

New literature

Jostein Gripsrud:

The Dynasty Years. Hollywood

Comedia/Routledge, London, 1995 (Television and Critical Media Studies)

It is not often that academic monographs manage to elicit smiles and laughter from the reader. With Jostein Gripsrud's book such amusing moments are not rare, as he draws unexpected parallels between cultural phenomena, or exposes the absurdity of academic opponents' viewpoints. One of the really precious moments is when JG reflects on the problems Stanley Fish would have had illustrating his theory of readers' power, if the names on the classroom blackboard that his students (mis-)took for a 17th century religious poem (and which according to Fish could have consisted of the names of the faculty of any college) had not been Jacobs-Rosenbaum, Levin, Thorne, Hayes and Ohman, but Gentikow, Gripsrud, Hausken, Johansen, Kolbjørnsen, and Larsen (12)!

The book is a tremendous achievement. It sets out to accomplish a number of complex and challenging objectives and succeeds in most of them. The central question is to explain "what is the meaning of *Dynasty*?", understood as a complex phenomenon with economic, professional, textual, cultural, social and political dimensions. In other words, the study is 'holistic', its theorizing and data analysis spanning over both production, text, and audiences.

Echoing the author's own words, the book is then about the *Dynasty* phenomenon in the US and in Norway, interpreted as a symptom of the internationalization of culture; commercialization of the media; changing relations between elite and popular culture; and the weakening of traditional institutions of popular enlightenment, notably public service television.

It is a declared aim of the book to contribute to the development of media and cultural studies by progressing through a constant dialogue of theoretical positions and empirical analyses. In its cultural politics it strives (without entirely succeeding) to balance – in a kind of ambivalence that has become more and more necessary in order to grasp complex cultural processes – between a rejuvenated Frankfurt School critical perspective on the one hand, and the populist position of more recent postmodernist and/or reception-oriented positions on the other.

In the Introduction, "Signalling a Position", JG presents himself as a scholar who wishes to focus on the media texts while also recognizing the importance of undertaking empirical studies of audiences, or in other words – ambivalently – combining a measure of 'determinism' with a measure of 'agency'.

Chapter One, "Hollywood Speaks", deals with the determining constraints and human agents of the cultural industry production process. Thoroughly researched in a vast number of publications and personal interviews, it reads almost like a classic 'whodunnit' story (Who invented Alexis, and why?). JG meticulously interrogates all 'suspects', from producer to writer and actor, pointing out both the role of production routines and the scope for individual creativity. Surprising to some, perhaps, one conclusion is that in bringing "a new meta-textual quality to prime-time drama" *Dynasty* produced something which "to me (...) will pass as 'creativity'" (61). On the whole, however, JG clearly leans toward a more Frankfurt-oriented view that sees "little room for personal, creative, or ideologically deviant manoeuvres" (28) in the economic and professional standardized routines of cultural production.

In addition to dealing with determinations within cultural production, JG in this chapter also addresses the question of determination between production and consumption. Continuing on the – necessary – note of ambivalence on this issue, he notes how, even when 'production comes first', considerations of production and consumption are inextricably intertwined, as producers are in important ways in tune with the target audiences, conduct official and unofficial pretests, etc. Before going on to analyze audiences later in the book, JG thus seeks to "establish the plausibility of significant links between the process of production and the process of reception" (51).

The chapter is symptomatic of the way Gripsrud works throughout the book, insisting on a mutual feedback between theoretical and empirical work: First some theorizing about cultural production; then some empirical research that may illuminate the issue; finally returning to theory in order to possibly revise our understanding of authorship and subjectivity.

In Chapter 2, "The Cultural Debate of the Ages", we move from Hollywood to Norway, in order to witness JG's exploration of the '*Dynasty* event' in a country in which, due to specific historical, political and cultural circumstances, the impor-

tation of the serial was disruptively controversial, and had lasting effects not only on media policy, but on realignments in the cultural realm as a whole. The chapter thus demonstrates "how it was possible for a Hollywood television serial to become both a sign of a historical shift in broadcasting and cultural traditions and also an instrument for such change" (72). The scenario analyzed here includes Norwegian political, cultural and religious history; the nationally specific tradition of single-channel public service broadcasting; the role of the press for public debate; and the dilemmas of intellectuals faced with the seemingly unstoppable commercialization and entrenchment of cultural values.

The chapter's theoretical outlook is, again, and necessarily, ambivalent: On the one hand political economy factors (technology, capital, the state) are seen as prime movers in bringing about cultural change. However, although as a good Adorno-Habermasian he is not entirely pleased with the superficiality of the voice of the people as represented by the tabloid press, JG ascribes the decisive influence in getting *Dynasty* on to Norwegian screens to popular agency, articulated through newspaper debates:

Though it may be hard to accept in some circles, it seems one has to conclude that the 'commercialization' of both television and print media actually, in this case, contributed to a form of cultural democratization. (...) The commodified forms of (pesudo-)debate formed a pressure which could not be neglected. (98)

Chapter 3, "Dimensions of Domestic Reception", presents a wealth of empirical data about the Norwegian *Dynasty* audience, which are situated in a range of important theoretical debates. The most interesting of these from my point of view deals with the constitution of the analytical object when analyzing a tv serial consisting of hundreds of episodes. What *Dynasty* comes to mean for audiences depends not only on the 'primary' serial visual, verbal, and musical text itself, but also on a number of intertextual dimensions: 'secondary' (print media coverage), 'tertiary' (viewers' verbal interaction about the serial), and even 'quadriary' (viewers' intertextual repertoire in general). JG argues convincingly, and ambivalently, that it is necessary to maintain "the centrality of the text proper (...) while acknowledging and assigning vital importance to the masses of surrounding texts" (130). The data analyzed in this chapter all come from 'non- primary' sources, leaving the analysis of the *Dynasty* text itself for chapter 4.

Insisting on the need for methodological pluralism Gripsrud collected data through surveys, newspaper coverage of *Dynasty*, and 'fan mail' sent from viewers to the Norwegian broadcaster. Through the survey data we are enlightened about the demographic composition of the audience; *Dynasty* as a topic in everyday life; viewers' attitudes, critical or pleasurable, to the serial; and viewers' perceptions of the serial's proximity to real life. JG makes the most of the survey approach, offering subtle interpretations of the statistical data, while also recognizing its limitations.

Newspaper coverage of and debates about *Dynasty* in the newspapers are found to have mainly influenced the public debate with distanced (critical or camp) readings, representing

'pure taste', whereas magazine coverage adopted an uncritical, emotional type of involvement typical of 'barbaric taste'.

Finally, JG analyzes 144 letters mostly from lower-class female viewers to the broadcaster, stressing the experienced contrast between *Dynasty* and all other (male-oriented) tv genres then available to them, and the sporadic glimpses of gendered programme pleasures the letters provide.

Concluding on these types of audience data JG states that "nothing encountered in the analysis of reception, except the refusal to watch, seriously contradicts or otherwise challenges the ideas and intentions of the producers of the show. (...) No convincingly 'subversive' or 'aberrant' readings were discovered" (160). This conclusion is presented (in italics!) as a devastating blow to the claims of some reception researchers, who (like John Fiske, whose work is unfortunately discussed as representative of 'reception research') have indulged in resistance raptures.

However, this conclusion is more revealing of the limitations of JG's audience data than of previous reception research: The survey merely provides insights into viewers' attitudes, not their contextualized experiences of programme content, and, by his own admission, nor do the letters "provide direct insight into the way people experienced *Dynasty*" (145). It is of course possible that Norwegian viewers produce no 'aberrant' readings; but it is the greatest shortcoming of the book that it presents no real reception data that could demonstrate this.

Chapter 4, "Reconsidering (Prime-Time) Soap Opera", offers a detailed discussion of the genre of soap opera and its various sub-genres, focusing on the dilemma of feminist scholars wanting to point out both how soap operas contribute to the patriarchal repression of women, and how "the never-ending soap opera opposes the dominant 'masculine' narrative form" (170).

Other issues dealt with are the meaning of serial repetition and a long overdue serious and competent consideration of the rhetoric of music in film and television. This leads on to a brilliant thematic analysis of the *Dynasty* title sequence which sees Bill Conti's serial theme as one of the elements that neutralize the serial's potential polysemy.

The general drift of chapter 4 is, unfortunately, away from ambivalence. Instead, as if the author is ultimately unable to live with the balanced ambivalences proposed in the first chapters, the analyses of this and the following chapters seem to be increasingly founded on economic and textual perspectives that favour a determinist and functionalist understanding of popular culture.

The relation between the commodity form and cultural response is presented as direct: Since soap opera is "an aesthetic form which, as a matter of historical fact, was invented to promote the sale of consumer goods and consumerist conformism" (183), it is a "cultural production which, particularly in the US tv institution, openly serves the at least slightly dubious main function of producing happy, obedient consumers" (179). Perhaps US consumers are happy and obedient (or maybe just obedient...?), but is this a result of their enjoyment of soaps?

More specifically, *Dynasty* in this perspective serves "to reduce what was once a vision of the human condition to a set of

audio-visual and narrative devices which arouse titillations and emotions which are not tied to anagnorisis, recognition of, insights into, or 'knowledge' about the conditions of human existence in today's world" (183). This sweeping denial of any possible insight-giving potential in soap opera is pursued further in the following chapter's textual analysis.

Chapter 5, "The Not So 'Polysemic' Dynasty Text", undertakes an impressive, multi-faceted critical analysis of *Dynasty*, on the basis of 8 episodes (described in the 30-page appendix) from the 'never-ending' serial that all belong to what JG calls "Dynasty as we know it", i.e. the time after the first 13 episodes, the point at which Alexis was introduced in the serial universe.

The analysis presents a theoretically anchored abundance of original and witty perspectives, as it deals with the serial's patriarchal core (the centrality of Blake); narrative time and narrative desire; the dominance of plots over characters; textual invitations to involvement and distancing: schizophrenic character identities, and conflictual characterrelations.

The latter are explained through a useful, and humorous, metaphor comparing them to "the hierarchical, upside-down 'tree' structure of IBM computer directories. Blake is the 'C' prompt, and not because his name is Carrington" (217).

Perhaps at this point I ought to inform the reader that the very title of chapter 5 (The Not So 'Polysemic' Dynasty Text), and consequently many of its analytical observations, expresses a perspective on meaning with which I fundamentally disagree. As someone who has analyzed the reception of *Dynasty* in a social-semiotic framework, it is my view that 'polysemic' is not something a text 'is', but something that any text may become for its readers. Therefore, the question of polysemy cannot be resolved by textual analysis, however sensitive. It is at least possible that a reception study would have revealed a not so 'monosemic' *Dynasty* text.

Naturally in a linguistically and culturally homogeneous society like Norway, a serial like *Dynasty* is bound to trigger many shared meanings in the audience, but it is equally likely that there are going to be differences, idiosyncratic as well as culturally structured ones. Maybe, unlike JG, many viewers find the minimal narrative resolutions of conflicts (which JG acknowledges, but then dismisses as "not worth mentioning" (222) quite satisfactory? Maybe some viewers are able to not just alternate between involved and distanced reading positions (232), but to occupy both simultaneously? Maybe not all viewers would go along with the, in my view somewhat strained, interpretation that practically all character relationships (including Jeff/Alexis, Blake/Krystle, Jeff/Kirby, p.234ff.) are not just promiscuous, but of an imaginary "incestuous" kind?

What we get here is only the hegemonic part of the story, in which no visual, verbal, or musical detail is accidental, but all part of a successful, carefully orchestrated strategy: producers' intentions find expression in the text, and are in turn realized by the audience, showing that Hollywood's hegemony works, bringing across "the show's Reaganite political message" (233). There are no fissures, no surprises, no real change in the text. Maybe so, but textual interpretation remains unable to say whether members of the audience may have changed, or may be in the process of changing (even "incrementally" as Radway

concludes in her reception analysis of romance novels), for instance in their perception of gender roles (Krystle, Fallon, Alexis), homosexuality (Steven), big business (Blake, Alexis, Adam), or ethnicity (as when Blake discovers that Dominique is his black half-sister).

In other words, the presence or absence of 'lasting changes' in the textual universe tells us nothing about changes, fleeting or lasting, in the audience universe.

The concluding Chapter 6, "The Social Meanings of Soap Opera and the Dynasty Event", attempts to put *Dynasty* and soap opera in general in cultural, social and historical perspective. Among other things JG discusses whether soap operas can be seen as expressing a particular 'women's time'. While arguing against any kind of essentialism in conceptions of gender, he on the whole supports this idea, finding that a significant portion of the genre's critical potential resides in this textual counter-tendency to dominant 'male' forms of linear time.

The conclusion also asks whether *Dynasty* can be seen as a modern form of 'melodrama', i.e. a popular emotional and didactic drama about the compelling consequences of the struggle between good and evil? The answer is negative, because "melodrama depends upon closure" in order to produce its symbols and moral lessons; "Never-ending serials will (...) always disrupt any equilibrium, any conclusion". According to JG this "logically implies that no moral lessons can emerge – the never-ending serial can never make a definitive 'statement' on anything" (246).

This point is developed into a full-fledged essentialism of te Ending in the statement that "as long as an ending is there, the text invites sense-making reflection" (249). So no textual ending, no audience reflection! This is a bold statement coming from someone whose data as previously noted do not provide direct insight into the way people experience *Dynasty*. The implications of this view are staggering: For instance, if you watch 71 episodes of a soap before you realize that it is never-ending, then presumably you will be engaging in "sense-making reflection" until that moment? From then onwards you will not? And maybe the reflections already engaged in will suddenly be eradicated, since "the function of a story's end is precisely to provide a point from which the preceding parts of it take on meaning" (248)?

The argument adds an element of terminological equivocation when it goes on to claim that American daytime soap operas (because of their everyday realism and synchronicity with daily life) are like journalism, since they portray "'parallel worlds' which each individual episode reports on. It thus in fact fundamentally questions their status as 'narratives' in the ordinary sense of the word", i.e. they become "information, not narratives" (250). However, this view "does not mean that they do not contain 'stories'. They do, just like journalism and real life" (252). Not 'narratives', but still 'stories' – I must confess I am lost.

The purpose of making this argument, it turns out, is that JG wishes to restore a measure of ambivalence, as it were, by lending a bit of respectability to the soap genre, comparing it to a socially useful "journalistic running commentary on social life, social conflict, social change (...)" (251). But since soap opera's "running commentary on social life" is presented in the

never-ending generic format, it must follow logically from the preceding argument about endings that the reflective potential of its commentary is totally lame?

Consequently the reader (this reader!) is left with the cultural-political message that in a democratic society soap opera should be tolerated in the tv schedule of public service broadcasters, not because of any positive contribution to popular reflection, but simply because dominated social groups have a right to programming that is in tune with their barbaric taste.

On the last pages of the book JG worries that readers may have found his relatively detailed discussion "a bit tedious" (259). I can assure the hopefully many readers of the book that I had no tedious moments when reading it. On the contrary, it is a stimulating and provocative book, good both to think with and against, although its last chapters turn out to be less pluralistic in approach than the first chapters seemed to promise. However, it is still an impressive contribution to contemporary media and cultural studies, and because of its holistic analysis of *Dynasty's* cultural circuits it will have a lasting influence on the future development of the field. That is also why I have discussed it at such length.

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Eli Skogerbø:

Privatising the Public Interest. Conflicts and Compromises in Norwegian Media Politics 1980-1993.

University of Oslo. Department of Media and Communication. IMK Report No. 20, Oslo 1996 (375 pp.)

Eli Skogerbø's book *Privatising the Public Interest*, is a dr. polit. dissertation successfully defended at University of Oslo in May 1996. The dissertation contains extensive theoretical reflections and historical analyses of recent Norwegian media policy.

In her establishing shot Skogerbø contends that between 1980 and 1993 the Norwegian media landscape went through large changes – changes that have influenced political priorities especially within the Labour Party's position on the press subsidy system, public service and regulations with a shift from emphasising the so-called positive rights to a varied menu of media content to the negatively defined rights of the individual's freedom of expression and choice. At this early stage one wonders whether the changes surfaced out the blue air or if they were not the result of political decisions and processes themselves.

The focal point in the thesis is the changes especially regarding the press and local radio and television but in a broader sense also the attitudes to and arguments for and against regulation of the media and the market forces – a core issue not only in Norwegian media policy but in most European countries as well during the period.

In analysing and discussing the development three objectives are presented: to discuss how specific obligations of the media towards the public have been justified; with the background in these justifications to evaluate the development of political objectives and regulations; and finally to compare the outcoming structural results of recent Norwegian media policy and its main objectives and goals. These three objectives materialise as three tracks in the thesis.

Before embarking on the mentioned tracks Skogerbø in the first part (chapters 1 and 2) outlines the structure and logic of the thesis and discusses a series of fundamental theoretical and methodological categories and concepts.

Regarding the definitions of categories brief discussions and definitions in the first chapter on mass, media and democracy and interrelation between them are presented.

This part pre-echoes the following theoretical investigations, which therefore will be dealt with later, but one important statement needs to be emphasised at this point, namely the chosen definition of the media:

Here, the concept is restricted to the media of public communication, that is, to the media in their capacity of being public institutions for communication and information.
(p.7).

By choosing this point of departure the thesis places itself within the tradition of analysing and understanding the media as part of the political sphere and democratic processes and consequently primarily understands the audience as more or less rational, political citizens. By choosing this definition the

analyses of the theoretical background for the policy development and the evaluation of its results when implemented risk the danger of being circular or even tautological in the sense that the merits and justifications of recent media policy are analysed within the very logic of the theoretical concepts with the same limitations – and one could add, as time goes by at least, the same blindspots regarding the societal functions of the mass media and their heterogeneous use values for the receivers or users. It thus could be argued that the adopted concept of democracy and the role of the media is to a certain extent a static or ahistoric measure and accordingly not sufficiently encompassing the dynamics and development of democracy and the various and changing needs and attitudes of people understood as both 'citizens' and 'consumers' and how they are best catered for, let alone the profound changes in the structure and rampant proliferation of the mass media during the recent decades and the possible theoretical ramifications.

Methodologically Skogerbø, in chapter 2, discusses the differences between normative and positive approaches by drawing upon *Hume* (ought and is), *Weber's* work on objectivity and *Bjørn Erik Rasch's* discussions on positive and normative analyses and positive and normative theory related to the core question of the purpose or rather *knowledge interest*. To cut this part short Skogerbø states that she consciously places values and value judgements at the centre of the analysis (and) thereby placing (herself) within the realm of a normative (evaluating), as opposed to positive (explaining) analysis.

This approach is adopted in order to fulfill the objectives of analysing the policy development and the outcome of this. Now and again it is emphasised that the thesis is delimited to analysing and evaluating the *structural* issues and not media performance, e.g. the development of journalism and programme formats or content as such. Obviously this delimitation has its problems as it excludes the possibility of substantiating the role and effect of the media and the possible merits or shortcomings of the operationalisation of media policy. That is, how it materialises as media products.

By excluding the content, the danger is that the media are left as black boxes, though it must be admitted that including content would have been quite difficult as valid and extensive data on the matter hardly exist, a fact that indicates the marginality of content and programming analyses in media research. Skogerbø, thus, is not the only one to blame.

In the first track, tracing and analysing theories of democracy, Skogerbø emphasises the liberty of expression and the liberty of the press, both understood as negatively defined rights, as two fundamental preconditions for establishing democratically organised societies. With ample critical distance she goes through the early, more or less explicitly religiously founded, writings of *Milton* and *Locke* and *Mill's* more secular or logic arguments and preoccupation with the right of the individual as opposed to both the state and the majority. The major observation at this early stage of defining democracy is the lack of distinction between the liberty of expression and the liberty of the press. The missing distinction is ascribed to the historic context, whereas later a distinction between the two becomes particularly important as the liberty of expression-position justifies regulations and obligations to secure the rights

of the individual, whereas the liberty of the press-position as a consequence includes property rights and editorial autonomy.

In the following chapter (4) Skogerbø takes us through more recent theories of and reflections on democracy, communicative rights and justifications for regulations and obligations in media policy. Focus here is what Skogerbø interprets as a shift towards emphasising *the citizen and citizens' rights* (positively defined), and even more importantly that this shift is primarily observed within the political left tradition in the theoretical struggle for justifying media regulations and restrictions in order to defend citizen's or civil rights especially regarding the public service area. The very precise, detailed and critical investigation into current theories and positions includes the confrontation between *Dewey* and *Lippmann* in the United States and recent Western European works of *Garnham*, *Blumler*, *Curran* and *Keane* – and of course *Habermas*, whose *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* from 1962 has had immense impact on media studies on the European continent and recently, when translated into English, also among anglo-american scholars. Habermas' ongoing project is illustrated by including his work *Faktizität und Geltung* (1993), where his earlier, perhaps idealistic positions are modified although still emphasising the importance of the public sphere as a space for public deliberation and discourse.

With the risk to watering this very excellent chapter down too much, one observation is that the notion of the citizen is profoundly important in the described works and even more so the distinction between people as citizens and as consumers and the attached freedom rights. Following this regulations and restrictions in the media field in order to secure the rights of people as citizens are justified. Or as stated regarding the habermasian tradition:

Habermas provides a compelling argument for claiming that there must exist media for the public communication that have obligations towards the public, not only towards the market. Consequently there must also exist criteria on which to justify media policies that are directed at maintaining these obligations. (p.109).

And even more operational:

The only existing regulatory models that have endorsed citizens, that is, people in their capacity of being citizens with explicit rights to information and communications resources, are the public broadcasting and telecommunications institutions in Western Europe, that is, strictly regulated public institutions. (p. 111).

Skogerbø points to the fact, though, that public service is a rather tricky or ill-defined term. In the concluding remarks and referring for instance to feminist criticism the latter quotation is modified in the sense that the public service broadcasting systems 'as we know them' might not be the only solution. What this solution might be is not elaborated on here, and the mentioned authors (Granham, Blumler etc.) are not of much help, as Skogerbø correctly rejects them as

...none of them are more than suggestive when it comes to defining exactly what this need or right consists of, and even more critical, what regulations that can or should be used to secure that these rights are catered to. (p. 120).

The fifth chapter deals with the so-called radical alternative. The chapter focuses on research conducted during the last ten years with local or community radio and television as the empirical field. From the outset the concept of participation played an important role in promoting these new media as a way to decentralise, de-monopolise and democratise the media structure.

The chapter, not surprisingly, takes us back to the early 1930s when *Brecht* suggested that sound radio given the right societal circumstances had profound democratic, emancipatory and even revolutionary potentials if given in the hands of the people and to the early 1970s when *Hans Magnus Enzensberger*, inspired by the emergence of portable video equipment and cheap radio transmitters, repeated the potentials of the electronic media in distinguishing between repressive and emancipatory media set-ups.

The advent of community radio and television understood as non-professional and non-commercial facilities paved the way for considerations on access and participation and the belief that these new outlets would turn out to be vehicles for alternative voices and points of view hitherto suppressed by the hegemony of the public service monopolies and commercial media companies.

It is a well-known fact that the development turned out slightly different than the forecasts suggested or hoped for.

Skogerbø concludes that the development led to a replacement of the radical participatory model in favour of a model of a representative communicative democracy. The empirical development where the radical alternative vanished into a marginal phenomenon among the proliferation of commercially and mainstream oriented stations is unquestionable, but hardly surprising. The major problem in this chapter is that it is limited to very few references within this specific field and that more general theories on participatory democracy are not included. It could be argued that the chosen references are not at all theories but a mixture of empirical observations and analysis and loyal or perhaps even naive hopes or dreams shared with the practitioners. It also seems to be a bit out of proportion that the primary source on the claimed theoretical shift to a representative communicative democracy model is a conference paper by *Karol Jakubowicz* in 1988.

The second track, primarily on Norwegian media policy *development* in the ten years period, is introduced by a brief chapter (six) on the international development of technology and policy with a natural emphasis on the European scene.

In describing the development towards the proliferation of internationally distributed channels one could have expected a more elaborate analysis of the powers behind this development and its market and economic logic. Even more so as it is correctly stated that this development has influenced national media policy, a formulation which comes close to being an understatement. For instance one lacks a description of the struggle between Intelsat and Eutelsat in the beginning of the 1980s and the interdependence between telecommunications policy and planning and media policy exemplified by the fact that Eutelsat in the early 1980s decided to use its communication satellite transponders for distributing television due to what was estimated to be temporary overcapacity – and in downright

conflict with the delicate compromises on allocation of DBS-frequencies reached between the European countries in 1977.

If this empirical line had been followed it would have become much more clear how European Union initiatives such as the Television Directive of 1989 more or less could be described as post-festum actions primarily adapting regulations to already existing realities.

Nevertheless Skogerbø correctly observes how the political winds changed during the period in favour of liberalising and privatising the electronic media hand in hand with the issuing of an array of regulatory initiatives.

In chapter 7 the changes in Norwegian media policy are analysed centered on the press subsidy system, the introduction of local radio and television and consequently the lifting of the NRK monopoly, and finally the establishing of the second national television channel.

The objective of the chapter combined with the following chapter 8 is to identify the objectives for the press and broadcasting policies promoted by shifting governments, to map and explain the variation of the objectives and the transition of objectives and justifications for different types of regulations – and finally to evaluate the goals and objectives in relation to the normative positions dealt with in the previous chapters.

The sources used to analyse the development are mainly official documents such as committee reports, governmental white papers and actual decisions.

The first of these, and thus setting the scene, is a 1983 report on Mass Media and media policy by a committee appointed in 1977 with the aim of describing the media landscape and the effects of the media, to forecast the development and to propose possible political initiatives. The report stresses four major functions of the media: diversity of information, enlightenment, the role as the fourth estate and finally to have an integrative effect on societal conflicts and differences. The report had little political effect though, as many of the proposals did not match the taste of the government, which in a white paper one year later stressed the importance of protecting the liberty of expression as the basic and fundamental value, thus emphasising the negative rights.

In Norway a press subsidy system was introduced in 1969 to avoid the closing of daily or weekly newspapers, especially the so-called second papers on local markets. The system was worked out primarily by representatives from the press itself, and only the Conservatives voted against the system based on the argument that subsidies would distort competition. Until the mid 80s the rationale of the system was to maintain local competition between party related newspapers. But when a revision of the system was proposed by the non-socialist government, consensus was broken as the argument now was to maintain a diversified national press structure. This reflected the fact that the subsidy system had not prevented concentration as well as relations to the parties had been loosened in favour of journalistic professionalisation.

In 1993 the shift of focus or arguments for maintaining the press subsidy system was, according to Skogerbø, further – or perhaps finally – de-ideologised. In its white paper from that year the Labour government emphasises four objectives or

goals for the system: to secure high readership, to promote issuing of local newspapers where there are sufficiently large markets, secure national quality papers and competition between papers in as many localities as possible. Skogerbø observes that the original and central argument – diversity and competition in communities – is now infringed to but one objective by the same party, which earlier promoted this as *the* raison être of the subsidy system. The question is, of course, whether it is correct to say, that the policy objectives lack ideological justification, even though, admittedly, the focus has changed or has been broadened and adapted to realities. But after all, it is a political position still in favour of modifying the logic of the market, but the possible distinction between political positions and ideology does not become clear.

Whether the claimed lack of ideological justification refers to the lack of a consistent and static concept is hard to tell, but on the other hand it might be too much to expect from politicians of today, even more so as Skogerbø rightly observed certain inconsistencies in the early philosophical writings 200 years ago.

Local radio and television was introduced by the non-socialist government in the early 1980s as part of a more general media policy programme by the Conservative party. In its paper of 1980 the NRK monopoly was for the first time explicitly questioned and seen as restricting pluralism and business and technologically out of date, a fact that forced the Labour party to present a more elaborate defense for the monopoly with point of departure in a citizens' rights argument. So, whereas the conservatives positioned themselves on favouring liberalisation in order to extend freedom of choice for the consumers, the Labour Party took point of departure in the citizen perspective. Thus the political configuration emphasised the traditional dichotomy between market and consumers and regulations and citizens – a dichotomy pointed at several times in the thesis, but not sufficiently and open-mindedly scrutinised.

When proposing local radio and television a series of objectives were announced, which could hardly be rejected by other parties: after all, who could vote against decentralisation, democratisation, participation, access and liberty of expression? In Skogerbø's analysis the arguments can be seen as considerate political salesmanship, but on the other hand it was also a two-edged sword, as all arguments could later be used when the Labour party later proposed restrictions in order avoid (in vain though) commercialisation and to secure local autonomy.

The development of local radio and television is described structured around the notion of privatisation defined as the

...transference of responsibility from the public to the private sector regarding the regulation, financing and production of services (p. 233)

– not to be understood as an overnight decision but a gradual development from the point of no return when local radio and television was introduced, in the first phase administratively, in the second due to a formal change in legislation – still as an experiment though, with several extension until 1988. Skogerbø describes this phase as a field trial of the market potentials of the new media – neglecting the important fact that advertising was not allowed until the Labour party suddenly changed

its position and proposed that advertising was introduced in the local media.

The tendency of privatisation was fully accomplished when the decision to establish a privately owned and solely advertising financed second national television channel was reached, although the company is, to some extent at least, considered to be a public service provider due to the obligations to deliver a universal service for both minorities and the majority. Thus, in both cases, the instruments available to regulate the broadcasting media became weaker in favour of the logic of the market including the imbedded tendency of concentration of ownership. Skogerbø writes:

...a development that is the least desirable judged from a citizenship perspective (p. 258)

– all through the thesis an unquestioned dogma – one wonders why. Still she maintains in the conclusion of chapter 8 that

... the public's right to information and a diverse programme content has been toned down in favour of increased emphasis on the value of liberty of expression and freedom of choice in the form of diversity of channels. (p. 258)

And she continues:

...all aspects of broadcasting have a private actor/(and)/ privatisation in terms of regulatory instruments is so extensive that there are few instruments left to restrict ownership, cross ownership and secure a diverse programme menu in the 'new' and redefined public service channels. (...). However, the removal of the broadcasting monopoly, in itself an opening for new voices, actors and interests to the means of communication, represents a numerical extension of freedom of choice and expression, an observation that has been used to justify further liberalisation. (p. 260f.).

One fact mentioned, but skipped in the quotation, is the not so insignificant reality that NRK is still with us. The term "the removal of the monopoly" might thus be a bit misleading – nothing has *disappeared*, but more has appeared – the possible consequences for the old public service company and the future results of the generally market driven development notwithstanding, of course. One wonders if that is so bad.

In the last chapter (9) before concluding in chapter 10 the structural characteristics of the Norwegian media structure and its development are illustrated based upon different statistical data.

Regarding the press it is obvious that the subsidy system has not prevented concentration and cross-ownership. On the other hand, it could be suggested that the system has had a positive effect on maintaining a high number of papers, whereas a decrease has occurred in the other Scandinavian countries. Whereas readership has increased in Norway the opposite is the case in the other countries. One could be tempted to suggest that Norwegians like newspapers more than their neighbours and in fact *that* is why Norway has that many papers and not because of the subsidy system.

All in all the combination of the structural development and the watering down of the justifications for maintaining the press subsidy system may in the long run, according to Skogerbø, reduce the legitimacy of the system.

Finally regarding local radio and television. It is a well known fact that during the 80s Norwegian policy in this field was not, what would have been only logic, a both-and policy but rather a neither-nor policy – or with *Svennik Høyer's* phrase a decade of "tragedy and disaster". The disaster especially hit the commercially oriented part of the stations as also recent investigations into the fragility of station economy has proved. Although administration has been liberal and for instance allowing the Danish owned Aller to play an important and perhaps operatively controlling role on many radio stations this segment can only be described as a mere crisis.

The crisis was not complete, though. According to the data provided the total numbers of local radio stations only decreased from 458 in 1989 to 416 in 1993. And further it is concluded that diversity as defined by the type of license holders remained high as did the survival of less general stations outside big city areas. Also among local television the picture is showing a rather stable situation.

The chapter, which is characterised by lack of more detailed statistical data and descriptions on the different types of stations as to hours of transmission, sharing of transmitters, programming profile etc., concludes that keeping local radio and television non-commercial has not been accomplished – a rather logic development since advertising was introduced in 1987. On the other hand, as already mentioned, when advertising was introduced many sceptics feared that the chips were really down and that commercialism and centralisation would hit the fan.

According to the data presented, the development turned out more differentiated. Or in other words:

...the combination of very liberal licensing practices that aimed at obtaining quantitative, rather than qualitative, diversity, with a privatisation of the responsibilities for financing the activities, had to produce problems. In this perspective, the degree of stability and diversity that could be observed until 1993 may be regarded as more surprising than the problems. (p. 312) .

The last chapter winds up concluding that the observed theoretical convergence around citizenship and representation has shown its parallel in policy discourse and arguments, though the changes have not been dramatic.

Regarding the press policy, according to Skogerbø the objective of political diversity as a justification for the subsidy system was replaced by vaguely and pragmatically formulated objectives making it more vulnerable than if for instance a cultural diversity goal had been chosen. At this point the possible consequences of a qualitatively defined selective subsidy system are unfortunately not elaborated on.

As regards the broadcasting sector, Skogerbø maintains that basically the objectives have survived, whereas operationalisation has changed in favour of privatisation and consequently with still less possibilities for regulation and sanctions.

Skogerbø obviously is not satisfied with this development and its future prospects, and after having discussed the pros and cons related to the citizenship argument and the freedom of expression argument, she ends up by listen three different models for future regulatory systems, or more modestly put with her own words

... sketch several alternative ways to justify public regulations in the 'information society' (p. 322),

although the term 'information society' is never defined nor dealt with otherwise.

The models are presented briefly: *one*: is to maintain, somehow, the existing tradition of public service institutions; *two*: the install a division between commercial and non-commercial segments, and *three*: to support based on values, rights and types of media production. All three models have their weaknesses as clearly stated, and no final recommendation is provided. But as this thesis is not a policy white paper, one could not expect that anyway.

It should be emphasised that the thesis contains a lot more space time has allowed concentrating on, and that the more complex and insightful discussions contained in the work has not been given full credit. Despite the critical remarks it should be stated that the thesis has a high academic standard and successfully pursues its goals.

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Alf Linderman:

The Reception of Religious Television. Social Semeiology Applied to an Empirical Case Study

Department of Theology, University of Uppsala, 1995 (Doctoral dissertation)

The study of religion and of the media have taken interesting turns in recent years. In both fields, interest has shifted away from some received approaches toward a focus on popular practice. For religion scholarship, this has meant an openness to vernacular and informal modes of meaning and spirituality, the so-called "new paradigm" approaches detailed in an important article by Stephen Warner (1993). For media scholarship, this has meant an openness to understanding modes of experience beyond the rational "effects" models. Media audiences are not always actively engaged in information-seeking, for example. Sometimes they are looking to popular culture for things that might originally have been provided by formal religion.

Media studies have traditionally had little to say about this possibility, concentrating attention to religion in studies of formally religious media such as televangelism or religion journalism. Alf Linderman demonstrates that such an approach to religion in the media has been too narrow.

But his work is far more significant for the fact that he argues that to adequately account for religious meaning-making in the media age, new theoretical and methodological tools are necessary. In the process, he presents a systematic and detailed consideration of a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches. The result is a cross-disciplinary synthesis which is highly suggested, and which will no doubt prove to be germinal of further work by Linderman and others and for studies well beyond the confines of "the religious."

Linderman's argument begins on sturdy ground. Believing, along with Berger and Luckman, that reality is socially-constructed, he moves quickly to an assessment of the instrumentality most relevant to such construction in modernity, the question of signs. Along with others such as Eco, he assumes that signs have some autonomy, and that a science of signs is possible and is socially-mediated.

The central question raised by such an approach is obviously that of the determinism of these signs and sign-systems. Where is the location of symbolic production? Is it internal or external to the individual? Thus, the issue is the determination versus the agency of symbolic production. Linderman resolves these and other questions through a construct he calls "social semeiology", an approach which integrates Saussurean and Peircean semiotics with the symbolic interactionism of George Herbert Mead.

In the process of constructing his argument, Linderman contributes a very helpful turn in ongoing debates in the field over the appropriation of the various sciences of signs into the study of the media (Jensen, 1991; Fiske, 1991; Newcomb, 1991). The problem with many conventional readings, Linderman (and Jensen) agree, is the relative de-emphasis in many

approaches, particularly those drawn from Saussure, on the social context of symbolic practice. His label, social semeiology, is intended to be more inclusive than others' and to focus on the autonomy of the receiver or interpreter of signs. In the simplest terms, it is an elaboration of Peirce more than of Saussure, and describes how Peirce's sign-referent-interpretant triads can be understood and described as dynamic, not static or linear.

This approach necessarily binds symbolic reception from the world of sign systems into the formation and development of the self. Under Mead's symbolic interactionism, the "I" becomes the "me" by taking on board the socially-defined meanings and understandings of the larger world, "the individual internalizes the perspectives of the social whole," as Linderman puts it. By suggesting that symbolic practice and social development can be so closely linked theoretically, he is thus at some great distance from traditional or "received" understandings of the social significance of the media and popular culture. These latter approaches have tended to assume, in the first instance, a clear demarcation between the "authentic" and "natural" realm of psycho-social development and the "inauthentic," and "artificial" realm of modern cultural artifacts.

Linderman then proceeds to an elaborated model for meaning which accounts for 1) texts; 2) individually actualized meaning; and 3) internal and external contexts of meaning, including discourses, genres, and repertoires. In the end, he suggests that the power in textual consumption lies with the socially-embedded individual, not with the text, thus unequivocally addressing that major question. At the same time, his model allows for innovation and change. Meanings expected as well as social contexts lived can be sources of either stability or change, under appropriate conditions.

The empirical core of this study is the question of the religious use of television, and it is addressed through a thorough and nuanced study of this genre and of a specific case. In a comprehensive review of the history of religious broadcasting in Sweden and the United States, Linderman is able to draw attention to the relative position of "religion" (formal religious institutions) and "the media" as guarantors of transcendence and meaning in contemporary life in each country. In both contexts, practice has been typified by a process of "media adaptation" away from support of church life. At the same time, a clear institutional relationship between the media and religion persists.

This then sets the context for the reception case study, that of a fascinating para-religious quasi-documentary called *The Other South Africa*. While not an example of formal "religious broadcasting", this program resides within the context of religious-symbolic media practices which have gone before. Clearly designed as a sort of "Christian travelogue" of South Africa under Apartheid, it was produced in the mid-1980s as a vehicle for increasing both missionary and pecuniary zeal among American Evangelicals. It was apparently distributed by both Evangelical ministries and South African travel officials, including South African Airways.

The Other South Africa thus has a status which made it particularly useful for analysis of the social, historical, and

individual contexts of meaning reception. It was not really a religious television program. It was not really a travelogue. Its equivocal genre enabled Linderman (and other of his colleagues) to use it more heuristically than might have been possible with a different kind of text. Because of its obvious political and social implications, it further allowed Linderman to address a wider range of symbolic issues than might have been possible otherwise.

Reception interviews were conducted with both Evangelical and Non-Evangelical University students in the United States, and with a small sample of Swedish informants. In general, this analysis revealed that three types of symbolic meanings were active in the program (as revealed through statistical analyses and subsequently probed in the field data): 1) Its religious authenticity; 2) Its status as a "documentary" (that is, how and in what ways it looked "true"); and 3) Its inferred or stated commercial aspirations.

But what was found about the way these audiences related to this text was less important to Linderman's study than the way it was found. That is, a social-semantic analysis of the interviews revealed the complexity of the process of meaning-making, along lines broadly predicted by the project's theoretical arguments. Along each of the major dimensions, for example, interesting and illuminating examples of meaning construction were found. In another analysis, Linderman probed "atypical" responses to the program (i.e., American Evangelicals who found the program not to be credible, and Non-Evangelicals who found it credible, for example). These cases served perhaps better than others to illustrate how the various symbolic capacities of the program were negotiated and used by these viewers.

As in any study influenced by qualitative and reception traditions, some question about generalizability always lurks. Based on his findings, Linderman is able to make a compelling argument that the quality of the data, and the depth and sophistication of theoretical judgment, can compensate for crude representativeness. The question should always be, "do we know more than we did before we read this study?" In Linderman's case, the answer is clearly "yes." In the end, the question is always one of what is gained and what is lost by a given method, rather than some absolute standard anyway. Two theoretical issues do persist throughout this study and the larger emerging tradition of which it is a part. The first is the question of essentialism. That is, it is natural to ask of such phenomena "what is it that makes this essentially a 'religious' act or practice?" This is related to the larger question of the seriousness or triviality of popular practice when compared to traditionally understood religion. To formalist or essentialist voices, most of whom seem to base their arguments on some derivative of Durkheim and the notion that there are both "substantive" and "functional" ways of understanding religious practice (thus relegating the popular to the latter category) Linderman's argument is that in contemporary religion, this distinction is under scrutiny. Late modern or post-modern religion (if you will) in the west is functional around the individual self, admittedly, but this does not necessarily mean the disintegration of the substantive inscription of the religious on the social as seen by Durkheim.

But the question of the nature of underlying social relations still obtains. Are there to be things called "social structures" if the essential modes of social life are individual practices of symbolic construction? If so, how are they systematic? Further consideration is obviously needed, a project to which Linderman's work contributes much.

A second issue implied by Linderman's approach is the problem of "meaning" itself. Put simply, it is the question of the status of the process of individual meaning construction. That is, how do we know that individual meaning construction even takes place? Wuthnow (1987) has argued that it is not possible, in fact, to know "meaning." We don't have the meanings themselves, just the discourses about them. In the same vein, we might ask if the "I" (contributed by Mead to Linderman's argument) can ever be known. Meanings are always derived from an interacting set of directions and contexts, as Linderman has demonstrated. What we don't know is whether there are autonomous "I's" and autonomous meanings involved in the process.

A way around this latter dilemma is, in fact, implied by Linderman's approach. An anthropological turn would ask, instead of "what is the meaning?" "WHERE is the meaning?" Linderman's study provides ample evidence that meanings are lodged in an interplay of individual, cultural, social, and historical symbolic relations.

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Brett Dellinger:

Finnish Views of CNN Television News: A Critical Cross-Cultural Analysis of the American Commercial Discourse Style

University of Vaasa, 1995 (Doctoral Dissertation)

In Europe and through much of the world, the reception of pervasive imported television news services has led to wide speculation and consternation, but a dearth of scholarly analysis. Brett Dellinger's contribution is useful and laudable because it provides far deeper insights into American forms of television news than appear in most critiques of Americanization, while offering an innovative reception analysis of an culturally appropriate audience. Finns are a suitable target of analysis due to their considerable English language skills contrasting with their substantial differences in culture and broadcast traditions from America or Britain. The Finnish audience, notes Dellinger, does not accept the American style implicitly as news. But the author clearly fears they may come to, thereby affecting the very structure of the "language of public discourse" in Finland and throughout Europe.

While essentially valuable, Dellinger's project is diminished by some conceptual and organizational difficulties and an exposition of his research with Finnish subject audiences which is less than lucid. Dellinger's first chapter discusses the nature of public discourse in Finland, focusing on the evening news programs of Yleisradio (YLE), Finland's public broadcasting service. The chapter concludes with mention of the increasing penetration of Time Warner's (the new owner of Turner Broadcasting) Cable News Network (CNN) in Europe. Chapter two builds the case for the present study by addressing weaknesses in traditional content analysis, and their failure to discover deeper levels of meaning creation. He also introduces differences in the American news style, here defining an important component of the American news discourse called "cueing", although the reason for discussing this aspect of the American style here is unclear.

Chapters three and four present a cogent summation of historical factors leading to the development of American television news, dating back more than a century. This is an eloquent effort to more accurately position this broadcast style historically, for it is not a modern development at all. The deep roots of commercialism and hucksterism in American broadcasting, paralleling governmental rejection of public service broadcasting, are demonstrated. American television news is shown to have been born into a family of salesmen, not journalists.

American public broadcasting, which so far has generally avoided the style Dellinger identifies, is truly the more modern approach in the U.S., the author argues in footnote (fn. 5, p. 69). Practices which have become standardized in the industry, since the days of the first newscasts, were originated as means of holding an audience from commercial to commercial, program to program. Chapter four raises the difficult question of "control" of the news, as exercised by journalists, government, media owners, and advertisers.

Chapter five takes us finally to the realm of theory, paying respectful visits to Hall, Gramsci, Barthes, and Fiske. Dellin-

ger not only makes a strong case for the ideological hegemony of cultural products, but lays bare the linguistic roots of the branch of communications scholarship grounding his project. He skillfully builds his case against the conglomerate dominated, commercially oriented American TV news industry to a point when, just as the reader prepares to toss the glowing image of Bernard Shaw and Peter Jennings out the window in a desperate act of self defence (à la Jerry Mander's Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television), we are confronted by Fiske's active audience, the possibility that we make our meanings, we find our own pleasures, in the morass delivered to us from New York, Hollywood, and Atlanta. But Dellinger wisely counsels that,

To completely embrace Fiske's approach, it seems, would place the concerned critic in danger of over-emphasizing radical rhetorical analysis while under-emphasizing the actual operations of the capitalist economy and the culture over which it exercises hegemony. (146)

Having posed this challenge, the author answers it by introducing one methodological approach taken in this project: Critical Discourse Analysis, a method which "enables the media critic to 'denaturalize,' or expose the 'taken-for-grantedness' of ideological messages..." (148). The method, according to Dellinger, "offers the opportunity to adopt a social perspective in the cross-cultural study of media texts" (149). Dellinger draws from the pioneering discourse analysis of Teun Van Dijk to demonstrate ideological components of news discourse. A contrast is drawn between implicit and explicit forms of discourse.

Dellinger then moves to the core of his analysis, the lacuna method of cross-cultural analysis as advanced by Hartmut Schroeder of Vaasa University, building on Russian ethnopsycholinguistics. "Lacuna," explains Dellinger, "refers to perceived or unperceived 'gaps' in cross-cultural texts (in which there is a nonequivalent lexis) or other poorly understood cultural items" (160).

Chapter six details the methodology and presents findings from the study. Five minutes of a CNN International (or CNNI) broadcast are analyzed discursively. A Finnish interpretation summarizing the comments of Dellinger's Turku University student informants, and his own extensive commentary is then offered for nine specific elements of this brief audio-visual text.

Chapter seven returns to a discussion of framing in television news, and development of "formula" newscasts. Oddly, it draws from one news consultant's 1971 format recommendations (fn. 47, p. 213). American TV news is a stagnant genre, but not that stagnant. Dellinger's intent here is to introduce a second cross-cultural analysis of CNN, this of CNN's Gulf War coverage. Examples of news framing which neglect the Iraqi point of view, allude to a terrorist threat, dehumanize Iraqis, overestimate Iraqi strength, and self-promote CNN are discursively analyzed.

The dissertation's final chapter addresses concision, a term proffered by Noam Chomsky (perhaps to explain why he can't get a hearing on American television). The term refers to the need, in American commercial television news, to express an idea within a very limited time frame, since every second of air-

time carries a high dollar value. To offer but one example of Dellinger's cross-cultural phenomena, American television's concision is unaccepting of silence, whereas to a Finn, silence evokes positive connotations (275). Dellinger attempts to construct a cross-cultural definition of concision, using Finnish perspectives on the CNN program *Crossfire*. Dellinger's too brief conclusion offers little summation, but only the vague hope that emerging information technologies will make redundant our concerns about an inadequate, centrally controlled mass media.

As the one consistent object of comparison (since several variants of CNN are used) the analysis presented of YLE is too limited. Discursive analysis is provided of a portion of a single newscast, one Dellinger admits to be unusual. This gives the reader little faith in the representativeness of his sample of Finnish news, upon which much of the rest of the project rests. Suggesting in his introduction that "the written word" is the current style of discourse preferred by European public service broadcasters sets up the contrast with American TV, while ignoring its internal contradiction. YLE has a spoken (not written) and visual style of news presentation of its own, albeit a different one from American broadcasters. Their writers write for television, not print, only following different rules from American writers.

Chapter two is a curious collection of feeble justifications for this very justifiable project. The methodological criticism of content analysis as aid to understanding of cross-cultural communications might have been persuasive had Dellinger not chosen to critique two highly ideological and methodologically unsound studies to make his case. These are a 1983 study of CNN by the conservative Media Institute, and Mickiewicz' 1988 analysis of Soviet television, *Split Signals: Television and Politics in the Soviet Union*.

As a comparison of styles and as an historical analysis of American television news, this project excels. But Dellinger's method ultimately reveals little, for it is bogged down by Dellinger's restatement of aspects of the American style, as though his systematized viewing of YLE and CNN texts by a subject audience served more to reinforce his own complaints about American broadcasting than to expose the lacuna he seeks. Dellinger's informants are rarely heard – no extended transcription of interviews is provided. His analysis of subject's responses to CNN lack credibility since few examples of informant responses are offered. Dellinger's analysis of Gulf War coverage adds little to the massive literature already addressing the subject, a literature substantially ignored here.

While Dellinger's method offers many advantages – a credible exposition of lacuna in this situation would contribute massively to the understanding of cross-cultural mass communications – this research is replete with enough inconsistencies and biases to make the positivist cringe. (Dellinger seems to trust, for example, that his informants report only on the specific YLE and CNN newscasts they have been shown, and disregard, at his request, any other TV news they may have seen).

The choice of *Crossfire* is unfortunate, for it is a uniquely conservative and deliberately "no-holds-barred" interview program on the fringes of mainstream national news. The very issue being debated in Dellinger's sample *Crossfire*, sexual harassment in the workplace – virtually a non-issue in Finland,

itself represents a lacuna to the Finnish audience. Given that, another program addressing a more culturally relevant topic might have led to more insightful data on the cross-cultural reception of this form of American commercial discourse style.

Dellinger's descriptions of CNN are often problematic. His first chapter concludes with an introduction of the CNN International phenomena, but this early appraisal of the CNN "formula" is misleading. CNN's success was more the result of prevailing trends in media economics than, as Dellinger suggests, the decisions to shun trade unions and buy in dramatic, if unimportant, pictures. These were the inclinations of most American broadcasters during CNN's inception.

More significantly, this project never fully addresses CNN International as an object of analysis independent of CNN. Is there a difference? Anyone who has watched CNN inside and outside of the U.S. would likely think so. And Turner Broadcasting certainly considers its international product to be unique. Turner adds and differentiates products so rapidly in the global and domestic marketplace that it would be impossible for any scholar to understand them fully without comprehensive primary research involving some combination of direct contact with CNN and content analysis of individual news products. Dellinger's failure to do so embrates his project.

CNN International, the only service of Turner Broadcasting currently seen in Europe, is a peculiar amalgamation of programs and production practices borrowed from CNN's domestic services, from American cablecasters and broadcasters, from other global broadcasters, and some practices uniquely created for this service. It is far from a clone of CNN's main domestic service, which is itself a unique creation, in many respects very different from other popular television news services in the U.S. Not until page 167 does the author inform us that his main CNN sample is actually a broadcast of CNN *Headline News* (one of CNN's domestic services) on CNNI. So various unique Turner products are viewed by the Finnish sample: *Headline News*, *Crossfire*, and an example of CNNI war coverage, but a typical portion of the routine CNNI coverage a Finn is most likely to see is never used.

Even if a typical CNNI text were used here, the choice of this channel remains problematic. It is probably reasonable to say that CNN International in Finland is the best locally available example of the American commercial discourse style Dellinger devotes most of the dissertation to identifying, but it is vital that his reader understands it is but one very bastardized and particularly internationalized example, far from representative of American television news.

The culturally specific particularities of the reception of global media products is of considerable interest, but such products must be properly analyzed on their own terms, and not unquestioningly identified with the nation and/or culture native to their ownership. Should Rupert Murdoch implement a global news network of his own, as he seems to be doing, what national or cultural identity shall we assign it? Would it be Australian, American, or English? It would more likely be a uniquely international product, produced by and for a variety of cultures, and produced in a great many places. CNNI is such a text now, even if its producers remain predominantly American and borrow heavily from American broadcast traditions.

Dellinger might have benefited from a closer collaboration with one of the major communications research centers in Finland: Tampere or Helsinki. One indication of this is either his ignorance of or inappropriate choice to ignore other significant Scandinavian studies addressing similar issues. Especially noteworthy is Ritva Levo-Henriksson's largely quantitative cross-cultural project, *Eyes upon Wings: Culture in Finnish and US Television News*. Levo-Henriksson's set out to reveal more about American and Finnish culture than about aspects of reception, but nonetheless addresses many of the same issues as Dellinger. Her project was started in 1987 and published by YLE in 1994, so should have been accessible. The recent work of Ingunn Hagen of the University of Bergen and Stig Hjarvard of the University of Copenhagen might also have been employed to further probe the use of television news in the broader Scandinavian and European contexts.

As "... an attempt to structure and explain Finnish audience perception of American commercial news broadcasts" (164), Dellinger's project succeeds. He is to be commended for theorizing the existence of an American commercial discourse style in the cross-cultural context, and proposing innovative methodological mechanisms for its analysis, even if he fails to demonstrate their efficacy here. His is a thoughtful review of the literature on objectivity, news as propaganda, and control of news, and an intelligent, if conspicuously left leaning history of American broadcast news. Dellinger's writing is always clear and crisp and perhaps in consideration of his largely Nordic audience, is not inundated with English jargon. The dissertation provides excellent footnotes throughout.

Dellinger makes an important start at understanding cultural impacts of imported television news, a phenomena too long ignored or glossed over by scholars. But just as he wisely discards empirical analytic paradigms, he must also discard the outdated media imperialism paradigm which lurks in his project's recesses. Global conglomerates create global products for an imaginary global audience. What does this mean to the very real consumers of these alien genres? As the global broadcasters grow, Dellinger's will surely not be the last word on this topic.

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