference database for Finnish periodical articles Arto, administrated by the National Library of Finland and containing information from 350 Finnish-language magazines and journals.

Because of the similarities in the media system, the term “cultural journalism” is widely used in the Scandinavian languages instead of “arts journalism” or any other forms of ‘soft journalism’ to describe the content published on culture pages and produced by specialised journalists (Danish and Swedish *kulturjournalistik*, Norwegian *kulturjournalistikk* and Finnish *kulttuurijournalismi*). To track articles that included references to this type of journalism, the search terms *kulturjournalistik** for Danish, Norwegian and Swedish articles and *kulttuurijournalis** for Finnish articles were used to search the digital database. The abbreviation was able to retrieve the word in different conjugations (*kulturjournalistiken*, *kulttuurijournalismin*), including all words that referred to the institution or phenomenon as an entity³.

¹ From 1 January 2010 to 25 September 2017.

² The newspaper archives included the print papers and digital editions of the daily papers *Aamulehti*, *Iltalehti*, *Lapin Kansa*, *Satakunnan Kansa* and *Helsingin Sanomat*, as well as a number of different magazine titles.

³ It was discovered that the search word *kulttuurijournalis** would have retrieved too high an amount of data if all occurrences including a person’s name (*kulturjournalist*, *cultural journalist*) were included. As in most cases, these kinds of articles would have been side notes on cultural journalism, and the focus would have been elsewhere. Hence, the search term “cultural journalism” was selected. Only the Finnish search word allowed the inclusion of persons’ names (*kulttuurijournalisti*).

The data retrieval yielded 1,787 individual articles, as summarized in Table 1. However, many articles in this sample were duplicates, as both articles with open access and articles behind the pay wall were listed in the results. Another reason is that media companies published the same story in all its different news outlets. Because leaving out articles from some newspapers while including others would have led to biased results, the duplicate articles were included in the data. In Norway, the most frequent sources were as follows: *Klassekampen* (81 articles) and *Aftenposten* (49 articles); in Sweden *Dagens Nyheter* (112 articles), *Expressen* (109 articles) and *Svenska Dagbladet* (89 articles); in Denmark *Politiken* (16 articles) and *Dagbladet Information* (14 articles); and in Finland *Helsingin Sanomat* (62 articles) and *Aamulehti* (28 articles).

Table 1. Description of the data

| | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | Total |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Norway | 96 | 70 | 54 | 71 | 136 | 92 | 229 | 135 | 883 |
| Sweden | 112 | 88 | 76 | 84 | 83 | 72 | 71 | 46 | 632 |
| Denmark | 9 | 14 | 15 | 27 | 28 | 23 | 28 | 12 | 156 |
| Finland | 31 | 8 | 15 | 24 | 17 | 10 | 5 | 6 | 116 |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>248</i> | <i>180</i> | <i>160</i> | <i>206</i> | <i>264</i> | <i>197</i> | <i>333</i> | <i>199</i> | <i>1,787</i> |

The search revealed that the public coverage of cultural journalism was the most voluminous in Norway with 110 articles per year on average, whereas the average number of articles on cultural journalism in the public sphere was 79 in Sweden, 20 in Denmark and 15 in Finland.

The low occurrence of articles related to cultural journalism in Finland may partly derive from the combined use of sources, as no complete database for the Finnish-language articles was available. However, the databases used for the data retrieval in this study are the most central sources of newspapers and magazines produced in the language area; therefore, the articles containing the words “cultural journalism” were identified. Despite their extensive coverage, even the search in the periodicals’ databases produced only eight articles that contained the words “cultural journalism”, which indicates a low level of discussion about the topic in the public sphere. Another, perhaps even more plausible, explanation might be that issues of cultural journalism are typically addressed in Finnish discussions using words other than the explicit term “cultural journalism”. For example, debates may be limited to criticism, reviewing or the evaluation of the quality of the arts, and the institution of cultural journalism is not explicitly semantically involved. The word ‘journalism’ may also have connotations that are avoided in cultural debates in some countries. Nevertheless, the presupposition of the study, according to which cultural journalism is a term with a relatively established meaning in the Nordic region, assumes that the words should be mentioned whenever the institution of journalism and culture are addressed. Similarly, when cultural journalists are discussed, the words should be used explicitly. The low number of items retrieved could relate to observations concerning the Finnish debate on culture, cultural issues and cultural journalism, which, according to public debaters with international experience, seems to be more passive than in the neighbouring countries (Koivunen, 2017; Apunen, 2009).

Nevertheless, the question of the activity and volume of a public debate seems to involve more than just counting the number of articles that refer to a distinct type of journalism. Therefore, direct conclusions about the *activity* of cultural discussion in the public sphere cannot be drawn based on the sample, even if the number undeniably point to the frequency at which the institutional frame occurs in public discussions. Moreover, in this study, the sample served to map

public discourse at a general level, and the primary focus is not on comparing discussions between individual countries. The anatomy of the discussion on cultural journalism, the staging of cultural journalism in the public debate in terms of crisis and the performativity of the crisis are described in the next section.

4. Results

The results of the analysis of the sample of articles intended for the public's general interest supported the findings of previous studies on this topic. The results showed that the discourse on cultural journalism was tightly linked to the idea of non-preferred or notorious change (see Constantopoulou, 2016; Frey, 2014; Jaakkola, 2015b). The number of articles about the crisis indicates that it is a reoccurring frame. In Norway, 261 articles (30 %) were connected to the idea of crisis; in Sweden the number was 114 (18 %) and in Denmark it was 49 (31 %). In Finnish newspapers, 57 articles (49 %) were about the crisis.

Regarding semantics, the headings of articles on cultural journalism highlighted crisis, death, tragedy, threat and survival: "death", "crisis", "struggle", "worry", "anxiety" and "longing" were frequent word choices. The headings typically expressed a lack of hope: "The die is cast", "Who needs a critic" and "First they outsourced sports". In addition, the problems in cultural journalism were often denoted in the headings: "lack of passion", "lack of enthusiasm", "filter bubble", "reality debate gone astray", "uncriticality" and "prostitute journalism". The same descriptions were circulated across different countries, such as the sentence appropriated from Mark Twain: "the rumours of the death of cultural journalism are greatly exaggerated", which was found in the Norwegian, Danish and Finnish articles in the sample.

The leading Finnish newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* dedicated a series of articles to examining the changes in cultural journalism, which had finished before the period of study. In the summarising article, all the problems related to the production structure were discussed according to different areas of arts and culture: film, music, games, fashion, television, literature and architecture. The series of articles in *Helsingin Sanomat* exposed several problems in cultural journalism (*HS:n sarja nosti esiin monia kulttuurijournalismin ongelmia*, 28 May 2010). The problems described included the structural characteristics that undermine journalistic integrity in the production of cultural journalism (e.g., film distributors and importers tend to offer journalists pre-paid travels to make interviews and 'goodie bags' are a normalised perquisite in the fashion field). Many articles pointed to the diminishing number of reviews in cultural journalism, which has led to storylines that emphasise individual cultural producers and their celebrity status instead of the focus on content and its quality, which is the function of a review. This series of articles presented a systematic analysis of the crisis approach by addressing long-standing structural problems rather than raising an alarm about the perceived abrupt change.

A common starting point for the coverage on cultural journalism was the opinion that because cultural journalism had never managed to draw the public's attention, it should thus be discussed more frequently. For example, in the Swedish *Svenska Dagbladet*, Lisa Irenius remarked, "the future of cultural journalism is to an overwhelming extent discussed with risks as starting point, rather than the possibilities", and "cultural journalism is never in the focus when seminars about the digital development are organized" ("This is how the future cultural journalism looks like", *Så blir framtidens kulturjournalistik*, 31 May 2015). Against this backdrop, the contributions of culture newsrooms to the cultural debate, which often only address cultural journalism in the public space, seem to be mere activism performed to strive for a better future.

This approach to the crisis seems to resonate well with the public discussion and research on the media. In addition to the status of cultural journalism, the 21st-century media have been discussed extensively with regard to crisis, change and renewal in terms of the

professional crisis in content production, the change in professional values and identities (see e.g., Nygren & Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015), the economic crisis in the funding of journalism (see e.g., Kaye & Quinn, 2010) and the socio-cultural crisis based on the altered social functions of journalism and media in society (see e.g., Peters & Broersma, 2017). However, in addition to the crisis frame, the results clearly showed a clear positive strain in many articles in the sample. Cultural journalism was either covered by addressing its “quality”, “level”, “renewal”, “modernization”, “digitalization” or future intentions and ambitions of the media. For example, the media will “focus on the re-energizing of culture”, “recruit new employees”, innovate “new forms of cultural journalism” and launch “study programs for cultural journalists”. Indeed, “culture will be reconquered”. Moreover, diligent attention is paid to such efforts as if the “positive” developments would occur without question. The main message of all these types of news articles is that culture and cultural journalism are needed. They are about taking cultural journalism seriously despite difficult conditions and challenges. By sharing the characteristics in their framing, these articles appeared to present a counter-argument against the implicit assumption that as a journalistic “beat”, culture is expendable.

In other words, the results showed both supporting and contesting positions, both of which related the content to the idea of crisis as a turning point. Crisis works as a staging concept that bridges the shortcomings of the past and visions of future. Discussing a crisis resembles living through a *thaumaston*, which reflects both the inevitability of a catastrophe and the opportunity to create a reaction. In Aristotle’s *Poetics*, pity and fear serve as the basis for tragedy to produce a catharsis at the end of a drama. According to Koselleck (2006: 374), the term crisis “takes hold of old experiences and transforms them metaphorically in ways that create new expectations”. This transformation is more than metaphorical because it has ‘real-world’ consequences that urge action.

In setting up the crisis in the public stage, the following opinions about the status of cultural journalism were expressed in the sample articles:

Culture is and will continue to be a low-priority issue in journalism. According to the utterances in the press coverage, culture is easily disregarded in times of economic scarcity and re-structurations in media organisations, or it is rather passively ignored by not being invested in by the media organisations. There is, in other words, a crisis, but no one is interested. It is “only culture”, so why care? This statement is particularly fuelled by real changes in which the position of cultural journalism has undeniably deteriorated; during the research period, several culture newsrooms were closed down in the Nordic countries, freelancers were hired, they protested against media companies or newsrooms presented strategies in which culture was not included.

Cultural coverage is under threat. This statement underpins the fight for life or death. The threat might come from various directions: it might be click journalism, or “clickocracy”, commercial pressures, a shift in political power (e.g., a “Donald Trump” or a governmental minister) or elitism among cultural journalists. A central concern is that culture is not saleable and that culture can hardly be made profitable at least not without compromising what is referred to as quality content. With regard to relatively limited audiences, the cultural sector has never been a lucrative business, but several factors are now contributing to its change. For example, during the period of study, there was much discussion in the sample countries about user-paid content specifically that if nobody were willing to pay for culture its existence would be threatened under the contemporary conditions of the market economy.

Cultural journalism has already changed and not necessarily for the better. This opinion was expressed in a conglomerate group of discourses that assessed the experienced or perceived development of cultural journalism. They conveyed a sense of deterioration rather than making a clearly structured argument. This opinion implies that the turning point in the crisis process has already passed. The existing coverage has decreased, is insufficient, cultural journalists and

reviewers have become less critical or culture editors either overestimate or underestimate their readers. The reason for this assessment may remain unclear, but its impetus is nostalgia for the old days, the desire for a better future, or simply being unsatisfied with the contemporary conditions in which cultural journalism is produced.

In all these statements of opinion, the rules of discourse govern a game in which some social groups are actors and others are spectators. In the metadiscourse, two dimensions reoccur throughout the texts. The first dimension deals with the identification of the origins of discourse in which the speaker's point of view was predominant. This dimension concerns a sense of belonging, membership in or inclusion from the speaker's point of view. It concerns whether cultural journalism is conceived of as part of a wider field in journalism and media or whether it is a specific field in its own right. The first alternative seeks similarities between cultural journalism and the rest of the journalism or media field, whereas the second alternative tends to emphasize the characteristics that distinguish cultural journalism from other types of journalism or media. A general distinction seems to exist between those who identify with the "media people", that is, staff writers and employees in media organisations, and those who feel outside the power fields of the media, that is, artists.

The second dimension is related to the origin of the threat that is crucial to the idea of crisis. *The locus of crisis* refers to the place in which the crisis can be found. This dimension often deals with "them", in contrast to "us", by perceiving threats as either external or internal. External threats include "click" journalism and commercial pressures in journalistic production, which are foreign to the internal rules of critical cultural production. Internal threats include low, self-set standards of quality, conservatism, and the fear of change.

The cultural field is so multi-faceted that the number of different combinations of the distinctions between these two dimensions is very high. Moreover, the positionings are constantly in flux. However, from the positionings of "we" and "them", it is possible to connect to the main opinions described above, and engagement means involvement in the collective staging of a crisis that is the driving force of the public explosion in cultural issues. Indeed, in the discourse on culture, individuals are typically seen as heroic figures embarking on a fight, struggle or (cultural) war, which is evident in the frequent occurrence of the expression "fight for culture" (*kampen om kultur, kulturkampen*) in the sample articles. In one article, Åsa Linderborg, the culture chief of the Swedish *Aftonbladet*, asserted, "culture sections that spread the light of a fragrance candle will never gain relevance" ("Culture is", *Kultur är*, 25 March 2017).

5. Discussion

Nordic scholars who discuss cultural journalism have contradicted the crisis narrative and deemed it counterproductive if not partly misleading (Knapskog & Larsen, 2008; Kristensen & Riebert, 2017; Kristensen, 2010). In recent decades, the volume of cultural coverage in the daily newspapers has significantly increased. Moreover, as online editions of the news outlets have been developed, better conditions for cultural coverage have been created in online publishing. In addition, journalistic thinking, supported by several layout and format re-designs and organisational re-structurations in media organisations, has contributed to increasing the quality of the journalistic product. The number of titles of special-interest magazines in the sphere of arts and culture has been relatively stable in the present decade (See e.g., Jaakkola, 2015a; Purhonen et al., 2017; Kristensen, 2010). The boundaries between different forms or fields of arts (Purhonen et al. 2017; Jaakkola, 2015a) and between different subtypes of culturally oriented journalism (Kristensen & From, 2012) have been observed to have blurred, which was one source of the alarming debates. To complicate the mediascape further, in the new millennium, a range of new, diverse channels for bottom-up cultural debate and coverage have emerged, which remain under-

researched, including the blogosphere, microblogs (twitosphere) and other userspheres that are enabled by social networking sites such as Facebook and Instagram.

However, with regard to the persistence of the crisis discourse, we must note that the crisis narrative and the theatricalization of the crisis, which constitute performative actions in the public sphere, do perform important functions. The analysis of the articles published in the Nordic countries, revealed at least three fundamental functions to which the aspects discussed above can be subordinated.

First, the view that cultural journalism is a problematic area involves an identification that aims at positioning the institution not only for the audiences external to it but also for the social groups involved in its production. *Crisis discourse serves to relate cultural journalism to other areas of journalism and to society in general.* As an area that has typically been marginally positioned in journalism and society and has suffered from the ambiguous definition of the word “culture”, there has been a distinct need, which was expressed in the early textbooks on cultural journalism, to justify the affiliations of cultural journalism to general or mainstream journalism and thus to democracy (Hansen, 1977; Loman et al., 2007; Riegert & Roosvall, 2017).

Second, the crisis discourse is a *discourse about the quality of cultural journalism.* In particular, because the deterioration of quality has gained attention, it is typically the centre of discussion. Unlike other types of journalism, cultural journalism and similar forms of journalism, such as literary journalism and lifestyle journalism, has been regarded as a form of art, in which the literary qualities of the writing are valued compared with the standardised and impersonalised form of news journalism, which is the predominant form. For example, in contrast to political, economic, environmental and foreign affairs journalism, in cultural journalism the subjective input typically takes precedent over the news-making aspect. To address cultural journalism in the frame of crisis thus marks the attempt to discuss and ensure its quality.

Third, the objective of the crisis discourse is to enhance the working conditions for cultural journalists to attain the ideals of quality of cultural journalism. Crisis discourse can thus be seen as an attempt to *create better conditions for work and action.* This kind of strain presents activism in which culture and cultural journalism appear in the public sphere as “weaker” agents that have to be defended against the Goliaths of news journalism, the market or other intrusive factors that are seen as risks to the inner logics of culture.

With regard to these basic, profoundly interconnected functions of the crisis discourse in the public sphere, the persistence of such discourse may to some degree be better understood. In effect, addressing the crisis does not concern addressing the actual developments within the media landscape, even if their influence cannot be denied, as much as addressing the worst and best scenarios in order to sustain the integrity and autonomy that are necessary preconditions for cultural production. In cultural production, the risk of reducing art and culture to their material conditions is always at stake (Brandellero & Kloosterman, 2010). By addressing the questions of content and quality, cultural producers are able to establish internal rules that create conditions in the external environment to allow autonomy and integrity. In the case of journalism, however, the crisis discourse also serves to contribute to increased accountability as structural or internal problems are exposed and publicly discussed.

Moreover, both culture and media are high-threshold issues that need to be made journalistically interesting in order to place them on the public agenda although for different reasons. As a process, culture contests the journalistic patterns that are manifest in news values which favour abrupt changes, events, persons and concrete matters rather than slow, gradual, enduring processes. For the media, reporting issues that need self-reflection and openness, even if accountability is officially endorsed in discourse about the quality of journalistic culture and

practice, is a complicated question. Issues regarding the activities of the media are often considered in only professional magazines instead of being discussed in the public sphere for the general interest of large audiences, which often requires that the coverage of self-covering issues is a distinct reason for placing them on the agenda. It is not too unrealistic to think that the crisis frame has been adopted in order to make culture topical, interesting and thus relevant as a journalistic issue. It then functions as *an entry point* into the public discussion (Jaakkola 2015b). Simultaneously, the entry into public discussion is part of the self-interested behaviour of participants involved in the production of the discourse (Fengler & Ruß-Mohl, 2008).

However, the semantical flexibility of the basic concepts underlying the discussion—culture, quality of content and work, and as discussed above, the concept of crisis and its theatricalization—may be elusive unless it is anchored in a specific context⁴. Because of the possibility of multiple parallel definitions that denote very different semantic extensions of the term, the intangibility of the underlying concepts challenge rational deliberations in public about the cultural institution of cultural journalism and its related issues. In this ambiguous discursive sphere, crisis, which points to a single original event in a chain of events, appears to be an appropriate anchoring point for communication. This anchoring may concern not only the discussion of cultural journalism but also other cultural issues, which tend to oscillate between the opposite but complementary poles of cultural and democratic objects and commercial and market objects (Eide & Knight, 1999). In this dynamic landscape of competing notions that are sometimes complementary and sometimes conflicting, the simplicity of crisis as a chronologically and spatially defined point of reference partly explains journalism's affinity for easily definable questions and issues instead of addressing concerns at the institutional level.

6. Conclusions

This analysis of journalistic general-interest coverage in the institution of cultural journalism indicates that the idea of crisis provides a fruitful project for discussions that otherwise would not fulfil the journalistic criteria for being interesting, topical or relevant. With the help of the crisis discourse, culture is being pushed forward from the periphery towards the centre. The ultimate threat to society includes the question of what would happen if culture were taken away from us.

To some extent, crisis discourse is part of the definition of what is meant by quality cultural journalism, cultural communication and cultural work in the wider sense. The agents involved in cultural communication are supposed to be passionately interested in the issues they address and to fight for the common good with which culture is synonymous. That is the reason that the crisis discourse seems a natural fit with the cultural journalist's parlance. When the common cultural fight seems stagnated, it is an equally "natural" action to react to the shortcomings and threats, to resume the cultural fight that constitutes that grand drama that is the driving force of the cultural public sphere.

The public sphere, which is affected by general-interest newspapers and special-interest periodicals, is not the only space in which reflections on the institution of cultural journalism and its constitutive agents occur. Many statements concerning these reflections are documents that fall into the category of grey literature, which consists of materials produced in

⁴ For example, according to Raymond Williams (1976), because culture is one of the most complicated words in the modern English language, it needs to be defined in every context. Similarly, quality is a multi-discursive concept that is used in several different approaches and definitions (in the framework of journalism, see Arnold, 2008).

and by organisations outside the traditional commercial or academic publishing and distribution channels (Schöpfel, 2010). Such materials are also orally produced in encounters that are not recorded or documented, such as conferences, seminars, workshops, public discussion events, informal discussions etcetera. The discourse that is historically recorded is not necessarily representative of the professional practitioners' discussions and views in a certain period. However, it can be said that the issues that are assessed as interesting and relevant in a democracy are and should be addressed by the press and media. Moreover, the discussions recorded on these platforms must reflect current issues in the professional field.

Acknowledgements

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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Theatricalization of Patriarchate's Power through Television Serials: Legitimation of Rape

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Received 31 October 2017 ▪ Revised 20 November 2017 ▪ Accepted 25 November 2017

Abstract

This paper aims to present the results of our empirical research concerning the reception of Turkish television serials in Greece. More precisely, in this paper we tempt to approach the representations projected by the Turkish serial entitled “Futmagul’un suçunu ne?” as well as their reception by the public in Greece. The serial in question provides a particular representation of rape: under the cover of a “feminist” ideal (the persecution of the man who raped into a trial) it conveys representations and archetypes that are in accordance with the dominant patriarchal organization and principles; therefore, it contributes to the legitimation of violence against women. Our analysis focuses on the reception of this serial by women in Greece. Our research revealed that the majority of women who were part of the sample, develop through their interpretation various strategies against patriarchy despite the fact that they do not always recognize the archetypal stereotypes projected by the serial in question.

Keywords: social representations, cultural studies, serials, gender, violence.

1. Introduction

Since 2000, the production of Turkish television serials is in constant development. These serials that have indisputably a great success at a local level are also exported abroad. More precisely, they were first diffused in countries that were in the sphere of cultural influence of the ancient Ottoman Empire (which means the Balkans and the Middle East). Later they were also exported even far, in Latin America, in China, in Pakistan, in India, in Bangladesh etc.

Among these countries, Greece has become a great consumer of Turkish television serials. This consumption has considerably augmented since the economic crisis in Greece. During this period, the local production has been practically diminished. Consequently, Turkish television serials had an ideal context of diffusion, in this country in a state of lack.

The themes of these serials are not original. They remind the practically standardized themes of the classic “soap-operas” or of the “telenovelas” of the Hispanic speaking world of the period 1990 – 2000.

The most frequent subjects concern the sentimental relations and more precisely the stories of forbidden love between two persons with different social status or between lovers that are in an ambiguous situation because of a third person that is implicated in the relation.

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These serials present different stories that are marked by the rich lifestyle of the protagonists. Protagonists have a lifestyle that is characterized by goods, such as expensive clothes, jewelry, furniture or even cultural goods such as frequent trips etc. So, this lifestyle invites the public to a journey towards fantasy, dream and evasion.

- This paper aims to present the results of our empirical research concerning the reception of the Turkish serial entitled *Fatmagul'un suçu ne?* by the public in Greece.
- Since the beginning of the economic crisis Greece has become a great consumer of Turkish television serials.
- Theatricalization of the patriarchate's power is effectuated by various means, especially by the representation of rape and of rapists.
- The analysis of the reception of these representations by the public showed that women in Greece, even though they consume the cultural product in question, operate resistance against violence towards women.

The values that are conveyed by these serials are identical to those that we find in most of the television serials anywhere in the world (life lasting love, optimism, fight between good and bad etc.). It is about presenting problems that preoccupy every person in its daily life (love problems, survival problems etc.) but always by accompanying these problems by intrigues, passions and rivalries in order to attract the public.

The representation of women through these serials is particular. Women, even those who are represented as dynamic or even emancipated, are often treated as minors and are represented as highly sentimental and therefore very often not capable of taking rational decisions. In addition, they betray men (or other women) frequently by various means. Moreover, violence in general and violence against women in particular is very common to Turkish television programs. So, women in serials are respected by others when they are mothers (or in general when they have a high position in the institution of family) or when they impose their position through the intrigues. Therefore, the analysis of women's position in these serials, as well as its reception by women in Greece is, in our opinion, an important aspect.

2. Presenting the patriarchate values: the case of TV serial *Fatmagul'un suçu ne?* and the legitimation of rape

Our research concerns Turkish television serials diffused in Greece. It is actually an analysis of the representations projected by these serials and of the reception of the messages proposed by them by the public in Greece.

More precisely we have conducted a research of 25 interviews between May and August 2016 with people with different socioeconomic backgrounds. These interviews helped us (among other things of course) to establish a list of the Turkish serials that the public in Greece enjoyed watching. Among Greek's most favorite television programs was listed the serial named "*Fatmagul'un suçu ne?*" which means "what is *Fatmagul's* fault"². In Greece this serial was simply given the title "*Fatmagul*".

The story of this serial treats the life of *Fatmagul*, a young orphan woman leaving with her brother named *Rahmi*, her sister in law, *Mukades*, and their child in a village named *Ildir* in *Izmir*. *Fatmagul*, is mistreated daily by *Mukades* who is jealous of her and consequently hates her but she hopes for a better future with her fiancé, *Mustapha* who works as a fisherman in order to gather money for their marriage.

² See Annexes 1 and 2.

In the same village, the Yasaran family (a rich and well-known family of Turkey) is gathered in order to realize the engagement of their son, Selim to the daughter of a politician. At the party of his engagement Selim meets with his cousin Erdogan and his friends Vural and Kerim. So, the three of them (Erdogan, Selim and Vural) are rich (it is a very stereotypical image of rich young men who reside in Istanbul and who are of course spoiled, disrespectful and caring only for their pleasure etc.). On the other hand, Kerim, is their childhood friend who leaves permanently in Ildir and who is poor but beautiful, well-mannered, polite and who had a difficult childhood as his father abandoned his mother who later committed suicide. Therefore, he was raised by Ebe Nine, the mid-wife of the village.

After the engagement party, the four men, having consumed drugs and alcohol, go on a promenade to the beach where they meet accidentally Fatmagul and they rape her successively. Kerim, who was the last in the row to rape the girl could not commit the act of the rape and he was just watching the scene without participating actively. Later, the four men abandoned the woman unconscious.

The next morning Fatmagul was found and was transported to the local hospital. Mustafa, abandoned Fatmagul when he learned what had happened to her and Mukades who found Selim's wedding ring in the scene of the crime blackmails the rich family in order to gain money. The Yasaran family decides to give money to Kerim and forces him to get married with Fatmagul in order to present what had happened as an act between two young persons in love. Fatmagul gets married to Kerim as she is forced by Mukades in order to restore the shameful act.

Gradually, Kerim falls in love with Fatmagul and conducts several acts aiming to prove his love to her. Among these acts he buys a restaurant to Fatmagul so that she starts working and he goes to the police and declares what have happened to her (the fact that the 4 men raped her but precising clearly at the same time that he did not participated actively in the act of rape). So, it is through Kerim that Fatmagul decides to apply a charge against her rapists. At the final episode, she wins the procedure against her rapists and she leaves the court by making a speech against violence towards women after having become a symbol of denunciation of rape (something that is not given in the Turkish society). Fatmagul also had fallen gradually in love with Kerim. After having go through several adventures together they get married again (this time being actually in love) and they live happily ever after.

According to our analysis, this serial contributed to the further establishment of the patriarchy's power under a cover of denunciation of acts of violence towards women. And this, because even if the serial revindicates a feminist position by the condemnation of the three rapists (and presenting this as something that should be applied in every similar incident) it contributes at the same time to the legitimation (at a social level of course) of the act of rape by several means.

First of all, the act of rape is being put under question here. The fact that the protagonist did not participate actively in the rape seems to be an effort to detach his part of responsibility to the crime even though that Kerim caught Fatmagul while she was trying to escape from her rapists, he watched the scene, he did not help her but instead he left her unconscious on the beach. So, on an ethical level (and maybe not on a legal level, at least in the case of Turkey), we could say that Kerim has an equal part of responsibility with the three other men for what have happened to Fatmagul.

In addition, the act of rape was justified due to mitigating circumstances. More precisely, the consumption of drugs and alcohol were presented as the main reasons that conducted the four men to commit the following act (even if later being sober they kept denning their act).

Furthermore, the four men seem to have deeply regretted their act and having remorse for what they did. So, the rape is presented as an ordinary act that anyone can eventually commit.

As a nonsense that even a young poor but hard working and honest man such as Kerim could have commit. It is like the scenario of this serial is saying to women “don’t worry if you are raped, your rapist may be a kind and sensible man that will marry you”.

Moreover, it is true that gradually we assist at the emancipation of Fatmagul but this happens in a patriarchic way, which means through Kerim. It is Kerim that buys a restaurant to Fatmagul, so it is because of him that she starts making money of her own. It is Kerim that testifies to the police and denounces the crime committed against her, it is through him again, that she gets justice. And finally, but most importantly, it is only with him that Fatmagul continues her life. It is Kerim and the woman who raised him, Ebe Nine, that convince Fatmagul to continue her education that she had abandoned years ago and graduate from high school or even to go to a psychologist and speak for what happened to her. Finally, it is Kerim and Ebe Nine that defend Fatmagul against her sister in law Mukades and helps her to escape from the psychological tortures she imposed to her.

So Fatmagul, is supported by him in every step of her life, and what is gained from her (emancipation, justice, education, psychological stability etc.) is presented not only as an individual accomplishment but also as an accomplishment of Kerim.

Of course, the fact that women take pleasure from this serial does not mean that they enjoy watching violence against women or even that they accept the story as it is. We consider that the reception of the representations projected by this serial, by the public in Greece is also important in order to understand how women interpret the relations between men and women and more precisely the violence committed by men towards women.

3. The reception by the public in Greece

During our research, several aspects were pointed out. More precisely, among the 20 persons who had watched the serial 65% (13 persons) do not consider that Kerim is a rapist or that he has a part of responsibility to what have happened to Fatmagul. Only 7 persons (35%) consider that Kerim has a responsibility to what have happened to Fatmagul³.

However, many of those who agree with the fact that Kerim has his part of responsibility to the rape still do not classify him to the same category with the three other rapists. More precisely, some supported that he “had to do it” (participate to the rape) in order to be socially accepted by his friends and others that the fact that regretted for what he did and stood by the side of Fatmagul distinguishes him from the others. For some persons Kerim is also a victim of the three other men.

In fact, the acts conducted by Kerim in order to prove his love to Fatmagul, made him very likeable to the public. Consequently, Kerim is described by the public as a “correct” man that had all the characteristics that can make a woman to fall in love with him. His patience and his acts made him a hero to the eyes of the public.

However, oppositional decoding is minor but do exist. A 20% (4 persons) of the population that participated in our research considers unacceptable the fact that Fatmagul gets married with Kerim and declare that they would have preferred a different end.

Thus, quite surprisingly, the big majority of people (16 persons, 80%) that participated in our research declare that they consider this serial feminist and even revolutionary. The fact that Fatmagul find justice and becomes more dynamic and emancipated (even if she does not do this alone but through Kerim) is for the public the main reason to consider this story feminist⁴.

³ See Annex 3.

⁴ See Annex 4.

4. Conclusion

As each person interpret (decode) the message during the moment of consumption, then it is important not only to analyze the message itself but also the interpretation on behalf of the public. Consequently, for many women this serial defends women's rights and stands against any act of violence towards them. They give to this cultural product a feminist attitude neglecting however that the story is evolving in a patriarchic way ("yes a woman can be emancipated and vindicate her rights but only through a man"). Maybe this neglect is due to the fact that women themselves have interiorize the patriarchic values and maybe they consider them as something natural.

So, under a cover of a superficial feminist ideal this serial subconsciously plays with values and archetypes that contribute to the maintain of the dominant patriarchic society.

However, this does not mean that all women accept its content without questioning. What is important here is to point out the fact that women are critical concerning the cultural product that is proposed to them and they do their own interpretations regarding the serial in question. Either by recognizing the fact that this serial promotes patriarchic values or by considering that the serial in question promotes feminist ideals the important here is that every woman through her interpretation attempts to challenge the patriarchate.

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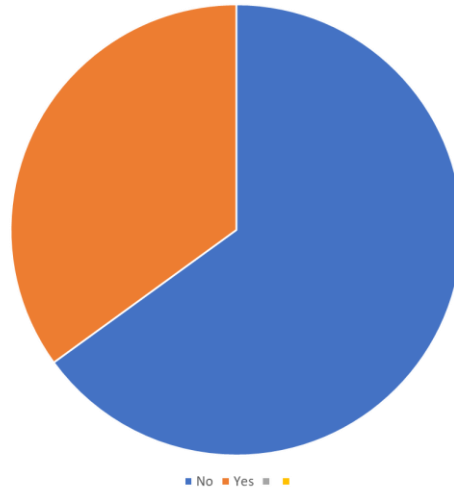
Annex 2

| | Name of the serial | Number of persons | % |
|-----|---|-------------------|-----|
| 1. | Fatmagul'un sucu ne? | 20 | 80% |
| 2. | Ezel | 19 | 76% |
| 3. | Ask-i-memnu (Πεφασμός) | 18 | 72% |
| 4. | Muhtesem Yuzgi (Σουλεϊμάν ο Μεγαλοπρεπής) | 17 | 68% |
| 5. | 1000 και 1 νύχτες | 16 | 64% |
| 6. | Sila | 14 | 56% |
| 7. | Karadayi | 13 | 52% |
| 8. | Karasevda | 12 | 48% |
| 9. | Asi | 10 | 40% |
| 10. | Διαμάντια και έρωτας | 8 | 32% |
| 11. | Karagul | 7 | 28% |
| 12. | Kismet | 7 | 28% |
| 13. | Τα σύνορα της αγάπης | 7 | 28% |
| 14. | Paramparca | 6 | 24% |
| 15. | Προδοσία | 5 | 20% |
| 16. | Poyraz Karayel | 5 | 20% |
| 16. | Son | 4 | 16% |
| 17. | 20 λεπτά | 4 | 16% |
| 18. | Kuzey Guney | 4 | 16% |
| 19. | Αιώνια αγάπη | 4 | 16% |
| 18. | Ένα αστέρι γεννιέται | 4 | 16% |
| 19. | Έρωτας και τιμωρία | 4 | 16% |
| 20. | Bahar | 3 | 12% |
| 21. | Το αγιάζι του έρωτα | 3 | 12% |
| 22. | Στα δίχτυα του πεπρωμένου | 2 | 8% |
| 23. | Εκδίκηση | 2 | 8% |
| 24. | Η βασίλισσα της νύχτας | 2 | 8% |
| 25. | Adini Feriha Koydum | 2 | 8% |
| 26. | Kosem | 2 | 8% |
| 27. | Bitmeyen Sarki | 2 | 8% |
| 28. | Παλίρροια | 2 | 8% |
| 29. | Gumus | 2 | 8% |
| 30. | Kiralik ask | 2 | 8% |
| 31. | Asmali Konak | 2 | 8% |
| 32. | Μουραίος Έρωτας | 1 | 4% |
| 33. | Ρώτα την αγάπη | 1 | 4% |
| 34. | Απαγορευμένη αγάπη | 1 | 4% |
| 35. | Να ήμουν ένα σύννεφο | 1 | 4% |
| 36. | Kiraz mevsimi | 1 | 4% |
| 37. | Fatih Harbiye | 1 | 4% |
| 38. | Cilek kokusu | 1 | 4% |
| 39. | Huzur sokagi | 1 | 4% |
| 40. | Hanim Koylu | 1 | 4% |
| 41. | Asla Vazgecmem | 1 | 4% |
| 42. | Χειμωνιάτικος ήλιος | 1 | 4% |
| 43. | Seref meselesi | 1 | 4% |
| 44. | Beni Affet | 1 | 4% |
| 45. | Επικίνδυνοι δρόμοι | 1 | 4% |
| 46. | Σιωπιλοί | 1 | 4% |
| 47. | Kavak yelleri | 1 | 4% |
| 48. | Bir Istanbul Masali | 1 | 4% |
| 49. | Iffet | 1 | 4% |
| 50. | Μενεξέ | 1 | 4% |

This table presents the distribution of the percentages concerning the viewing of Turkish serials by the public that participated in our research.

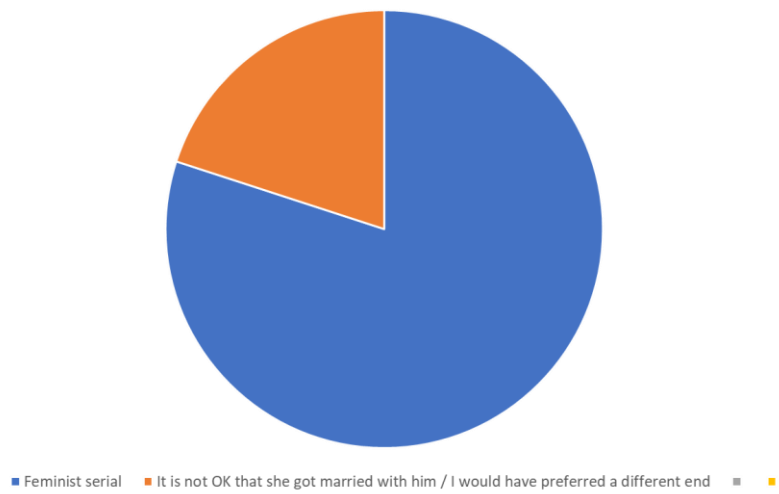
Annex 3

Is Kerim responsible ?



Annex 4

About the serial





Visual Narratives: Image and Consciousness of Social Reality

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Received 31 October 2017 ▪ Revised 20 November 2017 ▪ Accepted 22 November 2017

Abstract

This article concerns images that portray a social reality in relation to the ability that humans have to create narratives that are a configuration of the collective consciousness. According to arguments developed in the literature and broadcasted by the media, citizens' actions guard both the public space and the configuration of culture. The images associated with relevant issues determine the public's responses and give more power to public opinion. However, the results of innovation depend on the political will at any given time. According to Jürgen Habermas, the rationality of the discourse of decision makers guides the collective conscience through their communicative actions. In this sense, the message and its ideology can effect changes by capitalizing on belief in the narratives. Therefore, the main goal is to understand social reality in relation to the influence of visual narratives.

Keywords: illusion, determination, media, transformation, cultures.

1. Introduction

Cultures are a presence, an influence, and the heritage of humanity. This legacy can be universal or restricted to a small community. At the same time, a variation of cultures can be considered within the dynamic of a global metropolis, which maintains a part of its heritage together with a universal culture. The subsequent complexities of the development make possible the integration of individuals into their diverse cultures. This dynamic is influenced by the narratives through which the individual acquires a presence, because these narratives transmit tradition, education and knowledge of the language, history, art, and costumes. The process of acculturation through intellectual, ethical, and aesthetic development, whether among the nations or between different nationalities concentrated in the same country, results in a diversity of the cultures. A prominent characteristic of the results can be seen in the artistic practices of the present, on the works that remain in time, marking not only a cultural origin but also a process of identification and adaptation to other realities in time and space.

It is not always easy to distinguish the ideas of a necessary future from historical human achievements in the course of intellectual, ethical, and aesthetic development. The historical presence in the sense of human self-development is also an ongoing and connected process in global metropolises. Also, the metropolis imposes a rhythm on the world under the directives of its hegemonic powers, on their cultural productions, which impacts the progress and

the development of civilization. Undoubtedly, the conditions and contexts are necessary for interpretations and general laws of historical development.

- The primary goal is to analyze communicative actions and collective conscience through visual narratives.
- This leads to the understanding of the socio-historical influence and its political representations in art and literature.
- This is a way of analyzing media and consciousness as illusions.
- Think about artifices and inventions in visual culture.

The knowledge and experiences of each person with respect to the particular conditions of one's life – which shape one's subjectivity – present the “truth” as part of life, that is, as an interpreted form of the world, absorbed and shared in one's cultural milieu. There is an exchange of values in a continuously processed social relation, in which the individual has a partial view of the world. Each new message renews knowledge and experiences, and imparts new values. The message is generated for political and economic reasons, structuring the culture. Thus all aspects of culture can be seen as communication processes and acquired experience, while the new elements of invention and artifice acquire meaning through ideology. For Umberto Eco, ideology is a message that starts with a factual description and a testing of its theoretical justification, and is gradually adopted by society as an element of its code. As soon as the message is used as ideology, it becomes one of the worldviews that, as a “reality” shared by several individuals, is disseminated among a large proportion society, according to the material circumstances of life. Ideology, then, is seen as a motivating element of modern society and as an image of progress. This image convinces the investors and producers in the technology industry to sponsor the significant evolution of our imaginary world. The term “evolution” directs the meaning and the formation of the thought of humanity, which believes in the possibility of overcoming a state, in the sense of change as a latent desire for modernization.

Language, as a form of expression and narrative, is continually modified by the external world, which conditions the emergence of a set of statements that are formed by a set of signs that are made available to society. It is the individual in transformation with his techniques, obtaining tools, and, with his language, receiving symbolic value. It is the significance that qualifies a regime that leads to the illusion. That is one of the basic characteristics of the human being: the ability to formulate abstractions from everything in the world, in the search for a cause, or in the process of distinguishing truth and reality. Relative or absolute? So many other questions derive from abstraction in the constant search for answers that are always conditioned to a model, a representation to be understood.

The dichotomy of the imaginary worldview and the real world is imbued with all its positive and negative aspects. The constant creation, the “recreation”, through inventions and artifices, is the link in this current and there will always be a new message that will maintain the continuous relationship of our existence as a communication process throughout our lives and those of future generations. In short, the broad idea is not the infinity of “recreation” to be realized, but always the continuity of the production of our simulated and dissimulated messages. Such messages offer meaning to our ways of life; the growth of possibilities, which are summarized in a single sense, is not the argument, but the invention and the artifice. Moreover, many visual productions are created for the public that convey an imaginary universe and therefore represent the totality, such as environments, scenarios, and other fantasy worlds, as well as installations, works of art, sculptures, and monuments in the everyday reality of urban centers. Examples include interventions of virtual objects that can be introduced into real environments and “augmented reality”, which also provides the individual with the opportunity to handle these objects, enabling interaction with the environment. However, to be part of the real environment, virtual objects are made using engineering software and appropriate technological

devices for augmented reality. Although most of the devices used in a virtual reality environment can be used in augmented reality environments, there are cases in which some adaptations are necessary due to the differences between technological devices. The direct optical vision system uses glasses or helmets with lenses that allow for the direct reception of the actual image while enabling the projection of virtual images properly adjusted to the real scene.

It is also necessary to understand the process of creating products that are designed in an imaginary world that is different from the creative experience of the artist, intercalating fantasy and imagination to represent reality. One must also consider the invention of simulacra to feed the imagination through creativity, or even from science fiction, when designing an imaginary future. Perhaps it is the experience of new technologies that enables the simulation of the new experience, stimulating creative projects.

2. Idea, form, and self-consciousness

In the 1820s, modernization was changing daily life, especially in the most prominent cities of that period, when Hegel was studying the spirit of the times in Berlin, Vienna, and Paris. Such experience had a significant influence on his philosophical reflection on art in relation to the social context through which he perceived the tendencies of modern times and artistic production. Hegel perceived that the growing assertion of artistic freedom and the autonomy of aesthetics within art resulted in an unlimited autonomy of individual choices. Hegel's aesthetics are part of his philosophy of spirit (Houlgate, 2016), which is detailed in his work *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). In Hegel's philosophy of art, it comes to be valued according to its characteristics, in particular its form and content, and also specific criteria determined by the context, ideas, and place in history, in which art production is an attempt to reflect social and political reality. Following this line of thought, Stephen Houlgate (2016) explains: "[...] Hegel is well aware that art can perform various functions: it can teach, edify, provoke, adorn, and so on. His concern, however, is to identify art's proper and most distinctive function. This, he claims, is to give intuitive, sensuous expression to the freedom of spirit. The point of art, therefore, is not to be 'realistic' – to imitate or mirror the contingencies of everyday life – but to show us what divine and human *freedom* look like. Such sensuous expression of spiritual freedom is what Hegel calls the 'Ideal,' or true beauty".

The individual, through his reason (self-determination), acquires more freedom, that is, he is conscious of his autonomy over his decisions; it is the exercise of one's thoughts, of one's consciousness of life – spirit (*Geist*). One's subjectivity finds space to experience itself through language and thoughts while the person experiences his autonomy materializing. In art, this relation to the spirit – the Idea – concerns the content of art and its mode of presentation, which is formed materially. Thus, the balance between content and form, i.e., a synthesis achieved through a process of dialectical thinking, in which the spirit clarifies the confrontation between thesis and antithesis, is related to a moment in time and place of realization. For Hegel, the work of art reaches its highest level of achievement by the expression of the balance between content and form, technique and materials, in each epoch and state of consciousness of life, that is, the spirit of the time (*Zeitgeist*). In this realization, the artist's imagination exerts its potential and presents the characteristics of socio-historical influence and its artistic representations.

On the one hand, Hegel argues that Greek sculpture concretizes the highest level of evolution as pure beauty realizing its spiritual freedom as self-consciousness of life and, because of this, classical art has, until Hegel, inspired a large Western audience. On the other hand, Hegel's aesthetic is critiqued in Marx's work (Thom, 2014). With some subtleties to be considered, which shape another perception. Marx adequately demonstrated that the evolution of art does not depend on the consciousness of the spirit. For Marx, human evolution is primarily determined by material, social, and economic conditions. He pointed out that the ancient forms of artistic

expression linked to archaic societies still thrilled modern society in his day. However, this expression would be the product of education that would keep the aesthetic and cultural criteria preserved and transmitted by tradition. Whatever we perceive the reason to be for the fact that permanence could be attributed to these classical works throughout history, the fact is that such classical works can still evoke emotions. The themes in the ancient tragedies and also represented in sculptures are eternal, such as survival, fate, destiny, passion, despair, death, and love. All sentimental matters are timeless and trans-historical, and are detached from the material conditions of production and economic oppression. Even if these conditions are also responsible for our emotional states, there will always be an emotional state for any fundamental experience of human relations, regardless of the dominant material factors that might influence one in every season and place.

Only a small portion of Marx's theory (1867) is dedicated to the theme of art. Nevertheless, throughout the 20th century significant transformations occurred that were based on interpretations of Marx's work. His arguments about capitalism and the interpretation of it influenced a large part of the world's population and became political ideals, placing art in a position of submission to political ideologies as the consciousness of life. Consequently, a Marxist aesthetic was integrated into numerous theories that sustained the artistic world during the 20th century, whether its practitioners were for or against the dominant ideologies, and which established the relationship between art, society, and politics. Along the lines of a Marxist aesthetic, and following Hegelian thought, is the theory of Hungarian philosopher György Lukács (1885-1971), for whom art was a "reflection of reality", as he wrote in *History and Class Consciousness* (1923). This results from the interaction between humanity and nature, work, and society, which are essential elements of the act of creation. Thus the historic moment would have great importance not only at the time of creation but also in terms of the aesthetic conception of a work. Thus, Lukács considered art to be the most appropriate form of expression of a self-consciousness of humanity, or "self-consciousness of the human race". Lukács, however, was unaware of the artistic and political significance of modern art. Therefore he did not realize that the modernist movements, notwithstanding their formal, experimental characteristics, also sought, as he did, to bring art closer to reality, which it denounced and criticized. In other words, it increased sensitivity in order to perceive the entrance of the modern human into a disenchanted and inhuman world.

We try to understand the essential concepts and contexts that were important during the artistic or technical production. We are based, in a generalized way, from ancient Greece to the socio-historical direction of the West, in a universe of artistic achievements related to social reality. Thus, in a chronology of ruptures, retakes of values, movements, wars, revolutions, and innovations, we see humans imagining freedom and "happiness", and believing in the life of "truth" as the consciousness of human existence. However, to understand all interpretations is mainly to comprehend and accept that new interpretations are still possible and that the world is not another, but the same, in its constant evolution.

To understand the context of the arts and the ideological dynamics of images in relation to contemporary social reality, we can embrace a theory related to the mode of production exercised by a globalized society, such as in *Technology and science as ideology (Technik und Wissenschaft als Ideologie)* by Habermas (1968). Understanding society and also the nature of its actions is part of a complex process that includes the development of techniques, and the art of creating and producing. In the course of their history, literary and artistic achievements have transformed the way we understand them. Aside from the significance of metropolitan life, we analyze technical evolution and scientific status, and its contribution to raising art and its creators to a position of great importance. However, to the same degree, its trivialization in the context of subjective values – based on aesthetic judgments that are subject to polysemy – is, above all, in the face of an immense diversity of values, the orientation of artistic speculations that form the

collective consciousness. The transformation of reality in society, from ancient Greece to contemporary culture, offers us an image of an immense inventory of all the human achievements as the presence, influence, and heritage of humanity.

Therefore, in general, what constitutes the configuration of a contemporary image in its search for the consciousness of social reality is to understand that the dynamics of the global metropolises, in their process of transformation, always seeks to meet the needs of the *modus vivendi*, not only by the means mentioned before, which would lead to other reflections on the constant artistic movements. However, the modifications of the system and market, and the relations of production, new objects and services are, nevertheless, the consequence of globalization and standardization in the configuration of a single image of reality. Such an image is the representation of a standard, collective consciousness. Art is facing technological and scientific evolution in a scenario of contemporary universality that is not found only in social transformation, but especially in the environment. Despite the fact that language has evolved and arrived at the writing stage, the capacity for perfect communication is still lacking. If we consider the differences in intelligence, knowledge, and social domination, and especially the different languages, pictorial language continues to unify the communication of different cultures, accompanying the new forms of representation. The new technologies offer new possibilities, regardless of any similarity with the established image.

Still, under the effects of modernity, Pierre Francastel (1956) situates us in evolution using a temporal example of the rhythm of life that represents French society. He mentions that Victor Hugo, in 1850, said that the world traveled on a wagon and spoke French, and that, in 1950, the author himself said in his work that the world would fly by plane and would design and sculpt as in Paris. Today, however, we would say that the world has become deterritorialized and we cannot identify the time or even the space. Morin (2007) asks: "Where does the world go?" (*Où va le monde?*). Apparently, the aim of this is to configure the contemporary image in its visual narratives and the consciousness of social reality.

3. Illusion and consciousness

According to analytic philosophy, we are conditioned by the vicissitudes of language, tradition, and the history of Western thought. Situating ourselves in a socio-cultural system, therefore, is necessary in order to understand images as a means of communication. Likewise, idealists developed systems and theories to study the phenomena of consciousness – to learn about the apparent manifestations of the spirit – in terms of Hegel's approach to reality as a historical process. In Hegelian philosophy, the spirit is in a historical process, the purpose of which is development and evolution. Thus, we will approach the concept of collective consciousness in light of some of the observations of Habermas on contemporary contexts of development.

In his work *The structural transformation of the public sphere*, Habermas (1962) presents a discussion about the assumption that a society is developed by its common interests, through media, the judicial system, and the state's political power. The author discusses questions about civil rights relating to the liberty of expression, females' equal participation with men, and, finally, the appropriation of this space in common with other individuals for the possible involvement and achievement of all. By systematizing public dynamics in its complex grandeur, Habermas demonstrates the formation of a collective consciousness that results from rational agreement within social relations. Actions are performed in the public space and consensus is sought as an indication of success. Habermas presents a rational notion of social reality. He discusses the process of modern state development in relation to the private sphere when the latter becomes public, and in which public opinion builds the public sphere.

The greatest reference in the 18th century to a public and politicized life was the French Revolution, not only for France, but also for Germany, as confirmed by Habermas and also, of course, for the whole of Europe and a significant part of the world. Literature and the arts have come to be conceived as contributions to political discussions or allusions to political events. The greatest focus, however, is not on the aspects of urbanization or the ideologies of the generation that marked the cultural revolution, nor on the consequences of economic and social development. It is not even on the characterization of the process of transformation due to the emergence of new policies and commercial relations that guide the market system. Rather, the emphasis is on the analysis of the consolidation, by consensus, of the orientation and meaning of society, and in particular the influence from the 18th and 19th centuries, when literature became more important to the bourgeoisie, giving meaning to mass culture. Our illusion of reality is due to the influence exerted by art and literature, as well as by technological resources, which build the mass culture through the media. Accordingly, the public sphere has been configured by all these influences. Thus, society is conditioned to adapt to transformed models through a process that sustains itself, without significant risks and without considerable controversy. However, if the extremes were compared over time, the differences would be noticeable. Therefore, these differences bring changes independently of a desire to innovate. Thus, cultural transformations and models are both the results of decisions and due to a process of continuity of values through confirmation, i.e., the establishment of the consciousness of social reality. The importance of this process is not only its origin but also its implementation, with errors and corrections throughout the experience. Of course, for aggregation between individuals in social reality, life depends on ethics. Without them, life could not continue in society, decisions would not be the result of common agreements, and the models would not serve the common good. However, the question of innovation in this context seems unlikely. Man would find innovation only in the breaking of their relationships within models, resulting in paradigm changes. It is understood that models, as with all presupposed relationships, are pre-established with the intention of concretizing a “standard assumption of relations” so that the public space forms the collective consciousness. However, there is always room for improvement.

Society is continuing to be presented with a growth of media power, while the search for a balance between the liberty of expression and equality of rights remains. Such a significant complexity of needs in a contemporary democracy can also be seen in competitive challenges regarding a common agreement, resulting in a collective consciousness. There are many institutions, communities, and associations nowadays that have interests in common with many others. Among the many interests, the most detached are cultural events. For this reason, the state has been subsidizing arts and educational initiatives such as museum exhibitions, concerts, festivals, etc., instead of the previous subversive achievements that prevailed in modernity. Moreover, there is a relationship of exchange; that is, a public relationship with common goals and an agreement to attend to the models of a society's interests (Habermas, 1981).

Among the achievements and appropriation of space, the image is constructed by the collective consciousness. Besides, a danger that threatens human existence comes in the shape of collective consciousness and draws up the argument of necessity, and also stimulates the search for solutions through new creations and discoveries. The merits of the discoveries, also considered innovations, can be found in the evolution of technology. However, society proposes a new scenario for the solutions of a fourth generation, which is already claiming its rights, such as the controversial nanotechnology.

According to *The principles of philosophy* of Descartes (1640), consciousness in its operation is conditioned to error, mistake, and illusion. Therefore, the Cartesian doubt will be related to the fact that consciousness affirms itself when it finds itself in situations of mistakes and errors; that is, it is always seeking an affirmation to deal with everything that is not confirmed as true. This possibility of truth as theory, based on the thought of Descartes and Spinoza, is

understood as an affirmation of freedom via knowledge of the truth. In this way, we consider free will to be a power of freedom, which would not be possible without knowledge of the decision, facilitating a consideration of the criteria of truth and error in the practical affirmation, especially by technique and science. The phenomenon of illusion is characteristic of consciousness, which, according to Spinoza, is no more than imagination, which, for the consciousness to be free, would be the consciousness that there is no reality.

Thus the truth is the subject that seeks the understanding of this determinism, which would lead to the discovery of a new freedom, which would be the understanding of what determines us. According to Spinoza, it is a necessity of our nature to know what our essence is and what determines us, whether internal or external causes. For him these are limitations that cause a human being to make mistakes. Therefore, for a consciousness of freedom, it is necessary to understand the conditions of human nature. Thus, truth consists of being free, knowing oneself, and knowing the outer things that are in contact with the truth, with the truth offering the power to be free. It is this freedom that is defined by the understanding of knowledge; it is the relationship between the understanding and the will. This relation is seen by Descartes, and also, represented by Spinoza. This knowledge consists of the understanding of the primary questions. In the thought of Descartes, this means that to be free is to know the truth. It shows us that free will is an illusion; it is a freedom that is no longer a choice. We are encouraged to choose that which seems to be the truth and the best; this stimulus that we have for the truth is due to the inclination we have for the truth because we would have no other thing.

The moment that one views freedom as an illusion, one would be in true freedom; in short, we must know freedom, not truth. The consciousness of the experience of freedom places one in a condition of recognition, then of a consciousness of the possibility of choosing one option or another, and one will wonder about the arbitration and reality of this arbitration, i.e., in general, all the difficulty of the subject is a paradox. Thus, we will try to overcome the contradiction, and thus the paradox. The experience that I have with my freedom is an experience of consciousness, and consciousness is an illusory phenomenon by which the fact of choice is consciousness, according to Spinoza. Thus, the fact of choosing, of having the experience of consciousness, is already being free.

However, the freedom we approach in the arts is one in which the artist is conscious and in full control of the boundaries and rules of creating. It is an achievement within the limits of creation, regardless of the historical context and, of course, the idea of freedom bound to that moment. The artist recognizes the limits that exist in any realization, that is, the problems that seek solutions, thus requiring that the artist can always solve them. However, through creativity, we can well understand that artistic practice is always linked to the technique and methodology of achievement of the form, the rules of art, which necessitates idealizing freedom. Creations formed without any rules or limits were never an accomplishment. Somehow they always existed to be overcome or transgressed, only for other rules or limits to be imposed – for either subjective or objective reasons – as a manifestation of freedom as well as the autonomy of the artists. Therefore, rules are compatible with freedom, confirming that freedom is exercised through the power of rules because there are edicts that arise from a subjective need to confront some problems or difficulties. Ultimately, the needs to be met require the will to perform.

The freedom lies in the creation of artwork, not in the sense of liberty as a theme, but in terms of the rules within the meaning of autonomy and the means by which we produce for a determined purpose. Thus, we find ourselves, throughout history, in the Aristotelian sense, with work that is not created from anything, but from something, with the determined purpose of forming creation. Then we perceive that we have two needs for freedom: one is subjective, an internal necessity in the sense of liberty idealized in the Platonic sense; and another more objective, which is a need imposed by the medium, by the socio-cultural context, in the meaning of a poetic freedom influenced by the ideas of Aristotle. On the whole, there are many theories

about consciousness to explain the human condition in the relation to oneself and one's ambience. Different ways of thought have been developed about this phenomenon and its diversity of features. As Robert Van Gulick (2017) puts it, "each in their own way aims respectively to explain the physical, neural, cognitive, functional, representational, and higher-order aspects of consciousness".

4. The artifices of innovation and collective consciousness

Now, in the 21st century, humanity presents itself in its cultural diversity as a planetary reality under the tutelage of technology and communication. It is in continuity, however, with the need for the creation of illusion, which so many other artistic achievements have made possible. The notion that illusion is important is a matter of divided opinion. However, we do not know in experience the importance of not having it. We need only think of Plato's ideas, evaluating art in relation to the truth and Plato's influence on the Western mindset. However, artists always form a reality. Even the art would offer that illusion.

In the current planetary crisis, Edgar Morin says that many people might believe that if they lose their illusions, they will lose everything; however, this is a mistake. In Morin's view, we would attain a huge achievement if we lost our mistakes, that is, the consciousness necessary to decide on our future. Therefore, in the Cartesian sense, knowledge through errors and corrections are possibilities of the consciousness as illusions.

However, Morin thinks about the loss of faith in the context of the idea of progress, and consequently that the loss of this principle would also be progress, by discovering that progress is a myth. Therefore, social progress is a system of values that operates through instability and insecurity and seeks security by setting optimistic forecasts. We can see this dynamic in social, cultural, economic, and political contexts. Furthermore, the image of success consists of innovation as self-consciousness. Thus, it is possible for the individual to select information, but the media continues to have the capacity to construct a social reality.

The media and social networks converge to report on recent and significant events, which comprise a global social reality. Moreover, news and images present illusions as reality through this technological convergence. The users of communication technologies, which are always in gradual evolution, seek not only technical perfection or the overcoming of humans by the human, but also identification and signification as a form of better interaction and the illusion of reality. This sense of overcoming of humans by the human means a consciousness of perfection as the illusion.

However, this question remains: How can one innovate? (Wagner, 2014) In recent times, innovation has been considered extremely important in all fields of human activity. Innovation is considered a way to add value, qualifying events when they present something new. Any actions that have the characteristic of novelty can be evaluated as innovative. Nowadays, the search for innovation gives rise to a series of discussions, in general because creativity is an illusion. This understanding can often be used as a rule, hence building the self-consciousness.

The etymological meaning of the term innovation is from late Middle English: specifically, the Latin "*innovatio*", from the verb "*innovare*", used since the 18th century to indicate the sense of renewing. In its wide employment throughout history, innovation has referred to configurations of contents. Thus, the definitions found in the Oxford Dictionaries have the following meanings: firstly, the action or process of innovating; secondly, a new method, idea, product, etc.

On the whole, it is the ability to renew, considering the development of techniques and technological evolution in the broad sense of the historical notion of innovation. In short, innovation itself is a method or object that depends on invention, on ideas. However, today, innovation is mainly a means or a process of commercial exploitation fundamental to economic growth. These conditions of innovation are linked to technological activities, conceptions, development, and the management of achievements according to the circumstances of the political, economic and social systems.

Although these “innovative” activities are elementary and come from a long list of achievements, we realize the situation between reality and imagination, leading us to the universe of images in building the visual culture. Moreover, the representations of a system, due to the influence of the cultural production, promote the innovation. A new form of standardized consumption, namely self-consciousness that is aimed at globalization, seeks fidelity to the demand for consumption habits that are surrounded by the configurations of the images.

The images transmit illusion as simulacra, creating the stimuli of consumption. There is a concern to ensure production for large-scale consumption and future generations. In this case, it is clear that immediate investments must be secured. Moreover, a market plan ensures the future of the public in today’s production. The artifices of the images and their aesthetic values ideologize universal themes, and their rationale is based on the realization of collective consciousness and thus social importance. The notion of visual narratives – images – analyzing the consumer society is the invention, containing in it the reasons for the contemporary social reality.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by Postdoctoral Research Fellowship PNP/CAPEL.

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