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Czech and Slovak Journal of Humanities (CSJH) is a peer-reviewed scholarly journal established in 2011 at Palacký University, one of the oldest Central European universities. The journal is dedicated to various important fields of the humanities: history, philosophy, the visual arts, theatre & film (including TV and radio), music, and cultural anthropology, with interdisciplinary themes among these fields.

The journal is intended as a dialogue between the finest Czech and Slovak research and research abroad and as a forum where innovative approaches and current topics are discussed, as well as local themes and previously neglected research. *CSJH* is open to Czech, Slovak and international scholars and guarantees a fair and accurate reviewing process. In order to reach an international readership, *CSJH* publishes the majority of texts in English. Regular scholarly papers are particularly welcome, as well as book or conference reviews, notices, research projects reports and other kinds of academic chronicle.

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Contents

Editorial.....	5
----------------	---

Radio Studies

Overcoming Fear of Death in the Czech Radio Documentary.....	8
--	---

Gabriela Míšková

The Performative Mode and Its Ethical Aspects in Authorial Radio Documentaries	23
--	----

Andrea Hanáčková

Television Studies

From Interactivity to Freakshow: Ethical Aspects of New Television Trends from the Perspective of Democratic Competence	44
--	----

Jan Motal

Speech Patterns in Czech TV News Programmes.....	54
--	----

Michaela Kopečková

Is Kafka a Greater Czech Than Freud?

The Global TV Format 100 Great Britons in Czech Translation (A Case Study).....	68
---	----

Martin Štoll

Contemporary Trends in Teen TV.....	88
-------------------------------------	----

Jana Jedličková

Book reviews

Audionarratology: Interfaces of Sound and Narrative	102
---	-----

Review by Zuzana Řezníčková

Cable Guys: Television and Masculinities in the 21st Century.....	106
---	-----

Review by Jana Jedličková

Television Audiences Across the World: Deconstructing the Ratings Machine.....	108
--	-----

Review by Jana Jedličková

Contemporary Television Series: Narrative Structures and Audience Perception	110
--	-----

Review by Jana Jedličková

The CIA in Hollywood: How the Agency Shapes Film and Television (Revised and Updated Edition).....	112
---	-----

Review by Milan Hain

The Future of TV and Radio Studies (Poll) |

Prof. Jonathan Bignell, University of Reading, UK.....	116
Kevin Brew, RTÉ Radio 1, Ireland.....	116
Prof. Christopher Cwynar, Defiance College, USA	117
Prof. John Hartley, Curtin University, Australia	118
<i>Communicative Causation and Mediated Subjectivity</i>	
Prof. Janet McCabe, Birkbeck, University of London, UK	120
<i>Getting Connected</i>	
Prof. Toby Miller, University of California, Riverside, USA.....	122
<i>Vibrant and Threatened</i>	

Editorial

The Department of Theater and Film Studies of Palacký University Olomouc will offer a new specialization for its prospective students, TV and Radio Studies, beginning in September 2017. Palacký University will become one of the first academic institutions in Central Europe to include this field of study in its portfolio. Our plan is to embrace all areas of TV and Radio Studies which will be taught in close contact with our colleagues specializing in film and theater. We are primarily interested in media narratology, audience research, LGBTQ communities and their representation across media, radio documentary and feature and all types of fictional programs. The students will gain an acquaintance not only with the theory and history of both media as specific art forms and industrial practices, but will also have the opportunity to produce their own programs for the university radio channel or participate in the internationally-recognized AFO Festival of Science Documentary Films. Graduates will find themselves well-prepared for work in media, TV and radio production/distribution companies, archives, publishing houses, festivals of TV and radio and other institutions associated with culture and communication. Under the leadership of professors Jakub Korda and Andrea Hanáčková, the new field of study promises to provide a vibrant and stimulating environment for all interested in contemporary media and their role in society.

This issue of the *Czech and Slovak Journal of Humanities* was conceived as a showcase of contemporary TV and Radio Studies scholarship in the Czech Republic. It features six essays by both experienced researchers and young authors at the beginning of their academic careers. Taken as a whole, these texts point out the diversity of topics and approaches circulating within the fields of TV and Radio Studies at present. Gabriela Míšková, a graduate student from Charles University in Prague, examines the representation of death and dying in contemporary Czech radio, drawing attention to the fact that the subject has been pushed out of the public debate. Andrea Hanáčková of Palacký University Olomouc combines Bill Nichols' classification of the film documentary and the autoethnographic method to describe the ethical aspects of the radio documentary, focusing on her own work on the celebrated feature *Pavilion M*. Ethics is also one of the key terms used in Jan Motal's (JAMU, Brno) paper focused on new television trends, particularly reality TV and docusoap. The author describes the "numbing effect" these shows have on their audiences, turning them into passive spectators of what he terms freakshows. Michaela Kopečková from the Department of Czech Studies of Palacký University presents the results of her phonetic research focused on speech patterns in Czech TV news. Her aims were specifically "to find out and evaluate if TV news presenters adhere to the rules of the orthoepic norm, if their speech affects the objectivity and neutrality of the TV news, and if these speakers have the potential to establish language patterns for Czech society." Professor Martin Štoll of Charles University provides an insider's view into the Czech "translation" of the popular BBC format *100 Greatest Britons*. Entitled *Největší Čech* and released in 2005, the Czech version of the show brought with it numerous challenges which the producers had to face and overcome in order to address their specific local audience. Finally, Jana Jedličková, assistant professor at Palacký University, examines a current trend in contemporary television, namely its emphasis on a diversity of characters. She draws special attention to the marketing strategies of the TV companies which attempt to address the so-called millennials who reached adulthood around the turn of the twenty-first century and who share a set of values and convictions due to online media and social networks. These papers are complemented by reviews of selected TV and Ra-

dio Studies publications and by a poll conducted among respected scholars and professionals concerning the future of the discipline.

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Radio Studies |

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Overcoming Fear of Death in the Czech Radio Documentary

Abstract | The paper examines the imaging of the topical society-wide theme of death and palliative care in the Czech radio documentary. A quantitative content analysis lists documentaries which deal with the topic of death or dying. Individual documentaries are examined in terms of function, dramaturgy and with regard to the Czech Radio Code. The analytical part focuses on instruments provided by the radio to deal with the topic, narrative and journalistic practices which the authors choose when contacting the respondents and the overall composition of the documentary work touching this sensitive topic. The aim is to draw attention to the lack of reflection on highly topical issues and the extensive problem of displacement of dying and death both in the public media and beyond.

Key words | Radio Documentary – Death and Palliative Care – Czech Radio – Public Radio – The Function of Documentary – Dramaturgy – Dramaturgical Analysis

Fear of one's own mortality and bereavement is a given fact in the ontogeny of humans. This natural fear which aims at protecting oneself and one's family is strongly connected to the self-preservation instinct. If a person is unable, however, to manage the fear of death and cope with it using the sheer power of their will and reason, it then loses its protective form and can become paralysing. The consequences of such undesirable effects become primarily apparent in the field of palliative care. In this respect, humanity has made a surprising step backward over the last century.

The aim of this study is not to perform yet another sociological and historical excursion into the relationship between men and death. We will, however, pause for a moment on the question of thanatology. I would like to consider at this point a somewhat broader relationship pattern, particularly the attitude of Czech Radio toward the society-wide theme and public media's view of death, dying, palliative care and the new dangerous phenomenon of displacing death from life. In order to be able to apply the method of quantitative content analysis, it is essential to carefully define the fields of exploration first with the help of literature in the fields of sociology, psychology, thanatology and history. The following part of the paper includes the quantitative research of Czech Radio documentaries broadcast as of 2005 and a consequent dramaturgical exemplary analysis. In this section I pose the question of *how the Czech radio documentary and feature present the theme of death*, whether it is flexible in reflecting the transformation of society in relation to death and whether Czech Radio defines this objective in its Code at all.¹

¹ I will scrutinise for this purpose the Preamble to the Czech Radio Code, "Kodex Českého rozhlasu," Český rozhlas, accessed March 19, 2016, http://www.rozhlas.cz/rada/legislativa/_zprava/kodex-ceskeho-rozhlasu--789056.

Generally speaking, there are currently a large number of specialised publications dealing with palliative care, many of them dealing with hospices. In the Czech Republic, there are, for example, books by the physician Marie Svatošová,² founder of the hospice movement in this country, or Jiřina Šiklová, a sociologist and promoter of palliative care.³ The expert publication by Martin Kupka *Psychosociální aspekty paliativní péče*⁴ (Psycho-Social Aspects of Palliative Care) is on the borderland between the psychological and sociological approach. Olga Nešporová⁵ and Helena Haškovcová⁶ have been dealing with the topics of death and burial for a long time. An overwhelming majority of experts agree that scientific knowledge and research have not yet been successfully applied in practice. In order to understand the current attitude of society to death, it is important to reach an understanding of the evolution of this relationship throughout history. In this respect, the two-volume book by the French historian Philippe Ariès *L'homme devant la mort* (The Hour of Our Death) is a crucial work.⁷ The book provides an exhaustive view of changes in European mentality in relation to dying and death from antiquity up to the present day.

It is characteristic for the multiparadigm field of radio studies that the works come from various disciplines: from theatre studies, film studies and media sciences.⁸ This indicates that adequate terminology has not yet been established in radio studies. I will use terminology from film studies which suits the purpose in this case, particularly from Bill Nichols' *Introduction to Documentary*.⁹ Since the question "How Czech radio documentary and feature depict the theme of death" is largely a dramaturgical one, I will draw from the book *Zvuková dramaturgie audiovizuálního díla* (Sound Dramaturgy of Audio-Visual Work)¹⁰ and from the studies by Jan Motal.¹¹

Jan Motal understands dramaturgy as the search for the *meaning* of the work. "Above all, a dramaturgical analysis must be a systematic cultivation of the dramaturgist, i.e. an activity requiring continuous self-education and self-development."¹² In this respect, it is of key importance that at the beginning of the paper I spend some time on research in the fields of history, sociology and psychology, because "a dramaturgist cannot be confined to the world of film [or radio documentary in our case; author's note].¹³ They must be an active historical factor, be present in the world around them, perceive its problems and try to educate as much as possible."¹⁴ According to Motal, dramaturgy is an *interpretive activity* where the interpreter is the key actor making efforts to understand the researched work and looking for its meaning.¹⁵ The researched radio documentaries will be seen through this prism.

² For example Marie Svatošová, *Hospice a umění doprovázet* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2011); Marie Svatošová, *O naději s Marií Svatošovou* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2006); Marie Svatošová, *Víme si rady s duchovními potřebami nemocných?* (Praha: Grada, 2012).

³ Jiřina Šiklová, *Vyhoštěná smrt* (Praha: Kalich, 2013).

⁴ Martin Kupka, *Psychosociální aspekty paliativní péče* (Pardubice: Grada, 2014).

⁵ Olga Nešporová, *O smrti a pohřbívání* (Brno: CDK, 2013).

⁶ Helena Haškovcová, *Thanatologie. Nauka o umírání a smrti* (Praha: Galén, 2007).

⁷ Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death. The Classic History of Western Attitudes Toward Death Over the Last One Thousand Years*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), ePUB e-book.

⁸ Guy Starkey, "Analysing Radio: Applying Media Theory to Radio Context," in *Radio in Context*, ed. Guy Starkey (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 25–32.

⁹ Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001).

¹⁰ Ivo Bláha, *Zvuková dramaturgie audiovizuálního díla* (Praha: Nakladatelství Akademie múzických umění, 2014).

¹¹ Jan Motal, "Základní problémy dramaturgie," in *Nové trendy v médiích II: Rozhlas a televize*, ed. Jan Motal (Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2012), 45–79; Jan Motal, *Kráska ve filmovém dokumentu* (Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2014).

¹² Motal, "Základní problémy dramaturgie," 9–10.

¹³ As explained above, the study uses theoretical papers in the field of film studies and applies the terminology to radio documentaries. In references to non-fiction film, we can replace the term "film" with "radio documentary" or "feature."

¹⁴ Motal, "Základní problémy dramaturgie," 31.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 37.

The function and objectives pursued by the work are the connecting elements between the question “How Czech radio documentary and feature depict the theme of death” and the question of insight into the meaning of the work. In order to define these functions, I will make use of an essay by the non-fiction theoretician Michael Renov “Toward a Poetics of Documentary.”¹⁶ On the basis of the ontological given, Renov defines four basic objectives¹⁷ – functions¹⁸ of film documentary. Through listening and analysing documentaries selected by the method of quantitative content analysis, I will define how documentaries and features on the theme of death or palliative care fulfil the generally valid documentary functions outlined by Renov.

Displaced Death and Good Dying

Philippe Ariès’ book makes it very much apparent that man’s stance towards death has been changing throughout history, although admittedly a gradual change which is important. It is clear that even though people have always been afraid of death, they have tried to devise various ways to cope with death and the fear of it. There has never been a period, prior to this one, of such denial, displacement from everyday life and rejection of this important transition ritual. We are living in a period where, for the first time, we try to expatriate¹⁹ death from our lives.

Philippe Ariès begins his book with reflections on sudden death (*mors repentina*) which in the Middle Ages was stigmatised as disgraceful as it ruled out the spiritual and material preparations for death. This is certainly in contrast with the present where, according to an opinion poll, when asked about “good” or “dignified dying” people mostly wished to die in their sleep (26%), without pain (26%), as quickly as possible (14%).²⁰ This is further confirmed by individual research by the social anthropologist Olga Nešporová.²¹ Up until the end of the nineteenth century, the nature of death was characterised by two prominent features: “Familiar simplicity is one of the two essential characteristics of this death. The other is its public aspect, which is to last until the end of the nineteenth century. The dying person must be the centre of a group of people.”²² In the 1930s, it was still quite common that people from outside the family, even complete strangers, would participate in parting with the deceased.

The crisis of the burial ritual is closely connected with the expatriation of death. Burial as a transition ritual (equal to baptism or the celebration of birth, graduation, wedding...) fulfils an appreciable function in our lives. “A funeral is a ceremony which in some sense protects against

¹⁶ Michael Renov, “Toward a Poetics of Documentary,” in *Theorizing Documentary*, ed. Michael Renov (New York and London: Routledge, 1993).

¹⁷ “These four functions operate as modalities of desire, impulsions which fuel documentary discourse. As such, the record/reveal/preserve mode might be understood as the mimetic drive common to all cinema, intensified by the documentary signifier’s ontological status. Its presumed power to capture ‘the imponderable movement of the real.’ [...] As concerns the category of promotion and persuasion, one might understand the rhetorical function of film as a facilitator of desire in its most rationalist aspect. [...] The promotional impulse-selling products or values, rallying support for social movements, or solidifying subcultural identities is a crucial documentative instinct to which non-fiction film and video continue to respond. [...] One might argue that the ‘analyse or interrogate’ mode is a response to cognitive requirements, an extension of the psychological activities which, according to Constructivist psychologists, allow humans to organise sensory data, make inferences and construct schema. (Renov, “Toward a Poetics of Documentary,” 22–24.)

¹⁸ Renov works loosely with the terms “function” and “objective” and uses them as synonyms in his essay.

¹⁹ I view this term by Jiřina Šiklová as the most characteristic definition of the current position of death.

²⁰ The opinion poll *Dying and Care for Terminally Ill II* was commissioned by the hospice civic association Cesta domů (“Way Home”) and was carried out by the STEM/MARK poll agency in 2015, 2013 and 2011. “Nejnovější data o postojích veřejnosti a zdravotníků k umírání a smrti (Výzkumná zpráva 2013),” Umrání.cz, accessed April 18, 2016, <http://www.umrani.cz/data>.

²¹ Nešporová, *O smrti a pohřbívání*, 185.

²² Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, 32.

the grief and desperation of the bereaved, it is a mechanism for distraction and mitigation of reactions that might otherwise overwhelm the mourners and jeopardise them in consequence.”²³

Philippe Ariès divided human history into two periods following two principles of attitudes towards death. The first period when death was close, familiar and often present is described as the “tame death” and is situated in the nineteenth century when the second period of “wild death” also began: “The ancient attitude in which death is close and familiar yet diminished and desensitized is too different from our own view, in which it is so terrifying that we no longer dare say its name. Thus, when we call this familiar death the tame death, we do not mean that it was once wild and that it was later domesticated. On the contrary, we mean that it has become wild today when it used to be tame. The tame death is the oldest death there is.”²⁴

The author notes that the death of an individual generally affected the entire society or community. Death was always a social and public event. An entirely new way of dying came about, however, in the nineteenth century which has, according to Ariès, two characteristics. Firstly, it is contrary to all previous periods (i.e. in the city we have no way of telling that someone has died, the death of an individual – the funeral – does not stop the flow of time, we do not even notice the passing hearse, we live as if nobody has died). Secondly, matters relating to death have been changing over the last millennium, but extremely slowly. The changes have been almost imperceptible and thus our contemporaries have hardly noticed them, not to mention thought about them. There is such a rapid turn²⁵ at present that we feel the urge to discuss it, conduct sociological surveys and hold medical discussions.

Ariès talks about this turn in the twentieth century but points to trends heading toward “wild death” as early as the nineteenth century.²⁶ The denial of death was completed by the massive transfer of the dying into hospitals. This general movement, however, occurred less than two decades before the end of the century. Ariès²⁷ could not come to terms of course with developments in the 1980s and 1990s when the hospice movement began to arise, as observed by Olga Nešporová.²⁸

At a time when it was normal to die at home, it was equally common to think about death and talk about it with one’s loved ones. According to the latest research, only two fifths of respondents (mostly aged 45–59 years with a lower education and people who have their own experience with caring for the dying, or those suffering from a chronic illness) “spoke about their wishes concerning care for themselves at the end of life.” The majority of the population never spoke about their last wishes with any of their relatives (64%).²⁹

The fundamental issue is not actually a change in the situation in and of itself. The change has merely been to a certain extent a natural process throughout human history. The actual core of the problem resides in the fact that we have lost the habit of thinking and talking about death. We no longer perceive death as the natural climax of life. Unless we begin to think and talk naturally about death once again, unless we stop perceiving it as taboo and displacing it, we run the risk of seriously jeopardising the course of the last days of our loved ones and our own death.

²³ Naděžda Kubíčková, *Zármutek a pomoc pozůstalým* (Praha: ISV nakladatelství, 2001).

²⁴ Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, 44.

²⁵ “Today, a complete reversal of customs seems to have occurred in one generation. In my youth, women in mourning were invisible under their crepe and voluminous black veils. Middle-class children whose grandmothers had died were dressed in violet. After 1945, my mother wore mourning for a son killed in the war for the twenty-odd years that remained to her.” (Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, chap. “Death Denied,” 318.)

²⁶ Ariès demonstrates this with the well-known story by L. N. Tolstoy “The Death of Ivan Ilyich” and dedicates an entire chapter to an analysis of this story. (Ibid., 332–334.)

²⁷ Died July 21, 1984.

²⁸ Nešporová, *O smrti a pohřbívání*, 12.

²⁹ “Nejnovější data o postojích veřejnosti a zdravotníků k umírání a smrti.”

This inadequate confrontation with death over the course of life is one of the crucial problems brought about by the gradual displacement of death from society. People who have lost the habit of looking at death, people who have not witnessed the dying of their parents, grandparents or other relatives, experience greater difficulties coming to terms with their own mortality. Martin Kupka describes the situation quite prosaically: "The dying used to know what happened when their time came. Over the course of life, they encountered death on a regular basis. During their lives, they had various tasks in situations, accompanying their relatives when they fell ill and died. They were consequently able to profoundly understand that they too would be in the same situation one day."³⁰

It is extremely difficult to serious disease, dying or death to children if we have not come to terms with such situations ourselves. "Identity is affected by the decline and then death of one's own parents who are in this respect a kind of biological mirror. [...] Circumscribing such possibilities results in the loss of the opportunity to create adequate defence strategies."³¹ Generally, the displacement of death from life is reflected on several levels that are causally linked to one another: insufficient confrontation with the death of ancestors, inability to prepare for the dying of a loved one, inability to ensure the dignified departure of a loved person following their wishes, suppression of children's confrontation with dying, rejection of a traditional funeral (secular and religious), suppression of mourning the death of a loved person, inability to cope with one's own mortality.

The situation is further exacerbated by a current trend in medical treatment. It notably has a preference for acute care with the aim of recovery even in hopeless cases. Medicine often views death as a defeat, not as a natural process.³² The consistent rejection of mourning for the dead, the denial of sorrow and one's own mortality can lead to startling situations where one subconsciously comes to believe that he or she is immortal, as the physician František Koukolík has mentioned in an interview for the daily *Hospodářské noviny*.³³

In addition, there will be a growing number of people of very old age in the future, which current society will have to adapt to.³⁴ There is also the question as to whether the current health care system will be able to ensure medical and palliative care for such a high number of old people and whether it might be appropriate to return the care for the ageing and dying to families and loved ones.

The term "good dying" is absolutely crucial for the present. Although it means different things to different people, it is clear that if we do not communicate our wishes for the end of our lives to anyone (and we can only do this if we think about them) they cannot be fulfilled.

We are often unable to provide the dying, death and funeral for our relatives that they would have wished, we are not able to ensure their "good dying." This is the greatest problem, risk and perhaps tragedy caused by the expatriation of death from our lives.

³⁰ Kupka, *Psychosociální aspekty paliativní péče*, 19.

³¹ Marie Vágnerová, *Vývojová psychologie. Dětství, dospívání, stáří* (Praha: Portál, 2000).

³² Šárka Horáková-Maixnerová, "Lidé neradi mluví o smrti," *Pro a proti, ČRo Plus*, March 14, 2014, accessed March 2, 2016, <http://prehravac.rozhlas.cz/audio/3082188>.

³³ Zdeněk Procházka, "Lékař a patologický anatom František Koukolík říká: Umírání je část života," *Hospodářské noviny*, December 10, 1999, accessed March 2, 2016, <http://archivihned.cz/c1-828457-lekar-a-patologicky-anatom-frantisek-koukolik-rika>.

³⁴ A report by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs provides the latest predictions: "The number of persons aged 85+ in 2013 was 0.2 million, while in 2060 the expected growth is to 0.8 million which is four times as much." ("Příprava na stárnutí v České republice," Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí, accessed October 26, 2015, <http://www.mpsv.cz/cs/2856>.)

Death and Palliative Care in the Czech Radio Documentary

It would seem that the displacement of death is not the way to overcome the natural fear of bereavement or one's own mortality. Despite long-term and systematic work by sociologists and experts in the field of thanatology and palliative care, the current attitude of the public has not yet changed to the extent that most of the population would achieve the "good dying" of their loved ones and themselves. By performing public service, Czech Radio has the great potential to influence (if not change) the attitude of listeners through a wide variety of radio genres. As will be seen below in the Czech Radio Code, Czech Radio has pondered this obligation but the question remains as to what extent it makes use of its potential for the benefit, cultivation and education of the audience.

In identifying and classifying radio documentaries selected for quantitative content analysis, general definitions of thanatology³⁵ and palliative care³⁶ have been taken into consideration. Documentaries dealing with the topics of the elderly and old age (activities of senior citizens, clubs and civic associations helping them) have been eliminated from the selection.

Czech Radio has available three documentary cycles broadcast on the stations Czech Radio Dvojka (entertainment and education), Czech Radio Vltava (cultural station) and Czech Radio Plus (current affairs, analysis and science). These are *Radiodokument*,³⁷ *Dokument Dvojky*³⁸ and *Dobrá vůle*.³⁹ A total of 811 documentaries have been posted on the Internet archive of Czech Radio as of 2005. Ten of them can be described as those which contain the topic of death or palliative care.

As concerns the proportion, documentaries with the theme of death make up 1.2% of the total number of documentaries in the archives of Czech Radio. The documents can be divided up based on their main theme. In the majority of cases the documentaries cover a number of other sub-themes and motifs that extend beyond the central theme. This is visible in the summary where certain themes are used repeatedly. All the documentaries are listed with the author's name in brackets and the date of the first broadcast:

Volunteering in hospices or long-term care hospitals:

- *Na začátku a na konci* (At the Beginning and At the End) (Filip Černý, November 1, 2008)
- *Jak je těžké pápěři* (What is the Weight of a Feather) (Gabriela Albrechtová, October 30, 2010)
- *Kde jinak plyne čas* (Where Time Passes Differently) (Gabriela Albrechtová, December 10, 2012)

Societies, civic associations and help for the bereaved:

- *Průvodce na cestě truchlením* (Guide to the Journey of Mourning) (Alena Blažejovská, October 24, 2015)
- *Je nás sto tisíc ročně* (There Are a Hundred Thousand of Us Per Year) (Lenka Svobodová, October 25, 2008)
- *Dlouhá cesta* (Long Journey) (Magdalena Šorelová, October 30, 2013)

³⁵ "Thanatology is mostly defined as the interdisciplinary science of death and all related phenomena. In practice, the content of thanatology is dispersed into a number of classical disciplines: philosophy, theology, medicine, psychology, sociology, etc." (Haškovcová, *Thanatologie*, 178.)

³⁶ "Palliative medicine is general treatment and care for patients who are unresponsive to curative treatment. The most important is to palliate pain and other symptoms as well as the psychological, social and spiritual problems of the patients. The goal of palliative medicine is to ensure the best possible quality of life for the patients and their families." (Kupka, *Psychosociální aspekty paliativní péče*, 28.)

³⁷ Created in 1990, dramaturgist Eva Nachmilnerová.

³⁸ Made in 2005, Daniel Moravec has been chief dramaturgist since 2009.

³⁹ Made in 2008, dramaturgy by Lenka Svobodová.

Hospice care:

- *O smrti s nadějí* (On Death with Hope) (Lenka Svobodová, March 22, 2008)
- *Nejsem žádná Matka Tereza* (I Am No Mother Theresa) (Dagmar Misařová, October 3, 2015)

Suicide:

- *Ahoj, chci umřít* (Hi, I Want to Die) (Daniel Moravec, August 20, 2014)

The process of dying:

- *Díptych. Život za život* (Díptych: Life for Life) (Jan Hanák, November 3, 2013)

Child death:

- *Dlouhá cesta* (Long Journey) (Magdalena Šorelová, October 30, 2013)

It is apparent that volunteering in hospices and the activities of civic associations helping the bereaved are the most frequent topics. The theme of the *Long Journey* documentary falls into two categories as it covers the theme of the taboo situation of parents who survive the death of their children as well as providing valuable information on the activities of a charitable organisation. A similar trend is apparent in *There Are a Hundred Thousand of Us per Year* where once again we learn about an organisation active in helping people who have lost their close persons in traffic accidents. In this case death is a logical and necessary secondary theme rather than a systematically developed one. Three of the documentaries are dedicated to volunteering. Volunteers helping patients in the terminal stage of disease are a fully-fledged and crucial part of palliative care. It should be emphasised, however, that the documentaries deal with the actual process of dying and death only marginally despite the fact that the authors and their respondents have found themselves in an environment (hospice or long-term care hospital), where death and dying are part of everyday life. Also of interest is the fact that the words death (and dying) – a direct naming of the theme – only appear in the titles of two documentaries (*On Death with Hope* and *Hi, I Want to Die*).

One might ask whether, given the current nature and scope of the issue which was discussed in the first part of this paper, death and palliative care are adequately analysed by Czech Radio and whether public radio pays attention to topics on the margins of society at all. It is therefore useful to at least glance into the Preamble to the Czech Radio Code.⁴⁰

The Preamble to the Code summarises the main mission of Czech Radio as a public service in twelve points (a-l). Let us select and analyse points that directly affect the creation of radio documentaries. It should be noted at this point that radio documentary and feature are not the only means which Czech Radio uses to provide information about the topics of death and palliative care.

The topic is discussed in other, mostly reporting genres. Radio documentary and feature, in my opinion, have the greatest chance to reach the audience, to lead them toward self-reflection and to outline questions as to what extent they are prepared and open to thinking about death or palliative care, this being one of the few topics which touch every one of us without exception. It is important to note that the absence of the image is an advantage in the auditory documentation of death and palliative care. The one-way experience through the perception of sound

⁴⁰ The Czech Radio Code is submitted by the General Manager and approved by the Czech Radio Council which subsequently submits the Code to the Parliament of the Czech Republic for approval. The Czech Radio Council oversees the enforcement of the Code. The Council is independent of political parties and reports to the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament. Bc. Ivan Tesař has been the acting chairman of the Czech Radio Council since 1 April 2016. ("Statut Rady Českého rozhlasu," Český rozhlas, accessed March 19, 2016, http://www.rozhlas.cz/rada/legislativa/_zprava/statut-rady-ceskeho-rozhlasu-1169440). The Czech Radio Code defines the rights and obligations of Czech Radio and its employees with respect to the public. It is the obligation of each Czech Radio employee to become acquainted with the contents of the Code. It is meant to be "a useful and generally respected tool to support public service capable of keeping up with developments in society and the field of radio." ("Kodex Českého rozhlasu.")

increases its intensity while evoking a greater intimacy than a documentary film. In addition, the audio-visual recording of dying may be so demanding on the psyche of certain individuals that it might divert their attention from the essence of the message or might cause a complete rejection of the topic.

Preamble to the Code, section c), reads: “[Czech Radio] supports the cohesion of society and the integration of all individuals, groups and communities. It specifically avoids cultural, sexual, religious, racial or political discrimination and *social segregation*.”⁴¹ As has been mentioned above, the current state of society manifests signs of segregation of ageing and dying people. With a sufficient emphasis on this social group, Czech Radio can help integrate this group by means of its documentaries. If we do not call things by their proper name, they will never be adequately analysed, will continue to be a taboo and the chances for improvement in current Czech society will not increase.

Section f) reads: “[Czech Radio] creates a pluralistic, inventive and varied range of programming that meets high ethical and qualitative standards, and does not subordinate its efforts aimed at quality output to market pressures.”⁴² Thanks to the reflections on and depiction of joyful and painless ageing, Czech Radio has a chance to help increase awareness of the forms of ageing, create a more tangible image of dying and point out the wide range of possibilities of caring for an ageing or dying family member. It thereby has an opportunity to help eliminate fear of one's own ageing and dying as well as the fear of caring for the dying. The natural symptoms of ageing and dying are often obscured at present by insufficient personal experience and infrequent direct encounter with old age and death around us. We cannot provide adequate assistance to ourselves and our loved ones if we, as a society, have lost an awareness of the natural processes of ageing and dying. These natural processes, which were formerly mediated by autopsies, need to be mediated differently at the present day.

Section g) reads: “[Czech Radio] creates and structures program schemes and schedules that serve to attract the general public and at the same time remain sensitive to the needs of minority groups.”⁴³ It should suffice to say at this point that death and palliative care are a society-wide issue and, considering the fast growth of the highest age groups, an increasingly topical one.

The requirements of the programs stipulated in the Czech Radio Code makes it apparent that programs on death and palliative care should have an adequate position in the various genres broadcast by Czech Radio. Based on the available information, there has never been a media analysis in the Czech Republic quantifying the occurrence of this particular topic in printed, auditory or audio-visual media.

Each work of art is created with a goal. While fictional creation is more focused on building a story and artistic quality, the goal is somewhat multi-layered in documentaries and the author is often in a difficult position when facing issues of ethics, recording the truth, working with social actors, etc. Michael Renov in the essay “Toward a Poetics of Documentary” formulated a four-point typology of documentary discourse that stems from his university lectures. The knowledge gained in the first part of the study will be combined with the quantification and definition of the main topics of radio documentaries. At this point I would like to add the general functions/objectives of documentaries, these being the following:

1. *to record, reveal, or preserve,*
2. *to persuade or promote,*

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

3. *to analyse or interrogate*,
4. *to express*.

Renov does not list these four functions at random. He perceives them as ontogenically determined modalities of desire,⁴⁴ “as impulsions which fuel documentary discourse.”⁴⁵

In connection with the first function, *record, reveal, or preserve*, we must ask what image of the current state, i.e. what replication of reality, radio documentaries will preserve for us. We have argued that the majority of experts view death and dying in the Czech environment as a topic which has been displaced, expatriated, inadequately reflected and taboo. None of the examined documentaries explicitly names this phenomenon which is so typical of the new millennium.

Renov writes about the ability of the camera (or microphone in our case) to reveal facts, to preserve the tracks of a passing or already vanished phenomenon. I believe that even the Czech radio documentary should contribute to capturing the attitude to death of society at present. This attitude and its evolution has been naturally captured in thanatological literature but radio documentary and feature in particular, out of the variety of radio genres and formats, have the opportunity to embrace the history of everyday life as demanded by the Annales school under whose influence Philippe Ariès wrote *The Hour of Our Death*. Radio documentary and feature reach a much wider range of listeners and have the potential to help the audience understand as well as perceive and experience the topic by means of stories.

In Renov's words: radio documentaries do not record and do not preserve the current state of death's displacement from society. They actually paradoxically confirm it by speaking about the subject in a limited way and dedicating only a small section to the wide theme of thanatology. The fact that documentaries about death form only 1.2% of all broadcast documentaries in Czech Radio dramaturgy reflects the fact that the topic has been displaced from society as well as from most documentarists' field of vision.⁴⁶

The function of *revelation* was fulfilled in the documentary *Hi, I Want to Die*. It reveals the phenomenon of sharing suicidal plans on the Internet and on this basis *records* people's possible motivations for suicide.

The function of *persuading or promoting* is, according to Renov, inherent to all forms of documents. In this respect, the selected radio documentaries *promote* institutions rather than the topic itself. They can eliminate the potential fear of the unknown and invite listeners to investigate the topic even at a time when we do not urgently need the institutions' services. While the documentarist's attention is devoted to institutions, the listener can be *persuaded* about their importance and significance.

Dan Moravec's *Hi, I Want to Die* is clearly the closest to Renov's understanding of the promotional function of the documentary. Following a visit to the *Zpovědnice* (Confessional) website⁴⁷ where people, among other things, share their plans to commit suicide, the author contacted two respondents. His highly-committed approach is expressive and, at the same time, *promotes* a world view which is probably quite remote for people with suicidal tendencies: even the most difficult existence and existential problems can be solved. Moravec actively intervenes in the

⁴⁴ The desire to imitate in the case of function 1 “record/reveal/preserve,” 2 – (rhetorical) function “persuade/promote” is motivated by the desire to gain support for social movements or strengthening of subcultural identities, 3 – function “analyse/interrogate” is a reaction to the human need to learn, 4 – (aesthetical) function “express” is determined by the desire for pleasure from the text (documentary).

⁴⁵ Renov, “Toward a Poetics of Documentary,” 22.

⁴⁶ The reflection of the crisis in burial and rejection of funeral rituals, the inability or impossibility of mourning is absent. There are no reflections on the possibilities of care for the dying – home and institutional care and their pros and cons. Radio documentaries do not provide any investigative information on hospice care funding.

⁴⁷ “Zpovědnice,” accessed June 27, 2016, <http://www.zpovednice.cz/>.

respondents' lives and helps them find a way out of desperate situations. By means of sensitively placed questions, the listener hears intimate confessions from people on the verge of death who are far from condemnable. Dan Moravec's documentary can thus *promote* the help we can offer our fellow humans.⁴⁸

Renov believes the *analyse* function to be an intellectualised version of the first function, *record, reveal or preserve*. It is an analysis and a thorough examination of the environment, individual fates and situations that is lacking in the radio documentaries on death and palliative care. Analytical insight is offered in *Long Journey*, *Diptych*, *Life for Life* and *Guide on the Journey of Mourning*. In my view, the deepest probe into the topic is provided in Magdalena Šorelová's *Long Journey* which, unlike the other documentaries, exposes the multi-faceted structure of situations experienced by parents who have survived their children. In the questions and selected answers, she has embraced the central theme of the dead child's mother as well as the themes of bereaved siblings, friends, and conflicts and dilemmas arising in the family with the child's death.

In describing the *expressive* function, an aesthetic function, Renov writes: "That a work undertaking some manner of historical documentation renders that representation in a challenging or innovative manner should in no way disqualify it as nonfiction because the question of expressivity is, in all events, a matter of degree."⁴⁹ Renov only emphasises the fact that the documentary is a documentary-artistic genre. Truth and beauty are not in contradiction, they complement one another.⁵⁰ Of interest is the fact that in all the documentaries the application of similar artistic means of expression can be observed. Only one of the examined documentaries, for example, makes use of poetry as a meaning-bearing stylistic figure.⁵¹ Quotations involving death read by an actor are used in *Guide to the Journey of Mourning* in order to evoke a certain atmosphere. Music mostly underscores or divides the programs.⁵² Metaphors or allegories are only found in *Diptych*, *Life for Life* where the name itself is an allegory.⁵³ The artistic value is strengthened by the author's spiritual contemplation of a dying friend's fate. *Long Journey* uses a stylistic figure as a symbol. The pilgrimage undergone by the respondents and the author used the symbol of a journey toward acceptance of a child's death. Most of the examined documentaries handle space and time in a similar fashion. *Hi, I Want to Die* is an exception where the author Daniel Moravec initiated the recording in various spaces, at various locations and in various respondents' emotional frames of mind. He also steps back one month to confront the respondents' change of attitude over time. *Diptych*, *Life for Life* bears some characteristics of a time-lapse documentary. I will explain the work with time in this documentary in the final example study. In my view, the function *to express* is the "most exclusive" in the hierarchy of all functions. It is not without interest that the topic of death offers supreme creative potential. On the one hand, there is an individual human story which is almost always original and strong, while on the other hand there is the abstract evasiveness of death, the great secret of eternity, which always needs to be expressed by artistic means. This is because art has always been helping us in situations where we are lost for words.

If we venture outside the border of the Czech radio documentary and feature, we will have to mention the highly expressive and aesthetically valuable British feature by Jarvis Cocker

⁴⁸ This is in view of the fact that the documentary participatory mode perceives the spectator (listener) simultaneously as a participant. (Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, 180.)

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ It is the documentary *I Am No Mother Theresa*. The poems read by an actor were written by the father of the principal respondent and founder of the home hospice "Ondrášek" in Ostrava.

⁵² Music bears a certain meaning in *Long Journey*.

⁵³ Diptych – two-plated altar painting depicting life and death as two intertwined realities.

*Overnight Delivery*⁵⁴ from the Wireless Nights cycle primarily dedicated to the topic of plurality of birth and departure from this world. It can serve as an outstanding source of inspiration for Czech authors as it combines various journalistic snaps and stories of respondents with music, poetry, acting performances into a comprehensive expressive story of life and death without pathos.

Example analysis of the documentary *Diptych. Life for Life*

Jan Hanák's documentary was awarded the first prize for a radio documentary for the year 2016 at the international festival Prix Bohemia Radio. It is exceptional among other documentaries thanks to the direct, clear and deeply human naming, describing and compassion in natural death. The author chose as the main compositional principle the alternating testimony of the sole respondent Zdeněk and short messages exchanged between him and a dying young man who lost his family due to disease and the author in the role of a priest. The narrative line winds around the young man's spiritual journey toward reconciliation with the approaching end.

We are briefly informed about the relationship between the author and the respondent. Meditative, spiritually tuned transcendent music pacifies the audience instead of a traditional announcement. The calm and confident voice of the experienced orator of the priest does not begin with the facts but with a micro-sermon which introduces the symbolic leitmotif of the documentary – a two-part altarpiece – a diptych which he understands as the unity of life and death. We are not therefore dealing with a mere summary of Zdeněk's life, it is not a story describing his battle with cancer and its progression. It is a story of death and dying.

Before we hear the actual conversation between the friends in Zdeněk's home, Jan Hanák briefly explains who Zdeněk is and how he gradually found his way to him. We discover much later how Zdeněk found his way to Jan and, through him, to God, and through God perhaps to reconciliation with approaching death. Since the respondent undergoes a certain transformation during the recording, we have to mention the *analytical function*. As previously mentioned, Renov understands it as an intellectualised version of the *record, reveal or preserve* function. In this respect, the documentary actually has high expectations for the listeners while drawing them nearer to the possibility of their own transformation.

This corresponds with the requirement of the dramaturgical *meaning* of the work. The author answers his own question about the meaning: "I am recording with him while I can because a testimony like this must be heard."⁵⁵ Following this introductory message, we hear Zdeněk's joyful voice for the first time and his mother's voice in the background. There is a cut-in from everyday life with comments on the weather. The initial formalities from the beginning of the visit contrast with the following comment in which the respondent, through the documentarist's voice, expresses his wish to live long enough to hear the spring birds sing.⁵⁶ This makes the topic

⁵⁴ The feature *Overnight Delivery* (time 27:45) is the first episode of the four-part miniseries Wireless Nights, which was made for BBC 4 by the singer, songwriter, presenter and filmmaker Jarvis Branson Cocker in 2012. The set of the documentary is an imaginary transatlantic flight which Cocker takes. From the skies, he overlooks seemingly unrelated human dramas. We meet an old shepherd who refuses to undergo heart surgery at the age of 85; a girl who is taught by a herdsman during the complicated birth of two lambs; the captain of the aircraft; a priest performing a service of deliverance from evil spirits; and a coordinator of transplants telling emotionally powerful stories of people she has seen die. All the stories are intertwined, answering questions of life and death, showing the eternal cycle of life. The feature is underscored with sacral singing, piano romances as well as pop music. The expressive artistic potential is completed by dramatic sketches in the form of the captain's announcements, the priest's prayers and quotes from the Bible, recited ancient shepherd rhymes and humorous commentaries of the author.

⁵⁵ Timecode: 1:50/39:47

⁵⁶ Timecode: 2:47/39:47

of death's proximity resound even more without directly mentioning it at this stage. The entire introduction to the documentary has a vertically rich sound track. The author's commentary, the rustling of autumn leaves, sounds in the respondent's mother's kitchen and continuous music, all in a typical meditative mood, are layered in a rather small space.

When Zdeněk finally begins to talk about himself and his divorce, he shortly arrives at his terminal disease and his ultimate refusal of chemotherapy. Zdeněk is allowed to talk for an unusually long time (more than five minutes) without any authorial intervention or editing. We cannot speak here, however, of an observation mode. The author maintains a professional distance although the exchanged short messages that cut through Zdeněk's account clearly suggest the author's sincere compassion with the respondent's private life. The long unedited accounts are not without purpose. The unusually long stretches provided by the respondent's monologue mediate the tremulousness, uncertainty and fear to the listener and the effort to obscure some of it with words about the sense of disease and new insights gained through the disease.

This brings us back to the natural fear of death. Martin Kupka in his book on the psychosocial aspects of palliative care opens up the chapter on fear by paraphrasing the sociologist Ernest Becker: "Only a being who is aware of its own existence can reflect on their past and relate in some way to the future. Being endowed with consciousness (self-awareness) is, on the one hand, a great advantage, but, on the other hand, also has its pitfalls. Man realises that his stay in the world is limited in time, realizing that he will die."⁵⁷ One could say that this quotation captures the main and basically the sole narrative line of the documentary. The respondent through various micro-stories from his own life talks the entire time about this quest of knowledge that Ernest Becker refers to.

At this point we will have to pause to reflect on how documentarists work with time. The short messages are certain driving units which the two men use to arrange their visits or inform about Zdeněk's health. Even though the friends talk about several visits, it is likely that a single visit was edited for the documentary due to Zdeněk's condition. We learn about others only indirectly. The narration time exceeds the time of telling. An empathetic listener can reach reconciliation almost simultaneously with Zdeněk. They can overcome fear within the time limited by the length of the documentary. The documentary works with time on several levels: from the autumn when the first short message arrives through the long winter spent in treatment to the spring when the recording is made and to the beginning of summer when Zdeněk's life comes to an end. In addition to this most general time level, the time is being worked with within individual shots – announcement of the upcoming lunch with Mother, a recording during lunch followed by the clearing of the table and washing up. The way in which the listener is constantly informed about the time-line the respondent and documentarist are working with serves to accentuate the passage of time and, at the same time, the time that Zdeněk has left.

While Zdeněk's initial accounts primarily fulfil the *recording* function, in the following stages we arrive at an *analysis* of the attitude toward his terminal disease. The author carefully guides Zdeněk to other topics, such as forgiveness and taking stock of his own life. The work satisfies the requirements of Ivo Bláha who emphasises that silence can be efficiently intensified with "appropriately sounding means."⁵⁸ We specifically hear the tinkle of cutlery during lunch, the sound of dish washing by the latently present mother or the simple creaking of chairs.

The *analytical function* is accomplished in the accounts where Zdeněk does not speak of himself and instead moves on to society-wide topics and current affairs. He contemplates the natural fear of death, loneliness at the moment of death, euthanasia, the current trend of displacement

⁵⁷ Kupka, *Psychosociální aspekty paliativní péče*, 67. See also Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1973).

⁵⁸ Bláha, *Zvuková dramaturgie audiovizuálního díla*, 53–57.

of death and a focus on a joyful, active, painless old age which in fact does not exist. In this way, the aspect changes and the focus shifts toward death which becomes the main hero of the story and remains it until the end.

A moment for meditation is provided when the sound defocuses (the most frequent sound punctuation used by Jan Hanák) blending into the sound of a sharpened scythe and subsequent grass cutting – a symbol of death but also a metaphor of the coming summer and the first haymaking – once again a reiteration of the passage of time. This brings us to the *expressive function* of the documentary. We enter this section again through the read short messages, this time underscored by drums, synthetic sounds evoking a hospital and a ticking clock. It becomes increasingly difficult to arrange further meetings due to the progressing disease. Short messages which usually symbolise quick arrangements, short superficial communication, often a mere exchange of jokes and greetings, in this case serve as the mediator of the most intimate human communication simulating a penitent's confession to a priest. Reporting about the impending death through short messages read by the author not only serves to inform but also functions as an artistic means of expressing a kind of commonness and ordinariness of death without downplaying it or undermining the power of the message. Tension escalates thanks to the time stamps which the author places before each message. The information about Zdeněk's death is related at the same pace as the messages are read. The author does not work with the mother as a potential respondent but quotes her words about her son's last moments and death in a third person narrative.

The anticipated end of the documentary does not come about as yet. Jan Hanák resourcefully comes up with a continuation in the form of Zdeněk's funeral where instead of preaching a sermon over his coffin he replays Zdeněk's accounts on dying, death and life after life. The rest of these authentic narrations are consequently inserted. This brings the listeners to a highly emotional state. It is as if they are at the funeral of a person whose life story they have just heard. They empathise with Zdeněk as well as the bereaved for whom this listening must have been extraordinarily stressful. It is almost shocking that this effect is achieved without being even present at the funeral with a microphone. This creates a highly authentic experience when the listeners realise to the full extent that they are listening to the voice of a man who is already dead. In theatre terminology, we would say that the real and fictitious time-lines intersect at this point.

In the last part of the monologue dialogue between Zdeněk and Jan everything that was insinuated before begins to make sense.

Although from the craft point of view the documentary might appear unattractive due to its low number of cuts, long stretches of narration, single respondent and stable environment, its *expressive function* is fulfilled on the vertical axis thanks to its rich sound verticality and vertical spiritual overlap. Such a strong topic surely should not be used as a veil behind which one hides poorly executed work. In this particular case, we can speak of a sensitive approach, the unusually large space that is provided to the respondent, and also that there is not always a need to festoon the main narrative line with effective colourful flags, fast cuts or infinitely layered metaphors. A certain rawness is appropriate and the story itself contains enough metaphor even without an explicit emphasis. In this manner, Jan Hanák avoids the risk of pathos. On the contrary, the expression of the author and respondent is successfully kept at a very informal level. This documentary can boldly achieve the dramaturgical ambition of helping people who find themselves in a similar situation.

Conclusion

To maintain the public function of the media which aims at covering the widest possible range of topics, it would be advisable for Czech Radio to contribute to raising the public awareness of the topic of death and palliative care with all its implications. Daniel Moravec confirms the fact that the radio inherently has the ability and opportunity to influence the audience: “The listeners definitely perceive the spoken word. The question is how much it can form them but the mere fact of the existence of the topic in broadcasting is important and influential.”⁵⁹ It follows from the quantitative content analysis, however, that this topic is not viewed as important by the Czech Radio dramaturgy. By focussing so little on the phenomenon of thanatology and palliative care, it actually contributes to its displacement.

Using Michael Renov’s essay “Toward a Poetics of Documentary” as support, we can note when looking at the examined sample that radio documentaries only partially *record, reveal or preserve* the current relationship of society to death. They merely attempt to *promote* hospice care, *persuade* about the benefits of dying in a home environment with a great focus on *promoting* philanthropic activities, volunteering and presentation of various civic associations and societies. They partly highlight the importance of preparation for the dying of their loved ones and their own (mostly *Diptych. Life for Life*). Such a dramaturgical orientation clearly corresponds with the functions of *persuade or promote*.

The demanding *analyse or interrogate* function is most often fulfilled in radio documentaries where authors are not afraid to ask potentially unpleasant and thorny questions. Jan Hanák (*Diptych. Life for Life*) and Magdalena Šorelová (*Long Journey*) do this as does Daniel Moravec who attempts a deeper analysis (*Hi, I Want to Die*). There is no radio documentary attempting a thorough analysis of society or involving deep research into the phenomenon of death and its position in contemporary society.

Czech documentarists are still learning how to use artistic means to elevate the informational, educational, ethical or investigative value of radio documentary to an *aesthetically* valuable work. Although some documentaries mentioned above (*Diptych. Life for Life*; *Hi, I Want to Die*; *Long Journey*) are doing very well in this respect, the difference between Czech and international features is still prominent.

When subjected to quantitative analysis supported by sociological literature, it was determined that radio documentary, even though in limited quantity, tries to show the topic of death in quite diverse forms in the documentaries: death as an opportunity for reconciliation, fear, an opportunity for forgiveness, a natural process, something that one cannot cope with, sudden death, infant death, death in the home environment, death as a potential new beginning. The documentaries still neglect, however, a number of aspects of thanatology and palliative care. Perhaps the lack of familiarity with this issue and, consequently, the marginal status (and low quantity) of documentaries about death or palliative care, is the reason for the neglect in Czech Radio dramaturgy.

Those who can overcome fear, or rather work with it, can be seen as heroes. The fact that the documentarists (and their respondents) tried to communicate the topic of death to their listeners was an act of courage in itself. Nonetheless, a principal and emotionally charged topic is not an automatic guarantee of a high-quality documentary and should not be abused for obtrusive playing with the listener’s emotions. One must always therefore pause to consider the artistic value of each documentary, inquire about its meaning and ponder the functions, the objectives for which the documentary was created. Czech Radio has the opportunity to shape society and

⁵⁹ Daniel Moravec, e-mail correspondence with author, February 18-March 4, 2016.

provide feedback about its current status through the documentary genre and feature. It can help overcome fear and thus become a hero in the best sense of the word.

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The Performative Mode and Its Ethical Aspects in Authorial Radio Documentaries

Abstract | The current study applies the classification of documentary film modes based on the theoretician Bill Nichols to radio documentaries and features with a special focus on a particular one of them, the performative mode. The author combines the autoethnographic method with narrative analysis to demonstrate the performative approach in authorial radio documentaries. Using several examples from international auditory creation, I attempt to demonstrate how key terms from Nichols' theory (emotional intensities, social subjectivity) can be applied and what roles the author of radio documentaries assumes. I pay extended attention to the ethical aspects of the autoethnographic method and the pitfalls associated with authorial stories, the self-concept of the author or the author's family in the radio documentary. In conclusion, the author applies the theoretical notions to her own documentary based on her own ultimate life experience, a serious injury to her son.

Key words | Radio Documentary – Radio Feature – Performative Mode – Narrative Analysis – Bill Nichols – Autoethnography – Ethical Issues

Film theory has long since adapted and accepted the documentary film modes terminology proposed by Bill Nichols in 2001.¹ Nichols establishes more elaborate criteria for the classification of non-fiction films on the activity of an actor's performance in relation to topical and social actors, with issues of media ethics also being omnipresent. I will take these particular aspects into consideration within the context of the radio documentary in the present paper.

The point of departure is the classification of documentary as defined by Bill Nichols for the purpose of film studies. He defines *six modes of documentary films*,² with the main criteria for classification being the extent of subjectivity and objectivity of the film-maker, the emotional urgency and appeal of the author, the method of working with social actors, the ability to depict reality without external interventions, the (non-)conventionality of documentary methods, the extent of creative interest in the topic, manipulation and staging and the extent of performativity and creation of the author. Nichols focuses on the author's style, work with timing, space and narration which he refers to as the author's voice. He is always interested in the *political*

¹ Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001).

² According to Nichols, there is the *poetic mode* in documentary films with an emphasis on visual associations and description referring to experimental and avant-garde films; the *expository mode* emphasising the narrative commentary and argumentative logic; the *observational mode* emphasising the author's direct participation in the observed subjects' everyday life; the *participatory mode* marking the interaction between the author and the subject using interactive forms ranging from participation in conversation to provocation; the *reflexive mode* whose subject of observation is the documentary film medium itself and the knowledge of the constructed representation of reality; and the *performative mode* emphasising the subjective and expressive subject of the author's relationship with the subject and a direct addressing of the perceivers. (Ibid., 50–51.)

and social dimension of non-fiction and the overlap into appellativity or another type of offer to address the problems of the world.³

The paper will also concentrate on the ethical aspects of a single performative mode and its forms in the non-fiction radio genre.⁴ The principal research question is: *What are the ethical issues associated with the authorial radio feature in the performative mode and how are they demonstrated in the case of a specific authorial programme Pavilion M?*

The author of this paper is an active documentarist who has been recording auditory documentaries, features and reportage for public Czech Radio since 1992. She writes, adapts and creates programmes for children. For this reason, I will be switching from the third person to the first person narration in order to describe the performative mode in relation to my own work and, following autoethnographic methods, offer a perspective on the subject from the point of view of a selected piece of the author's work.

The sociologist Sarah Wall⁵ called her text on the autoethnographic method "Easier Said Than Done," aptly depicting my own principal dilemma. *Introspection and Use of Performative Techniques* in reflecting on one's own life and work are the substance of autoethnography, often defined as an "alternative" method in the set of qualitative approaches to interpreting reality. A *highly-personalised experience* is therefore employed to expand the understanding of a specific social phenomenon.⁶ The chosen method appears to be ideal for analysing autobiographical radio work, the more so because many of my radio programmes are often based on *intense self-reflection*. The autoethnographic method is often defined in proximity with other methods – *narrative analysis and loose autobiography* which are rather typical of practical artistic disciplines. All these methods place individual personal experience in the highest position and present the story as the starting point for the perceiver's recognition and initiation.⁷ Catherine Russell refers to three "voices" in which autoethnography speaks in the mode of authorial documentary films. One of them is the *speaker* who most often speaks as a first-person voice-over providing an intently and unambiguously subjective account. Russell refers to the other two voices as "*seer*" and "*seen*." It is the possible permutations of these three voices that generate the richness and diversity of the autobiographical methods of work.⁸ This is the reason why the autoethnographic method often involves searching in diaries, personal archives, self-questioning and an endeavour to understand one's own motivations and actions in the context of a specific cultural discourse.⁹ Autoethnography involves the direct observation of everyday behaviour, a gradual discovering of the deepest personal motivations, truths or beliefs, the recording of personal history and in-depth interviews with selected social actors. The researcher is responsible for analysing all the

³ Ibid., 266.

⁴ Nichols himself asserts, and my experience as an author and radio critic confirms this, that it is impossible to establish a pure documentary mode and that we often have to resort to "hybrid forms." A puristic view cannot even be taken in journalistic-artistic genres. As concerns genre, the forms are almost always mingled.

⁵ Sarah Wall, "Easier Said Than Done: Writing an Autoethnography," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 7, no. 1 (March 2008), <https://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/IJQM/article/view/1621>.

⁶ Sally Denshire, "Autoethnography," *Sociopedia.isa* (2013), <http://www.sagepub.net/isa/resources/pdf/Autoethnography.pdf>.

⁷ Garance Maréchal, "Autoethnography," in *Encyclopedia of Case Study Research*, vol. 2, eds. Albert J. Mills, Gabrielle Durepos, and Elden Wiebe (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2010), 43–45.

⁸ Catherine Russell, "Autoethnography: Journeys of the Self," *Haussite.net* (1999), <http://www.haussite.net/haus.0/SCRIPT/txt2001/01/russel.HTML>.

⁹ Laurel Richardson describes five basic autoethnographic method factors and muses upon what qualities a piece using the method has to have to achieve the validity of an expert study and, at the same time, to fulfil the basic methodological criteria. She formulates her requirements in five sets of questions which I adapt to the conditions of the desired shape of the submitted paper. It should be substantive, legible and helpful in understanding specific aspects of social and societal topics. It should have aesthetic merit and there should be a clear authorial motivation at each moment to create the text. Richardson appeals to the emotional level of the account and a permanent effort to achieve veracity. (Laurel Richardson, "Evaluating Ethnography," *Qualitative Inquiry* 6, no. 2 (2000): 253–255, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249735505_Evaluating_Ethnography.)

materials and this applies even in the case when the subject of the research is the author himself/herself. In such case, it is apparent that the author creates a self-portrait that could and should extend towards more general communication and generally applicable conclusions. Autoethnographic research outputs are extremely diverse and can take the form of an expert essay as well as a popular magazine article. They can appear as a text for a theatre play, a script for a film or a radio documentary.¹⁰

In this context, my authorial radio programmes, one of which is dealt with in the second part of the present paper, have autoethnographic auditory features. I present my view of *experienced reality* in them in the context of specific topics and, once again, I personally guarantee the authenticity, veracity and ethics of the presented reality. I chose autoethnography not only as the *creative point of departure for my authorial radio work* but also as the *method for reflecting on this work*.

My view is principally *multi-perspective*, however. Being aware of the proximity of autoethnographic methods to narratology I deal with the *narrative strategy* in the context of Crooks theory of radio sound meaning dimension.¹¹ The *ethics of the presented topics and the author's view* occupy the principal position in this paper.¹² The attempt to show, through experiences of life, reality in a particular socially defined group of people, and allow others, in this case the radio audience, insight into the group's structure of thinking is an important aspect of the chosen autoethnographic approach to the topic of radio documentary. Therefore, when I tell you about my own experience as a mother whose child was seriously injured and who within a single moment found herself in a completely new situation, with a disabled child, my goal is not to generalise my personal findings but to share a life experience through *participant observation*.

I will pause for a moment at the term *feature*, this being a rather unique "radio hybrid" (Hugh Chignell's term¹³) which only exists in the auditory format. Over the last couple of decades, a growing group of radio makers has transformed non-fiction audio storytelling into a strikingly vibrant form of creative expression in both Western Europe and the US.¹⁴

On the following pages, I will use the term *feature* to describe programmes which are based on reflections on authentic experiences and events in an attempt to document them and mediate them with the clearly chosen aspect of the non-fiction mode while using artistic means. The chosen composition approach stems from the stories of the social actors with a preservation of the veracity of the stories being the principal ambition of the author as well as of the documentary. The author composed the overall sound with the narrations, reportage and artificially created sounds, music and silence. To support the topic, the author inserts literary or poetic elements

¹⁰ One of the documentary film branches uses directly the term autoethnography. The author is often the subject of film-making, often appears in the context of their family or professional community, and the lived experience, conviction and belief become the focal point of the story-telling. In autoethnographic documentary the author consciously resigns on the criterion of objectivity. Staged images are often used for the author's account and the visual or auditory shape of the works is subordinated to the interests of the author's story. (Russell, "Autoethnography.")

¹¹ Tim Crook whose reflections touch primarily on the fiction genre of radio drama uses the term *dimension* which encompasses five categories: *speech, music, sound effect, silence and the imagination of the listener*. His classification is the most complex and I will adhere to this method of classifying the dimensions of radio work in my further argument. (Tim Crook, *The Radio Drama* [London: Routledge, 1999], 64.)

¹² The natural question is how to subject such work to evaluation. In one of the latest comprehensive publications on the substance of the autoethnographic methods, the authors define *descriptive*, *prescriptive*, *practical*, and *theoretical* goals for evaluating the results of the observed phenomenon. They argue that the outputs of autoethnographic work should: 1. make contributions to knowledge, 2. value the personal and experiential, 3. demonstrate the power, craft, and responsibilities of stories and storytelling, 4. take a relationally responsible approach to research practice and representation. (Tony Adams, Stacy Jones Holman, and Carolyn Ellis, *Autoethnography: Understanding Qualitative Research* [Oxford: University Press, 2015].)

¹³ Hugh Chignell, *Key Concepts in Radio Studies* (London and Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2009), 22.

¹⁴ John Biewen, "Introduction," in *Reality Radio: Telling True Stories in Sound*, eds. John Biewen and John Dilworth (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2010), 3.

into the narrative verbal component. As well as gradually building up the verbal horizontal of the programme, the author also keeps in mind the sound vertical of the feature. The time-lapse method is the standard rather than the exception in the everyday professional life of a feature author. The fact that the author actively intervenes with the dialogues and records moments spent with the respondents as an actual dialogue means he/she often becomes a performer in the actual events who can actively influence the situations or specific life events of the social actor. This remains essential for the following reflections on the performative mode of the documentary discourse. In this way, the author escalates the internal dynamics of the feature, its authenticity and the possibility to offer a shared experience to the listener. The negation of synthesis and fragmentariness, the tendency toward mosaic and evasion of summaries, clear endings and literalness are all typical characteristics of feature. The multi-perspective view of the depicted topic is often determined by the simultaneous creative work where the author combines several authorial roles and technical professions. The professions of author, reporter, script writer, editor, director and producer can merge in one person. In cooperation with a dramaturgist or producer, the author chooses a specific story for their work that enables a thematic overlap and the possibility of broadening the focus of attention from an individual fate to more general messages. In the following text I provide several examples that demonstrate all these characteristics of feature, wherein the topics of authorial performance and creative ethics can be examined.

Performance in radio feature

Nichols emphasises the expressive quality of the filmmaker's engagement with the film's subject as being the main characteristic of the performative documentary mode. This criterion can be seen as markedly subjective and difficult to measure in a straightforward way. The extent of the filmmaker's engagement with the film's subject cannot be measured easily. This is why further criteria need to be established. The author's ability to enhance actual situations with imaginary ones, merge them at will and emphasise subjective experience and memories with the same weight which is, for example, assigned to facts and verifiable facts in the observation mode is rooted in the substance of the performative mode. In such a case, we can use the term *reenactment* with all the problematic connotations of the term.¹⁵ The performative account of the author logically changes depending on the performance of the individual social actors. Nichols introduces the term *social subjectivity* for this characteristic of the performative mode and uses it for the merger of the concrete with the general, the individual with the collective and the personal with the political. The author intentionally seeks to move the audience into subjective alignment or affinity with its specific perspective on the world.¹⁶ *Emotional intensities* are often associated with omitted phenomena or social groups of marginalised people, with a long-term distorted image of a social phenomenon. The encounter of the personal story with a reference to a social phenomenon in the details and complexity of the life story manifest the strong *appeal* of the situational documentary. Authors often intentionally work with the predictable development of their heroes so as to surprise their listeners with an unexpected turn of events, a radical change or unpredictable behaviour.

¹⁵ See also Bill Nichols, "Documentary Reenactments: A Paradoxical Temporality That Is Not One," *Dok.Revue.cz* (2014), <http://www.dokrevue.cz/en/clanky/documentary-reenactments-a-paradoxical-temporality-that-is-not-one>.

¹⁶ Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, 220.

In the British feature *Lacrimosa*,¹⁷ Proinsias, the 26-year-old social actor, accepted the producer Conor Garrett's idea and walked his "journey to tears" with a microphone in his hand with the aim of showing in abbreviation and in a staged format what he went through over the past ten years when he was unable to shed tears. Proinsias maintains the tension by depicting his entertaining journey from artist to artist who, each in their own field, try to make him cry. And they all fail. Before arriving at the crucial moment of the programme, we enjoy an entirely comedic show. This process is fully compliant with Nichols' thesis on the typical character of the documentary staging, the performative effort to register what is or will immediately become the past in a *mise-en-scène* produced by a desire to retrieve, re-experience, master or enjoy.¹⁸ One should recall in this context Proinsias' "campaign" up until the moment which was crucial and absolutely authentic, that being the recording of a night time radio show where he spoke of his desire to learn how to cry. Quite unexpectedly, however, he "came out" and realised the true cause behind his mental block.

Another important characteristic of the performative documentary mode is connected with the author's rebalancing and corrective tendency. One obviously in this aspect moves close to the *therapeutic effect of performance*. It is this fact which is often the subject of irritation among certain members of the documentary authorial community. They, placed in the role of listeners, do not want to involuntarily witness other people's trauma and disability. They refuse to take part in processes which often aim at a mere re-discovery of lost values in life or the restoration of the status quo. It remains a solely ethical question as to what extent the author manipulates the facts, reality and its meaning, in fact, how much they manipulate their own life and the way it is presented and how they use or perhaps abuse their loved ones, family members and friends. The potential recipient of the radio programme may accept their role in the same way participants in group therapy do, this being in an effort to help a client who seeks their help. The narrative and systemic therapy believes that "people are able to intervene with their own fates and negotiate meanings important for their life both individually and in cooperation with others."¹⁹ The remaining principal problem is the unidirectionality of the radio. The listener does not receive any feedback to their emotional reaction, they remain alone with it. Many recipients do not wish to be exposed to such situations.

Neil Sandell (*It Begins with Air*, 2016)²⁰ also works with various exclusively *auditory methods to re-create his life impression*. Most of the narrative material is his first-person narration. His fears for his own health, a disturbing memory of his father's stroke and various signs of slowly slackening physical strength are prominent aspects. He tries to maintain subtle self-irony and humour in the narration throughout. His autobiographical self-examination "turns into a reflection of former selves, a present self looking at a past one. By evoking the past he tries to understand himself and others in the present."²¹ Even in such a case, even though the story-teller knows his past and it is his declared decision to tell about it, the author can work with important categories of narrative theory: *suspense and surprise*.²² Neil primarily addresses age as a topic in the exposition of his feature. By making mention of various satellite events, he heralds the questionability of common decisions in life and keeps referring to the fact that at an

¹⁷ Conor Garrett, Proinsias O'Coin, *Lacrimosa*, radio feature, BBC Radio 4, Northern Ireland BBC, premièred August 17, 2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02zjn56>.

¹⁸ Nichols, "Documentary Reenactments."

¹⁹ Šárka Gjuričová and Jiří Kubička, *Rodinná terapie: Systemické a narativní přístupy* (Praha: GRADA, 2009), 37.

²⁰ Neil Sandell, *It Begins with Air*, radio feature, podcast January 30, 2016, <https://soundcloud.com/nsandell/it-begins-with-air>.

²¹ Michael A. Unger, "The Extreme Subjectivity of Ross McElwee: Home as Docu-movie," *Documentary Film* 9, no. 3 (2005): 189–200, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17503280.2015.1104136>.

²² Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978), 59–62.

older age and with the risk of disease it is simply too difficult to make a clear-cut decision and adopt a definite stance. In this way, he anticipates the demanding process of changing his living circumstances which he is planning with his wife: they want to move from Canada to southern France. Even though the fear of old age, disease, sudden death and physical weakness are topics winding through the entire programme, by telling the following story he somewhat negates his age and its obvious limitations.

The author's performance establishes a quite *distinctive representation mode* which is not based on a contrast between errors and facts, information and misinformation, but demands that the recipients notice the subtle expressive shades, that they perceive through associations and accept motivations which are difficult to believe or express while trusting the author and his experience mediated "from the grassroots."²³ The 30-minute feature *Velký plán* (The Great Plan, 2016)²⁴ by the Danish author Brit Jensen living in the Czech Republic is based on a simple idea which Jensen doggedly examines from all possible aspects: enabling a very old women who can no longer find male partners of her generation to experience an adequate relationship and feeling of intimacy with another woman. The author consults her "idea" or "great plan" with an 81-year-old Canadian Claire over Skype and with her Danish cousin Zita. The increasingly intense questioning and more and more penetrating performative probes into the issue gradually shift the emphasis to the author herself who, aged around forty, actually begins to consider her own old age and the potential solitude ahead of her.

Empathy on the part of the listeners is obviously needed for the acceptance of such a work which not everybody is capable of in everyday life, not to mention in an auditory work. The author has to have counted upon this, however, and has to have submitted their radio documentary for listening with the knowledge that it can be radically rejected. The authors often try to express the inexpressible, publish unintelligible behaviour which resists conventions. Often, the author's objective is not to argue, explain, defend themselves or judge. They mostly publish a feeling and evoke emotions through which the listener is then able to receive the message and grow close to the experience which the author wishes to mediate. The *appeal of the performative documentary* is on the affect rather than effect, sense rather than reason.

The documentary performative mode and the author's engagement often restore the greatness behind what is *local, distinctive and specific*. By reviving the personal world and individual story, it enables us to enter the political, general and cosmopolitan world. This is connected with the last element of the performative mode, in particular the *intentionality of the direct relationship between the author and the recipient*, in our case the documentarist and the listener to the radio programme. When the author needs the listener's empathy for the perception and acceptance of the story, it is sometimes difficult to require absolute loyalty toward the discovered and recorded sound material. Performative documentaries focus on expressing intense emotions that contain gained knowledge. According to Nichols, "performative documentaries intensify the rhetorical desire to be compelling and tie it less to the persuasive goal than to an affective one, in order to have us feel or experience the world in a particular way as vividly as possible."²⁵ The aforementioned characteristics of the documentary performative mode guide us toward establishing *genre categories* in which the author's performance can be applied as well as expected. In terms of non-fiction discourse, they are clearly diaries, biographies and autobiographies, profiles, essays but also manifestos, blogs or other authorial notes, journals, poetry or additional methods of autoethnographic story-telling.

²³ Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, 222.

²⁴ Brit Jensen, *Velký plán*, radio feature, Český rozhlas, http://www.rozhlas.cz/vltava/dokument/_zprava/osamelost-laska-a-velky-plan-1599915.

²⁵ Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, 218–219.

In the context of radio documentary and feature of the last two decades, namely international, a great increase in authorial stories can be seen. My personal observation of the topic usually generates about one third of programmes presented at international competitions, shows or seminars that markedly follow their authors' personal themes. Betsy McLane, when talking about film documentary, refers to "a flood of self-reflexivity" dating back to the 1980s.²⁶ In the Czech Republic, however, this trend was delayed by so-called "Normalisation" in Socialist radio where the individual first-person narrative documentary was almost absent. The development of this type of auditory story-telling was also hindered later, in the 1990s, when the majority of documentaries tried to fill in white spots in history and gradually reflected on the hectic period of re-establishing social and societal phenomena.²⁷

Documentaries slowly abandoned traditional observation methods and it was only at the turn of the millennium that they became willing to participate in their work more prominently as authors, partners of their respondents and ultimately as performers reflecting and modifying their own story in the documentary to a lesser or greater extent.

When looking at the topics usually chosen for radio features in the performative mode, the initial ethical-philosophical thesis can be clearly confirmed. One usually does not perceive a steady state but an intense reflection on a change in the state. It is actually logical that feature authors pay the greatest attention to the *topic of disease* with its fatal effects on quality of life. This has a great deal to do with the intensely perceived *topic of ageing society and old age* as a period of life which is becoming longer, yet accompanied by dwindling physical strength. *Experiencing the death of a close person* naturally intensifies such considerations, as it often instigates reflections on the deceased person but also on one's own life. Apart from painful and tragic themes, performative methods also explore more joyful or at least less serious topics. These are often associated with *parenting and raising children*, they can relate to *beliefs, relationships or sexual self-identification*. Authorial performance only seldom touches any *broadier societal or social issues*. At times a situation arises when the author, while exploring a family history, provides a broader historical context for a particular period in a particular country.

Ethical aspects of radio feature in the performative mode

Questions regarding the ethics of an author who chooses their own life, the lives of close people or friends as the objects of documentary examination have been a recurrent topic at many meetings of documentary film-makers. At each Prix Europa²⁸ competition in Berlin, during the International Feature Conference²⁹ as well as at less important platforms, such as Report, the Czech competition of journalistic and documentary programmes, personal stories regularly crop up always provoking debates on the ethics of the particular chosen authorial focus. The basic argument always revolves around the *individual boundary* established by each participant in the discussion concerning the *level of sharing personal and intimate topics*. This depends on the level of openness and willingness to accept reflections about lives that are not my own, my

²⁶ Betsy McLane, *A New History of Documentary Film* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012), 278.

²⁷ I offer a more detailed classification of Czech radio documentary topics in my thesis published in 2010. (Andrea Hanáčková, *Český rozhlasový dokument 1990–2005. Poetika žánrů* [Brno: JAMU, 2010], 56–72.)

²⁸ Prix Europa is an annual radio and television fiction and non-fiction competition regularly held in Berlin. It is one of two most prestigious competitions in Europe. It is valuable mainly for its voting jury consisting of participants and lively discussions of the shortlisted works.

²⁹ The International Feature Conference is a travelling encounter of radio feature and documentary authors. This unique community of people (usually around 150) has met every year since 1974 and during workshops, presentations and mentoring educates new authors of auditory non-fiction work. More information at <https://ifc2.wordpress.com/>.

children's, family's or friends'. The definition of the documentary as a genre which, for example, John Grierson defines as a dialectical tension between reality and the creative treatment of actuality,³⁰ then becomes the core of the dispute.

The author's decision to view reality through the optics of the performative mode permanently entails a number of ethical decisions in terms of the conduct of the author/documentarist/producer who is often one and the same person. Such decisions relate to all types of communication in the author – social actor – recipient relationship: the emphasis on the truth and authenticity of the submitted documentary material, the transparency of the author's acting and the creative process during editing and montage work. The documentarist's performativity often has a *direct impact on the lives of the social actors*, their decisions, immediate action and method of narration. It is apparent that it is useful to think about the degree of manipulation of the respondents as well as the perceivers of the work. Various forms of self-stylisation, the specific position as witnesses to particular situations and the importance of narrative strategy for a specific narration act also have to be considered.

With regard to Nichols' basic thesis, the *examined subject of ethics* in a radio documentary can be compared to *part of policy* at the centre of which is a person in the community as a "subject of moral cultivation."³¹ Features made in the performative mode often focus on extremely serious or political issues, such as refugees, cancer and civilisational diseases in general, displacement by death, the hypocrisy of the Catholic Church, social exclusion of sexual minorities, Alzheimer's disease and many others. The documentarist's basic premise should be an effort to capture *the truth* which should serve as evidence for various types of messages which the documentary contains.³² Even in a strictly observation mode, however, one cannot to certain that the perceiver will see the reality as it is, "undeformed and unmanipulated with various illusionary tools, conventions and interventions [by the author]."³³ Stella Bruzzi begins her reflections on the *veracity of documentary film* with a sarcastic note that "documentaries are a negotiation between film-maker and reality and, at heart, a performance."³⁴ Catherine Russell defines the veracity of documentaries in a similar fashion: "Documentary truth is freely mixed with storytelling and performances."³⁵

In the Czech context it took longer than elsewhere to admit that the author's subjective view does not entail that the author is somehow indolent and refuses to provide an alternative view in order to balance the positions of the respondents in the documentary. The heritage of totalitarian thinking evoked the impression that a subjective view can be tagged as something extra to a non-fiction work, that the author's own opinion is a mere supplement. Despite the fact that the substance of the medial treatment of any recording involves an inherent manipulation with personal choices being reflected in editing, ways of recording, selection of respondents and possibilities of montage, there is still a requirement for "objectivity" which is often a suspicious guarantee of the "the truth" being displayed. There is also, however, "the inner truth" predicting a private opinion, an internal view, experience or dream. While the objective documentary discourse primarily attacks the intellectual level of consciousness through inner truths, there is the possibility to intensely connect with the perceiver and address their emotional intelligence. No matter how difficult it is to grasp, evaluate and appraise the personal or autobiographical accounts, the author's performance or participation, they always represent a relevant attempt

³⁰ Jane Chapman, *Issues in Contemporary Documentary* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 9.

³¹ Jan Motal, *Krása ve filmovém dokumentu* (Nové Město nad Metují: Masarykova univerzita, 2014), 10.

³² Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (London and New York: The MIT Press, 1994).

³³ Tesář, "Pravda dokumentu."

³⁴ Stella Bruzzi, *New Documentary* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 186.

³⁵ Russell, "Autoethnography."

to grasp the past and present in a specific way. It will remain a question, however, whether the perceivers will be willing to let themselves be pulled into the author's inner world which can be extremely disquieting, calling into question established values and offering alternative views. In this respect, objectivity provides the certainty of exact arguments which the perceiver does not have to agree with but can form a definite opinion of them. The judgement of the author's performance is always the question of a willingness to be on the same emotional wavelength, to emphatically accept the stances of the social actors and author and, as the case may be, not perceive disapproval or disharmony as a personal attack. There are also a number of ethical, moral and often philosophical and existential questions.

The situation is further complicated by the *staging of reenactments*,³⁶ a rather frequent and increasingly popular method of documentary discourse, even more so in film making.

The auditory means naturally offer a staging mainly through the voice and its use in the authentication of the narrator. The Finnish author Matti Ripatti has a preference for a purely monologue format in his coming to terms with his father, his position in the family and specific moments in the history of Finland. In the narrative *Tuntemattomalle isälle – pojan kertomus* (2015), he formulated a very personal written confession which was then read in the studio by the actor Eero Saarinen. Ripatti uses various rhetorical figures to modulate the long monologue, addressing the perceivers, his dying father directly and even himself. The third-person narration describes a situation where the bed-ridden old man, with his mind blurred by Alzheimer's disease, helplessly awaits his death while his son, standing above him, watches his body while holding his hand fast. "I am the son. The man is my father,"³⁷ Ripatti switches into the first-person narration but then changes the aspect once again. In the feature, we always perceive the duality of the author's story-telling: the author who wrote the story and the actor lending his voice to the author.

When examining the narrative function of the commentary it is not of much importance whether the author himself reads his own text or whether he is represented by an actor. When examining the *descriptive function of the sound element of voice*, however, this plays a crucial role. Bill Nichols takes this into account in the context of the means used by Ripatti: he placed himself on stage, his memories, the most intimate account for someone else's voice. Although Nichols primarily speaks about staged situations, for example, in historical documentaries, most of his notions are suitable for any non-authentic treatment of reality, be it in relation to the person and voice of the documentary or the feature author: "The voice of an orator, or documentarian, enlists and reveals desires, lacks and longings. It charts a path through the stuff of the world that gives body to dreams and substance to principles. Speaking, giving voice to a view of the world, makes possible the necessary conditions of visibility to see things anew, to see, as if for the first time, what had, until now, escaped notice. This is not objective sight but seeing as a way of being "hit and struck," caught in that precarious, fleeting moment of insight."³⁸

The example above depicts the ethical concern that John Ellis, for example, sees as a distinct tension in documentary discourse: *an unclear distinction as to what is truthful and what is the result of the activity of the documentarist*. In his view, the main ethical concern is the question of whether a certain type of truth can be published at all and how.³⁹ In the practical part I will follow up on this by reflecting on specific situations that I dealt with when publishing scenes from

³⁶ Nichols, "Documentary Reenactments."

³⁷ Matti Ripatti, *Tuntemattomalle isälle – pojan kertomus* (working script, 2015), 2.

³⁸ Nichols, "Documentary Reenactments."

³⁹ "A number of ethical concerns run through all the considerations of the films. They relate to the social purpose of documentaries as information or instruction, and judgement of the resulting attempts to be truthful." (John Ellis, *Documentary. Witness and Self-Revelation* [Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2012], 8.)

the physiotherapeutic gyms and such where desperate mothers yelled at their severely disabled children letting steam off from their obviously frustrating lives.

The *multifunctionality of an author in the radio feature* has considerable pitfalls. The conscious author's performance increases the risk of an inability to step back from the situation and lowers the possibility of assessing the potential of the recorded scene. The author-performer must possess the skill to only intervene to such an extent that can be still used for documentary purposes or stop recording at the moment where the recording is no longer bearable or appropriate. All such skills are highly individual and their level cannot be measured.

Apart from the author, the next subject of consideration in the radio documentary performative mode are the *social actors*⁴⁰ who present a specific way of representing the world. In connection with social actors, it is important to pose questions the truthful answers to which predict the truthfulness of the document as a whole. Do social actors behave in the presence of the microphone in the same way as they would have behaved if the microphone were not there? What position is the listener in relation to the closeness of social actors and their often intimate accounts? How much information does the listener need to form a relevant view without hindering the development of the story with too much detail? How necessary and desirable is it to insert comments into the story? Are the meanings given to words and actions by social actors clear? Was the truthfulness of their story preserved after the necessary cuts and editing? Are there clear implicit meanings that the author did not specify verbally but suggested by means of the selected music, sound or silence? Nichols aptly defines the basic ethical concern of documentary: "What do we do with people when we make a documentary film?"⁴¹ Ellis also modifies the question in relation to the *witness*. He reminds us that every individual brings with them their own expectations and understanding of what is happening into the story. This position actually defines how they behave in this or that situation.⁴²

An intense feeling of *abuse of the social actor* always comes about at times when the narration somewhat too obviously, unreservedly and explicitly supports a distinct author's thesis. *Transparency* must be a key parameter of the documentary situation credibility. The radio feature by the Dutch author Willem Davids *Lachen met Kanker* develops a grotesque story from the beginning about the journey of two ageing bohemians going to visit their dying friend. Cancer is the leitmotif of all the discussions. It was the fate of all the people who the friends spoke to, the cause of death of various acquaintances who appear in the bizarre dialogues. The author and his social actors present the topic with an unprecedented sense of humour and bohemian irresponsibility – they go on drinking, smoking, living an unhealthy lifestyle while carefully watching the sickness markers in regular medical measurements and lab reports. The most remarkable moment in terms of the author's performance arises when the author Willem lays out his story in a few short sentences. He tells about how he became ill with prostate cancer. This short monologue provides meaning to the entire programme.⁴³ The personal story with

⁴⁰ Bill Nichols uses the term "social actors" for respondents who in the film documentary represent their own lives, express a specific opinion or perspective of a life situation or event. (Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, 8.)

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁴² Ellis, *Documentary*, 45.

⁴³ "They found out a few years ago. During my first meeting with the doctor (who needed 45 minutes to tell me). I got completely lost after 5 minutes. I was only thinking of the consequences. I didn't hear the monologue of the doctor at all. I thought: this won't happen again! So I recorded all my meetings with the doctor. I realized I could make a radio documentary with that material. That is the first thing that came to my mind, as a program maker. But I didn't make that documentary. I was operated on. One year after that I needed 35 radiotherapy sessions. Every day I took the taxi to the hospital in Utrecht. I counted the taxi kilometers I still had to do till the end of the radiotherapy. 1275 kilometers. I looked at Google Maps to see where I could go with 1275 kilometers. Southwards. I would end up in Santo Maria del Campo. From that moment on, I posted pictures of signs with the names of villages I passed on my 'trip' on my Facebook wall. And you know what? Friends found it difficult to ask me about the whole process. 'Willem, how are you now,' that kind of stuff. But they found it easy to hear that

a cross-reference to the societal validity of the detailed and complete life story adds a strong *appeal* to the situational documentary.

I have already mentioned the actor's individual limitations in terms of how far they are willing to go in sharing moments which undoubtedly have a *therapeutic* effect on the documentarist, author or a certain social actor but which might offend the recipients, threatened in their zone of personal comfort by being invited too close, being forced to share the intimate zone of another person. At other moments such displeasure is aroused when as listeners we become involuntary witnesses to the hero's failure, embarrassment or inadequate reaction.

It is apparent that one cannot speak of empathy if the perceiver creates a negative image of the author's subject in the position of the documentary protagonist. For a fair assessment of marked disputable moments in specific documentaries, it needs to be said that authors usually are very much aware if their work is at the edge of acceptability and no matter how truthfully they depict their negative personal traits, immediately try to mitigate them, soften them and balance them with a different situation, usually involving humour and self-mockery.

Manipulation is an important ethical topic in documentary discourse. The listener does not feel manipulated if they have the sense of having been witness to an actual situation, if they are not explicitly told what to think.

Those moments where individual social actors are somehow *judged* by the author can also be perceived as a manipulation technique. Views that are not neutral provide an implicit impression and foist their own opinion on the situation. They can be viewed in a certain sense as an author's style based on long-term collection of documentary material but mainly in connection with shared emotion and the author's strong personal involvement in the social actor's story. Personally, however, I consider any judgement in a documentary as a suggestive, manipulative and inadmissible rhetorical figure. With regard to the social purpose which documentaries and features often have, it is somehow assumed that the documentary will provide information, if not instructions, as to what stance to take toward the issue. Nonetheless, the premise that the results and outcomes of documentary work should correspond with reality, be truthful, is still valid. It is a double-edged weapon dangerous for both the maker and social actors. A balance needs to be established in the expected reaction and listeners need space.⁴⁴ There may actually be a need for a clear stance from time to time. Although a strong relationship is established between the author and the social actor in the strong personal involvement which often takes place in a performative documentary, this should not develop into judgements, predictions of the respondent's future fate or unasked for advice.

The relationship between two men in the Norwegian feature *Stormfulle Hóyder* (2015) would serve as an example. The author Espen Thoresen, an experienced Norwegian documentarist, is looking for Tore Nagel, his former social actor, a parachuter and currently a base jumper,⁴⁵ he being the oldest Norwegian man doing this risky adrenaline sport. The 63-year-old Tore is an alcoholic diagnosed with cancer, an eccentric, loner and an irritable sick man. Espen visits him in his mountain cottage and later accompanies him to the tallest rock wall Trollveggen from where Tore wants to jump despite a strict police ban. The men's journey turns into an inspiring meditation on life, love, fidelity and loneliness, bad karma, courage and strength of decision.

I passed Paris for example, on my way to Santo Maria del Campo. So I survived the 35 sessions of radiotherapy. A few years have passed now. Everything went well. I feel cured. I still think: should I make a programme about it. But I have nothing with this kind of narcissism." (Willem Davids, *Lachen met Kanker* [working script, January 16, 2016], 30–31, https://issuu.com/internationalfeatureconference/docs/laughing_cancer_full_v3prod.)

⁴⁴ Ellis, *Documentary*, 135.

⁴⁵ Base jumping is an extreme sport, parachuting or wingsuit flying from a fixed structure with the parachute opening low above ground. It is also referred to as B.A.S.E. jumping: *building* (B), *antenna tower* (A), *spans* (S), *earth* (E).

Although Espen initially has the intention of recording Tore's lonely life in the mountains, he becomes the target of Tore's brutal attacks, his grumpy bossing and unkindness. He is correct, however, in sensing an interesting point in his documentary and this is why he accompanies Tore all the way up to the plateau from where one can jump 1,500 m in free fall. This feature is an ideal example when it comes to considerations concerning the relationship and interaction between an author and a social actor in the documentary performative mode. The author Espen models his role based on the momentary need of the respondent. He is the audience for lengthy self-scrutinising and often self-pitying monologues, a drinking buddy, a friend who the respondent calls upon for closeness, assists him on the steep climb and witnesses the final decision-making as to whether to jump from the dangerous rock wall or not. Although the permanent presence of the microphone could be seen as problematic and however impossible it is to be a participant in this intense experience and its reporter, the author manages to evoke the suggestive mood of the final handing in of his accounts. Espen initially clearly explains his motivation for the recording, with his position in relation to the principal social actor being clear throughout the programme. He places his authorial perceptions and feelings to the side in favour of portraying the other party in the dialogue. If we look at Espen's behaviour, however, from the perspective of the utilitarian principle of consequences, we have to state that there is no acting that could be labelled as correct or incorrect in and of itself. Of manifest importance is what the behaviour causes without regard to the inner stance of the actor.⁴⁶

The perception of documentary and its acceptance in connection with ethical categories can be comprehended once again by means of the *story* and *discourse*. If one accepts Chatman's definition of a story as "the continuum of events presupposing the total set of all conceivable details, that is, those that can be projected by the normal laws of the physical universe," it will be more than apparent that it is the discourse that is crucial in the radio documentary. The way "how" the story is told and even more so its manifestation and substance of expression presuppose how the listener understands the "continuum" from the auditory message and what "set of details" they will accept from the radio story, how they will interpret it.⁴⁷

In a performative documentary, the film-maker and social actors often communicate on an extremely personal level and the aspect is often the *respondent's aspect*. Attention is focused mainly on the traits and impulses of an individual, social issues can be shown rather indirectly, through a microhistory of an individual, family or community and in a broader context. The characters in the documentary are often psychologically complex and the subject of ethical concern is respect for boundaries between their voluntary personal account and the documentarist's desire to learn more, to break taboos, to get as close as possible to the respondent. Let us reiterate that the goal of the performative mode is to inspire understanding or sympathy rather than finding solutions, offering ways out or demonstrating crises. The documentarist "stresses drama of experiencing the world from an individual's distinct perspective."⁴⁸ We can therefore make use of the definition of autoethnography which places a fundamental ethical requirement on interpersonal relationships and the researcher/documentarist's responsibility toward those he questions.⁴⁹ The *ethics of responsibility* should be governed by predictable consequences for each decision and act. This can be a demanding task but one that should not be resigned upon.

⁴⁶ For more about criticism of utilitarianism see e.g., Viktor E. Frankl and Pinchas Lapide, *Bůh a člověk hledající smysl* (Brno: Cesta, 2011), 47.

⁴⁷ Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 28.

⁴⁸ Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, 251.

⁴⁹ Adams, Holman, and Ellis, *Autoethnography*, 189.

Performance in the author's radio feature *Pavilion M*

I am now going to analyse my own radio feature according to the autoethnographic method in order to demonstrate the key characteristics of the performative mode outlined in the first part of this paper and the ethical aspects of the author's self-reflective method.

The feature *Pavilion M* describes the situation of a mother and her son after a serious injury. The documentary was made toward the end of a period during which I took intensive care of my ten-year-old son Václav, spending all my time with him first in hospitals, later in the Hamza treatment centre for children and adults in Luže-Košumberk, East Bohemia.⁵⁰

The auditory reflection of this period, disjointed from the entire life rhythm thus far, underwent an interesting genesis and is a good demonstration of how easily the observation and participative modes are gradually transformed into the performative documentary mode. Working on the programme had a significant therapeutic effect on me and the gradually increasing participation of my son Václav in the creation and moderation of the programme was the finest "reward" for the extremely difficult period that we were experiencing together.⁵¹

I began making the documentary in August 2014. Václav was no longer confined to a wheelchair at that time and was beginning to speak. He was learning how to walk, maintaining balance while doing various movements and suppressing his hand tremor. We were working on restoring his short-term and long-term memory, he was learning to read and write again and we were repeating primary school skills.

I would like to emphasise at this point that my intention was not to depict Václav's gradual recovery. Caring for a recumbent and later only partially ambulant child was extremely physically and mentally demanding and as his guide and assistant I had a difficult time managing this care. The motivation for the recording was different.

Over the course of the treatment I made the acquaintance of a number of mothers of disabled children whose situation was quite different from mine. They had always had disabled children, often without much of a perspective of improvement. While I observed improvement in his condition every day, other women in the sanatorium only enjoyed short breaks in their never-ending labour. Despite this fact, they always had words of understanding, practical advice and recommendations for me. They understood my episodic desperation and were able to identify my feelings on the strange scale of new feelings caused by the insufficiencies both in me and my child which I had to find a way around. The plan to pay tribute to them in a radio documentary was gradually born.

I was recording at the end of the first and then primarily during the second stay at the Luže sanatorium addressing the mothers and, with the senior consultant's consent, the physiotherapists, physicians and nurses. The *basic structure of the three stories* was taking shape and were to be connected with the fourth story, Václav's and mine. My dramaturgist Lenka Svobodová began at that time to encourage me to accentuate my own story and concentrate on describing the experience rather than the sanatorium and its treatment procedures. My consultation

⁵⁰ My son Václav was injured in March 2014 when he was knocked down by a passing car. After several weeks in a coma, thanks to repeated treatments in a hyperbaric chamber, he gradually came back to life with the diagnosis of diffuse axonal brain damage, spasticity and severe psychoorganic syndrome. We began physiotherapy in May and spent the following eight months between the sanatorium and home. The first year is crucial in cases of brain trauma treatment. We spent it in very intensive physiotherapy which has continued with lower intensity up until the present day. Although my son is going through life with a number of motoric and mental disabilities, his condition is continuously improving.

⁵¹ The documentary was prized as the most interesting non-fictional programme in the Czech context in 2015 and an international jury selected it as an example of an experimental approach and a strong personal story for the International Feature Conference held in Vienna in May 2016. It won second place in the documentary competition Report 2016 and the same achievement in the Government Board for People with Disabilities competition.

with the director Radim Nejedlý approximately one month before the recording frequency was particularly important. He suggested I radically change the exposition of the documentary. The director was captivated by the breathing sound that I recorded at the time Václav was still hooked to the machines at the emergency ward. Drastic as this may sound, the truth is that I recorded the breathing of my child because at the time I had no certainty he would survive the injury, did not know whether he would even wake up from the coma and wanted to preserve at least the sound of his breathing.⁵² The director found the disjointed, obviously machine-supported breath, in contrast with an older recording where the still healthy Václav and his siblings shout jokes at the microphone, to be a strong opening image that would address the listeners from the very beginning and would draw them into the story. I agreed with this view but it meant changing the accent of the programme completely. I had to do what Scott Carrier describes as being the genesis of radio feature: “Now, when I sit down with all the tape I’ve recorded while working on a story, I ask myself, ‘What did I see?’ and ‘What do I want to show the listener?’ [...] ‘What happened?’ And then I pay attention to how I answer the question.”⁵³

The listener experiences a remarkable twist during the initial minutes. The unexpectedness of the serious injury startles them just as much as it startled our own family and the image of playful children changes into a struggle for life within the first seconds. Against the backdrop of jolly chatter, the listener can hear a voice that is distinctly slow, pronouncing with difficulty, searching for words. Such a sharp contrast draws the listeners’ attention and can be marked as the directorial strategy. There are no more striking changes in mood of this kind during the programme and the overall image keeps improving from the opening drastic moment although there are a number of additional emotional moments.

Thanks to this exposition solution, Václav and my story became the focal point of the programme, becoming the opening and key image of the documentary. Additional components, narration, accents of the story and the overall impression had to be adapted. The described genesis of the documentary clearly determined *the time and space circumstances of the programme, the basic principle of composition and the narrative strategy*. I chose chronological, linear story-telling with approximative time marks. This was extremely sensitive information in this specific case, the publishing of which could have very negative ethical connotations. This was not merely a matter of my son’s safety but primarily the fact that brain injury develops differently in each individual case and although patients long for it and do it by nature, it is undesirable to compare the cases. Physician-patient privilege, protection of the patient’s personal data and a sensitive approach to the details of treatment have been important ethical concerns throughout the entire recording.

Forming a *subjective alliance with the listener* primarily took place by means of the entries in my diary. The diary was my faithful companion on lengthy evenings in the hospital and sanatorium. I carefully recorded the process of Václav’s treatment, any infinitesimal progress and newly restored skill. In another book, I recorded my innermost feelings, fears, tried to come to terms with the new situation and recorded my dreams.⁵⁴

⁵² I find it important to note that my family makes almost no video recordings of our children. I did not make any audio-visual recordings of Václav’s condition. There might be some photographs and short videos in the hospital archives which the physicians, speech therapist and physiotherapist made for the neurological ward records.

⁵³ Scott Carrier, “That Jackie Kennedy Moment,” in *Reality Radio*, 29.

⁵⁴ “ANDREA: Third week. I was flooded with deep sadness and terrible tiredness. I fell asleep at six listening to an audiobook. I changed Václav drowsily at seven, gave him his medicine, put him to bed and washed. I lay down in Václav’s bed, we interlocked our fingers and were together like that. The wind outside arose in the evening, it was eight o’clock. Through the large windows we watch the branches of trees with hardly any leaves yet, we listen to the rustling in the crowns of the large lime and birch trees. And I can hear Václav whisper something – this is the fifth day he’s been able to articulate some words and speech specialists have so far helped him say ‘yes’ and ‘no.’ He lifted himself up on his elbows and looked at the fridge on which there’s a family photo from a trip. He recites what he can see: Daddy, Mommy, Anežka, Václav, Matěj. He lies down again and falls asleep.” (Andrea and Václav Hanáček, *Pavilon M* [working script, 2015], 15.)

The position I attributed to Doctor František Hamza⁵⁵, founder of the sanatorium, could be interesting with regard to the *narrative strategy*. I conceived his figure as my spiritual guide through the process of my son's treatment and as in my diaries I addressed him directly using the second-person singular. Autoethnography believes that this rhetorical figure is "[...] a way to bring readers into my story, inviting them to live my experiences alongside me, feeling how I felt and suggesting how they might, under similar circumstances, act as I did."⁵⁶

This brings me to Nichols' *reenactments* in which he refers to a connection between realistic, authentic scenes, imaginary situations and the potential insertion of fictional elements. I understand this term in this respect slightly differently when I apply it to the scene with the running race. A disabled cycling race was organised at the sanatorium and part of it involved a group running race for parents and disabled children around Pavilion M. I was recording over the entire racing day and, naturally left the recorder on for the running race as well. Václav was greatly looking forward to it but I was anxious about how he would manage. The scene shows how soon after the start everyone overtook us, Václav took offence and left.⁵⁷

I tried to come to terms with the situation as a mother. I know now that I did not show much empathy, but instead incomprehension and disapproval. I was aware the entire time, however, that the digital voice recorder was running and switched it off when I finally needed to understand my son's motivations, his feelings and the real reason for giving up the race. Up until the moment of switching off the recorder, I perceived the whole situation as staged. My behaviour, even though effective at the moment, was influenced by the knowledge that the situation was being recorded. I put the microphone away when I began to feel that further questioning might cross over the acceptable level of intimacy, of what I was willing to share with a potential listener.

⁵⁵ MUDr. František Hamza (1868–1930), Czech physician and writer, chose the remote town of Luže for his practice in order to be able to make his visionary project come about. His project, based on Humanism and medicine, was to build a children's sanatorium for the treatment of tuberculosis (scrofula) which until then was considered an incurable epidemic disease. His comprehensive approach to treatment was unparalleled at the time even in the richest European countries. Children did not receive special treatment, not to mention poor children and orphans. He opened the first house for the first eleven diseased children in 1901, then went on to build a huge sanatorium where thousands of children were treated. He did an enormous amount of work in raising awareness and helped to lay the foundations for hygienic standards. He is the founder of ergotherapy as a treatment method. (Věra Linhartová, *Skutkem a pravdou milovat lidi. Prof. MUDr. František Hamza (1868–1930)* [Brno: Akademické nakladatelství CERM, 2008].)

⁵⁶ Adams, Holman, and Ellis, *Autoethnography*, 101.

⁵⁷ Extract from the script:

"VÁCLAV: Various sportsmen always take one sportsman with a handicap and ride bikes across the entire country. Now they are running through Hamza Sanatorium.

REPO *before the race*

VÁCLAV: On this occasion, there is also a run across the sanatorium grounds for everyone and I wanted to run too.

REPO *noise of the race track, presenter speaks into the microphone*

PRESENTER: Three, two, one, start! Hurry up! Be careful, children!

REPO *noise of runners starting, sound of pushcarts, bicycles, shouting of adults and whooping of children*

ANDREA: Children on wheelchairs, children on tricycles, scooters, babies on push-bikes, mums with pushchairs are running, riding, whizzing past us. I'm holding Václav's hand and we slowly run along the edge of the road. It doesn't take long until everyone overtakes us. We are last. Václav has never experienced this before. He turns round and without a word leaves, disappears.

REPO *noise of the race track, Andrea speaks while walking fast, slow introduction of music, words gradually merge into the music*

ANDREA: (*in reportage*) Václav, what's wrong? (*pause*) What happened? Václav! (*pause*) Where are you going? Tell me what happened. The track is the other way. Are you tired? Václav, what's up? (*slowly fading sound of dialogue and surrounding noise*)

VÁCLAV: (*commenting on the situation one year later, dialogue in a room*) During the race I wanted to run to the full, but my running partner, my "radio colleague" – my mum, made me run endurance style, so that I could run to the end. Which made me angry, so in the end I ended up not running at all.

ANDREA: Have you forgiven me?

VÁCLAV: Honestly?

ANDREA: Yes!

VÁCLAV: No.

ANDREA: This is something I cannot figure out, František... How do I talk to a ten-year-old who was overtaken by everyone?" (*Andrea and Václav Hanáček, Pavilion M, 4–5.*)

Nichols describes this situation in a reflection on the ethical aspects of the performative mode as being *the required degree of honesty and self-scrutiny versus self-deception, misinterpretation or distortion of larger issues*.⁵⁸ He goes on to suggest that such behaviour can veer towards *idiosyncrasy* which aptly depicts this specific situation.⁵⁹

As for the relationship with my son, I find it appropriate to explain how we cooperated: Václav was informed of the recording at any moment when the recorder was running. Sometimes he pointed out himself that certain situations were worth recording by means of reportage (for example, when they worked with wood during ergotherapeutic sessions in the workshop). The recording was made in several stages. First, Václav simply answered several of my questions and at the end I asked him to read some sentences from a sheet as part of the work on the script. The sentences summed up all the information that I needed to insert in the narration. Václav was informed about the entire programme. He knew what I would be saying, which circumstances of his injury were to be made public and which of his friends would perform. He was originally supposed to be present during the recording in the studio but it was still difficult to transport him at that time and the home recording was of adequate quality. It goes without saying that as a mother, moreover a mother in such an extreme situation, after many months of constant contact with my child, I had a great deal of influence on the young child weakened by the disease and I would have been able to make him do anything. It is an issue of my conscience as to whether I manipulated him at any point or forced him to do anything without his consent. The joint work on the recording had a strong therapeutic effect on us both. With the microphone in hand I asked questions which there had never been time for before. I did not hesitate to ask about certain psychologically sensitive memories concerning the time when he was still healthy, surrounded by his friends, strong and interested in everything around him. It was a relief for me to determine that he was able to answer these depressing questions with both consideration and composure while preserving his specific sense of humour and unbeatable optimism. This experience is truly unique, however, and I fully understand the view of certain colleagues, female radio authors, for whom this way of communicating and treating one's own child was deemed unacceptable.⁶⁰ I will finally add one methodological note about the relevance of the autoethnographic method and the requirement of *the author's responsibility in the ethnographic study*. Autoethnography takes this awkward moment into consideration and describes it as the "relational responsibility," placing it on the researcher's conscience.⁶¹

When making recordings with other social actors, mostly mothers, grandparents and disabled children, I had to deal with several *ethically important concerns*. Although we only had time to work between treatment sessions, the parents usually shared long stories starting from childbirth. I knew that each diagnosis had a number of specific aspects which, if not all mentioned, might distort the description of the problem.⁶²

⁵⁸ Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, 227

⁵⁹ Mental idiosyncrasy is a certain hypersensitivity, in some cases even animosity to certain stimuli the source of which are other people or the surrounding environment. Such behaviour is typical of persons with brain injury. Václav reacted irritably to my paternalistic effort to protect him and was, at the same time, unable to express his irritation verbally or physically. Thus he simply decided to walk away from the situation. He did not speak to me and left and I did not understand why. In the reportage there is the sound of my departure, calls, an effort to find out what happened but the situation fades out and there follows a rhetorical question which I pose to my spiritual guide asking him for help and support.

⁶⁰ I refer to a discussion at the 34th International Feature Conference where my feature was presented and subjected to feedback from an international audience.

⁶¹ Adams, Holman, and Ellis, *Autoethnography*, 188.

⁶² One example: there was a girl of the same age and with an identical diagnosis as Václav in the sanatorium at the same time. They were similar in many details but the major difference was that the girl slept very little. She required attention and activity twenty hours a day and this resulted in the complete exhaustion of the mother and the worse therapeutic outcome of the daughter. Withholding such details meant a distorting of the progress of treatment.

Another ethical aspect concerned the social actors' expectations. Each parent approached the recording with an interest in expressing gratitude to individual physicians, therapists, institutions and others who had helped their children get better, receive an education and integrate with the healthy population. They viewed the recording as an opportunity to make these people visible, thank them, publish their names and meritorious acts and praise them as examples worth emulating. I understood completely. I began this work with the same motivation! I also knew as I was recording, however, that the dozens of such marginal pieces of information, so absolutely important for the family, would not find their way into the intended programme.

I often stood face to face with topics that were common subjects of conversation among disabled children's mothers but which involved a major ethical dilemma for me as to whether I should even listen to such things. These were, for example, the topic of the problematic puberty of disabled children who are extremely prone to suicide during that period of time. Conversations about financial problems were quite common including rather detailed summaries of income and expenditure. Intimate details about the family and sexual life were no exception. One of the mothers spoke frankly about her husband's infidelity and the way they dealt with the situation in the family. This entire experience with individual stories was extremely instructive for me. I suddenly received insights which I had always tried to obtain as a documentarist but which had always remained on the visible surface of things. Here, living with severely handicapped people and their closest caring relatives for a long period of time, I could see the real depth of their life-long hardships.

It was naturally problematic to record children who were not legally competent and often unable to spell out an answer to a simple question. Thanks to the trust of an experienced mother Zdeňka Chvojková, who I worked with all evening, I was able to have a long intimate conversation with her daughter Tereza. At the time of the recording she was already 15 and although her disability was obvious from her voice (poliomyelitis), she spoke reasonably and sensibly.⁶³ Paradoxically, my most *serious ethical concern* was not the narrative line of the verbal communication but the *sound reportage*.

We met a large number of disabled children during my stay in the sanatorium with my son. The daily exercise was an extremely unpopular activity for them and they would scream and give out heart-breaking moans. The sound carried along the high long corridors of children's Pavilion M, accompanying us during massages and transfers to the swimming pools and other therapeutic sessions. Children with severe disabilities also screamed during meals in the communal dining room. Over time we grew indifferent to the screams but sometimes a new noisy child arrived and we were once again exposed to this authentic disapproval which a disabled child can only express with loud screams. It seemed as if I should also accept this aspect of the treatment process, that I should not describe the physiotherapy as a mere idyll.⁶⁴ Michael Renov speaks of *documentary anti-aesthetics* in this context. He mentions that a fact in reality does not remain a fact if it is displayed in too beautiful a light. We can receive a lovely image of presented reality at the cost of losing a close relationship with reality.⁶⁵ The kind and unyielding consistence of the physiotherapists was my inspiration in taking care of my own boy and I am convinced

⁶³ I naturally had the consent of the mother and her full confidence as was the case with other parents whose children performed in the programme.

⁶⁴ An experienced "old school" physiotherapist with forty years of experience, Radmila Zlesáková offered the following explanation: "No physio likes it when the kid cries in their hands. But if the physio is not consistent, if they said 'OK, Joey, you're crying, we will let up, we'll just do the hand...' they would never get anywhere. The results, if they are good, come with drills. Being kind but not forgiving." (Quoted from an authentic uncut scene. Author's personal archive.)

⁶⁵ Michael Renov, "First-Person Films: Some Theses on Self-Inscription," in *Rethinking Documentary*, eds. Thomas Austin and Wilma de Jong (Bershire: Open University Press, 2008), 39–51.

that it aided the good results of our physiotherapy. In many cases, however, the results came at the price of many loud screams and the disapproval of the children.

I recorded the heart-breaking screams on several occasions. The recording was very good, it embraced the narrative and the descriptive function of the sound and, at the same time, described the perspective of space (the sounds of mechanical machines resounded in the screams, everything was echoed in the spacious corridors and mingled with other natural sounds such as snatches of conversations, footfalls and slamming doors).⁶⁶ According to Hand's classification of sound effects, these sounds perfectly fit the requirements for acoustic functions as they represented the natural sounds of the place where the scenes were taking place. The sound element thus fulfilled all three dimensions of auditory work sound effects: sound effects (sfx), acoustics and perspective.⁶⁷

The director confirmed that he thought the scenes were very powerful, raw, but too drastic and incomprehensibly cruel without any commentary. We nevertheless agreed on using them. The screams in the documentary were softened by the underscoring music and the spoken word. Although we do not hear the screams in their full intensity, this particular moment of listening is always very emotional. The absence of visual perception and, in the case of an ordinary listener, a rough idea as to what is behind the screams, increases the dramatic effect of the auditory experience in Hand's sense: "Its [the radio's] real strength is an ability to infiltrate the mind, to unleash the most powerful dramatic weapon of all: the imagination of the listener."⁶⁸

I had an even greater ethical dilemma in relation to mothers who sometimes treated their physically disabled children in an almost brutal way. At the beginning of the treatment I also had to issue clear commands to Václav, give him basically formulated instructions that did not offer any choice, participation or other solution. His injured brain was unable to evaluate any more sophisticated communication, it needed clear messages. In the sanatorium, however, I was confronted with mothers who dealt with their children's incapacities with permanent physical violence, aggression, yelling and humiliation. I also recorded these situations furtively, usually in the dining room or in the gyms. I never published them and did not use them in the programme. I greatly sympathised with such mothers as frustrated beings who had no time whatsoever for themselves, were not being appreciated for their sacrifices and were not even rewarded with their children's gratitude. This is an important, ethically crucial topic which I did not want to deal with in my programme, along with the collapsing families or the suicidal tendencies of pubescent children.

It is obvious that the topics suggested in this programme involved numerous personal stories in which I had to respect *the rights and dignity of the individual social actors* ensuring that their words would not be distorted or manipulated in any way. The principal criterion in conversations with social actors was *transparency, a respectful approach* and a decision not to make them victims of fate at any point.

I have demonstrated with a number of examples that thanks to the performative mode my authorial documentary, following the principle of *social subjectivity*, could describe in words and sound the shifts from the specific to the general, from the individual to the common, from individual stories of disease and injury to generally applicable principles of treatment, relaxation, patience and comprehensive care. My plan was to emphasise the role of the *slow passing of time* in the

⁶⁶ Elke Huwiler, "Storytelling by Sound: A Theoretical Frame for Radio Drama Analysis," *The Radio Journal – International Studies in Broadcast and Audio Media* 1, no. 3 (2005): 54.

⁶⁷ Richard J. Hand and Mary Traynor, *The Radio Drama Handbook. Audio Drama in Practice and Context* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), 44.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

sanatorium and the importance of the underestimated *silent observation* of the body's physical signals and meeting its needs. I emphasised the importance of long moments of inactivity in the park and tranquil reading sessions on benches in the consoling shadow of full-grown trees. Due to my son's injury, I was able to experience this *quality of time* to the full extent. In the first part of the study I reflected on examples of documentaries depicting emotional pain, sorrow, disappointment and crisis of identity. In the case of this life event, however, and its subsequent documentary reflection, it consisted of an experience of physical and existential pain.

Re-establishing the balance of the world is one of the performative mode elements in documentary discourse. I have demonstrated in several aspects how important the perception of time was for me during the preparation and making of the feature, in terms of its continuity, slowness and fully experienced quality. Still today, when listening to the programme, I re-experience the therapeutic effect of my work. The history of the origin of the Hamza sanatorium, fused with the recent treatment of my son and other children who we met there, have survived in them and in me up until the present day.

Conclusion

The previous pages have made it apparent that there are many similarities with the theory of radio documentary and feature in general in the radio documentary performative mode. Certain characteristics are specific, however, to the mode in which the author consciously intervenes with the storyline and the lives of the social actors.

The truth of the work which should demonstrate the link between the lived world and the presented auditory artefact in documentary discourse seems to be the fundamental premise. As with the other modes defined by Bill Nichols, the subject under examination always stands at the centre of concrete social events as well as of customs, religion and culture. Ethical aspects can largely be implemented as part of the policy in the sense of perceiving man in community as a subject of moral cultivation. The author is faced with fundamental ethical issues whenever they decide to stage reality instead of its immediate depiction, this being impossible, for example, in historical documentaries. The transparency of the author's intention, the used means and identifiability of the situation or its designation are even then of crucial significance.

Several ethical topics connected with the multifunctionality of the author's role, the scope of the author's self-presentation and the omnipresent responsibility for the way of depicting the world are prominent in the performative mode. Authors who decide to perform more in their work have a direct influence on the lives of the social actors and, as we have seen, the intervention, presence or even offered help can influence the life of a concrete person to a great extent. This occurs all the time in real life, of course, but we are speaking of cases where this change is permanently and intentionally observed and documented by microphone and recording equipment. An author presents a specific view of the world through a social actor and this offer in itself is a remarkable intervention in the person's life. The author is available, provides a mediation of the media account and listens. The question is then whether the relationship between the author and the social actor is presented truthfully and whether there is perhaps some level of manipulation. Although the performative mode accepts the author's intervention in the social actors' lives as the basis, one still has to assume responsibility for the consequences of such conduct.

Yet another situation arises if the author is the subject of introspection and if the radio documentary has an auto-reference framework. Knowing the great influence of documentary perception, the fact that the radio work is co-created by the fifth dimension of the listener's imagination, the fact that for authors the performance in their features often has a therapeutic

role, appears to be crucial. The therapy takes the form of a dialogue with a therapist or in a group which voluntarily and knowingly participates in the therapy or the form of personal confession in a diary or another medium. This is not true, however, for a listener with individually defined limits for sharing intimate and personal topics. Shame, embarrassment, displeasure or a lowered ability of empathy are feelings that prevent the perception of a non-fiction radio programme as an aesthetic experience. The above-mentioned negative sensations can involve an author's intention as in the case of a theatre performance, for example, but the difference is in the unidirectionality of communication typical of radio. While a theatre performer receives immediate feedback, the radio does not enable any communication with the recipient.

When I think about why I work in radio, I usually conclude that it is a welcome opportunity to grow close to other people through the microphone and thus create new networks, find new impulses and new friends. In the submitted study I tried to identify ways of becoming closer to myself through my radio work and what pitfalls one may encounter in this journey.

The autoethnographic method helped me find a way to understand a lived experience through systematic retrospection and emotional feedback. My diary entries from the specific period and the vast authorial archive revived the details that resound with nuances of authentic feelings.

The analysis of the feature *Pavilion M* adhered to an important autoethnographic method principle demonstrating the life reality of a specific socially defined group of people by means of specific experiences. Thanks to the method of participant observation, I was able to closely follow the lives of people in the restricted environment of the sanatorium and subsequently present this group in the radio feature sound. I wanted to support the relevance of my findings with my own experience as a mother who was helping with the physiotherapy of her seriously injured son. The programme genesis description demonstrated how the dramaturgical, production and direction interference with the original author's intention changed the intended observation and participation principle of recording into a markedly performative mode with a much greater proportion of personal story than I originally intended. In the end, the validity of information about the lives of disabled children was the strongest at the moment when my son and I told our own story.

My aim in both parts of the presented paper was to make a contribution to the study and development of radio studies by drawing attention to issues that have not yet been dealt with in any of the available literature. I have tried to apply the value of my personal authorial, radio and theoretical experience and demonstrate it in the explanation and structuring of the presented paper. The autoethnographic method requires that the researcher assume responsibility for the research outcome which I am doing now in relation to the entire paper.

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Television Studies |

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From Interactivity to Freakshow: Ethical Aspects of New Television Trends from the Perspective of Democratic Competence

Abstract | The paper outlines selected ethical aspects of interactivity as a principle. It applies content from Philippe Breton's perspective of the theory of democratic competence in the transformation of technology and contemporary television broadcasting. In terms of the moral philosophy of media, the author views interactivity as a claim on acting and disturbing the space for inner human contemplation integrating one's experience into identity (interiority). Interactivity in this concept may disrupt democratic competence. The author traces this problematic aspect of interactivity specifically in new television formats focusing namely on local production. The author attempts to demonstrate how, due to the reality TV show in particular and its accentuated narrative of success and conflict, interactivity is becoming the prevailing principle and in extreme cases turning into a freakshow. The paper describes the negative relationship between these phenomena and democratic competence.

Key words | Television – Interactivity – Ethics – Democratic Competence – Moral Philosophy – Reality TV – Docusoap – Freakshow

Introduction

Television and radio are in motion. The media sphere thrives on new technologies and forms and digitisation is bringing with it unheard of new possibilities for experimenting with previously relatively boring media. In this paper, I would like to provide a view of these phenomena which is slightly different from what is common in this discipline, namely in my own country, the Czech Republic. I wish to draw a sketch of certain selected ethical issues associated with these transformation processes, especially from the moral philosophy point of view. I will base my assumption on the not so apparent idea that we are living in the political space of liberal democracy, i.e. that we subscribe to the ideals of democratic governance in public life. In addition, we perceive liberal democracy, irrespective of the particular model, as a desirable life prospect. It is undoubtedly clear that supporters of the totalitarian vision of society as well as those who would rather leave the governance of human community to the proverbial invisible hand of the market will have a very different idea of the purpose of media. I would like to begin with the clearly defined assumption that people who enjoy the dignity of a shared humanity are best off governing their affairs on their own in a free public space supervised by a certain community united by a shared identity. This is in accordance with Mill's concept of liberty, that no

one holds the truth, but that truth arises from direct community encounters of life experiences of various individuals.¹

Out of all the topics offered by the transformation of technologies and narrative forms of television and radio, I will choose *interactivity*,² for the sake of simplicity, focusing specifically on the audio-visual segment. I have chosen in this fashion because it is inextricably linked with the democratic right to shared encounters and negotiation of individuals in the community. The promotion of interactivity as a desirable principle in media traffic would appear to be a democratisation and, in the ethical sense of the word, hopeful principle because it seems to be opening the previously closed world of mass media up to new sensitivities. An example of such hopefulness is so-called *t-government* (transformational government) using interactive television technology to create entirely new video-centric forms of governance.³ This involves not only the provision of a service, but a transformation process resulting in a new model of governance.⁴ Initiatives toward such transformation have been observed in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. Similar efforts, although on a much smaller scale, are also visible in the Czech Republic. As early as 2009, for example, the former general manager of Czech Television Jiří Janeček signed a memorandum on introducing t-government with Ivan Langer, the former Minister of Interior.⁵

This brings us directly to the utopian vision of interactivity as the means of qualitative technological transformation of the democratic governance into a new, better form. There is no need to point out that any such figure of thought is misleading. No technological tool is inherently a torch of cultural values. A newspaper can provide space for a political party battle, a public agora as well as function as an instrument of mass propaganda. The ways of using a specific technological medium are as numerous as the values with which we are willing to justify its existence. The use of the techno-deterministic argument that a certain technology is *democratic ipso facto* and its application automatically leads to a qualitative change in policy is unconvincing although it cannot be denied that there are technologies more suitable for supporting democratic principles and, in contrast, those which serve to impede them. The ontological question as to whether a democratic character is inherent to interactivity (in the sense of *provocation* and *reaction* as a new concept of speech) is incorrectly put, as humans use the technologies and by their activity determine the meaning of instruments. We should rather ask how to use interactivity, *how to provoke speech in order to* support the desired values. It is consequently not an ontological question, but a moral one.

As concerns the ethical discussion about interactivity, I will make use of the theoretical framework of *democratic competence* which enables me to analyse the moral aspects of interactivity

¹ John Stuart Mill, "On Liberty," in *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill: Volume XVIII: Essays on Politics and Society Part I*, ed. John M. Robson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), 274–275.

² I do not perceive interactivity as it is usually perceived in media studies, as a variability of media or their objects – see Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, MA, London: The MIT Press, 2001), 40. My concept of interactivity is a "[...] new concept of spoken word and its role. The idea is that speech circulates in a better, faster and friendlier way in cases where the speech standards which organise the distribution encourage everyone to first, speak freely, second, choose a stance according to one's own preferences in relation to it, in reaction to what has been said, with the intention to create the closest possible social relationship." In its deviated form, interaction is a method of *provocation* and *reaction*. (Philippe Breton, *L'Incompétence Démocratique: La crise de la parole aux sources du malaise (dans la) politique* [Paris: La Découverte, 2006], 185.)

³ Greg Thompson and Yih-Farn Robin Chen, "IPTV: Reinventing Television in the Internet Age," *IEEE Internet Computing* 13, no. 3 (2009): 11–14.

⁴ Although the current situation is particularly modest, see, for example, the analysis of the introduction of t-government in the U.K. by Visanth Weerakkody and Gurjit Dhillon, "Moving From E-Government to T-Government: A Study of Process Reengineering Challenges in a UK Local Authority Context," *International Journal of Electronic Government Research* 4, no. 4 (2008): 1–16.

⁵ "T-Government will bring authorities in television," *Česká televize* 24, February 24, 2009, accessed August 25, 2015, <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/domaci/1419502-t-government-prinese-urady-do-televize>.

as a presumed democratic value. I will then attempt to point out to its risk not in its explicit, technological form (such as t-government) but in how it is demonstrated as a formal principle in new genres and formats of television broadcasting with an emphasis on local production.

Democratic competence

The French philosopher Philippe Breton, whose theoretical perspective I am adapting in the present paper, analyses the concept of communication in post-war development as a symptom of the arrival of a new concept of man. Cybernetics is setting in with a new ontology in which the real is defined by relations. Therefore, relations between phenomena constitute their very existence.⁶ The human mind is being debiologised in this manner and the concepts of *input*, *output* and *feedback* are used to describe the character of the relations. The advantage of this model is that it wipes out the individual differences and the world can be perceived as the proverbial *global village*. The new post-war vision of humanity concentrates around the *communication utopia* which is, to a great extent, a reaction to the modern trauma of previous historical failures.⁷

This idea of communication identifies the public space with the network of information by which it simultaneously exchanges the concepts of *information* and *consciousness* or *knowledge* (*connaissance*, *savoir*).⁸ A set of beliefs is created which gives rise to a hope for a harmonising society through communication. “Speak and all will be better” becomes the maxim of this belief.⁹ One could consequently argue that logocentrism prevails reducing reality to a network of information. The rise of semiotics can be perceived in this respect as a demonstration of a fascination with the structure and mechanisms of this information network that embraces more intricate audio-visual complexes and instruments of verbalised mythologisation. Behind each definition one can find the defined and one attains the ultimate differentiation of Derrida’s physicality of the sign. Breton demonstrates the influence of this *information sacralisation*, as he defines the debiologisation process, in Jacques Lacan, Claude Levi-Strauss or Edgar Morin. In his view, all post-modern and post-humanist philosophy participates in this reduction of ethos.¹⁰

From the perspective of moral philosophy, beyond the framework of Breton’s argumentation, it needs to be noted that this information-centric perspective is dehumanising. It reduces humanity to *logos*, omitting its holistic dimension as the identity of a living, practical human being in a community. The cognitive processes are not only *logical*, however, but have a hybrid character. “The mind” of a human being is not a confined information network, it is not merely software installed in the body hardware. Mental processes are incorporated and include both internal as well as external operations. Human wisdom is of a practical nature and is connected not only with the composition of the body, but also with certain specific contingencies of the environment.¹¹ From the phenomenological point of view, a person cannot simply “love” but always “loves someone,” always being tied with the environment by intentionality. Mark Rowlands describes this feature of the human mind by referring to cognitive processes as the *amalgam*

⁶ Philippe Breton, *L'utopie de la communication* (Paris: La Découverte, 1997), 25.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 158.

¹⁰ Philippe Breton, “La sacralisation de l’information,” *ESSACHESS: Journal for Communication Studies* 4, no. 2 (2011): 66. Lyotard in describing the “post-modern situation” actually proceeds from the hypothesis of societal informatisation, see Jean François Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne* (Paris: Les éditions de minuit, 1979). The term of the discourse stemming from the logocentric concept of information flow as the determinant for the structure of social reality is of key importance for all post-war French philosophy and sociology.

¹¹ Mark Rowlands, *The New Science of the Mind: From Extended Mind to Embodied Phenomenology* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 2010), 79.

of the brain, body and environment, i.e. neural, bodily and environmental structures and processes.¹² Therefore, no knowledge is pure information, there is no consciousness that could be replicated by information and there is no chance to reduce a human individual in the process of democratic decision-making to an information node in the network. An individual participates in community life with full corporeality including all illogical processes and sentiments that cannot be reduced to mere words.

Breton makes a sharp turn back to the relationship between communication and democracy in his book *L'incompétence démocratique* where he also focuses on interactivity. It is closely connected with the communication paradigm and is an expression of the behaviouristic reduction of the human mind's relations with the environment to *input* and *output*. A more detailed conceptual analysis, however, opens up yet another moral-philosophical problem. Breton understands it as a *new concept of speech*: interactivity represents a claim demanding that a person *act*. This concept of interactivity expresses that it is desirable for two components of reality – the presenter and the actor, the television set and the viewer – to interact. Ultimately, this interactivity detaches itself from its purpose becoming a claim of its own standing like instant messengers in mobile phones or the incessantly blinking and bleeping social media applications in tablets. This is a familiar picture, as unlike in the case of a letter, we have difficulty understanding with an e-mail why the recipient does not reply immediately. Or we might keep ringing someone all day. Why aren't they answering? The phone must surely be ringing! This interactivity enters the human environment as a claim that undermines one's specific personal space which Breton refers to as *interiority* (*intériorité*).¹³

This metaphor of interiority does not signify any material reality in a person but a personal and private space where one can authentically interact with oneself, consult one's conscience, experience and *subjective difference*. This is a space that enables the integration of the human experience into an identity. Others do not have access to this space, it is exclusively mine and is a prerequisite for me as an individual, determining my identity and thus actually entering the truly democratic space of being an individual that brings into it *my truth*, not as information truth but the truth of my life, my existence. It can encounter other similarly founded but differently formulated identities, i.e. the truths of others – and in their encounter, they can look for a common truth. The ability to participate in democratic discussion is therefore a necessary component of *democratic competence*.¹⁴

Interactivity is an expression of *homo communicans*, a human who is urged to react immediately, without delay. Interactivity kills the silence and contemplation, robbing people of the interiority which prevents them from building the integrity of their personality, thinking of publicly discussed topics and taking a stand in relation to them. Interactivity is a collectivist attack on an individual who loses their competence and ability to be a valid voice in the democratic discussion because they lose their chance to articulate a voice. Chances for contemplation and possibilities for introspection, the chance to understand oneself, are lost. The ancient *gnóthi seauton*, know thyself, changes into the imperative *react* which can be destructive for democracy if it becomes an unconditional imperative.

At times, in the new forms of media, interactivity is approached as *intercreativity*,¹⁵ where consumers become involved in the process of creating media products, thereby changing their disgracefully passive role in the mass media model. The media content consequently circulates

¹² Ibid., 83.

¹³ Philippe Breton, *L'incompétence démocratique* (Paris: La Découverte, 2006), 199–206.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ “We should be able not only to interact with other people, but to create with other people. *Intercreativity* is the process of making things or solving problems together. If *interactivity* is not just sitting there passively in front of a display screen, then

in the sense of Jenkin's convergence,¹⁶ i.e. a situation where the consumers actively access the technological environment of the converging media industry and the multiple media functions in which they participate. In such a case, we can speak of a transformation of *mass communication* into *mass conversation*,¹⁷ while critical voices note that this conversation does not have a revolutionising character but rather the nature of commodification as it serves to exploit the work of end users producing content in the new media environment.¹⁸

The problem lies not only in this commodification, the Marxian view is reductive and even though it reveals the danger of alienation, it does not reflect the extent of lost interiority. Interactivity is not necessarily a realisation of democracy due to economic alienation amongst other things, but primarily because people do not cooperate in shaping a common truth based on the encounter of their life experiences. They instead are involved in building a human experience of independent truth. This is virtual not only because it is situated in the media space, but because it is not nurtured by personal contemplation. Hoaxes are good examples of this kind of virtual truth, becoming the nutrient substance for moral panic, verbal as well as physical aggression. We are witnessing a radicalisation of society as part of the interactivity at present in relation to migration and one need not go far to find other examples.

The finding concerning the inability to reduce humanity to mere *logos* goes on to demonstrate that the democratic space is not full of autonomous, intermittent subjects that are aware of one other's plans, desires and preferences and are able to negotiate with others. The Habermasian vision of deliberative democracy suffers in being inadequate for the anthropology of an amalgamation of the biological and cultural being's mind. People are part of a socially designed cultural sphere to which they are tightly bound and to which they enter the public space as individuals along with their emotions and illogicalities.¹⁹ The cultural sphere is not clearly separated from the political one.

This concerns how much space is provided for commentary on various topics, how this space is balanced and how much individuals have the possibility to react to one another. The civic principal of democracy is also a matter of something which moral philosophy calls *practical wisdom*²⁰ and in the Aristotelian sense of the word it is not a question of discourse. An individual enters relationships with other individuals and thereby enters the public space as an incorporation of the mind, not disconnected from their feelings, memories, sentiments and passions. Thus, in the light of contemporary cognitive science, the public space is not merely discursive.

Ann Mongoven in her book *Just Love: Transforming Civic Virtue* offers a genealogy of the contemporary political moral which has learned to distinguish between the cultural and political public sphere. There is a separation of the masculine space of public conflict in modern times

intercreativity is not just sitting there in front of something 'interactive.'" (Tim Berners-Lee, *Weaving the Web: The Original Design and Ultimate Destiny of the World Wide Web, by Its Inventor* [New York: HarperCollins, 1999], 169.)

¹⁶ "By convergence, I mean the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behaviour of media audiences who would go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they wanted." (Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture* [New York and London: New York University Press, 2006], 2.)

¹⁷ Christina Spurgeon, "Advertising and the New Media of Mass Conversation," Communications, Civics, Industry – ANZCA2007 Conference Proceedings, accessed August 25, 2015, http://www.anzca.net/images/stories/past_conferences/ANZCA07/spurgeon.pdf.

¹⁸ We are talking mostly about Marxian or critical-theoretical Internet studies. For a summary of the topic, see Christian Fuchs, "Towards Marxian Internet Studies," *TripleC* 10, no. 2 (2012): 392–412. For specific details on the exploitation of social media users, see Christian Fuchs, "Labor in Informational Capitalism and on the Internet," *The Information Society* 26, no. 3 (2010): 179–196.

¹⁹ Graham Murdock, "Public Broadcasting and Democratic Culture: Consumers, Citizens and Communards," in *A Companion to Television*, ed. Janet Wasko (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 179.

²⁰ Barry Schwartz and Kenneth Sharpe, *Practical Wisdom: The Right Way to Do the Right Thing* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2011).

which cannot be associated with the sentiments and domestic environment of love and care which is traditionally associated with the feminine principle. The Enlightenment idea of a universal, rational judgement touched the political sphere forming the idea of Newtonian ethics, modifiable on the objective level, divorced from the living, feeling individual. Civic virtue has been defined in modern times as the restraint of passion, in contrast to the sentimental effusion associated with the private womanly world of the home.²¹

Mongoven points out the need to cultivate civic virtue in its practical wisdom, i.e. to include its emotional elements. A virtuous citizen is not only competent in discourse but also able to strike a balance between his intimate sentiments and the broad community. This will be an individual who can switch between various moral practices and seek out inner and public consensus,²² on the level of deliberation amongst other things. Compassion, courage, friendship and forgiveness are virtues which are part of the public space like an opinion and argument. Not only democracy as the political public sphere, the agora, but the fully-fledged community of individuals seeks out harmony in their shared practical life.

Interactivity as a formal principal

Let us now move on to how interactivity changes the environment of television formats as a formal principal and let us observe the aspects of this interference with democratic competence. The goal of the following examples is not to reveal the dystopia of television entertainment but to point out the risky moments of interactivity as a formal principle (I am omitting the technological principle being aware of some of its aspects mentioned at the beginning). My discussion is meant to lead not to the complete rejection of interactivity but to a new examination of its value through the optics of moral philosophy based on the concept of democratic competence.

Reality TV is a good example of the arrival of the formal principle of interactivity.²³ This can be seen, for example, with the evolution of television cooking shows. As Tasha Oren documents, these shows underwent a tremendous evolution from simply providing cooking instructions to elimination interactive contests such as *The Next Iron Chef*, *Top Chef*, *Chopped*, *Hell's Kitchen* or *Masterchef*.²⁴ The extraordinary popularity of these formats underlines how *criticism* as the central ingredient of these shows and the basic principle of communication became the common tool of both the audience and fans. Panels of judges often subject the contestants to degrading judgements becoming the symbol of *interactivity* represented by a quasi-expert appraisal of others against benchmarks set high by popular culture. The social actors in these shows are continuously forced into situations where they must react, *prove themselves*, be ready to respond. They are subject to permanent judgement and appraisal, they are placed before tasks that require promptness and make them forget about interiority.

Cooking shows twist the question of *how to do it?* into *can I do it?* The quest to find a good and attractive meal is transformed into a narration full of tension, conflict, humiliation and failure.²⁵ Audiences of the Czech version of *Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares* called *Ano, šéfe!* with Zdeněk Pohlreich have witnessed the systematic humiliation of participants and a ridiculing of

²¹ Ann Mongoven, *Just Love: Transforming Civic Virtue* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009), 33–34.

²² Mongoven defines this specific virtue as “impartiality-as-practice.” (Ibid., 275–278.)

²³ The following selection of reality TV shows is arbitrary. It is only an example because if Breton's assumption is valid, similarly as the discourse is present in all works containing a certain message, interactivity will be present in all media genres. This choice was led by an effort to clearly demonstrate certain selected aspects which, in my view, reality TV provides for.

²⁴ Tasha Oren, “On the Line: Format, Cooking and Competition as Television Values,” *Critical Studies in Television* 8, no. 2 (2013): 20–35.

²⁵ Ibid., 29–30.

their skills, visions and hopes. A show with a completely different topic focused on education in a Roma school classroom called *Třída 8.A* (Class 8.A) gives rise to similar questions in the viewers. Will the teachers succeed? Or will the kids drive them crazy, like the teacher Maxová in Svěrák's *Obecná škola* (Elementary School)?²⁶ Equally, the audiences of *Čtyři v tom* (Four in It) or *Navždy svoji* (For Better or Worse) are interested in seeing whether the social actors succeed or fail. In similar fashion as with the cooking shows, it is not about the phenomenon (marriage, social exclusion) but rather a narration of success or failure and the coding of social reality as full of conflict.

Within the logic of these formats, the interactivity is not a path of dialogue but a path of conflict, be it a conflict among the competitors or between the young Roma and the rest of the world. This constant search for conflict is clearly visible in the contemporary Czech situational documentary school which directly prompts the actors to act on the basis of the artificial conditions created by the film-makers. A good example of this was the style-forming *Český sen* (Czech Dream) which, by creating an artificial situation with absurd parameters in the real environment, prompted not only the previously contracted actors to produce spontaneous reactions but occupied a space of wider reality with the film forcing *everyone* to react who was at a certain cultural and media reach.

Třída 8.A or *Ptáčata* (Birdies) is specific due to the fact that a similar invasive intrusion in a certain community has long-lasting effects. The interactivity disturbs the lives of children who are the social actors and shapes their future to some extent. From the ethical point of view, the situation is even more serious because both shows focus on a marginalised community at the extremely sensitive and defining age of adolescence. An intervention from the outside is always invasive *ex definitione* in a homeostatic environment and the ethical dimension should be carefully weighed. During the broadcasting of *Třída 8.A*, however, the school through its headmaster had already mentioned certain shortcomings in connection with the cooperation with the TV crew which further exacerbated the risks of such an invasive approach.²⁷ It can be concluded that bilaterally acceptable cooperation is impossible since the primary goal of a television institution is to fulfil the format and generally the reality TV genre with its expectations of conflict. In view of the dramaturgical intention in this respect, we must not admit that the conflicting relationships among the participants become a problem.

Interactivity *hic et nunc* before the camera rules out the possibility of concentrated preparation to react and think of an answer. It instead has a preference for automatic, instinctive processes to deliberation. It prompts the spectacle for the camera instead of interiority. This is where the space for interiority which is, as we saw, the central element of democratic competence, is disturbed. In addition, interiority is of key importance for the development of an individual's identity. Disturbing interiority during adolescence and silencing the need for contemplation by means of a conflicting narration are consequently two ways in which interactivity has negative ethical implications in the aforementioned shows. First, toward the actors whose lives it affects and second, by its form toward the audience and the media environment in general where it promotes the value of conflict against a concentrated search for understanding which is so much needed for the shared search of truth in a community. This makes the problem even more seri-

²⁶ Another question is whether the conflict structure requires that children be depicted as difficult to deal with which only enhances cultural stereotypes about the asocial Roma. Numerous NGOs sent this criticism to the Radio and Television Council, see "Omluvte se romským žákům, seriál *Třída 8.A* jim ublížil, vyzývají neziskovky ČT," Lidovky.cz, July 29, 2015, accessed August 29, 2015, http://www.lidovky.cz/omluve-se-romskym-zakum-serial-mensine-ublzil-vyzivaji-neziskovky-ct-14y-zpravy-domov.aspx?c=A150729_113118_in_domov_sk.

²⁷ Tomáš Feřtek and Libor Tománek, "Sami jsme zvědaví, jak dopadne *Třída 8.A*," EduIN.cz, December 10, 2014, accessed August 25, 2015, <http://www.eduin.cz/clanky/libor-tomanek-sami-jsme-zvedavi-jak-dopadne-trida-8-a/>.

ous when the medium, as in this case, attempts to use these formats to raise serious social topics (Roma community, marriage) in the public space.

Interactivity in these formats is a *challenge* and the world opens up through it as a space where a battle is expected to take place. Democratic discussion and deliberation are sidelined and replaced in this sense by an individual and collective competition for a place in the sun. Despite the declared socially sensitive varnish, the aforementioned shows in their core are equally neo-liberalistically contesting such as *Masterchef*.

The show does not care in the end for the phenomenon which it was supposed to focus on, as at the end of the cooking show it is not the pudding that matters but the chef. Similarly, at the end of *Český sen* it is not the advertisement that matters but the stupefied crowds of aggressive Czechs contrasting with the heroic film-makers or the teacher who leaves for home like a beaten dog (*Třída 8.A*). The climax of the cooking shows shifts the attention from the completion of the meal to an evaluation which is usually disgraceful.²⁸ Similarly, the docusoap²⁹ formats shift the focus from the topic to the success or failure of the principal characters.

This is very well documented in *Příběhy obrácení* (Stories of Conversion) which promises, initially, to provide information about various religious traditions. The show accentuates the conversion itself, however, whether it is successful and whether the characters *succeed* in the new reality. The principle delegates attention not to the conversion but to whether those who are to be converted do so *successfully*. As a result, the serial³⁰ offers a minimum of information about religious traditions and the personal stories of individual actors do not uncover more than what is practical for the narration. The viewer does not focus on the religious content of the show but on whether the *reactions* of the participants to situations they are in will reveal their ability to succeed or not. Again, interactivity proves to be the principle of competition.

Oren in his study metaphorically claims that cooking shows push at the limits of *gastro porn*. If the exposure of the audience to pornography results in the need for increasingly extreme practices, the gastronomic eroticism in the cooking shows turns out to be gastronomic sado-masochism.³¹ Thus in *Třída 8.A* we do not see the teacher teach but how the teacher is being tortured by a birdie out of control. Both children and teachers are commodified, like women and men in pornography, becoming instruments in a battle that generates pleasure not by a qualitative dimension but by a quantitative one.

Although it is not as yet fully apparent in these cases, the principle of these new television formats leads to a preference for the bizarre and deviant. This *freakshow*³² – people change into monsters in a freakshow – was legitimised by Karel Vachek who was the first to integrate the popular principle in the post-modernist sense of the word in his shows. Like a funfair storyteller,

²⁸ Oren, "On the Line," 30.

²⁹ Docusoap means the following: "The existing format of the observational documentary series was refined using fictional techniques. Characters were 'cast' for their performance potential as much as their stories, storylines were identified through research [...], and the idea of intercutting these character-led storylines in the manner of the fictional soap was established." (Jon Dovey, *Freakshow: First Person Media and Factual Television* [London: Pluto Press, 2000], 135.)

³⁰ I am using the terms series and serial as follows: a series is a cluster of episodes where each episode is a closed story and the characters are at an equilibrium at the beginning and at the end (the story opens and closes in the familiar environment in each episode). A serial is a single story broken into episodes. It was originally associated with soap operas and family drama. The storyline winds through the episodes and requires that the viewer puts it together based on a knowledge of previous episodes. The main structural difference between series and serial is the status of events at the end of each episode. A series refuses to conclude the story (cliff-hanger) and a solved storyline is replaced with a new one. In the episodic narration in the series the key conflicts remain unsolved and at the end of the episode they return to their original status. (Jason Mittel, "Film and Television Narrative," in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, ed. David Herman [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007], 163–165.)

³¹ Oren, "On the Line," 30.

³² "We are all learning to live in the freakshow, it is our new public space." (Dovey, *Freakshow*, 4.)

he degrades complex topics from the pedestal of rational discourse and turns them into a bestiary. In the modernist sense, however, he conceives this calendar principle as *art* in the framework of his philosophy. The television mechanisms of the new formats, namely docusoap, can afford to abandon this elite-oriented legitimising narration. A film example of such a freakshow is the otherwise formally conventional documentary *Nesvatbav* (Matchmaking Mayor) which, as for genre, Erika Hníková defines as a *comedy*. Instead of an analytical or sympathetic approach, we observe a procession of bizarre characters in the strange, degraded environment of an East Slovak village. In the serial format, a similar bestiary can be found in the show *Navždy svoji* where each of the families preparing a wedding is bizarre in one way or another. The juxtaposition of a traditional Catholic couple refusing sex before marriage and a female model on the verge of the porn industry living with a permanently unemployed partner is determined by the extreme.

Narratologists in American serials, in particular, have recently noted a remarkable shift toward the replacement of traditional narrative forms with new ones characterised by discontinuity, non-linearity, bricolage, polysemy and diversity in respect of pleasures,³³ the afore-mentioned Czech docusoap serials in this sense reveal more of a formal and stylistic simplicity which enhances the importance of the central narrative on conflict. The viewer is not confronted with a complex shape that enables them to choose from various layers that could offer different aspects on the topic but is instead condemned to accept the mentality of the struggle for success. In *Navždy svoji* there is practically no chance to pause and contemplate the meaning of marriage at present or in the history of European civilisation. The viewer is instead permanently confronted with the question of “what is he/she going to do now?” and whether their acts will postpone the wedding or result in a happy marriage. Without providing a more profound discussion as to what a happy marriage amounts to, the serial relies on the gross foundation of reality TV principles, i.e. a voyeuristic insight into people’s lives, without any deeper reflection.

Similarly as in the case with genre, the television format represents a historically evolving implementation of a certain media code.³⁴ The simple introduction of a new feature (such as a character’s ethnic origin) into the format does not constitute an innovation of its structural principles and does not necessarily mean that it supports democratic competence. If we place Roma children or converts in the formal reality TV framework defined by interactivity, it does not amount to a change in narrative but a mere choice of different semantics within the established rules. We watch a teacher who has replaced the cook. The narration of a fight remains present in the reality TV. It draws social topics into conflicts and continues to deepen the principle of aggressive interaction without providing any room for reconciliation, quieting, interiority or contemplation. The docusoap genre is no exception in this respect, as it merely replaces the explicitly competitive mechanism with the implicit narration of success or failure while observing the individual fates over a period of time.

Summary

I suggest only certain selected ethical problems associated with the new formats using criticism of the interactivity principle. I interpreted this principle according to Philippe Breton’s theoretical concept of democratic competence and interiority and tried to point out the potential moral defects in applying interactivity namely in the so-called new television formats. I discovered the

³³ New narration schemata have a preference for discontinuity, fragmentation and eclecticism. See Gaby Allrath and Marion Gymnich, *Narrative Strategies in Television Series* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 4.

³⁴ John Fiske and John Hartley, *Reading Television* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 41.

paradigm of interactivity in the prevailing narration of conflict and made mention of the fact that these formats require a certain way of representing reality.

Freakshow, focusing on success, steps in where we should be seeking out a space for mutual understanding and negotiation of shared values as parties to an endless democratic discussion.

Reality TV, as I classify the shows mentioned in this paper, relies on a juxtaposition of the everyday and ordinary to the unexpected and bizarre. Its programming is drama, emotion and sensation. It turns the world into a voyeuristic spectacle and thus alienates the human misfortunes turning them into an atomised part of a story on a struggle outside its socio-historical, political and economic context.³⁵ This fosters the idea that it is possible to understand the elements of reality on the basis of extreme shapes, bizarre forms or fragmented information. From the hermeneutics point of view, this is an atomisation of the understanding of the world where an effort to completely understand an individual's situation is fragmented into separate curiosities. The reality TV principle leads one to make rash and quick judgements without a broader context. Advocates of reality TV, those who see it as "democrataintment" using real people and real situations, in fact foist a degraded meaning onto the concept of democracy. Democracy is not merely popularity but, as we have seen with Philippe Breton, involves a certain attitude toward an understanding of the world. It requires democratic competence for which an unreflected interactivity is a risk. Reality TV in this sense, officially defined by interactivity, is anti-democratic, at least in the tradition that I am referring to. It requires a radical innovation which will eliminate moral defects. Such an innovation not only has to be thematic, but must involve a formal transformation, i.e. a limitation of the demanding claim by eliminating the dominance of the situational character of form and narrative of conflict or fight. I believe, however, that such a radical innovation leads to such a fundamental challenge of the genre definition that a reality TV supporting democratic competence would have to be called something else. This is in my personal view, however, a negligible price for the moral gain of such a cultivation.

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³⁵ Bernadette Casey et al., *Television Studies: The Key Concepts* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 229–231.

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Speech Patterns in Czech TV News Programmes

Abstract | The article is primarily based on my phonetic research carried out in 2014¹ and partly on additional ongoing research which will be part of my PhD dissertation. The aim of this research is to find out and evaluate if TV news presenters adhere to the rules of the orthoepic norm, if their speech affects the objectivity and neutrality of the TV news, and if these speakers have the potential to establish language patterns for Czech society (similarly to language standards on the BBC). The analysis focuses on thirteen TV news presenters from three Czech TV channels (ČT 1 – public, TV Prima – private, and TV Nova – private).

The entire analysis is based on previously published theories on public speech, rules of the Czech orthoepic norm, and description of speech impediments, as well as on related analyses published in 1999,² 2003³ and 2011.⁴ The analysis focuses on both the segmental and suprasegmental levels. The results are compared with the analyses from the years 1999, 2003 and 2011, and, additionally, with a listening test (an additional comparative tool) assigned to the students from the Department of Czech Studies at the Faculty of Arts, Palacký University, Olomouc.

Keywords | Orthoepy – Phonetics – Presenters – Speech Patterns – Spoken Language – TV News

Public Speech

In the theories of stylistics, public speech represents the factual functional style.⁵ There are, however, certain aesthetic elements included to make speech more attractive to an audience.⁶ The main emphasis is placed not only on the content of the delivered message, but also on elocution (i.e. the manner of speaking), pronunciation included.⁷

¹ Michaela Kopečková, *Mluvní vzory v televizním zpravodajství* (Master's thesis, Palacký University in Olomouc, 2014).

² Jitka Janíková, "Moderátoři televizního zpravodajství (ze série poslechových testů 'řečový vzor')", *Čeština doma a ve světě* 9, no. 3–4 (2001): 178–203.

³ Jana Janoušková and Jitka Veroňková, "Moderátoři večerního televizního zpravodajství 2003", *Čeština doma a ve světě* 16, no. 1–2 (2008): 53–80.

⁴ Michaela Kopečková, "Analýza mluvených projevů moderátorů televizních novin (Nova, Prima, ČT)" (Bachelor's thesis, Palacký University in Olomouc, 2011).

⁵ Functional styles are based on the function of a text in a speech; the individual types require certain appropriately chosen language tools, which ensure the clarity of communication. (Petr Karlík et al., *Encyklopedický slovník češtiny* [Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2002], 450.)

⁶ Marie Krčmová, "Podíl fonické roviny textu na konstituování stylu dnešních řečnických projevů," *Linguistica online* 1 (2005): 1, accessed September 21, 2016, <http://www.phil.muni.cz/linguistica/art/krcmova/krc-004.pdf>.

⁷ Marie Krčmová, "Výslovnost ve veřejném projevu," *Linguistica online* 1 (2005): 1, accessed September 21, 2016, <http://www.phil.muni.cz/linguistica/art/krcmova/krc-015.pdf>.

A listener assumes speakers' knowledge of the orthoepic norm of the Czech standard language – the nationwide language used mainly in the written system and official speeches⁸ (based on codified rules),⁹ and he or she can therefore judge the following speech phenomena:¹⁰

- articulation – precise or imprecise
- prosody – intonation, speech rate, phrasing
- emotions
- dialects, interdialects (so-called “common Czech” – interdialect based on the development of the Czech language in Bohemia)¹¹

TV News Language

News programmes represent the main field of broadcast journalism reporting of worldwide recent events. The audience presumes it to be true and reality-based. The news should therefore always be unbiased, objective and balanced.¹²

As concerns the news language, the basic rule for speech is to comply with the standard language code to make the speech understandable for all audiences.¹³

The speeches of the presenters are usually prepared in advance and read. This is why using a standard language code and correct pronunciation should not cause difficulties for the speakers. Zdena Palková argues that the role of TV news presenters' speech is extremely important as the professional speakers have a huge influence on society and represent the language standard and culture. They are therefore expected to set language patterns for society.¹⁴

The audiences should be the primary concern for the news presenters. The audience expects to be able to understand all the information easily and correctly without any misunderstandings, and they should not be forced to recover some information from the context. The intelligibility of the speech (where correct pronunciation is a key factor) is therefore of vital importance.¹⁵

Following audiences' needs, standard language and the orthoepic norm, there are certain basic requirements imposed on the professional speakers, in our case TV news presenters.¹⁶

- Following the orthoepic and standard language norms on all levels (morphology, syntax...).
- Speech understandable to the entire audience (young people, pensioners, Moravian, Bohemian or Silesian viewers...).
- Natural behavior.

Certain aspects of the spoken language are viewed as unacceptable.

- Too fast a speech rate and imprecise articulation are not allowed.
- The speech should not display any regional or dialect features, i.e. should be neutral.
- Hyperenunciation is considered a negative and disruptive element in the speech.
- Speech defects are unacceptable.

⁸ Karlík et al., *Encyklopedický slovník češtiny*, 90.

⁹ Jiřina Hůrková, *Česká výslovnostní norma* (Praha: Scientia, 1995).

¹⁰ Krčmová, “Podíl fonické roviny textu,” 3.

¹¹ Karlík et al., *Encyklopedický slovník češtiny*, 81.

¹² Marek Mičienka and Jan Jiráček, *Základy mediální výchovy* (Praha: Portál, 2007), 49.

¹³ Jaroslav Bartošek, “Jazyková kultura mluveného zpravodajství,” in *Spisovná čeština a jazyková kultura 1993 – sborník z olomoucké konference 23–27 August 1993*, ed. Jana Jančáková et al. (1995), 167.

¹⁴ Zdena Palková, “Zvuková podoba veřejných mluvených projevů z hlediska jazykové kultury,” *Čeština doma a ve světě* 16, no. 1–2 (2008): 20.

¹⁵ Barbora Hedbávná, “Teď mě dobře poslouchajte, nebudu to víckrát opakovat,” *Čeština doma a ve světě* 16, no. 1–2 (2008): 32.

¹⁶ Kopečková, “Mluvní vzory,” 11–14.

These basic rules should be obligatory for all professional speakers. In reality, however, a presenter becomes a public speaker as an adult and may have some inappropriate pronunciation habits which are hard to eliminate. Moreover, orthoepic education is both difficult and time-consuming and most of the TV channels are not interested in or neglect this kind of education of their employees.¹⁷

Another problem is that presenters' natural behavior is viewed as being of more importance than their language skills. Spontaneous speech seems to be, in fact, much closer and more authentic for the audience and correct pronunciation is not as required as it should be.¹⁸

Last but not least, certain linguists (for example Václav Cvrček) view standard language as a *negative* element in speech and hold the opinion that phoneticians make the presenters use a linguistic code which is not natural for them.¹⁹

Previous Analyses

The present analysis is inspired by two phonetic analyses of TV news presenters' speech published in 1999²⁰ and 2003.²¹ These analyses were mainly based on listening tests assigned to students of the Czech Studies programme at Charles University in Prague as well as to professional linguists. During the test the respondents listened to short speeches by selected TV news presenters and had to evaluate them (good/average/bad speaker). The listening tests were anonymous. The analyses were complemented by comments on the individual analyzed phenomena as well as by specific examples of the presenters' speech.

A similar analysis, using phonetic transcriptions as the data, was made as part of my bachelor's thesis project in 2011.²² The analyzed phenomena were also commented on and completed by specific examples.

The Tables 1–3 below show the results of the presenters who were analyzed repeatedly based on the analyses mentioned above (speakers are sorted from the best to the worst).

Tab. 1: The results of the analysis made in 1999

Order	Name	TV channel
1	Martina Kociánová	TV Prima (priv.) ²³
2	Marcela Augustová	ČT 1 (pub.) ²⁴
	...	
8	Karel Voříšek	TV Nova (priv.)
9	Reynolds Koranteng	TV Nova (priv.)
	...	
12	Lucie Borhyová	TV Nova (priv.)

¹⁷ Krčmová, "Výslovnost ve veřejném projevu," 2.

¹⁸ Marie Krčmová, "Proměny zvukové stavby češtiny," *Linguistica online* 1 (2005): 2, accessed September 22, 2016, <http://www.phil.muni.cz/linguistica/art/krcmova/krc-008.pdf>.

¹⁹ Hedbávná, "Teď mě dobře poslouchajte," 32.

²⁰ Janíková, "Moderátoři televizního zpravodajství," 178–203.

²¹ Janoušková and Veroňková, "Moderátoři večerního televizního zpravodajství," 53–80.

²² Kopečková, "Analýza mluvených projevů."

²³ Private channel.

²⁴ Private channel.

Tab. 2: The results of the analysis made in 2003

Order	Name	TV channel
1	Marcela Augustová	ČT 1 (pub.)
	...	
7	Roman Pistorius	ČT 1 (pub.)
	...	
12	Reynolds Koranteng	TV Nova (priv.)
	...	
14	Karel Voříšek	TV Nova (priv.)
15	Lucie Borhyová	TV Nova (priv.)

Tab. 3: The results of the analysis made in 2011

Order	Name	TV channel
1	Marcela Augustová	ČT 1 (pub.)
2	Roman Fojta	TV Prima (priv.)
3	Sandra Parmová	TV Prima (priv.)
4	Reynolds Koranteng	TV Nova (priv.)
5	Lucie Borhyová	TV Nova (priv.)
6	Roman Pistorius	ČT 1 (pub.)

Materials and Methods of the 2014 Analysis

The primary data for the analysis were audio recordings of the TV news (available in the three TV channel archives – TV Prima, TV Nova and ČT 1²⁵). Selected parts of presenters' speech were transcribed phonetically (using the IPA system²⁶ and symbols of specific prosodic phenomena²⁷). There were thirteen presenters analysed²⁸ and the length of each presenter's speech was approximately three minutes.

Additional materials included the vocalic triangles for each presenter based on the data generated from the phonetic program Praat,²⁹ the data and results from previous analyses mentioned above and comparative material – a listening test – assigned to the students of the Department of Czech Studies at the Faculty of Arts, Palacký University, Olomouc.

There were nine features (using the glottal stop, vocalic quality and quantity, voicing assimilation, assimilation of place of articulation, speech defects, speech rate, intonation and phrasing) analysed individually for each presenter with all these features being projected on a rating scale –1, 0, +1. To obtain a more specific evaluation, the arrows “better” / “worse” could have been added.

²⁵ Česká televize.

²⁶ Michael Ashby and John Maidment, *Úvod do obecné fonetiky* (Praha: Karolinum, 2015), 14.

²⁷ The prosodic elements are marked with these symbols: /, //, /// (short pause, long pause, end of the utterance), ↓ (descending cadence), → (slightly ascending cadence), ↑ (ascending cadence).

²⁸ ČT 1 – Marcela Augustová, Aneta Savarová, Jakub Železný, Daniela Písařovicová; TV Nova – Reynolds Koranteng, Lucie Borhyová, Renáta Czadernová, Petr Suchoň, Markéta Fialová; TV Prima – Klára Doležalová, Karel Voříšek, Terezie Kašparovská, Tomáš Hauptvogel.

²⁹ “Praat: Doing Phonetics by Computer,” accessed September 21, 2016, <http://www.fon.hum.uva.nl/praat/>.

The analysed features were commented on (and, if needed, compared with the previous analyses) and illustrated with specific examples.

The results of the individual evaluations were compiled into a table showing the final rankings both for each presenter and each TV channel. In the conclusion, the results of the current phonetic analysis were compared with the results of the listening test.³⁰

The Results of the 2014 Analysis

Tab. 4: The results of the phonetic analysis (presenters)

Order	Name (abbreviation)	TV channel
1	Klára Doležalová (Dol)	TV Prima (priv.)
2	Marcela Augustová (Aug)	ČT 1 (pub.)
3	Aneta Savarová (Sav)	ČT 1 (pub.)
4–8	Daniela Písařovicová (Pis)	ČT 1 (pub.)
4–8	Terezie Kašparovská (Kasp)	TV Prima (priv.)
4–8	Tomáš Hauptvogel (Haup)	TV Prima (priv.)
4–8	Markéta Fialová (Fial)	TV Nova (priv.)
4–8	Renáta Czadernová (Czad)	TV Nova (priv.)
9	Lucie Borhyová (Borh)	TV Nova (priv.)
10	Jakub Železný (Zel)	ČT 1 (pub.)
11	Petr Suchoň (Such)	TV Nova (priv.)
12	Reynolds Koranteng (Kor)	TV Nova (priv.)
13	Karel Voříšek (Vor)	TV Prima (priv.)

Tab. 5: The results of the phonetic analysis (TV channels)

Order	TV channel
1	ČT 1
2	TV Prima
3	TV Nova

The results indicated that the best presenter was Klára Doležalová from TV Prima. She was evaluated as an above average speaker with respect to most of the analysed features. Her speech was of high quality and well balanced. The lower speech rate might have had a significant influence on her speech. Marcela Augustová and Aneta Savarová can be judged as good presenters as well.

The worst presenter out of the selected sample was Karel Voříšek. He committed pronunciation mistakes in most of the analysed phenomena and was therefore evaluated as a below average speaker. His imprecise articulation makes his speech quite sloppy and his overall presentation careless and lax. This behavior is usually considered unacceptable in TV news.

Based on the quality of the individual presenters' speeches, the best TV channel was the public TV ČT 1. TV Prima was, however, also very close to the ranking as the best TV channel. The reason was the below average result of Jakub Železný from ČT 1. The lowest evaluations

³⁰ Kopečková, "Mluvní vzory," 42.

were given to TV Nova. The presenters on this channel were usually judged as average, or even below average speakers.³¹

The Analysed Phenomena

1 Using the glottal stop

Czech native speakers tend to realise a glottal stop³² spontaneously before vowels, but omitting glottal stops usually does not affect comprehension. In professional speech, however, there is a need to use the glottal stop to make speech more intelligible and to preclude unacceptable merging of words.³³

In the present analysis, using the glottal stop had quite a major influence on presenters' speech. Men usually did not realise the glottal stop, especially Karel Voříšek. Due to the pronunciation mistakes in this feature, the speech seemed to be sloppy and the utterance was disruptive.

Examples:

- 1) [tʃi naʃi polititsɪ tam jeli pod za:ʃcitou organizatɛ → /] (Vor)
- 2) [ma: rozɦodnout ʔo jeho osudu ↓ /] (Vor)
- 3) [xcel ʔujkɔcit ʔopsluɦu za barem a nakonets ʔutek↓ ↓ /] (Kor)
- 4) [no a jedna:ɲi: dnes tɛli: den sledovala lada kolovratova: ↓ /] (Žel)

2 Pronunciation of vowels

2.1 Vocalic quality

The articulation of Czech vowels should be neutral, which means they should not be articulated either too open or too close.³⁴ Incorrect pronunciation might cause misunderstanding, for example, in the pronunciation of the words *širý* ("wide") – [ʃiri:] ("wide") × [ʃeri:] ("dim"), or *této* ("this") – [tɛ:to] ("this") × [ta:to] ("Daddy").³⁵

The pronunciation is based on two (or three) formants F1, F2 (and F3) presented in Hertz (Hz). A formant is the harmonic of a note that is augmented by a resonance and gives a vowel its specific quality (pitch).³⁶

Table 6 demonstrates the presentable frequency ranges for the individual vowels. For careful pronunciation, merging of the vowels is not allowed.

³¹ Ibid., 84.

³² Glottal stop – a type of consonantal sound produced by obstructing airflow in the vocal tract (the glottis).

³³ Hůrková, *Česká výslovnostní norma*, 25.

³⁴ Ibid., 18.

³⁵ Ibid., 19.

³⁶ Edvard Lotko, *Slovník lingvistických pojmů pro filology* (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 2005), 37.

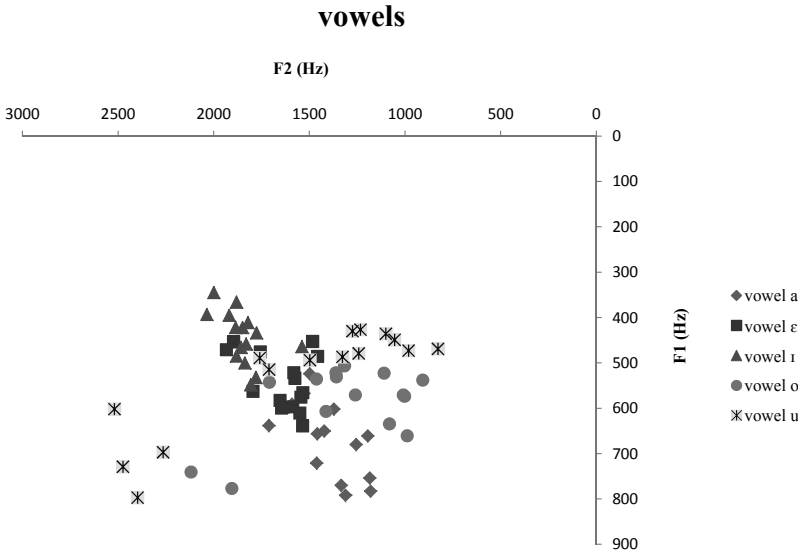
Tab. 6: The representative frequency ranges for Czech vowels³⁷

Vowels	F1 (Hz)	F2 (Hz)
ɪ, i:	300–500	2,000–2,800
ɛ, e:	480–700	1,560–2,100
ɑ, a:	700–1,100	1,100–1,500
o, o:	500–700	850–1,200
u, u:	300–500	600–1,000

The presenters’ pronunciation of vowels usually did not correspond (more or less) to the frequency range of the vowels [u, u:]. Its F2 was higher than 1,000 Hz which caused the move to the frequency range of [o, o:]. Eight of the thirteen presenters also did not respect the values of F2 of the vowels [ɪ, i:], therefore the pronunciation was more open and [ɪ, i:] sounded more like [ɛ, ɛ:]. Incorrect and open pronunciation was also mentioned in the previous analyses.

The individual vocalic triangles with comments are part of the master’s thesis.³⁸ The graphs below illustrate the vocalic triangles of the best (Daniela Písařovicová – ČT 1) and the worst speaker (Karel Voříšek – TV Prima).

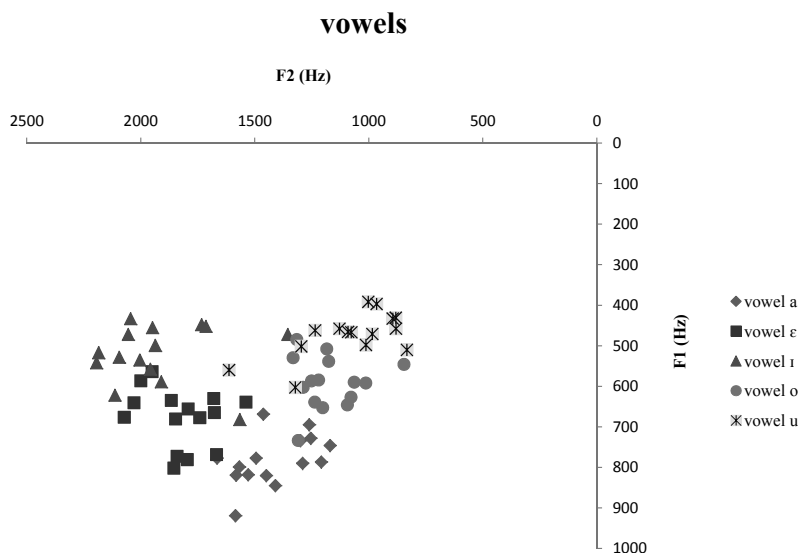
Graph 1: Vocalic triangle of Daniela Písařovicová. The frequency ranges of the individual vowels are quite well distinguished.



³⁷ Zdena Palková, *Fonetika a fonologie češtiny* (Praha: Karolinum, 1994), 174.

³⁸ Kopečková, “Mluvní vzory,” 49–62.

Graph 2: Vocalic triangle of Karel Voříšek. The frequency ranges are interwoven and almost merge which is unacceptable.



2.2 Vocalic quantity

The orthoepic norm requires strict distinction between short and long vowels.³⁹ The long vowels are usually supposed to be twice as long as the short ones. The distinction between the vowels is usually provided in milliseconds (ms). New research, however, has revealed quite different results – the distinction between [a, a:], [ε, ε:] and [o, o:] is about 70–80%, the distinction between high vowels [i, i:] and [u, u:] is lower.⁴⁰

Pronunciation of long and short vowels requires adhering to the rules of orthoepy. Low or no distinction between short and long vowels might break the intelligibility of the utterance because in the Czech language there are pairs of words where the quantity of a vowel is the only distinctive feature, e.g., [dal] (“he gave”) × [da:l] (“further”), [kru:ta] (“turkey hen”) × [kruta:] (“cruel”). The analysis revealed that the distinction between high vowels [i, i:] and [u, u:] was indeed lower than the distinction between other vowels. Moreover, these high long vowels were reduced by all the presenters more often than the other long vowels. The only exception was Aneta Savarová who reduced other long vowels as well.

Additionally, there were several cases of extending of vowels, but this mistake was not as common as the reduction of vowels.

The previous analyses also mentioned the shortening of long vowels. Even good presenters made mistakes in these phenomena and the reduction was quite a regular feature.

³⁹ Hůrková, *Česká výslovnostní norma*, 20.

⁴⁰ Jan Volín and Radek Skarnitzl, “Referenční hodnoty vokálních formantů pro mladé dospělé mluvčí,” *Akustické listy* 18, no. 1 (2012): 9, accessed September 25, 2016, http://fonetika.ff.cuni.cz/wp-content/uploads/sites/104/2016/05/Ska_Vol2012.pdf.

Examples:

- 1) [ʔozna:mɪɫɪ dnes malajzɪjskɛ ʔuradı ↓ /] (Borh)
- 2) [vlada ʔalɛ jɛʃcɛ musi: sxvalɪt za:kon kteri: ʔurʃi: spu:sob jak pɛpi:zɛ ʔot poɯʃcovɛn zi:skat] (Sav)
- 3) [sta:lɛ vtɪsɛ polɪtsistu: vozi vɛ svi:x ʔautɛx novou souʃʃa:st vi:bavi] (Dol)
- 4) [mi:ʃo: jaka: tam ʔatmosfɛ:ra jaká tam bila ʔatmosfɛ:ra jaka: tam ʔatmosfɛ:ra panovala ↓ /] (Fial)

3 Assimilation of voicing before sonorants⁴¹ and [v]

All consonants in the position before any of the sonorants (sounds which are most typically only voiced) maintained their original sound. This means there is no voicing assimilation before this group of consonants, e.g., correct pronunciation of the group *k ránu* (“towards morning”) is [k ra:nu], not [g ra:nu]. The same rule can be applied to the consonant [v]. Even though [v] can be assimilated, e.g., *včera* (“yesterday”) – [fʃɛra], it does not cause a regressive assimilation, for example *svůj* (“itself”) – [svu:j], not [zvu:j].⁴²

The analysed presenters did not have any problems with these phenomena and made mistakes only occasionally.

Examples:

- 1) [ʔa moɦou tak ʔokamzɪcɛ zaʃi:t z jɛɦo ʔoʒɪvova:ni:m ↓ /] (Dol)
- 2) [prima poma:ɦa: ra:da ʔa tɛc +smɛ servis pro va:z naʃɛ ɦiva:ki ʔa spotřɛbiteɛ → /] (Kasp)
- 3) [přita:ɦnout k volɛbnɪm ʔurna:m vi:ɔz volɪʃu: ↓ /] (Kor)
- 4) [pratsovni:tsɪ odboru ʔa:j ti: a dopravi mɛɦɪ podle soudu zmanɪpuloval vi:bjerovɛ: ři:zɛɦni: ↓ /] (Vor)

4 Assimilation of place of articulation

Assimilation of the place of articulation results in neutralizing the difference between neighboring sounds. A typical example in the Czech language is a change of alveolar [n] to velar [ŋ] in the position before velar consonants [k, g], such as *maminka* (“mom”) – [mamɪŋka]. Pronunciation of alveolar [n] in this position is considered hyperenunciation and is incorrect.⁴³

Assimilation rules allow speakers to assimilate the adjoining consonants usually in the middle of the word (root + suffix), e.g., *dětský* (“childish”) – [jɛtski:]. If the consonants occur at the word boundary or in the position prefix + root, they must be pronounced correctly without articulation assimilation, e.g., *podstavec* (“pedestal”) – [potstavɛts], not [poʔstavɛts] or *před stolem* (“in front of the table”) – [přɛt stɔlɛm], not [přɛtstɔlɛm].⁴⁴

Professional speakers are expected to follow fairly strict rules for this type of assimilation. They should not assimilate even the consonants in the middle of the word.

Another problematic phenomenon can be the reduction of the palatal consonant [j] in the full-meaning verb *být* (“to be”), e.g., [+sɛm] (“I am”), [+sɪ] (“you are”), in identical fashion as

⁴¹ Sonorants – l, r, m, n, ň, j.

⁴² Bohuslav Hála, *Výslovnost spisovné češtiny I. Zásady a pravidla: výslovnost slov českých* (Praha: Academia, 1967), 49.

⁴³ Hůrková, *Česká výslovnostní norma*, 30.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 33.

in other words where [j] is at the first position before the consonant, such as *jméno* (“name”) – [+mɛ: no] or *jdu* (“I go”) – [+du]. Reductions in those cases are not allowed.⁴⁵

This phenomenon was not problematic for most of the presenters tested in the present analysis. They did produce, however, certain mistakes which are viewed as unacceptable. The analysis primarily focused on the positions at word boundaries and prefix + suffix, as well as on reducing the consonant [j] in the full-meaning verb *být*. Incorrect pronunciation can deform the words and might cause misunderstanding.

Examples:

- 1) [která: se bude ʔotstrapovat jɛʃcɛ ɲekolík mɲesi:tsu: ↓ /] (Vor)
- 2) [přítom uʃ přɛʃfɛsci letí zaʃʃalí kvulí xulíga:nu:m soudtsí zasɛdat pří:mo na stadijo:nu ↓ /] (Kor)
- 3) [bɪ mɲɛlí mi:t mali: ʔa stʃɛɲni: zɛmɲɛjɛltsi pɔtʃacɲɛ snadɲɛjʃí: pří:stup g dotatsi:m ↓ /] (Haup)
- 4) [pro neɲvɪʃí:ho přɛstavitɛɛ zɛmɲɛ ↓ /] (Zel)
- 5) [pɛtʃɛ jak +sou na tom vɪxovateɛ: ↓ /] (Such)
- 6) [mɪ +smɛ tɛc vɛ spoɲɛji: s rɛpɔrtɛ:rkou mɪxaelou ʃmi:dovu → /] (Fial)

5 Speech defects

Speech defects are unacceptable in professional speeches. Most of the analysed presenters do not have any speech defects. The audience can notice a slightly sharp pronunciation of consonants [s, z] by female presenters, but this defect might be caused by the microphone.

A speech defect was detected in Reynolds Koranteng's speech, namely in his pronunciation of the consonant [l]. The correct pronunciation is alveolar, while the presenter's pronunciation is almost dental. The same speech defect by Reynolds Koranteng was also mentioned in the previous analyses.

6 Speech rate

Speech rate is usually defined by the number of syllables per second (pauses included). Depending on the individual utterances, it might have a huge influence on other phonological features.⁴⁶ Based on a great deal of research and, also, on the orthoepic rules, the average value of the speech rate for the spoken Czech language is 4.89 syl/sec, while the maximum is 6.67 syl/sec.⁴⁷

A professional speaker should not speak too slowly or too quickly, thus an average speech rate should be the rule for them. Unreasonably slow speech might be tiring for the audience while too fast a speech rate might result in incomprehensibility of an utterance. Sudden changes in the speech rate (from slow to fast and back) are not allowed because they can disrupt the fluency of speech.⁴⁸

None of the analyzed presenters respect (more or less) the average value of the speech rate 4.89 syl/sec and they speak faster. The slowest speech rate was measured in the speeches of Klára Doležalová and Karel Voříšek (5.4 syl/sec) and the fastest in the case of Jakub Železný and Petr Suchoň (6.2 syl/sec). The ongoing research in 2015 detected a fast speech rate (6.9 syl/sec) in the speeches of Reynolds Koranteng, which is even faster than the maximal speech rate defined by

⁴⁵ If *být* (“to be”) is used as an auxiliary, e.g., *šel jsem* (“I was going”), [j] sound can be omitted.

⁴⁶ Ilona Balkó, “K výzkumu tempa řeči a tempa artikulace v různých řečových úlohách,” *„Bohemistika“* 5, no. 3 (2005): 185.

⁴⁷ Palková, *Fonetika a fonologie češtiny*, 317.

⁴⁸ Edvard Lotko, *Kapitoly ze současné rétoriky* (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 2009), 69.

orthoepic rules. Such an extreme speech rate is unacceptable. This presenter also had problems with changing the speech rate (from slow to fast and back), thus the fluency was broken. The changing speech rate of Reynolds Koranteng was mentioned in the previous analyses as well.

Faster speech rates had an influence on the other analysed features – quantity of vowels, using the glottal stop, incorrect phrasing and intonation.

7 Intonation

The main function of intonation is to indicate the end of an utterance and to define if a sentence is declarative or interrogative.⁴⁹ The main intonation part at the end of a sentence is called cadence.

There are two types of intonation patterns – the cadence of the terminal section and the cadence of the non-terminal section in the Czech language. For the first type, descending intonation is typical in declarative sentences and raising intonation in yes/no questions. The second part normally involves slightly ascending intonation signaling to the audience that the utterance is not finished yet. Incorrect intonation patterns, e.g., ascending intonation in declarative sentences, are unacceptable.⁵⁰

The present analysis revealed two types of mistakes. First, all the presenters used descending intonation in the non-terminal sections which led to monotonous speech. This mistake was also mentioned in the previous analysis.

Examples:

- 1) [zdřtsuj+tsi: spra:vu pro bli:ske: tsestujci: + zmizel: fi: letadla ↓ / ?ozna: mli: dnes malajzijske ?uradi ↓ /] (Borh)
- 2) [ministerstvo živocni: fi: porstřej: ma: připraven: dvje mlijadi ↓ / ktere: bude rozjelovat ↓ /] (Vor)
- 3) [jeje teli: dnejni: den hasiři ?odvjetra: vali hali f ?area: lu peka: ren f klajne krořefilavi ↓ / gde řřera bojovali s rosa: fili: m poza: rem ↓ /] (Fial)

Another mistake in the intonation was influenced by the fast speech rate. The presenters with a higher speech rate used ascending (or no) intonation at the end of statements. This mistake might cause wrong phrasing and also disrupts the fluency of speech.

Examples:

- 4) [na řraje bil dnes ři jan mla: dek s řře: es es de: ke ktere: mu mnel mlioz zeman řurřite: vi: řradi → prozřail ci dnes pravjepodobni: budoutsi: ministr → / jestli fi: prezident nakonets ?opravdu jmenuje ↑ /] (Kor)
- 5) [vi: tse ?informati: řo sra: řře ma: nata: lije forsterova: → nata: lije → /] (Such)

⁴⁹ Marie Krčmová, *Úvod do fonetiky a fonologie pro bohemisty* (Ostrava: OU v Ostravě, 2007), 149.

⁵⁰ Hůrková, *Česká výslovnostní norma*, 43–46.

8 Phrasing

Correct phrasing consists in segmentation of an utterance to logical units, which should be semantically coherent. The segmentation is realised by pauses, intonation, etc.⁵¹

Wrong phrasing might result in semantic ambiguity of the utterance and complicate understanding.⁵²

As with the previous feature, the presenters made two kinds of mistakes. First, they often made pauses before the stressed words. Jakub Železný even segmented his speech into extremely short, illogical parts.

A second type of mistake is probably related to the speech rate and improper breathing. The presenters usually did not make any pause in their speech until they needed to take a breath.

Both mistakes might cause wrong segmentation of the utterance and break up the coherence of the speech.

Examples:

- 1) [ci:mto spu:sobem xtse prezident mřloz zeman → / přřta:řnōut k volebnřm řurna:m vi:dž volřřřu: ↓ /] (Kor)
- 2) [přřvřni: novelu → / nove:řio řoptřanske:řio za:koni:ku řiodla: v le:ce přřpravřt ministrřne spaveřřnosci řielena va:řkova: ↓ / vla:ře takř přředlozi: na:vřř normř → / řosta:třni:m zastupřtelstvi: ↓ /] (Aug)
- 3) [vi:tse řřnformatsi: řo sra:řřse ma: koleğřne nata:řije forsterova: nata:řije → /] (Such)
- 4) [řa to na:řodōu gdiř přřřli:řelř → / řarřivřni: pozu:stalost / sve:řio / dlōuřiole:řio koleğř ↓ /] (Zel)

Listening Test

As already mentioned, a listening test⁵³ was assigned to students of the Department of Czech Studies at the Faculty of Arts, Palacký University, Olomouc. Forty-six respondents listened to short speeches by the individual presenters and were asked to judge them using the rating scale -2, -1, 0, +1, +2, where +2 corresponds to “good,” 0 to “average,” and -2 to “bad” speakers. The students also could add comments to elaborate on why they evaluated the presenter in a particular way. The respondents were not given presenters’ names, they only knew that the speakers were TV presenters.

Table 7 compares the results of the phonetic analysis to the listening test results.

Tab. 7: The comparison of phonetic analysis (PA) and listening test (LT)

Order	Presenter (LT)	Presenter (PA)
1.	Marcela Augustová	Klára Doleřalová
2.	Lucie Borřhyová	Marcela Augustová
3.	Reynolds Koranteng	Aneta Savarová
4.	Daniela Přsařovicová	Daniela Přsařovicová
5.	Jakub řelezný	Terezie Kařparovská

⁵¹ Ibid., 42.
⁵² Lotko, *Kapřtoly ze současné řetoriky*, 65.
⁵³ Kopečková, “Mluvnř vzory,” 87–91.

6.	Aneta Savarová	Tomáš Hauptvogel
7.	Tomáš Hauptvogel	Markéta Fialová
8.	Terezie Kašparovská	Renáta Czadernová
9.	Karel Voříšek	Lucie Borhyová
10	Klára Doležalová	Jakub Železný
11.	Markéta Fialová	Petr Suchoň
12.	Petr Suchoň	Reynolds Koranteng
13.	Renáta Czadernová	Karel Voříšek

The final results clearly indicate differences in the evaluations, which were influenced by several factors. First of all, there were no phonetic transcriptions available for the respondents so their evaluation was based exclusively on listening. Although the listening test was anonymous and the respondents did not know the names of the presenters, they nevertheless recognised some of them, so their attitude to these speakers might have affected their opinion, e.g., “nice voice...,” “She is a nice presenter...,” “Jeee, Vořech...” (Karel Voříšek’s nickname). The questionnaires revealed that some of the students were not all that interested in this test, thus their evaluation was not objective. There were comments such as “Hey girl, how much work have you prepared for us?,” “Maybe I’m not objective but I’m already bored...”

The respondents usually only focused on the prosodic features – intonation, speech rate and phrasing. It is remarkable how frequently the respondents focused on Jakub Železný and his bad phrasing. This was usually identified as bad, weird or disruptive. None of the other presenters were evaluated in such a detailed way.

Despite the low objectivity, the listening test was a very useful research tool, because it indicated which aspects of speech are important for standard audiences.

Conclusion

The results of the present analysis revealed that presenters usually do not adhere to the orthoepic norm and their speech is not balanced. Regarding gender, the evaluation showed that women are slightly more careful speakers. The difference between men and women might be noticed mainly in using the glottal stop and in the speech rate.

The speech rate was considered the most problematic feature for all presenters. An excessively fast speech rate disrupted the fluency of speech and in all probability influenced the other analysed phenomena. Moreover, presenters with a high speech rate are usually ranked lower in the evaluations.

Additionally, the presenters committed the most mistakes in other suprasegmental features (intonation and phrasing). The suprasegmental features are not more important than segmental features (vocalic quality and quantity, voicing assimilation and assimilation of place of articulation) with respect to comprehension, but as the listening test demonstrated, the average audience usually only notices the suprasegmental features and the phonetic analysis revealed that the presenters make the most mistakes on this level.

According to the analysed presenters, only Klára Doležalová has the potential to establish language patterns for Czech society. The presenters Marcela Augustová and Aneta Savarová also have such a potential although they made mistakes in certain features. This means that only three out of the thirteen professional speakers adhered to the orthoepic norm, which can be considered a negative result.

With respect to the previous analyses, the speech of the repeatedly analysed presenters has not fundamentally changed despite the fact that the presenters are evaluated as bad speakers, so it seems that these presenters do not try to improve their pronunciation skills, e.g., Reynolds Koranteng and his speech defect and excessively fast speech rate.

Unfortunately, pronunciation and communication skills are not the only criteria which the present-day TV channels take into consideration during recruitment of new presenters. Moreover, their employees are not forced to take courses in orthoepy or rhetoric. Last but not least, the young age and lack of professionalism of the speakers lower the standards of the TV news.⁵⁴

It would be appropriate to increase the demands on candidates for the job and focus closely on their speech, which should be based on the Czech standard language, cultured, and intelligible, and – last but not least – in correspondence with orthoepic rules.

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⁵⁴ Jaroslav Bartošek, “K jazyku mluvených zpráv,” *Čeština doma a ve světě* 16, no. 1–2 (2008): 6.

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Is Kafka a Greater Czech Than Freud? The Global TV Format *100 Great Britons* in Czech Translation (A Case Study)

Abstract | The BBC television format *100 Greatest Britons* (2002) was a pioneer on the global television market. The project is based on cultural translation and on shifts in form and content, enabling it to address the largest local target audience possible. It can consequently be considered a typical representative of so-called glocalization. A text by a TV theoretician and one of the producers of the Czech version of the format (*The Greatest Czech – Největší Čech*, 2005) provides an insider's view. It follows the steps Czech TV had to take when adapting the format to fulfil the provisions of the licence agreement and address its concrete audience in its own, specific way.

Keywords | Television – TV Format – The Greatest Czech – 100 Greatest Britons – National Identity – Czech History – Jára Cimrman – Adaptation – Cultural Translation

1 Introduction

National adaptations of the BBC TV format *100 Greatest Britons* resembled ten-year-long election caucuses running in 25 different countries from 2002 to 2012. The elitist club of the greatest elected to date consists of Winston Churchill (GB), Konrad Adenauer (D), Tommy Douglas (CAN), Gustav Mannerheim (FIN), Pim Fortuin (NL), Nelson Mandela (SA), Ronald Reagan (USA), Father Damian (B), Ernest Rutheford (NZ), Charles de Gaulle (F), Vasil Levski (BG), Oda Nobunaga (J), Stephen the Great (RO), António de Oliveira Salazar (P), Juan Carlos I (E), José de San Martín (RA), Yaroslav I the Wise (UA), Alexander the Great (GR), Salvador Allende (RCH), St. Alexander Nevsky (RUS), John Hume (IRL), Leonardo da Vinci (I), Maria de Penha (BR) and B. R. Ambedkar (IND).¹ Czech TV contributed to this tradition in 2005 when it declared Charles IV, Roman Emperor and King of Bohemia, official winner of the competition *The Greatest Czech*. What steps had to be taken to adopt the global TV format to local conditions in the Czech Republic? What values were targeted, what was the desired impact and in what way can the results be analysed? Did the cultural translation produce a typical Czech feature or phenomenon?

¹ When visiting the University of Łódź in 2016, I asked the students why they think Polish public TV never bought the rights to the show. The unanimous answer was: why would they when Pope John Paul II is obviously the greatest Pole?

2 TV Format – Between the Global and the Local

TV formats are media products, programme ideas and plans that are produced for local markets and adjusted to their needs.² They have been the subjects of interest for professionals as of the mid-1990s when highly successful shows were turned into new formats thanks to the intensity of the impact of other markets. Since the formation of superformats, the so-called Big Four,³ production and sales practice in TV companies has changed radically, and using the formats has become one of the main principles of production and programming.⁴ Albert Moran refers to the current era full of reality shows, dating shows, game shows or cooking shows, which can be adopted for TV in all parts of the world, as “significant worldwide business” and dates it from 2000 to the present.⁵

Since these are products of mainstream popular culture with an incredible reach and business potential, the formats can also be analysed as representatives of sociological trends, or can be dealt with in the never-ending process of redefining globalization (see Giddens,⁶ Scholte,⁷ Thompson⁸). As late as the 1970s and the 1980s, these could be viewed as tools of so-called cultural imperialism, defined by Herbert Schiller in the processes of the massive spreading of the dominant culture (especially American) and the establishment of its paradigm on the level of local cultures. This concept and the variations of so-called cultural homegenization (Boyd-Barrett,⁹ Mirrlees¹⁰) were, however, abandoned in the 1990s, and since this time, the TV formats have been examined as specific bearers and originators of cultural heterogenization (Curran and Morley,¹¹ Straubhaar¹²). In stark contrast, they have actually been viewed as strong competitors on the global markets, whose strengths are used for the development of the specific culture of the defined areas. They have been viewed as creating a space for the formation of particular cultural identities. This is not due, however, to local patriotism or a desire for cultural diversity, but is merely a more elaborate means of reaching local markets with the goal of targeting the local community in the widest and most direct way. It is well known that marketing makes effective use of the same strategies.

This research is, in my view, the most valid when it focuses on those processes which transform the content in such a way that the audience can identify with the formats.¹³ TV communication theoreticians such as Silvio Waisbord have emphasised the fact that in terms of sales, it is actually undesirable that these formats should have any particular local or national meaning.

² Silvio Waisbord, “Understanding the Global Popularity of Television Formats,” *Television and New Media* 5, no. 4 (2004): 359.

³ The Big Four refers to *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*, *Survivor*, *Big Brother* and *Pop Idol*.

⁴ The licence for *100 Greatest Britons* was sold by the BBC Worldwide department.

⁵ In her article, Andrea Esser mentions Moran's periodization of the development of cross-border television adaptations: early “trailblazing” programme imitations (1935–55), “casual exchange” (1955–80), “the becoming of the format business” (1980–2000) and formats as “significant worldwide business” (2000 to present). Andrea Esser, “TV Formats. History, Theory, Industry and Audiences: Editorial,” CST online, December 12, 2013, accessed August 5, 2016, <http://cstonline.tv/tv-formats>.

⁶ Anthony Giddens, *Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996).

⁷ Jan Aart Scholte, *Globalization: A Critical Introduction* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000). Online: <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/cuni/Doc?id=2002945>, accessed July 28, 2016.

⁸ John B. Thompson, *Media and Modernity. A Social Theory of the Media* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013).

⁹ Oliver Boyd-Barrett, *Media Imperialism* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2014).

¹⁰ Tanner Mirrlees, *Global Entertainment Media: Between Cultural Imperialism and Cultural Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

¹¹ James Curran and David Morley, eds., *Media and Cultural Theory* (London: Routledge, 2006).

¹² Joseph D. Straubhaar, *World Television: From Global to Local* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2007).

¹³ Success is not automatic – e.g., *Survivor* was the only TV super-format with virtually no success with the Central European audience. (Kateřina Vachová, *Globální televizní formáty a jejich adaptace v zemích střední Evropy* [Master's thesis, Charles University in Prague, 2016].)

They should openly “void the signs of the nation,” so that there is space for adjustment.¹⁴ It is the adaptation that provides the option to express the culture of a nation in various ways.¹⁵ A unified preparation, a reusable shell, which has already been proven right in a number of countries, can then lead to the passivity of national producers, since it is always easier to buy and fill within a licensed format than to create one’s own.¹⁶ The “cultural discount theory” by Collin Hoskins may be truly inspirational in this matter since it provides an analysis of why people have a preference for local production over imported formats, this being the reason why TV formats have changed so much over recent years.¹⁷

3 The Pioneer of TV Glocalization

100 Greatest Britons can be seen as a typical representative and to a certain extent a pioneer of the phenomenon which Roland Robertson has called glocalization from as early as 1995.¹⁸ This portmanteau, originating not in sociology, but in the vocabulary of the market (“global localization”), provides an effective characterization of the complexity of the mutually influential features of cultural homogenization, as well as heterogenization. These two terms together help create the character of the society in question. This is a situation when “globalization and localization complement, and not exclude, each other,” where “the local is an integral part of the global.”¹⁹ Robertson even argues that due to this co-existence, which in itself contains tension and cooperation at the same time, the traditional and original concepts and meanings acquire new content which the local community is able to accept. This is how glocalization actually enriches national cultures and helps communities find their place in the global space.

100 Greatest Britons was one of the first cases when the local adjustment was the very principle of the format, and therefore the direct condition for the reception of the globally perceived construction. Although production procedures and the mechanisms of the competition could be taken over, the British world view or how the British understand themselves as a nation could not.

The nominations of the historical personalities and the poll, that is, the interaction on the part of the audience in a different field than singing, dancing, cooking and other skills, was the main tool by use of which the model entered the particular regions. Rupert Gavin from BBC Worldwide stated the following: “To give people the chance to decide on the result is a fantastic way how to make the audience interested in every single country.”²⁰ There is no doubt that the idea that “the generously drafted elements of nationwide competitiveness”²¹ could be used to nurture debate on the identity of the nation and the popularization of history came at the right time. Of interest is the fact that it was a product of a traditional medium of public service, the BBC as well as the fact that the idea came to life on a channel dedicated to culture.

According to the producer of the British model format, Mark Harrison, the competition was the first significant example of a “popular show based on real events,” whose goal was to “produce a certain cultural impact.” This can be seen as a “key moment in British TV” and for

¹⁴ Waisbord, “Understanding the Global Popularity of Television Formats,” 368.

¹⁵ Ibid., 380.

¹⁶ Straubhaar, *World Television*, 150.

¹⁷ Collin Hoskins, *Global Television and Film: An Introduction to the Economics of the Business* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

¹⁸ Roland Robertson, “Glocalization: Time–Space and Homogeneity–Heterogeneity,” in *Global Modernities*, eds. Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson (London: Sage, 1995), 25–44

¹⁹ Ibid., 40.

²⁰ Zuzana Gálová, “Kdo je největší Čech, Němec, Brit...” *Lidové noviny*, December 4, 2004, 17.

²¹ Stanislav Komárek, “Neonormalizace – o moderní morálce: Orientace – Salon,” *Lidové noviny*, May 14, 2005, 4.

“one of the most successful shows ever to be broadcast on BBC 2,” writes Harrison in his Preface to *The Format Bible*.²²

It should be added that the original specific feature of this project was the local localization, as well as the time-bound one, this being a one-time only format which cannot be used again the following year. If someone would like to use it again in the future, they would have to offer it to the next generation only.

4 A Mixture of Values and Controversies

The Format Bible provided the basic questions which the show wanted to present to the audience and the entire society: “What does it mean to be great? How does it feel to live with the awareness of one’s greatness? What is the price to pay for such greatness? Do the Britons have different criteria for assessing one’s greatness? What are the deciding moments and who made British history?”²³ The general quality of the original idea and the vagueness of terms such as “greatness,” “scale,” “decisive” and “making of Britain” stand at the root of the confusion of values at the very beginning of the show. If one competes in a discipline, can those people be compared? Furthermore, this was a competition spanning all periods and scientific and artistic disciplines. What makes John Lennon (8th place) better than Oliver Cromwell (10th), or Oprah Winfrey (9th) better than Franklin Delano Roosevelt (10th)? And when we move to the multinational level – is Rembrandt (9th place) really a worse painter than Rubens (4th), or is Giuseppe Verdi (2nd) a better composer than Jean Sibelius (8th) or Antonín Dvořák (6th place)? Do we compare them as painters and composers, or as Britons and Germans? Is there a need to ask about the measure of Britishness? Why should Isambard Kingdom Brunel (2nd place) be a greater Briton than Princess Diana (3rd place)? Absurdity can even be taken to another level: is Fyodor Dostoyevsky (7th place) a greater Russian than Molière (8th place) Frenchman? The title of this article was chosen based upon a similarly absurd logic.²⁴

All of these questions have a simple answer: it is a show. It is meant to entertain the audience. Its aim was not to petrify the greatest personages forever, but to raise the interest of various target groups by means of a show. The target groups consisted of TV viewers, not nations. This was never meant to be a poll initiated by the government. The impulse to initiate a nationwide debate on shared values came from a mainstream medium which is based on entertainment and which wanted to stage the agenda of common values by means of a show. The mixture of differences actually became one of the entertaining elements of the show. Jan Štern, manager of the Czech version of the project, states: “This project is trying to awaken us from lethargy.”²⁵

In the Czech version, the confusion of values was one of the reasons the public never accepted the project. “*The Greatest Czech* is a hoax invented by the greatest humorists in our country,”

²² Mark Harrison, *100 Greatest Britons – The Format Bible* (unpublished material of BBC and ČT, 2002, author’s archive). In TV terminology, the Bible means (albeit rather heretically) the format manual. The licence holder has the right to require and check on the fulfilment of the conditions mentioned in the manual.

²³ The Czech questions were: “With this film, we are asking the following: What does it mean to become great, to live with greatness and stay great throughout history? What price does one have to pay? Does every personage have a negative quality as a rule of thumb? What are the peculiarities of Czech greatness? What is its essence? What are the decisive moments and personages who have shaped Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia? What does it take to remain in the people’s hearts? To what extent is one’s greatness his or her own merit, and to what extent is this a product of a legend?” (Unpublished press release documents, January 2015, author’s archive.)

²⁴ Neither Kafka, nor Freud were considered Czech, even though the former was born in Prague and the latter in Příbor in Moravia. Kafka may be a representative of Prague literature, but at the same time, he belonged to the German speaking Jewish minority. Freud’s German Jewish family only lived in Příbor for a few years before moving to Vienna when Freud was 3 years old.

²⁵ Andrej Halada, “Otázka: jak ho najít?,” *Reflex*, April 28, 2005, 65.

Josef Tengler emailed to the Czech TV discussion show *Hyde Park*. “I plead that the next time a poll is organised, the question be easier. My suggestion: Which of the following animals is the brightest? An Ant – a Tiger – an Earthworm.”²⁶ Even one of the moderators Zdeněk Mahler stated in an interview for the newspaper *Lidové noviny*: “I approached the project with great distrust, even opposition.” In the following sentence, however, he admitted that the project had a positive role as well, which was after all the goal of the entire project: “But then I found out that the level of awareness of the general public is not all that bad and that the poll provided a chance to remind us of certain values. To be honest, I rooted for all of the shortlisted,” said Mahler of the ten finalists.²⁷

What were the values? “*100 Greatest Britons* is a distinctively oriented, emotional and popular series touching the psychology of the greatness and essence of Britishness,” *The Format Bible* characterizes the entire project in its very first sentence. The producers wanted to define at least some principles along which the audience could think. They consequently created five so-called auxiliary categories. “We defined the basic resources in the following way: legacy, talent, leadership, bravery and compassion.”²⁸ The Czech version was inspired by these categories, but decided to work with their own, especially when the final ten personages were chosen. (See Table 3) The Czech TV crew defined these as follows: 1) bravery (Hus, Žižka); 2) leadership (Masaryk, Charles IV); 3) legacy (Werich, Němcová, Comenius, Havel); 4. genius (Dvořák, Comenius); 5. compassion (Němcová, Čapek).²⁹

After the first round of the poll, the agency STEM/MARK carried out research as to what qualities the Greatest Czech should have. The 1004 answers defined them as follows: he/she should be world-renowned (46%), patriotic (41%), wise (39%) and honest (30%). The least important qualities were beauty (5%). The agency received a total of 227 different suggestions.

For a comparison, let us look at the following chart. The first column contains the prediction of the TV crew before the beginning of the show. The second indicates the results of the TV poll, and the third the results of the STEM/MARK research.³⁰

Table 1 Three charts based on the predictions of the TV crew, the results of the show and the results of the sociological research.

Czech TV crew prediction (no order)		Results of <i>The Greatest Czech</i>		Results of the STEM/MARK research
Charles IV	1.	Charles IV	1.	Charles IV
Masaryk	2.	Masaryk	2.	Masaryk
Havel	3.	Havel	3.	Comenius
Comenius	4.	Comenius	4.	Havel
Hus	5.	Žižka	5.	Hus
+	6.	Werich	6.–7.	Božena Němcová
Athletes (Jágr, Zátapek, Lendl)	7.	Hus	6.–7.	Václav Klaus (Czech president at the time)
Musical composer (Dvořák, Smetana)	8.	Dvořák	8.–12.	Jára Cimrman (fictitious literary character)

²⁶ “Hydepark,” ČT1 TV channel, July 25, 2005.

²⁷ Marta Švagrová, “Finále Největšího Čecha se blíží,” *Lidové noviny*, May 26, 2005, 18.

²⁸ Harrison, *The Format Bible*, 2002.

²⁹ “Vlastnosti,” internal document of Czech TV for the final night, May 23, 2005, author’s archive.

³⁰ “Výzkum: V Největším Čechovi by měl vyhrát Karel IV.,” *Lidovky.cz*, May 3, 2005; jp, “Nejhezčí Čech? Karel Gott,” *Mladá fronta DNES*, May 15, 2005, 4; Václav Suchan, “Největší Čech všech dob? Karel IV!,” *Blesk*, March 19, 2005, 1.

Czech TV crew prediction (no order)		Results of <i>The Greatest Czech</i>		Results of the STEM/MARK research
Actor/Actress, Celebrity (<i>Pop Idol</i> winner, pop singer Karel Gott etc.)	9.	Čapek	8.–12.	Grandfather Czech (legendary figure)
	10.	Němcová	8.–12.	Karel Gott (singer)
			8.–12.	Jaromír Jágr (ice-hockey player)
			8.–12.	Jan Werich (actor)

The comparison provides an interesting intersection of five names (marked in bold in Table 1), which appeared in all three charts. It could be argued that the “Big Five” represents a certain kind of national treasure for current Czech society, which is seldom called into doubt.³¹ Overall, the final ten consists of a dignified list: two presidents representing democracy (Masaryk, Havel), two Reformation priests whose acts and thoughts were integral for European history (Hus, Comenius), four artists who participated in the formation of national identity (Němcová, Werich) and represented this identity in the world (Dvořák, Čapek), a Hussite military leader representing invincibility (Žižka) and above them all, Charles IV, Emperor and King, viewed as the quintessential wise monarch, during whose reign there were no wars. Of particular interest is the fact that Charles IV received the same result in the STEM/MARK research and in the poll itself – 18% (!).³² The historian Dušan Třeštík³³ comments as follows: “(Czechs) project their ideal of a rational, responsible and enlightened government into Charles IV, the wise administrator of the Kingdom of Bohemia, creator and founder, and the Roman Emperor. [...] the same can be said of Masaryk and also of Havel. They do not wish for a firm hand, although they do appreciate Žižka’s mace. They instead have a preference for a different kind of courage, represented by Master John Hus. Comenius’ wisdom impresses them, but they still want someone more down-to-earth, someone who establishes a university, but at the same time builds a bridge that prevails over thousand-year waters.”³⁴

To better analyse what the Czech TV audience perceived as the “greatness” of the historical and modern personages, one has to confront the present, the chart and the particular names not only in the Top 10, but in the entire Top 100.

Prior to the beginning of the project, the producers of *The Greatest Czech* produced a list of 130 names which could make it into the Top 100.³⁵ A comparison with the actual results reveals that the names matched in 66 cases.³⁶ The list was produced on the presupposition that people would vote for positive characters and that any potential controversy would become stereotypical in a positive way over the years (or at least in the democratic era).³⁷ The other supposition was that this would be a mixture of personalities that make up part of the national canon (e.g., a number of personalities from the nineteenth century would appear on the list when the canon

³¹ Czech TV counted upon these five individuals and commissioned the production of documentaries in the fall of 2004, even before the voting began. The other team waited for the names to be chosen.

³² Out of total 380,611 votes sent, the winning Mediaeval king of Bohemia received 68,713.

³³ Třeštík also served as a guarantor of the historical relevance and accuracy in the project.

³⁴ Dušan Třeštík, “Inventura ve skladišti českých dějin,” *Právo*, June 6, 2005, 3.

³⁵ E.g., in terms of professions, the TV crew almost got it right: the estimate was 20 writers and playwrights which turned out to be the exact number; 10 athletes (11); 20 celebrities – actors and singers (19); 8 religious leaders and saints (11); 5 musical composers (3). The prediction was only off for scientists – Czech TV’s estimate was 3 and the final number turned out to be 11. (Martin Štoll, “Největší Čech” – unpublished report, October 28, 2005, author’s archive.)

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ For example, people persecuted by the Communist regime who were labelled in their day as traitors to the state, including Milada Horáková, executed in the Stalinist mock trials in the 1950s.

was established), along with those living at present who make up part of the media space in a positive way (from athletes to actors to the winner of the first *Pop Idol* show – *Česko hledá Superstar*). The third element was the idea that the Top 100 would consist of a) personages that “simply cannot be left out” (e.g., it was assumed that people would not leave out Miloš Forman); b) personages representing the erudition and class of the voter (Jaroslav Heyrovský, Nobel Prize winner in Chemistry), and c) personages that were generally well known (celebrities, those remembered for winning something, recently deceased – e.g., the then recently deceased ice-hockey coach Ivan Hlinka and others).

The nominations into the Top 100 revealed, in the majority of countries, that the main value which Czech as well as British, German, Canadian or American viewers identified with were the words “great,” “greatest,” or “ours,” in a positive manner. They understood that it was a game which could be taken seriously, almost involving “state-building,” while at the same time its goal was not to divide the audience, but to bring them together. This was the reason why the organizers tried to avoid completely negative historical characters. When they selected 300 names in Germany (instead of doing a public poll), they did not include Hitler. They had to count the votes twice in Russia to ensure that Stalin did not win (he ended up in third place).³⁸ The Czech organizers were concerned about votes being cast for the only negative character in recent Czech history, the Communist leader Klement Gottwald.³⁹ He eventually ended up in 97th place. The positive nature as the ruling principle of the project was declared by Czech TV in a simultaneous Internet poll called *The Greatest Villain*.⁴⁰ Gottwald was the winner by far (26%).⁴¹ In terms of personages whose legacy has not been historically exclusively positive, Czech viewers eventually chose to accentuate their positive features. Petr Čornej commented on this fact in the case of the second Czechoslovak President Edvard Beneš,⁴² who finished 22nd in the poll, living as “a positive historical character in the memory of the Czech nation;” his successor, the President during the Nazi protectorate Emil Hácha did not appear in the Top 100, but eventually finished 118th.⁴³

There was no single person in the Top 100 who would show no quality at all. The winner of the first Czech *Pop Idol*, Aneta Langerová (70th), was perhaps the most remarkable and unique in comparison with her successors. The Top 100 includes Bohemian patrons, kings-builders and all the important figures of the nineteenth century (23 in total), with the historian Jiří Rak even speaking of the “victory of the nineteenth century.”⁴⁴ The most numerous was the twentieth century, however, (61 names). In addition, apart from the Communist presidents Klement Gottwald and Ludvík Svoboda, the latter of which served as a general in WWII, there is not a single representative of the 40-year long Communist regime. In contrast, the list contains 18 names of those persecuted by the Communist regime. Also remarkable is the 9-member group of emigrants, who to a great extent represent Czech success abroad (e.g., Comenius, Baťa, Forman,

³⁸ Jefim Fištejn, “Rusko konečně zná své jméno,” *Reflex*, January 7, 2009, 12–13.

³⁹ A sentence was consequently placed into the regulations that the TV company will not violate the Penal Code of the Czech Republic, § 260. This would have occurred if Gottwald had appeared in the Top 10 and the TV would have had to create a document that presented him in a positive way and encouraged the viewers to send votes for him. “Češi si prostřednictvím ČT vyberou největší národní osobnost,” *Marketing & Media*, December 3, 2014.

⁴⁰ This is a similar type of activity that the BBC and the Channel 4 organized in 2003 – *100 Worst Britons*, with Tony Blair winning by a large margin.

⁴¹ Among the Top 10 Villains, only three representatives of the former Communist regime appeared (Gottwald 1st; Miloš Jakeš 8th; Gustáv Husák 10th); others were contemporary politicians (including the Czech president at the time Václav Klaus occupying the 3rd spot), a controversial entrepreneur (Viktor Kožený, 7th), and the ex-director of the most popular TV station, NOVA TV (Vladimír Železný, 4th).

⁴² As President, he initially gave in to the dictates of the so-called Munich Agreement in 1938 and later, in 1948, gave up power in the Communist coup. These deeds cannot be evaluated independently, however, and the opinions of the Czech public differ.

⁴³ Petr Čornej, “100 největších Čechů očima dneška,” in introduction to *Největší Čech* (Praha: Reader’s Digest Výběr, 2005), 9.

⁴⁴ Jiří Rak, “Největší Čech aneb Vítězství 19. století,” *Lidové noviny*, May 28, 2005, 5.

Albright, Navrátilová, Tigrid, Kundera, but no Lendl), along with a group of foreigners where one can hardly speak of Czech citizenship, but related somehow to part of the Czech Lands.⁴⁵ There are also a number of pairs in the Top 100, but never side-by-side: two marital couples,⁴⁶ five parents and their children,⁴⁷ and only one pair of brothers.⁴⁸ In terms of double acts, usually one of the pair made it onto the list,⁴⁹ or there is a large difference between their ranking.⁵⁰ Also of interest is the list of those who did not make it into the Top 100. This being the case with the once loved travellers Miroslav Zikmund (114th place) and Jiří Hanzelka (107th), the painter, writer and Karel Čapek's brother Josef Čapek (109th), the Oscar-winning director Jiří Menzel (125th), the world-renowned composer Bohuslav Martinů (127th), the writer Josef Škvorecký (139th) or athletes such as Petr Čech (101st), Kateřina Neumannová (105th), Josef Masopust (133rd) or the already mentioned Ivan Lendl (137th). The fact that these personages were not included in the list does not automatically mean that the audience had forgotten about them. It merely means others were more fortunate to have been present in the media space of the day. "This is a momentary image of who people respect," the speaker and anchor of the project Marek Eben stated in an interview. When he discovered the audience had placed him in the 31st spot,⁵¹ he said: "It should be somebody who helped establish the Czech nation in a wider framework. Who is going to know about me one hundred years from now? My work is only ephemeral."⁵² After reaching an agreement concerning the concept of the project, he stepped down and as a result, Miloš Zeman, the current President of the Czech Republic moved one spot up to the 100th place.

"Upon closer inspection, this appears to be an incredible collection of varying and often contradictory images, events, movements, icons, monuments, stereotypes, literary and visual clichés, proverbs, usual gestures and clips from literary works and films, all this in never-ending variability," argues historian Dušan Třeštík.⁵³ People have placed side by side myths and reality, the past and the present, the permanent and the ephemeral, historicity and the power of the moment. Overall, the results did not really tell us anything about the actual historical characters, but "merely about us, about today's society – not really about who we are, but how we would like to see ourselves," claimed theologian Tomáš Halík,⁵⁴ himself John Hus's "advocate." Although protests appeared from the perspective of gender, which was justifiable (82 men and 18 women), this was also an image of the society of the present and of the past. "*The Greatest Czech [...]* is based on the concept of so-called Big History, which reduces vivid reality to battles, wars, conspiracies, building and destruction. [...] To put it simply, it makes use of the presentation of history in school textbooks and historically proved greatness. Period," wrote the apparently angry journalist Kateřina Jonášová in *Lidové noviny*.⁵⁵ There were additional peculiarities in the

⁴⁵ It is surprising that the audience voted for the Empress Maria Theresa who was never fond of the the Czech nation and it is also surprising that the audience felt warm links with the Frankish merchant Samo from the eighth century, who formed the first state on Czech soil. Czechs also interestingly accept as their kin the likes of John of Luxembourg, the Emperor Rudolph II, the then US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, or the above-mentioned pair, Freud and Kafka.

⁴⁶ John of Luxembourg (74th) and Elizabeth of Bohemia (84th) – parents of Charles IV; Václav Havel (3rd) and Olga Havlová (80th).

⁴⁷ Ottokar II of Bohemia (16th) and Wenceslas II (68th); Wenceslas II (68th) and Elizabeth of Bohemia (84th); Elizabeth of Bohemia (84th) and Charles IV (1st); John of Luxembourg (74th) and Charles IV (1st); Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (2nd) and Jan Masaryk (50th).

⁴⁸ St Wenceslas (17th) and Boleslaus I (87th).

⁴⁹ E.g., Miroslav Šimek (97th), but not his partner Jiří Grossman.

⁵⁰ Jan Werich (6th) and Jiří Voskovec (94th) or Zdeněk Svěrák (25th) and Ladislav Smoljak (79th).

⁵¹ Jan Štern and Martin Štoll, "Slovo úvodem," in introduction to *Největší Čech*, (Praha: Reader's Digest Výběr, 2005), 5.

⁵² Alena Plavcová, "Marek Eben: Radím se s mámou. Rozhovor s M. Ebenem," *Lidové noviny*, April 29, 2005, 4.

⁵³ Třeštík, "Inventura," 3.

⁵⁴ Tomáš Halík, "Hlasujeme, jací chceme být," *Lidové noviny*, May 19, 2005, 5.

⁵⁵ Kateřina Jonášová, "Měla by to být Největší Češka," *Lidovky.cz*, April 12, 2005.

chart (for example, the most frequent first name was Jan – 11 times – or that only 22 people were alive when the chart was published).

Despite the declared positive nature and cultural impact, the concept literally begged for controversy. It amounted to a fight between David against Goliath. The defined qualities therefore merely defined the battleground, and the fact that incomparable characters from different historical periods and disciplines appeared side by side, actually became the very source of entertainment. The concept assumed that people would nominate important figures as well as freaks, including themselves.⁵⁶ Where “public boredom” and school-like praising of the great were looming, controversial advocates came up who had a link to their “client,” but at the same time represented pop culture (e.g., Jeremy Clarkson, Andrew Marr, Alan Davies and others). The biggest clashes were supposed to take place during the final night, where these popular personalities were supposed to secure the best spot possible for “their great.” The victory of the historical characters was therefore also a victory for their advocates.⁵⁷

The clashing principle also manifested itself in the promotion campaign for the show with advertisements in the press, billboards, city light displays and tram advertisements which always showed two characters and mottos: e.g., the Queen of Hearts vs. the Queen of England, Bridget vs. Bond, Morse vs. Marple, etc. In the Czech Republic, one of the pairs was St. Wenceslas and the Hussite military leader Jan Žižka, whose mottos were, respectively: Martyr vs. Guerilla of God. The conflicts which were supposed to entertain the viewers were also included in biographical videos of the 100 characters on the nomination night, where music was used regardless of the historical period (Beethoven's *Für Elise* for Elizabeth of Bohemia), or with cultural or scientific advocates chosen from “another field” (the head of the Prague ZOO Petr Fejk advocating a politician, the army general Pavel Štefka advocating culture, the chief justice of the Czech Constitutional Court advocating Gottwald, etc.).

From this point of view, the creators of the Czech version met with success. The following chart shows eight controversial pairs in neighbouring positions in the Top 100:

Table 2 Controversial pairs in neighbouring positions in the final Top 100.

13 th and 14 th	Karel Gott vs. George of Poděbrady	pop singer vs. King who invented the idea of a united Europe
17 th and 18 th	St Wenceslas vs. Václav Klaus	Czech Patron Saint; as a prince, he tried to cooperate with the neighbouring countries vs. President, well-known for his anti-EU opinions

⁵⁶ In the Czech version, a certain Václav Linkov made it onto the list thanks to a clever Internet campaign. Linkov was a young man who applied to be chancellor of Masaryk University at the age of only 25. He suggested establishing a department of erotic studies and establishing a university brewery. He also nominated himself as the greatest personality of Brno, tried to become director of a Slovak TV company, etc. See “Největší Brňák Václav Linkov,” liberalove.cz, March 3, 2008, http://liberalove.bluefile.cz/archives_of.php?co=1206478400.

⁵⁷ In the Czech version, this had a negative effect: the 10th place of Božena Němcová, writer and popular collector of fairy tales, is clearly the result of the bad choice of her advocate, the singer Yvonne Přenosilová. In contrast, the BBC speaker Jeremy Clarkson successfully placed “his” Kingdom Brunel ahead of Shakespeare and Darwin with quotes like “In the morning, you can make it to work without the help of Darwin, but clearly not without Brunel. Brunel constructed the underground Brunel Tunnel under the Thames.” In the German version *Unsere Besten*, the lobbyist Gregor Gysi, once the leader of the post-Communist Party of Democratic Socialism, placed Karl Marx on the 3rd spot. His argument was that Marx treated the social question in a way nobody before him did. (Gálová, “Kdo je Největší Čech, Němec, Brit...”)

20 th and 21 st	St Agnes of Bohemia vs. Tomáš Baťa	Czech Patron Saint, Abbess of St. Clare Convent in Prague vs. world-famous entrepreneur, shoe manufacturer
27 th and 28 th	Jaromír Jágr vs. Maria Theresa	contemporary world-famous ice-hockey player vs. Hapsburg Empress who introduced compulsory school attendance
25 th and 26 th	Daniel Landa vs. Milada Horáková	extremist singer vs. politician executed in the Stalinist political trials
57 th and 58 th	St. Adalbert of Prague vs. Josef Bican	Czech Patron Saint vs. football player
69 th and 70 th	Madeleine Albright vs. Aneta Langerová	American politician born in Czechoslovakia vs. <i>Pop Idol</i> winner
85 th and 86 th	Vladimír Remek vs. Milan Kundera	Czechoslovak astronaut (during Socialism) vs. writer, emigrated to France after the invasion in 1968, fleeing Socialism

The goal of the project, which was to gain popularity and initiate a debate on the values and the essence of being British, Czech, etc, was without a doubt accomplished. 81% of Czechs knew about the project, and although the project could be called a classic example of an educational programme, its ratings were around 18% and 7% with the documentaries, this being comparable with the results of other mutations (e.g., France 21%, Finland 20%, Germany 11.4%, the Netherlands 25.4%, and Britain itself 19%).⁵⁸ “Czechs were fortunate to have chosen the right things from the warehouse of the national memory. They defined for themselves what the ideal was, what they would like to become, and we can only wish the best for them. Nothing surprising happened, but what is more important, our nation did not cause any shame,” Třeštík summed up.⁵⁹

5 Processes of Czech “Translation”

The public TV company had never executed such a large-scale and grandly conceived licensed project before. It therefore first had to establish a variety of communication channels and gain at least some experience. Not everything went smoothly. “For the first time in its history, Czech TV was preparing a project of this magnitude, with the great potential to reach the widest public,” read the internal material drawn up by the marketing and PR departments of Czech Television.⁶⁰ It was one of the first projects that attempted nationwide coverage, and headed outside the area of the usual Czech TV product. (This does not include, of course, the daily news coverage of exceptional events such as floods or various elections in 1997 and 2002.) It was also the first major project that linked a documentary, entertainment, PR and marketing across

⁵⁸ Specifically: the 130-minute nomination night (May 5, 2005) had a rating of 18.4% (1,573,000 viewers); the average rating of the documentaries promoting the Top 10 was around 7%, which is above average for deceased personages (with the exception of Václav Havel), which represented “every twentieth spectator sitting in front of the TV;” the final live broadcast (June 10, 2005) had a rating of 18.2% again (1,018,000 viewers). (Martin Krafl, “Největší Čech? Úspěšná hra!,” *Lidové noviny*, June 20, 2005, 11; Karel Zeman, “Sto největších Čechů v centru divácké pozornosti,” internal document of Czech TV for a press conference, June 2005, author’s archive.)

⁵⁹ Třeštík, “Inventura,” 3.

⁶⁰ Tereza Typoltová, “Cíl kampaně,” internal document from the Department of Marketing and PR of Czech TV, September 12, 2004, author’s archive.

the Czech TV company, and which involved a great deal of pressure in terms of advertising or cross-promotion. "The project is quite an innovative combination of marketing, advertising, entertainment, documentary and education. Commercial tools in the service of culture, this is something unprecedented," said the then head of the project, the experienced producer of entertainment programmes Jan Štern.⁶¹

The team had 15 members and met every Wednesday. Some were stripped of their existing projects and were assigned exclusively to *The Greatest Czech*, e.g., the author of this text. At a press conference in December 2004, the Czech TV CEO Jiří Janeček announced the project as the main programme priority for the first half of the following year. This exclusive position began, however, to turn against the project itself during the realization. As it gradually took up most of the production capacities of the TV company, the atmosphere inside the institution shifted to aversion, and I can testify in person and only with slight exaggeration that although we began the project as makers of a highly innovative nationwide experiment, at the end we were finalizing the project as guerilla warfare, against almost everyone. I only mention this because *The Greatest Czech* showed how unprepared the institution actually was and how the scope and reach of the project surprised us. Fortunately, we learned the lesson for future large projects, such as the Czech version of *Strictly Come Dancing* (*StarDance*).

At some point in June 2004, the project Bible landed on the table of the team. All the mechanisms (competition rules, voting methods, timing etc.) were adopted with the utmost care. The principles of the programme were described in the Bible in 8 points:

- a) "participation" – the final list should not be a selection of experts, but that of the audience;
- b) "appeal to a diverse audience" – the documentaries needed to be attractive for the older audience, but also had to have a style sufficiently accessible to younger audiences;
- c) "marketing" – the campaign was divided into five phases and different communication methods were chosen. The team member responsible for marketing, Tereza Typoltová, described the campaign as follows, "In this case, the campaign is not merely a marketing tool, but consists of part of the project, especially the nomination phase. The success of the first part of the campaign depends on the success of the entire project."⁶²
- d) "prime time placement" – all the components of the project (the nomination night, the final night and all the documentaries) were placed in the schedule of the Czech TV Channel 1 during prime time;
- e) "celebrities" – see below for the choice of "advocates;"
- f) "online and interactive support" – in addition to voting with text messages or newspaper clippings, an interactive project website was established, and a number of accompanying events (Internet poll of the greatest villain, a contest of children's drawings, etc.) were also created;
- g) "secret" – this involved creating an atmosphere of expectation, which was implemented in three ways – a secret as part of the campaign (a countdown to the beginning of the show on TV a few months in advance, an airing of confusing hoax reports about who would appear there, etc.), incentive on the part of media partners to speculate and varying degrees of confidentiality even within the TV company;
- h) "collective creative management" – a team set up across the Television.⁶³

⁶¹ Halada, "Otázka: jak ho najít?" 65.

⁶² Typoltová, "Cíl kampaně," 2004.

⁶³ See Harrison, *The Format Bible*, 2002

It might seem as if all of the points are versatile and aimed at general TV and marketing professionalism, and that none of them required any adaptation to local conditions. This was predominantly true. In the case of *The Greatest Czech*, however, the need for a specific shift occurred in four areas.

5.1 Name

A large internal discussion addressed the fears that people will interpret the term “Czech” in an ethnic and national way, in which case the definition would negatively affect other nationalities living within the Czech Republic, for example, provincial nationalists in Moravia and Silesia. The estimates were accurate that the name of the show would cause controversy in the media, from tabloids to newspapers. The journalist Jaromír Slomek, for example, wrote: “Of course, the phrase *The Greatest Czech* is inept, hapless, dumb, simplistic, and unintentionally comical – on the other hand, even the greatest imbecile will understand it.”⁶⁴ In his article “Let’s Not Search for a Czech, but for the Nation,” Třeštík provided an analysis: “We silently assume that the Czech nation is only one, that it is a single, relatively well-defined, cohesive community. This is how our modern nation was created, and therefore we think that it is natural and necessary. But it is not, the Czech nation today actually means more.”⁶⁵ There is some truth to the fact that the way the project was concerned with national identities meant that despite efforts for the mobilization of great values, it became an accelerator of the simplest shortcuts and stereotypes, an active provoker of “banal nationalism,” as Billig defines it in his book.⁶⁶ The authors of the project hoped that the word Czech would provide inspiration for a Bauman-esque conception of an imaginary community⁶⁷ or the concept of the nation, which is closely linked to culture as it is inscribed in it.⁶⁸ Indeed, Macura’s emphasis on the role of mythology in creating cultural and national identity is well-known, and this competition would prove him right.

The team eventually chose the title *The Greatest Czech*, and added the motto: “Vote for the greatest personage from Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia!” It was difficult to come up with a different name at that point. Although the Germans chose a more general name *Our Best*, the Argentines picked *The Argentine Gene* and the Russians named the show *The Name of Russia*, the vast majority of the mutations of the project mentioned nationality and some variation of the word “great” or “the greatest.”⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Jaromír Slomek, “Největší Superstar,” *Lidové noviny*, June 18, 2005, 4.

⁶⁵ Dušan Třeštík, “Nehledejme Čecha, ale národ,” *Lidovky.cz*, January 17, 2005.

⁶⁶ Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: SAGE, 1995), 93.

⁶⁷ Zygmunt Bauman and Tim May, *Thinking Sociologically* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2001).

⁶⁸ Vladimír Macura, *Český sen* (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 1998), 61.

⁶⁹ 1. *100 Greatest Britons* (BBC, 2002); 2. *Unsere Besten* [Our Best] (ZDF, 2003); 3. *The Greatest Canadian* (CBS, 2004); 4. *Suuret suomalaiset* [Great Finns] (YLE, 2004); 5. *De Grootste Nederlander* [The Greatest Dutchman] (KRO, 2004); 6. *Great South Africans* (SABC3, 2004); 7. *De Grootse Belg/Le plus grand Belge* [The Greatest Belgian] (VRT 2005); 8. *New Zealand’s Top 100 History Makers* (PTNZ, 2005); 9. *Největší Čech* [The Greatest Czech] (ČT 2005); 10. *The Greatest American* (AOL + Discovery Channel, 2005); 11. *Le plus grand français de tous les temps* [The Greatest Frenchmen of All Time] (France 2, 2005); 12. *Великите българи – Velikite Balgari* [The Great Bulgarians] (BNT, 2006); 13. 超大型歴史アカデミー史上初1億3000万人が選ぶニッポン人が好きな偉人ベスト100発表 [The Top 100 Historical Persons in Japan] (Nippon Television, 2006); 14. *Mari Români* [100 Greatest Romanians] (TVR, 2006); 15. *Os Grandes Portugueses* [The Greatest Portuguese] (RTP, 2007); 16. *El Español De La Historia* [The Spaniard of History] (Antena 3, 2007); 17. *El Gen Argentino* [The Argentine Gene] (Telefe, 2007); 18. *Велики українці – Veliki Ukrainci* [The Greatest Ukrainians] (Inter, 2008); 19. *Μεγάλοι Έλληνες – Megali Ellines* [Great Greeks] (Skai TV, 2008); 20. *Grandes Chilenos de Nuestra Historia* [Great Chileans of Our History] (TVN, 2008); 21. *Имя России – Imja Rossiji* [The Name of Russia] (Rossija 1, 2008); 22. *Ireland’s Greatest* (RTÉ, 2010); 23. *Il più grande italiano di tutti i tempi* [The Greatest Italian of All Time] (Rai 2, 2010); 24. *O Maior Brasileiro de Todos os Tempos* [The Greatest Brazilian of All Time] (SBT, 2012); 25. *The Greatest Indian* (CNN-IBN + History Channel, 2012).

5.2 Communication Code and Faces of Entertainment

The second major area was which type of communication should be elected for the Czech audience. The team thought that the audience would have difficulty accepting the clearly aggressive style of Anne Robinson,⁷⁰ although Jan Štern repeatedly suggested that the provocative actor Jan Kraus could serve as the anchor face of the project. A counteroffer appeared in the name of the then well-known actor and presenter of the Czech version of the super-format *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*, Vladimír Čech, who was known for his noblesse and ability to work with a secret. His surname was a huge plus, since Čech means Czech. Czech TV management did not accept him, however, since Čech was one of the main faces of their main competitor, the private television NOVA TV, and the management did not want to link him with the public television network. The choice finally fell on Marek Eben whose moderating career was exclusively linked with Czech TV, and who at the time, already had extensive experience with moderating various TV competitions (*The Treasure of St. Agnes of Bohemia – O poklad Anežky České*). He had also been the prestigious moderator of the largest film festival in the Czech Republic, the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, and had his own talk show *At the Swimming Bath (Na plovárně)* for a number of years. Eben also brings (as is expected from him) a certain type of subtle and intelligent humour that some may find too “public service,” while others find extremely sophisticated.⁷¹

There was actually a dispute between representatives of the producing centre of entertainment shows who wanted the documentaries about the finalists to be as explosive and aggressive as possible, as was the case in the British original, and representatives of the centre of documentaries, who constantly warned of the ephemeral nature of the two evening shows in contrast with the lasting quality (and possible reruns) of documentaries. The documentary film-makers had to reject certain ideas for possible “advocates” (such as when the extremist singer Daniel Landa, who had inclined to neo-Nazism in the past, was supposed to serve as advocate for John Hus). The dramaturgy of the documentaries counted on a lengthy controversy, which had, however, a certain logic. Paradoxically, there was a Catholic priest Tomáš Halík advocating John Hus, although the fact that Hus had been at least partially rehabilitated by the Catholic Church was to Halík’s advantage. The rock singer Michael Kocáb who spoke for Antonín Dvořák had studied organ music in school and considered Dvořák’s *Stabat Mater* one of the greatest pieces of classical music. The director Igor Chaun who served as advocate for President Václav Havel had been one of the student leaders during the revolutionary days of 1989, etc. The following pairs were supposed to be amusing and entertaining: the before-mentioned actor Jan Kraus, known for his wit and eloquence, was to advocate the Hussite military leader Jan Žižka, while Jan Werich was given to Halina Pawlowská, a writer and moderator who is well-known from the screen as a lover of celebrities and parties. The choices were closest to the British version when it was decided that Karel Čapek would be defended by fellow journalist Andrej Halada and Tomáš G. Masaryk by Zdeněk Mahler, a skilled rhetorician and scholar. In contrast, the biggest problem occurred in the cases of Božena Němcová, Comenius and, paradoxically enough, Charles IV. Němcová was repeatedly offered to one of the Czech feminists, the director Olga Sommerová, who repeatedly refused. The writer Alexandra Berková also refused and Němcová was then finally “adopted” by the singer Yvonne Přenosilová, who unfortunately had no deep relationship to her “client” and could not handle her part. The creators chose the well-read actor Viktor Preiss for Comenius who, however, became nervous about the fact that the show was to be broadcast live, turned them down and had to be replaced by the actress Eva Holubová. For Charles IV, who was predicted right from the start as the clear winner, the producers had originally intended to get Marek Eben,

⁷⁰ Anne Robinson, who hosted *The Weakest Link!*, was the voice and face of the British project.

⁷¹ Since then, Eben, together with Tereza Kostková, has hosted the show *Strictly Come Dancing – StarDance*.

who would have provided the best service to the sophistication and popularity of Charles IV. Eben had become the face of the entire project, however, so Charles IV was irrationally assigned to the actor Jaroslav Dušek who changed his mind just two days before the shooting of the project began. The final choice for the Roman Emperor was the actor and architect David Vávra, which turned out to be a great idea, as Vávra was known to the Czech audience from the TV series *The Graceful Cities* (*Šumná města*). Eventually, Vávra's own specific poetry and passion, or perhaps the documentary itself, eventually sat Charles IV on the imaginary throne of winners.⁷²

The choice of advocates demonstrated that the Czech media environment lacks educated, but also popular and well-known journalists in the vein of those who defended most of the British top ten. Apart from Zdeněk Mahler, who would have been able to speak on behalf of any of the potential nominees, advocates were recruited from actors, who are well-known. There was a likelihood, however, that they would fail in a personal defence during the final night (such as with Viktor Preiss). It would have been logical to address historians and university teachers who would master the defence, but most of them had no experience with performing in front of camera and are not publicly known.

For the documentaries on selected personalities, well-known directors were chosen (such as Igor Chaun or Olga Sommerová), but the emphasis was primarily placed on experience, creativity and filming skills (such as the case with Petr Kaňka, Josef Čisářovský, Ondřej Kepka, Roman Vávra, Alena Činčerová and Petr Kotek). Space was given to younger directors as well (Petr Bok, Marián Polák). Some of the addressed directors, however, refused to take part in the project (e.g., Helena Třeštíková).

5.3 Targeting

The entertainment rate began to be an issue for another reason as well. Most national mutations of *100 Greatest Britons* were produced by public service television companies, often on their second programmes. Czech TV, in an effort to achieve nationwide impact, decided to place the project on the first, mainstream programme ČT1, even though the second programme, ČT2, was profiled at the time as a culture channel, making it definitely more suited for this type of project. The placement on the first programme created unrealistic expectations within the company, not perhaps so much concerning the number of viewers, but as to the composition. Although the British experience had clearly defined that “our main audience consisted mostly of men aged 45 and with a secondary education,”⁷³ Czech TV decided to focus on the audience with a primary education as well and adapted the attractiveness of certain elements of the campaign for them. They also chose, for the first time in its history, the tabloid newspaper *Blesk* for its media

⁷² The original ideas about the advocates were different, and alternatives were taken into account: the connections between Charles IV and Marek Eben, and between Jan Žižka and Jan Kraus, had always been obvious. In Comenius' case, we counted on Zdeněk Svěrák, the renowned “teacher of the nation” from the very beginning. Svěrák was even born on the same day as Comenius, but he declined the offer. For Dvořák, Libor Pešek, the world-renowned conductor based in Liverpool, was an obvious choice, while for Čapek this was Josef Abrhám, who starred as Čapek in the biopic *A Man against Destruction* (*Člověk proti zkáze*, 1989). The writer Michal Viewegh or the journalist Jaromír Štětina were pondered in case he declined the offer. The following names could be used universally: Halina Pawłowska; the actors Tomáš Töpfer, Bolek Polívka, Jiří Lábus and Iva Janžurová; the writers and journalists Ondřej Neff, Lída Rakušanová and Petra Procházková; the singers and songwriters Jiří Dědeček, Jan Burian and Jan Vodňanský; the singers Karel Gott, Jiří Korn and Lucie Bílá; controversial visual artists David Černý and Milan Knížík; the sociologist Jiřina Šiklová; or the medical doctor and translator from English Jaroslava Moserová. Václav Havel had the most alternative suggestions – apart from Chaun, Miloš Forman, Jan Tříska, who was a close friend of Havel's, Jiří Bartoška, who acted in Havel's plays, or the journalist Michal Horáček, who played an important part in the Velvet Revolution in 1989. The idea that Havel's wife, the actress Dagmar Havlová Veškrnová could be his advocate was rejected immediately. (Martin Štoll, *Největší Čech – první studie k dokumentům*, unpublished production material, 2004.)

⁷³ Harrison, *The Format Bible*, 2002.

partner, and created an opportunity to vote by use of ballots placed at the Tesco store chain. It was a lost battle, however, right from the start since the largest commercial channel NOVA TV ran the second season of *Pop Idol* (*Česko hledá Superstar*) against *The Greatest Czech*. An analysis confirmed that the audience consisted mostly of older men with a tertiary education (the final night received a rating of 31.9% of such viewers with a share of 60% of those with a tertiary education!).⁷⁴

Table 3 The ratings and share of the project. Corresponding results in bold. (Int ČT 2005d)

	RATING (%)		SHARE (%)	
1.	Werich	10.00	Werich	22.9
2.	Havel	9.23	Havel	21.18
3.	Žižka	9.12	Žižka	20.02
4.	Charles IV	7.40	Němcová	17.57
5.	Masaryk	7.35	Charles IV	15.44
6.	Němcová	7.30	Masaryk	14.23
7.	Čapek	6.10	Čapek	13.93
8.	Dvořák	6.03	Dvořák	13.02
9.	Comenius	5.44	Hus	12.10
10.	Hus	5.07	Comenius	11.37
	Cimrman	3.63	Cimrman	9.23

5.4 Czech Contribution to the Global Format: Cimrman

During the first week of the nomination period, votes for Jára Cimrman began to appear in great numbers.⁷⁵ Cimrman is a fictional character whose poetics are based on a Jack-of-all-trades quality and genius, constantly underrated and unappreciated by the entire world. Over the last 50 years, Cimrman has been rooted deeply in the Czech (and Czechoslovak) cultural space.⁷⁶ It is not surprising that he appeared among the nominees, as he remains a metaphor for Czech skills, but also of a certain insufficiency and a desire for greatness on the part of the small.

Since the goal, however, of the project was to search for the “essence of Britishness,” or, respectively, “Czechness” and since in a few short days, Cimrman moved ahead of Charles IV, the producers began contemplating the idea that they might make a deal with the licence holders. The Cimrmanesque prank and his Švejk-like type of behaviour would consequently enter the global project as a Czech particularity. Czech TV contacted the BBC Worldwide with a letter in which we tried to explain the phenomenon (it was very difficult – a bit like Forrest Gump, but in Austria-Hungary...), and the answer we received was the following: “The character of Jára Cimrman apparently has a lot to say to the Czech audience. Our format, however, stipulates that candidates must be real persons, either historical or still living.”⁷⁷ This stood in direct opposition, however, to the fact that the UK’s top one hundred placed legendary King Arthur in the 51st place. If this was the case, why did the Czechs have to strike off Cimrman, and apart from

⁷⁴ Krafl, “Největší Čech? Úspěšná hra!,” 11.

⁷⁵ Unfortunately, the votes stopped being counted even during the nomination process, so it remains unclear as to how many votes Cimrman would have received in total.

⁷⁶ Jára Cimrman was invented by the founders of the Jára Cimrman Theatre – Jiří Šebánek, Zdeněk Svěrák, Ladislav Smoljak, and Miloň Čepelka in 1966.

⁷⁷ Gra, “Největšího Čecha Cimrmana řekla BBC,” *zpravy.idnes.cz*, February 14, 2005.

him, also the mythical princess Libuše or Grandfather Czech as unconfirmed historical figures? A BBC deputy, in charge of the Czech version, told the project leader during a personal interview that the figure of “the Unknown Soldier” placed 76th in the UK. The “Unknown Soldier” might be a vague figure, but it represents real heroism, and to grant Cimrman, a figure who mocks heroism, the same position would stand “against the spirit of the competition” and might be viewed as an expression of “disrespect.” The official statement continued: “The BBC Worldwide believes that the format should provoke a debate about what is the essence of greatness, and how qualities such as a heritage for future generations, genius, leadership, courage or compassion may contribute to it. A fictional character lacks these properties, because they emanate from within. The qualities of fictional characters have been assigned to them and therefore cannot be considered their merit.”⁷⁸ Thus, in cultural translation: It is a game, but should not be playful. It is an entertainment project, but at the same time it is serious. And hands off King Arthur!

Scrapping Cimrman provoked a violent backlash. Dozens of disgruntled viewers called the TV company every day, demanding an explanation and complaining that Czech TV lacks a sense of humour. Explaining the conditions of the license and publishing the letter from the BBC had no effect and a press conference had to be organized. A petition *Let Jára Cimrman Become the Greatest Czech* was immediately launched on the Internet. The author of the petition was the twenty-five-year-old František Haupt and the petition was immediately signed by 10,000 people.⁷⁹ The creators of Jára Cimrman and his works were wary: “When the nation finally matured to appreciate Cimrman, a handful appeared which still denied him the trophy,” commented Zdeněk Svěrák.⁸⁰ However, as he stated, neither he, nor the co-creator Ladislav Smoljak, initiated a campaign for the return of Cimrman to the contest, nor did they encourage it. “We stand aside with all refinement,” stated Smoljak.⁸¹ “It demonstrates that the Czechs recognize humour as a value,”⁸² added Svěrák. Smoljak also believed that “the tendency of people to appreciate humour, which lies dormant here, received a chance for manifestation here.”⁸³

In personal conversations with the author of the study, however, they were both basically unhappy that their Cimrman was abused as a tool to disparage the competition and that the victory of a fictional genius was not the question. “The nomination of a fictional hero is a typical Czech subversion of the project, which the basically anarchist and antiheroic Czech public rightly interpreted primarily as an attempt by Czech TV to increase the rating of its programmes,” wrote University of Glasgow professor Jan Čulík in his online newspaper *Britské listy*. “Czech TV had to reject this irony of course and tried to justify it by the use of the ‘authority’ of the BBC,” he writes in an article with the subheading “Helpless Czech TV Seeks Advice with the BBC.”⁸⁴ Čulík’s presumption of the audience is merely a speculation, and consultations with the BBC were not, as has been shown above, a sign of helplessness. On the contrary, Czech TV asked the BBC for an exception to shoot eleven documentaries instead of the usual ten. The final result was a poetic documentary project about Cimrman, with Svěrák and Smoljak acting as speakers, although people were not allowed to send votes during the broadcast. Furthermore, Czech TV asked about the possibility of establishing a nomination night designated for fictional characters with the participation of other characters (e.g., Švejk, the Little Mole or Maya the Bee), which

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ “We, the below signed citizens of the Czech Republic and subscribers of Czech TV, require that Jára Cimrman be recognized by Czech TV to be the greatest personage in Czech history who we have the right to vote for in the project Greatest Czech.” See “Cimrman,” accessed July 28, 2016, <http://cimrman.nazory.cz>.

⁸⁰ Ondřej Štátný, “Největší Čech: Jára Cimrman,” *Mladá fronta DNES*, February 2, 2005, 5.

⁸¹ Alena Kodlová, “Ve volbě o Největšího Čecha Cimrmanovi nepomáháme,” *Plzeňský deník*, January 29, 2005, 27.

⁸² Štátný, “Největší Čech: Jára Cimrman,” 5.

⁸³ Kodlová, “Ve volbě o Největšího Čecha Cimrmanovi nepomáháme,” 27.

⁸⁴ Jan Čulík, “Největší Čech a Jára Cimrman,” *Britské listy*, February 2, 2005, <http://blisty.cz/art/22012.html>.

Cimrman masterfully won. The *Czech Unique* prize was handed over to both his creators, a statuette of a woman in a bikini (another “invention” of Cimrman). The astrophysicist Jiří Grygar presented the prize to them, because as of 1998, Cimrman has had his own asteroid in space.⁸⁵ At this point one needs to note that the entire Cimrman affair became a major inspiration for the last play of the Jára Cimrman Theatre, *Czech Heaven* (*České nebe*, 2009), where Czech greats received votes to ascend to heaven. The entire play can therefore be considered a by-product of the transnational project.⁸⁶

What serves to confirm my thesis that the majority of voters actually abused Cimrman in order to subvert the project, that these were not his actual admirers? Firstly, it was the aggression with which they protested Cimrman’s disqualification. The phone calls were full of shouts, insults, slander and threats (for example, claiming that they would immediately cancel their subscription), and cutting calls were frequent. Some presented their legal analyses of the situation. They took the definition of who can become *The Greatest Czech*⁸⁷ and argued that even if Cimrman never lived, he certainly “worked” here. Others went further and attached legal documents demonstrating that when an act claims streets cannot be named after living persons,⁸⁸ but only after the deceased, and there are several streets named after Cimrman in the Czech Republic, then in legal logic this means that he had to die at some point and thus lived prior to his death. The legal department of Czech TV analysed the very same law in a different way. These details, together with many others, are mentioned here because aggression is in direct contrast with the poetics of those works. The humour of the theatre is, in vivid contrast, humble and subtle and it seems likely that the genuine admirers of Cimrman would have been reluctant to make use of the fictional character for an attack. The second aspect indicating that these were not true admirers of Cimrman was the rating of the documentary itself. If all those who had sent their votes had watched it, the forecast carried out by the tabloid magazine *Story* on 31 January 2005 would have become reality. A *Story* article named “Do Not Take Our Jára Away from Us!” optimistically stated that “a documentary about Cimrman would take a decent bite out of the rating cake!”⁸⁹ The reality was, however, that the documentary reached only 3.63% in the ratings, which was the lowest out of all the Top 10 documentaries. The third, albeit indirect evidence, is the place Cimrman reached in the afore-mentioned survey carried out by the STEM/MARK agency, in which Cimrman finished at a joint 8th to 12th place. This result was more consistent with possible views of the population and it was not an activity directed against the competition.

In summary, it should be noted that Czech TV and Cimrman could not have done more for one other. Cimrman became a lightning rod for all those who wanted to ridicule the show, and thus saved Czech TV from a situation whereby for the same reason the Communist president and dictator Klement Gottwald would have appeared in the top ten. (The fear was justified, as at that time, the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia had an election potential of 18%.⁹⁰) Cimrman’s disqualification, in contrast, confirmed the poetics of this fictional character, a principal disregard for the Czech genius who “was elected into the top ten, but had to finish

⁸⁵ The asteroid was discovered by the astronomer Zdeněk Moravec at the Kleť observatory in South Bohemia and its catalogue number is 7796.

⁸⁶ The face of the project, Marek Eben, himself an actor and singer-songwriter, used his nomination in the lyrics of his song “Monument” (Pomník; album *Chlebičky*, 2008), where the chorus is “Don’t make me out of limestone, I would crumble soon...”

⁸⁷ Only those who were born, lived or worked in what is today Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia could take part in the competition.

⁸⁸ The paragraph in question is §29, Municipality Act, and paragraph §13, Act on the Capital City of Prague adopted in 2000; in Prague, this provision has been in effect since 1925.

⁸⁹ “Neberte nám Járu!,” *Story*, January 31, 2005, 6.

⁹⁰ In the last general elections to the Chamber of Deputies, 18.51% of votes went to the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia. See “Český statistický úřad,” volby.cz, accessed July 29, 2016, <http://www.volby.cz/pls/ps2002/ps2?xjazyk=CZ>.

eleventh.”⁹¹ After all, just imagine if Cimrman would actually win! The fifty years of work of the Jára Cimrman Theatre would have been ruined. Eventually, as Dušan Třeštík put it, although “the Cimrman tradition is rooted in the very nature of the Czech national character,” his victory “would have ruined the game.”⁹² The game per se, the Cimrman game.

6 Summary

The theorists Jolien Van Keulen and Tonny Krijnen have pointed out that if a national version of the global format is to obtain the attention of the audience, the format has to be adapted on three levels: the linguistic, the cultural and the intertextual.⁹³ All three levels were achieved in the case of *The Greatest Czech*. The essence was, according to Chalaby, a typical narrative⁹⁴ defined by the format,⁹⁵ filled with a local content and emphasised by the way of distribution and marketing support. “We might ask how the creators made use of the opportunity, what new things we learned about the greats of Czech history and how the results of such surveys might be interpreted,” Marta Švagrová, journalist from *Lidové noviny*, wrote in a final summary. “The answers are: little, nothing, none whatsoever. The Czech TV poll will fade away... the patriotic wave will disappear and historians will probably take a long time – if ever – to rectify the deformations of their opportunistic predecessors, who in each historical period altered the points of view of the deeds and lives of the great as was required.”⁹⁶ One might argue at present, twelve years after the show, that the historical consciousness of *The Greatest Czech* remains associated with Charles IV (whose importance was again commemorated last year on the occasion of the 700th anniversary of his birth), the “betrayal” of Cimrman (90 years ago it would have been Švejk). The project occasionally comes back to life for forty minutes when the documentaries are rerun (esp. the John Hus one, which is screened almost annually). Is this too little?

The experience remains. The experience of the team and the institution of Czech TV, the experience of the nation, the experience of a selection of its own idea of greatness, or perhaps only a memory. Czech TV jumped into the unknown, and although it partly misjudged its abilities, the project was implemented to the satisfaction of the licensees. Cimrman, who could be a great contribution on the part of Czechs to the treasury of global heritage, revealed the limits of the format. Or was it merely a contradiction which the conservatively oriented BBC failed to absorb with grace, a contradiction between seriousness and mock seriousness, although this project was primarily an entertainment show. Cimrman could have boldly stood next to King Arthur, since both represent the essence of the national mentality.

This consisted of a typical project by a public service TV not only in terms of the content and the attempt to trigger a nationwide debate concerning the values and specific personages of the past and present, but also in terms of the degree of sophistication. Public TV companies would be unwilling to cross the line and present it in a way commercial TV companies would.

⁹¹ Štoll, *Největší Čech – první studie k dokumentům*.

⁹² Třeštík, “Inventura,” 3.

⁹³ Jolien van Keulen and Tonny Krijnen, “The Limitations of Localization: A Cross-cultural Comparative Study of Farmer Wants a Wife,” *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 17, no. 3 (2014): 277–292.

⁹⁴ Jean K. Chalaby, “The Making of an Entertainment Revolution: How the TV Format Trade Became a Global Industry,” *European Journal of Communication* 26, no. 4 (2011): 293–309.

⁹⁵ In the internal provisions of Czech TV, the format is described as follows: “This is an entertainment show based on real events, a show that rediscovers historical stories for the nation [...]. We want to tell a story to the viewer. A story about how and by what means a single human could enter the minds of the millions over the years and centuries that followed. Stories about the cultural legacy of our great historical personages. Biographies are lively stories. A legacy is also a story.” (Internal Provisions of Czech TV, ČT 2004a.)

⁹⁶ Marta Švagrová, “Lid diskutuje... a Vávra se směje,” *Lidové noviny*, June 13, 2005, 11.

In contrast, a number of them actually avoided seeking out more invigorating elements from their dead history.

The poll, the debate at all levels and the results have been, at least in the Czech Republic, a certain reflection of maturity on the part of the participants. The mixture of values and big words which the project made use of, pulling them out of a hat like a magician would with rabbits, did not confuse the audience or the voters. The fact that we do not need to feel ashamed about the Top 100, let alone the Top 10, was undoubtedly partially a result of the parallel broadcasting of *Pop Idol*, a programme priority of NOVA TV, which attracted a different target audience. The particular names are, however, a showcase of who Czechs identified with in 2005, and who they consider part of their identity, naming Maria Theresa, Kafka and Freud quite spontaneously. Given that the Austrians did not appreciate the inclusion of W. A. Mozart in the German charts and the Poles did not like the inclusion of Nicolaus Copernicus therein, one wonders what the Germans would make of Charles IV. They would definitely accept him as a Roman emperor and a Luxembourg, but not as a Czech.⁹⁷

Finally, additional undocumented consequences should be recalled. Czech TV began to prepare *The Greatest Czech* and bought the license in 2004. At that time, the Czech Republic had joined the European Union along with other countries. This historical moment was in all probability one of the motivations on the part of Czech TV to react as quickly as possible, and by means of a global format join the European intellectual milieu. “The Britishness of the British is disappearing, but the Scots and the Welsh regenerate, and the Frenchness of France is falling apart into local and other identities. It is no different for us. We entered the European Union, but it does not seem as if we want to become Europeans,” Dušan Třeštík stated at the time. In the project *The Greatest Czech*, we raised the issue of not only what we would like to be, but who we would like to be in the new European community. “We want to be Czechs. Czechs in Europe.”⁹⁸

Table 4 TOP 10 (in alphabetical order) with the characteristics mentioned on the *Nomination Night*

Karel Čapek (09/01/1890–25/12/1938) writer, journalist, playwright	<i>His name is a symbol of humanism and democracy. His journalism activity is associated with the most renowned period of the newspaper Lidové noviny. In his stories, novels and plays, he did not hide his fears of the rising Nazism. He was nominated several times for the Nobel Prize for Literature.</i>
Antonín Dvořák (08/09/1841–01/05/1904) musical composer	<i>A world-renowned musician. He was invited to America as the director of the National Conservatory in New York to teach young composers how to compose national music. He also worked in England and Germany but always enjoyed returning to his native Bohemia. The New World Symphony and Rusalka rank among among the jewels of world classical music.</i>
Václav Havel (05/10/1936–18/12/2011) playwright, dissident, president	<i>He criticized the mechanisms of totalitarian power in his theatre plays. He was imprisoned several times during the normalization period for his civic attitudes. As president of the Czech Republic, the country obtained international prestige and respect. He was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize several times.</i>
Jan Hus (1371(?)–06/07/1415) priest	<i>He dedicated his life to the fight for the reform of the Church and society. As Rector of Charles University, he tried in vain to defend his ideas in front of the Catholic council and was burned at the stake. He became a role model and the message of his life became the basis for one of the most important historical periods in our history, the Hussite movement which bears his name.</i>

⁹⁷ Milan Šmíd, “Největší Čech, Jára Cimrman, a česko-německé pohledy na historii,” Louč.cz, January 19, 2005, <http://www.louc.cz/05/1400118.html>.

⁹⁸ Třeštík, “Nehledejme Čecha, ale národ.”

Charles IV (14/05/1316–29/11/1378) King of Bohemia and Roman Emperor	<i>The most important European ruler of the late Middle Ages. He made Prague the seat of his empire. He established the New Town of Prague and the University. He had a stone bridge built, began the construction of St. Vitus' Cathedral. He strengthened the cult of St. Wenceslas and had the crown and regalia made. His character became a national legend, earning him the nickname Father of the Homeland.</i>
Jan Ámos Komenský (Comenius) (28/03/1592–15/11/1670) pedagogue and philosopher	<i>Humanist, teacher and priest, known as the Teacher of Nations. He was also a theologian, writer, historian, linguist and ultimately a politician who tried to find help abroad for his nation.</i>
Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk (07/03/1850–14/09/1937) philosopher and politician	<i>During the First World War, he organised the anti-Austrian resistance which resulted in the founding of an independent Czechoslovak Republic. He became its first President upon its establishment. His name is the supreme symbol of the democracy of the First Republic.</i>
Božena Němcová (04/02/1820–21/01/1862) writer	<i>The Fairy tales Three Golden Hairs, Twelve Moons or Mr. Long, Mr. Broad and Mr. Sharpeye are an integral part of our culture. Thanks to her vast collections of folk tales and especially her novel The Grandmother, Němcová became one of the national icons. Her emancipated attitudes are also cherished.</i>
Jan Werich (06/02/1905–31/10/1980) actor and writer	<i>A noble comedian, a clown-philosopher, an original actor and the author of modern fairy tales. Together with Jiří Voskovec, he was the author of the repertoire of the Liberated Theatre. After the War, he found a new stage partner in Miroslav Horníček, but eventually became more interested in literature and film.</i>
Jan Žižka (1360(?)–11/10/1424) military leader	<i>All of Catholic Europe feared the invincible leader of the plebeian armies of Czech heretics. Not even his greatest enemies could deny his military genius. For Czechs, Žižka was a national hero and a remarkable role model over the centuries of German oppression.</i>

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Contemporary Trends in Teen TV

Abstract | Foreign fictional TV production aimed at teenagers, i.e. teen TV, is currently strongly influenced by the desire of television stations to capture the attention of the lucrative audience of Millennials. One of the characteristics of this production is an emphasis on the diversity of characters that populate the fictional world of the TV series. This article deals with a specific type of characters; LGBT+ teenagers who have shifted, in terms of action and importance in the narrative, from a marginalised group to the centre of attention of the audience, both in terms of the narrative function and the transformation of character personalities from pure stereotypes and TV tropes to complex protagonists. The author deals with the interconnection of marketing focus on Millennials and the representation of such characters and argues that one of the main reasons why these characters are currently so narratively focused on is, more than the success of human rights activists, an effort on the part of marketing departments of TV stations to reach a specific demographic.

Keywords | Millennials – TV audiences – TV show – The 100 – Minorities – LGBT+ – TV Marketing – Teen Drama – Teen Characters – Television

1 Introduction

When one looks at contemporary American TV production and focuses on teenage characters or the genre of teen drama itself, it is apparent that diversity is one of the fundamental characteristics. This aspect affects, among other things, the approach of TV creators towards minorities who used to experience difficulties appearing in TV programs. One such group was non-heterosexual teen characters, the representation of which was perceived as quite problematic within the context of TV broadcasting. The following text is consequently focused on contemporary trends in the representation of non-heterosexual teen characters, particularly in the context of the so-called cool factor which seems to be able to push minority themes and characters into mainstream TV.

It is difficult in terms of methodology to analyse TV series production with a focus on the representation of minorities through TV characters. No comprehensive methodology exists as yet which would provide a satisfactory research device. I therefore chose a combination of discourse analysis (Teun A. van Dijk) and TV character analysis as generally outlined by Jeremy G. Butler (*Television. Critical Methods and Applications*¹). Butler himself based his approach on the work of Richard Dyer who, amongst other topics, was interested in film characters and film celebrities (*Stars*,² *The Matter of Images*³).

¹ Jeremy Butler, *Television. Critical Methods and Applications* (Mahwah and London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2012).

² Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: BFI Publishing, 1998).

³ Richard Dyer, *The Matter of Images. Essays on Representations* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).

I chose the critical discourse method of analysis because it allows for an analysis of characters both in the text and the broader context and because, in its core, it discloses the relationship between the dominant and the subversive discourse, i.e. the interpretation of the relation between the “majority” and the “minority.” Van Dijk generally describes this method as follows: “CDA is essentially dealing with an oppositional study of the structures and strategies of elite discourse and their cognitive and social conditions and consequences, as well as with the discourses of resistance against such domination [...]. Critical discourse analysis, as described above, is a special approach in discourse analysis which focuses on the discursive conditions, components and consequences of power abuse by dominant (elite) groups and institutions. It examines patterns of access and control over contexts, genres, text and talk, their properties, as well as the discursive strategies of mind control.”⁴

I base the character analysis on the work of van Dijk who understands the work of art/TV series, etc. mainly through a post-structuralist textual analysis and perceives the individual elements of identity representation and ideology reproduction as such through the text and language itself. I focus on the pragmatic and lexical part of van Dijk’s analysis, attempting to determine who, how and which expressions describe which theme. I primarily focus on whether the division into “positively” perceived US and “negatively” perceived THEM exists as assumed by van Dijk, or whether there is a disruption of this concept.

I consider the character traits and therefore do not focus solely on the language as is the tendency in van Dijk’s approach. I also focus on the character appearance and dialogue without performing an in-depth semantic-lexical analysis while focusing on the subtext methods of expressing the dominance of heteronormativity through dialogue, the established themes that are related to heteronormativity and the way which the character is described through dialogue/monologue and, therefore, perceives itself. Jeremy Butler adds the level of action which I perceive, in the context of van Dijk’s discourse analysis, primarily in the sense of character placement in the narrative, whether they are active participants in the story or only passive onlookers which have no say in the matter.⁵

Due to its length, the following text does not allow for a detailed analysis of American TV series production or a detailed excursion into the context of the creation and distribution of the observed representations. I am submitting the results of the mentioned analysis which focus on all American TV series which regularly present both major and minor non-heterosexual teen characters.⁶

2 Commodification of Teen Identity

Teenagers as a consumer group and medially reflected subject began to exist in the context of American and British society after World War II⁷ when, due to the socio-economic conditions, baby boomers became prominent (baby boomers were the first generation to grow up and socialise in the new post-war environment), and these children grew up under different conditions

⁴ Teun A. van Dijk, “Aims of Critical Discourse Analysis,” *Japanese Discourse* 1, no. 1 (1995): 19, 24.

⁵ Jeremy Butler, *Television*, 57–95.

⁶ The detailed analysis and theoretical background of the study are part of the defended dissertation by the author of this text. See Jana Jedličková, *Diskurzivní analýza zobrazování neheterosexuálních teen postav v americké a britské fikční TV tvorbě od počátku 90. let 20. století do současnosti* (PhD dissertation, Palacký University, Olomouc in 2016).

⁷ David Buckingham, “Introducing Identity,” in *Youth, Identity, and Digital Media*, ed. David Buckingham (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2008), 3–22.

than their parents and grandparents during the War and before it.⁸ They possessed money and had more income than their parents a few years earlier, which meant that they had more economic impact on society and also began to appear in the media.⁹ Daniel Romer, for example, has pointed out the so-called youthful hedonism which was based on enjoying life itself, something the previous generations was unable to do.¹⁰ Osgerby mentions a parallel between the post-war situation and the 1990s when a new era of baby boomers began after several weaker generations, which became even more prominent after the year 2000.¹¹

As of the 1950s, television as a new medium has been associated with family both in the UK and the USA.¹² The family represented a consumer that could buy a TV set and the recipient of the TV content.¹³ Television was sold as a medium that connected and protected the family.¹⁴ The early programs focused on the family. The program was created to be aimed at both parents and children at the same time. This characteristic was utilised shortly after by the sellers of various goods that were aimed at the children as a focus group to convince parents to buy a TV set. Lynn Spigel points out: "Children especially were considered to have 'nagging' power in family purchases of television sets. Surveys indicated that families with children tended to buy televisions more than childless couples did."¹⁵

With changes in TV technology and the ways in which target groups perceive and consume TV broadcasting, the consumer market has also begun to transform. The most notable changes in the context of observed identities began in the 1990s and after the year 2000, when so-called Generations X and Y, sometimes also called the Millennials, took over. Their commodification and the need of the TV market to establish communication with these groups led to several factors which currently directly influence the manner of representation of LGBT+ characters in contemporary TV production.¹⁶

⁸ Patrick E. Jamieson and Daniel Romer, eds., *The Changing Portrayals of Adolescents in the Media since 1950* (Oxford and London: Oxford University Press, 2008), Kindle edition, "Preface" and "Introduction: Mass Media and the Socialization of Adolescents since World War II.," Bill Osgerby, "'So Who's Got Time for Adults!': Femininity, Consumption and the Development of Teen TV – from Gidget to Buffy," in *Teen TV. Genre, Consumption, Identity*, eds. Glyn Davis and Kay Dickinson (London: BFI, 2004), 71–86.

⁹ Lynn Spigel, "Seducing the Innocent. Childhood and Television in Postwar America," in *The Children's Culture Reader*, ed. Henry Jenkins (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 125–126.

¹⁰ Jamieson and Romer, *The Changing Portrayals of Adolescents in the Media since 1950*, "Preface."

¹¹ Osgerby, "'So Who's Got Time for Adults!'"

¹² Lynn Spigel, "Television in the Family Circle. The Popular Reception of a New Medium," in *Logics of Television. Essays in Cultural Criticism*, ed. Patricia Mellencamp (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 73–97.

¹³ Spigel, "Seducing the Innocent."

¹⁴ Spigel mentions how, in the early 1950s, TV was perceived by conservative groups and individuals as a medium that had eluded public control. It moved between the private and the public sphere and children could be exposed to dangerous factors at any time. (Spigel, "Television in the Family Circle.") Sex and unconventional gender behaviour ranked among the frequently mentioned "dangerous" factors that could endanger children while watching TV (most commonly associated in the 1950s in the USA with changes in gender roles in families – mother leaving the family for work, etc.). Any mention of homosexuality and "atypical" heterosexual practices (e.g., anal sex, masturbation, etc.) was considered particularly dangerous. (Robert Pondillo, *America's First Network TV Censor. The Work of NBC's Stockton Helffrich* [Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2010], 73–98.)

¹⁵ Spigel, "Seducing the Innocent," 120.

¹⁶ "By 2017, Millennials are projected to spend over \$200 billion annually and more than \$10 trillion in their lifetimes, which means they will have more purchasing power than any other generation and are bound to reshape the global economy. [...] With 92 million millennials in the United States, better marketing to millennials will not only set you apart from your competitors, but it will also increase your brand's value and bottom line." (Alexandra Abbott, "Marketing to Millennials: How to Get in with the Cool Crowd," TrackMaven.com, last modified April 18, 2016, <http://trackmaven.com/blog/2016/04/marketing-to-millennials/>.)

The issue of teen identity commodification naturally changes through time and space. It is by no means an established¹⁷ category with characteristic attributes.

More recently, one could argue that youth is increasingly defined through the operations of the commercial market. The category of the “teenager,” for example, was effectively brought into being in the 1950s through market research; and in contemporary marketing discourse, we can see the emergence of a whole series of newly invented categories such as “tweens,” “middle youth,” “kidults,” and “adul-tescents” – categories that crucially blur the distinctions between children, youth and adults.¹⁸

This is one of the reasons why this identity – or rather group of identities – is so difficult to grasp in terms of marketing. One of the means to therefore incite it to consume a specific product is the so-called cool factor.

The cool factor¹⁹ is most commonly associated with Generations X²⁰ and Y²¹, i.e. the Millennials.²² The most important thing for this group is the ideological connection with neoliberalism, free access to media content, social network activities and the use of alternative means of consuming the media content. Sidneyeve Matrix calls, for example, the younger representatives of these generations screenagers (especially Generation Y born after 2005), i.e. young people who turned away from “traditional” ways of media perception and watch or otherwise consume literature, music, films and TV programs through computer screens, tablets and other electronic devices.²³ The said media are consumed consistently, the audience of TV programs has increased several times over compared to the original estimates in the UK and the USA, but TV and other “traditional” media are no longer consumed in the “traditional” manner.²⁴ Millennials also represent at present one of the most sought-after target groups (not just in the TV industry) in the USA.²⁵ Alexandra Abbott summarises the principal marketing strategies to reach out to Millennials in the article “Marketing to Millennials: How to Get in with the Cool Crowd”:

Marketing to millennials is not only trendy, but a smart financial decision that is essential to your bottom line. Here are three tips to help you better market to the rising generation of consumers [...] 1. Keep it customizable and personal [...] 2. When marketing to millennials, intent matters. Be loyal [...] 3. Provide excellent customer feedback and service options.²⁶

¹⁷ One of the logical reasons for this instability is the fact that it concerns young recipients who often radically change their tastes with age (over a relatively short time). It is therefore extremely difficult to work with them the same as with other segments of the audience.

¹⁸ Buckingham, *Youth, Identity, and Digital Media*, 4.

¹⁹ The label “cool” is used in marketing to sell various products to teenagers. When something is labelled as cool, new, interesting and innovative enough, it has, from the perspective of teenagers, not only the potential to entertain them but also to keep or change the social status and image. See “Targeting Teens,” SF Environment. A Department of the City of San Francisco, last modified August 15, 2016, 14, ppt; Sidneyeve Matrix, “The Netflix Effect: Teens, Binge Watching, and On-Demand Digital Media Trends,” *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures*, no. 6 (2014): 119–137; Abbott, “Marketing to Millennials.”

²⁰ Generation X includes a rather wide group of people in terms of age who have similar world-views and approach to media consumption. These people were born roughly after 1985, i.e. the age group (in 2016) in the range from 20 to 36 years of age. (Matrix, “The Netflix Effect,” 120.)

²¹ Generation Y includes young people born after 2005. (Ibid.)

²² Although these generations may geographically differ in certain characteristics, based on international research, certain common characteristics can be traced for this generation of people throughout Euro-American culture. The UK and the USA have a great deal in common in particular.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Most Millennials do not own, for example, a TV set and therefore cannot be reached through conventional means of advertisement. (Matrix, “The Netflix Effect.”)

²⁵ Abbott points out that American Millennials have, according to current estimates, the potential to spend over 200 billion dollars by 2017 and over 10 trillion dollars during their lifetimes. (Abbott, “Marketing to Millennials.”)

²⁶ Ibid.

Marty Swant, Brett and Kate McKay and John Geraci have contributed to the debate concerning Millennials by emphasizing the so-called cool factor, which they view as fundamental for this generation, or rather group of generations. In similar fashion as with any previous generations, Millennials also naturally set themselves apart from the generations of their parents and grandparents, not just by using modern technology but in their system of values. This is commented on by Brett and Kate McKay in “Men & Status: A Cause Without Rebels – Millennials and the Changing Meaning of Cool.”²⁷

In the 50s and 60s being cool meant rebelling against the mainstream culture. Over the next several decades, however, society became so diverse and fragmented, there began to be no true mainstream culture to speak of, nor to set oneself in opposition to. The last breaths of Rebel Cool could be found in the “alternative” grunge culture of the 90s.²⁸

Brett and Kate McKay point out that the trend of fragmentation, growing tolerance and diversification has only grown over the years and the tendency to rebel against the mainstream has become unnecessary.

In fact, while Millennials demonstrate a greater tolerance towards different lifestyles than previous generations, they have actually become increasingly conservative in their own behaviour — even re-embracing some of the traditional values of the past.²⁹

Being children from often divorced families, the generation growing up at the time of economic crisis and brought up in an environment that in all respects promotes the idea that “you can do whatever you can think of,” the Millennials are, according to Brett and Kate McKay, a loyal generation requiring authenticity and honesty in actions and behaviour, not only with people but also with consumer brands. Also typical is the emphasis on social activism and heightened social responsibility for their own existence in general. Despite being considered a generation which is innovative and not afraid to take a risk, it does so prudently and after careful planning according to Brett and Kate McKay.³⁰ From their perspective, rebellion is not opposition to the mainstream, but rather a non-conventionality presented as cool. “While there’s no longer a monolithic ‘Man’ to fight against, Millennials still want to stand out from the crowd and feel unique.”³¹ The non-conventionality consequently becomes a new type of rebellion, which is fully commodified and sold as cool.

John Geraci summarises the uniqueness of this consumer group:

Be relevant. Teens constantly tell us in focus groups that they want brands to “be real” – not pretentious. Millennials don’t want retailers and products to try to make them something they are not. In this sense, their tastes can be surprisingly conservative. Yet, paradoxically, they want to stand out. As the saying goes, a teen wants to be different, just like everybody else.³²

²⁷ Brett McKay and Kate McKay, “Men & Status: A Cause Without Rebels – Millennials and the Changing Meaning of Cool,” *Art of Manliness*, last modified December 2, 2015, <http://www.artofmanliness.com/2015/12/02/men-status-a-cause-without-rebels-millennials-and-the-changing-meaning-of-cool/>.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² John Geraci, “Retailing to the Arbiters of Cool: Meet the Millennials,” *Cruxresearch.com*, last modified August 15, 2016, <http://www.cruxresearch.com/downloads/Meet%20the%20Millennials.pdf>.

Millennials represent a unique group of consumers that requires unconventionality, innovation but also “traditional values” which, however, correspond to the neoliberal world-view. It is not therefore surprising that, despite supporting a diversified society and the rights of minorities,³³ they also require more conventional patterns of action and behaviour. In this respect, there is nothing strange in the connection between support of LGBT+ identity and their civil rights and recognition of normative rules regarding sexuality and gender. These rules are again, however, “updated” in a fashion for the world of Millennials.

3 American TV

American TV is generally considered more conservative than British TV production with respect to teenage characters and themes related to adolescence. The different politico-economic environment, the nature of television broadcasting influenced by both internal and external interventions in the entertainment industry and the marketing practice towards adolescent consumers are among the many factors that are involved in the different TV representation of LGBT+ characters and themes in general.

Amy Villarejo in the collective monograph *Queer TV* is interested, for example, in the specificity of TV with regard to LGBT+ minorities. She points out that television as a medium has been since its inception primarily focused on the family as a consumer unit. The family, closely associated with the idea of heteronormativity, therefore determined, and to some extent still does, the form of TV broadcasting from the form of time slots, genre and format definition to media legislation as such.³⁴ According to Amy Villarejo, children and adolescents are the most “treasured” and “protected” group within the family since they are the ones most malleable with respect to socialisation and most inclined to changes in attitudes, behaviour and actions. Programs aimed at these target groups are therefore under the greatest scrutiny both in terms of media laws and the viewers themselves. An important topic in this sense is the regulation of TV content which is, in the USA, caused by the different system of financing of TV stations, as well as the factual influence of interest groups on TV content and media legislation which strictly regulates any content that could harm the psychological development of children and teenagers in the USA. An alternative sexual orientation is one such objectionable influence.³⁵

Organisations focused on protecting family, religious groups and organisations seeking the protection of moral values of American society have a strong influence on the American media market. When the programming of the broadcast television violates these standards in displaying the LGBT characters, these organisations attack the TV stations and producers with requests for withdrawal or cancellation of narratives or entire programs with the LGBT content. The sponsors usually respond with their refusal to finance such episodes or entire programs and TV stations usually react in the form of auto-censorship to the detriment of LGBT representation. Cable TV stations have a different system of financing their operations. They operate on a subscription basis and do not have to worry about short term financial shortage. In addition, they present themselves as TV stations with vastly different content than the one available on broadcast television. It is based on controversy and higher narrative and style quality (HBO, Showtime).³⁶

³³ Sarah Taylor Grace and Emily Swanson, “Poll: Young Americans Overwhelmingly Favor LGBT Rights,” *LGBTQnation.com*, last modified August 14, 2016, <http://www.lgbtqnation.com/2016/08/poll-young-americans-overwhelmingly-favor-lgbt-rights/>.

³⁴ Amy Villarejo, “Ethereal Queer: Notes on Method,” in *Queer TV*, eds. Glyn Davis and Gary Needham (London: Routledge, 2009), 48–62.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Jana Jedličková, *Tři etapy zobrazování LGBT postav v TV seriálech a sériích* (Bachelor’s thesis, Palacký University in Olomouc, 2010), 30.

From the perspective of history and the development of TV broadcasting in the USA, an important milestone is the emergence of cable TV and its legislative definition. Prior to the 1970s, there were three major TV networks (ABC, CBS and NBC) in the USA that divided the entertainment market among themselves. Due to pressure from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), this model of TV production was gradually deregulated and conditions for new competition arose.³⁷ New TV networks (The WB and FOX) were established and the first cable TV stations appeared at the end of the 1970s. The difference, in comparison with the TV networks, was primarily in terms of the manner of distribution of the TV content, the technical and programming definition in the media legislation and the method of financing.³⁸ It is fundamental to understand the cable TV channels as a distribution system regulated through licensing and monitoring of the technical parameters of the company, not in terms of program content. The subscription principle also allows for the creation of an environment where the viewer is expecting to be exposed to controversial content, this often being the reason for their subscription.³⁹ The networks, in contrast, are strictly controlled in terms of the program content. Needham and Davis have summarised all of these characteristics and pointed out that this approach to TV broadcasting paradoxically allows for reflections on minority themes and the inclusion of minority characters into TV narratives.⁴⁰

Apart from the teen LGBT+ characters, it is important to focus on the forms of TV broadcasting and the types of TV stations that produce these programs. In the context of the American market, the majority of programs with regularly occurring teen LGBT+ characters are produced by the broadcast networks, i.e. these programs are produced and distributed by the networks themselves. These companies are strictly monitored by FCC and various interest and activist groups and the TV stations themselves.⁴¹ The TV content aimed at children and the teenage audience is also constantly subject to the scrutiny of these institutions. One can therefore safely assume that broadcast television will offer considerably more conservative content than cable TV which is not scrutinised or limited in such a way.⁴² Having said that, cable TV does not offer all that many programs with LGBT+ teen characters. Most of the programs with these kinds of characters are aimed at an adult audience and these characters are not at the centre of attention. An exception would be the specialised cable TV stations, most notably MTV which intentionally targets the teenage audience (*Teen Wolf*, *Skins US* and *Faking It*).

There are, on the one hand, broadcast networks which have tried to aim their programs at the broadest audience possible for decades (so-called broadcasting) and, on the other hand, cable TV and other platforms offering TV programs (VoD, Hulu, Netflix) which focus on so-called niche audiences (so-called narrowcasting), i.e. audiences with a narrow focus who are more easily reachable because of their specific preferences. Although their numbers are lower than those of broadcast network audiences,⁴³ they are generally more loyal and more easily reachable through

³⁷ Jennifer Holt, "Vertical Vision: Deregulation, Industrial Economy and Prime-time Design," in *Quality Popular Television*, eds. Mark Jancovich and James Lyons (London: BFI, 2003), 11–31.

³⁸ Michael Curtin and Jane Shattuc, *The American Television Industry* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

³⁹ Jason Mittell, *Television and American Culture* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁴⁰ Gary Needham, "Scheduling Normativity: Television, The Family, and Queer Temporality," in *Queer TV*, 143–158.

⁴¹ Mittell, *Television and American Culture*.

⁴² Villarejo, "Ethereal Queer."

⁴³ One of the exceptions is the dystopian sci-fi series *The Walking Dead* made by the cable TV station AMC which reached audience ratings of 16 million viewers, a number comparable to many TV series on the American broadcast networks. Rick Kissel, "AMC's 'The Walking Dead' Finishes as TV's Top Series in Key Demo for Fourth Straight Season," *Variety.com*, last modified April 8, 2016, <http://variety.com/2016/tv/news/amc-the-walking-dead-top-series-in-young-adults-fourth-straight-season-1201749093/>.

marketing.⁴⁴ The TV theoretician Amanda Lotz has even reached the conclusion (supported by a recent survey on TV marketing and TV programming) that television as a mass medium in the USA no longer exists. According to Lotz, contemporary TV is distinctive in moving away from broadcasting, i.e. aiming at an unspecified mass audience that more or less passively (without any active interaction) consumes the content. Narrowcasting is on the rise, however, where a focus on niche audiences is characteristic of the activity and direct communication/interaction with the TV medium is typical.⁴⁵

One such niche audience is teenagers who broadcast networks are especially interested in reaching. This is one of the reasons why, as of the 1990s, there has been a rising number of teen TV series, and series with teen LGBT+ characters in relation to the generation of Millennials. Broadcast networks have aimed their programming at families as of the 1940s. These programs have to therefore include themes of adolescence and child and teenage characters. These TV programs began to be transformed with their programs becoming separate in the 1990s. As of the 1980s, in contrast, cable TV stations have tried to steal viewers from the broadcast networks by predominantly targeting adult audiences, whom they have reached through controversy (this plan would be problematic in the case of children and teenagers because of the strict legislation).⁴⁶ I believe that this is the reason why we can find more programs at present focused on teen LGBT+ characters on the broadcast networks. This fact is helped by the current trend of TV niche marketing used in cases when even established popular programs (American daytime soap operas for example) have distinctly lost their audience. In an attempt to find a new audience, teen characters and even minority teen characters have been added to the fictional worlds in order to reach Generations X and Y (*As the World Turns*).⁴⁷

4 Representation of Teen Characters

The primary focus of the market in the USA used to be on the white heterosexual middle class and, to a lesser degree, the lower class. Teenagers, who were older and had to start working soon, were not given all that much attention.⁴⁸ One of the reasons for the development of the new genre/format of teen programs was an effort on the part of the new TV stations to compete with the older ones. Osgerby mentions American ABC, which in an effort to differentiate the programming from NBC and CBS began to focus on families with children and teenagers, a tactic it uses to this day.⁴⁹ The most common genres in American TV production were the family sitcom (*The Wonder Years*) and the soap opera (*Days of Our Lives*) where teen characters were usually the focus of the minor narrative lines and still perceived from the perspective of an adult viewer or character. American teen TV production has been characteristic for a greater focus on spectacle, the physical “perfection” of the characters and a departure from the everyday problems of teenagers from lower social classes.⁵⁰ Osgerby has noted, however, that this practice

⁴⁴ Amanda D. Lotz, *The Television Will Be Revolutionized* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2014), 21–52, 167–205.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Michelle Hilmes, “US Television in the Multichannel Age (Protectionism, Deregulation and The Telecommunications Act of 1996),” in *The Television History Book*, ed. Michelle Hilmes (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 62–67.

⁴⁷ *As the World Turns* [TV series] (USA: CBS, 1956–2010), created by: Irna Phillips, 13 858 ep.

⁴⁸ Osgerby, “So Who’s Got Time for Adults!”

⁴⁹ Ibid., 73.

⁵⁰ We may consider an exception to this the quality TV series *Shameless US* (an adaptation of the eponymous British series), which presents the life of a poor working class American family in the form of dramedy. One of the main storylines is the same-sex relationship of teenage Ian and Mickey in his twenties. (*Shameless US* [TV series] [USA: Showtime, 2011 – present], developed by: John Wells, 72 ep.)

began to change under the influence of feminism, the African-American Civil Rights Movement and LGBT social movements both in the USA and in the UK.⁵¹

Around the year 2000, discourse regarding the representation of LGBT+ characters slowly began to change. The documentary *Totally Gay!* created by the cable TV station VH1 even stated that television was experiencing the period of a gay revolution. This claim is especially supported by the increased visibility of LGBT+ characters, even though most of them are gay white men in their thirties.⁵² Gay and lesbian sexual orientation began to be publicly commodified and promoted as hip and cool. One of the respondents of *Totally Gay* aptly commented on the situation regarding the commodification and change in the social attitude: “I know straight kids that get to get on their parents’ nerves telling them that they are gay. They come out when they are not, just to see their parents to freak out. This is all a new kind of rebellion. New way to be bad when gay is not enough.”⁵³ Ten years later, the online platforms Netflix and Hulu stepped into the picture and changed the ways in which young people consume TV content and the reasons why they do so (or why they consume this particular content). Sidneyeve Matrix has pointed out that young TV and online audiences usually carefully choose what they watch.⁵⁴ Students of Generation Y, for example, often perceive watching a certain TV series in order to “ensure” a specific social position outside of their group. Knowledge of such TV series (e.g., *Game of Thrones*, *The Big Bang Theory*, etc.) is often required as a mark of social competence within their group⁵⁵. Another reason for watching a specific TV series stated by the young respondents is that they feel good while watching it, and this not in the sense of procrastination, but in the sense, that by watching the teen drama they learn to accept themselves and confront certain values⁵⁶ which they would like to aspire to.⁵⁷ “Beyond teen dramas, there is ample evidence online that younger viewers are watching adult programs to satisfy their intellectual curiosity, for the sexually mature content, and to enjoy the high production values.”⁵⁸

5 Cool factor: Commodification of LGBT + Teen Identities

The transformation of the relationship between heteronormativity and alternative sexual identities is clearly visible in the use of the cool factor. LGBT+ teen identities are commodified, i.e. sold as a product of consumption that represents certain general values or to directly increase the credibility and audience of the program and help the target groups to identify with the idea of the TV program as something progressive, innovative and unique, in simple terms as cool, and transfer this characteristic to the viewer.⁵⁹ The analysis of the American teen TV series indicates that since the emergence of the TV series *Glee*, the number of teen LGBT+ characters

⁵¹ Osgerby, “So Who’s Got Time for Adults!”

⁵² Jedličková, *Tri etapy zobrazování LGBT postav v TV seriálech a sériích*, 101.

⁵³ *Totally Gay!* [TV documentary] (USA: VH1, 2003), directed by: Wash Westmoreland, 45 min. This tendency is represented, for example, by the character of Andrew Van de Kamp from the TV series *Desperate Housewives*, who deliberately pretends that he is gay to get back at his mother. In his case, however, a “true” coming out takes place several years later, and therefore the fulfilment of the heteronormative framework, against which he rebelled, occurs by means of marriage with his partner.

⁵⁴ Matrix, “The Netflix Effect.”

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ At this point I would like to refer to the previous chapter on the commodification of teenagers in pop-culture and the specifics of the generation of Millennials.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 129.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 130. This is crucial for an explanation of the form of certain contemporary teen dramas that dramatically broke away from the teen dramas of the 1990s and the beginning of the year 2000 in their production values and themes (*The 100*, *Glue*, *Pretty Little Liars*, etc.).

⁵⁹ Ibid.; McKay and McKay, “Men & Status.”

on American TV has risen exponentially. Teen characters and themes have the potential to attract teen viewers, however, as it is important for this segment belonging to Generations X and Y whether such a character is simply cool, or whether at least the TV series can be described as such.⁶⁰ The generation of Millennials requires diversity and therefore has a generally positive attitude towards the representation of minorities including teen LGBT+. They also require, however, such representations to be unique and not separate from the fictional world. This creates a representational paradox where, on the one hand, the minorities are required to somehow stand out to appeal to the audience, and on the other hand, be conceived in a way that does not differentiate between the majority and the minority identities. If one takes into account American teen TV production with teen LGBT+ characters, it is apparent that sexual orientation is interchangeable with sexual identity, i.e. that sexuality is viewed as a dominant human identity trait, considered natural, not constructed or fluid (fluid identity and bisexuality are still very problematic in TV fiction which is not aimed only at teenagers) and it is seemingly given the same importance as heterosexuality, at least in TV series since the second half of the 2000s. Teen LGBT+ characters are no longer as ostracised and strictly distinguished from the heterosexual characters, but, on the contrary, are assimilated into the heteronormative framework, which helps to form the demand of the TV market connected to neoliberal thinking because of their commodification.

In the words of teen LGBT+ characters, it is not cool to discriminate and be intolerant. These kinds of attitudes are viewed as backward by the younger generations. In contrast, the shift towards diversity and neoliberal individualism indicates the social prestige and recognised social position in young collectives.⁶¹ Teen LGBT+ characters are therefore represented as equal to heterosexual ones. A number of TV series and serials even almost completely blur these constructed boundaries between the categories. One such example is the sci-fi TV series *The 100*, which in my opinion, is not a case of assimilation but rather an utter annihilation of heteronormativity. A similar approach in terms of work with fictional characters can be seen in the paranormal TV series *Teen Wolf* with teen gay characters produced by MTV. Although they are marginalised and primarily act as support for the heterosexual characters, the TV series regularly thematises the “cool attitude” towards non-heterosexual minorities through the absence of differences. It is therefore characteristic that the teen characters have no need to be concerned about the sexual orientation of the people around them. Sexual orientation is important for the adult characters, who are usually perceived in teen drama as the conservative non-progressive element. In *Teen Wolf*, any hint of political correctness or pointing out of non-heterosexual orientations is ridiculed and the teen characters in the fictional world regularly remind us that LGBT+ minorities are the same as the heterosexual majority.

The cool factor is a topic in the case of another MTV series (MTV built its programming strategy precisely on the cool factor) *Faking it*, which in a subversive way reveals the mechanism of teen LGBT+ identity commodification and, at the same time, breaks down the neoliberal paradoxes required by Millennials. The first season of this series revolves around two friends, Amy (from a Republican conservative family) and Karma (from a Democrat hippie family) who, based on Karma's idea, decide to pretend they are lovers to gain popularity at the local high school. *Faking it* is a sitcom, however, due to the specific form of humour. It can satirise the generation of Millennials and their approach to diversity and political correctness. It introduces an intersex character, for example, whose coming out is constructed in the same way as the coming out of

⁶⁰ Matrix, “The Netflix Effect.”

⁶¹ Ibid.

gay teen characters in the 1990s and a transgender character who is portrayed in the same way as the gay, lesbian and heterosexual characters.⁶²

5 Summary

Although the analysis of 1990s programs did not indicate much variability of representation, after the year 2000, along with changes in the TV industry, media audiences and the influence of neo-liberal politics, a considerably more diverse portrayal of teen LGBT+ characters appeared on TV.

In relation to the heteronormative framework, two opposing principles of representation of observed identities are applied in American television. These are the assimilation of teen LGBT+ identity to the heteronormative framework which is dominant, and the subversive principle that makes use of the questioning of the naturalness and normativity of heterosexuality (*Faking It*, *Teen Wolf*, *The Fosters*, *The United States of Tara*, *Queer as Folk US*) or erases it completely (*The 100*).

As of the year 2000, there has been a change in the portrayal of the observed groups of characters that still shows signs of the separation of the subversive and the dominant discourse with an increase in subversion and a gradual assimilation of teen LGBT+ identities into the dominant discourse. The goal is therefore not the breakdown of heteronormativity and dominant vs. subversive dynamics but the extension of heteronormativity to include certain types of identities that used to be subversive. With this exclusive form of assimilation into the heteronormative framework, this type of character/TV series is differentiated from the subversive tendency where the characters question the heteronormatively constructed non-heterosexual identities and everyday practices (e.g., forms of love relationships, homogeneity and categorisation of identity, the institution of marriage, monogamy, etc.). An interesting example of the rejection of assimilation tendencies is the teen sci-fi TV series *The 100* where no shift occurs between the dominant and subversive discourses since all the characters belong to the same category, i.e. US. The teen LGBT+ characters also break down the gender patterns associated with heteronormativity and therefore I view this TV series as a fictional world where heteronormativity no longer exists.

The assimilation principle has revealed that only certain forms of teen LGBT+ representation can be assimilated by heteronormativity. Bisexuality, any fluid sexual and gender identities and intersex, i.e. any identity without an essentially stable character, are usually excluded. With certain exceptions, any teen LGBT+ identities that do not have a middle-class upbringing, are not white, and do not seek a conventional type of heteronormative relationship, are excluded.

The transformation of the relationship between heteronormativity and alternative sexual identities can also be seen in the context of the cool factor. This term is currently used especially in marketing focused on Millennials. This specific target group, defined in terms of generation, attitudes and life goals, is according to economists, one of the most desired contemporary demographics to be attained. In this demographic, LGBT+ identities are fully commodified to capture and keep the attention of these target groups on specific products. Programs including these identities are also perceived as progressive, innovative and unique precisely because they include such identities. In simple terms, they are cool, and therefore there is a presumption that they will be perceived as such by their respective social groups and the viewers that seek out such programs. To openly admit being a member of the LGBT+ subculture, or to at least support

⁶² Iveta Jansová, "Posouvání hranice normativity," 25fps.cz, last modified January 16, 2015, <http://25fps.cz/2015/faking-it/>.

them, is no longer a matter of tolerance on the part of the audience but, due to commodification, inclusion has become a desirable and sought-after feature of current TV production.

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Book Reviews |

Audionarratology: Interfaces of Sound and Narrative

Review by Zuzana Řezníčková

Jarmila Mildorf and Till Kinzel, eds., *Audionarratology: Interfaces of Sound and Narrative*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016. 267 pp. ISBN 978-3-11-046432-0
<https://www.degruyter.com/viewbooktoc/product/468357?rskey=3y4Faz&result=1>

It would appear, thanks to the growing popularity of YouTube videos, TV series, photos and GIFs on social networks, that the current media products are primarily visual. Acoustic perceptions such as voice, sound effects, music and silence create their own meanings that define the characters of a story and are part of its narration. We cannot therefore ignore them as they often make up an integral part of the visual works and form an additional dimension. Sound has the ability to create its own fictional worlds into which the recipients can enter.

These topics are frequently discussed, particularly in the field of radio studies which is primarily focused on radio production. The field of sound study and its possibilities are much broader, however. This is reflected in the publication *Audionarratology: Interfaces of Sound and Narrative*, this being the most recent contribution to expert analysis of this issue. It was published in the spring of 2016 as the 52nd volume in the *Narratologia* series. This series focuses on monographs and collective works regarding contemporary narratological theory and overlaps into various kinds of media, art forms and disciplines.

Audionarratology as a Method of Sound Study

Audionarratology presents a compilation of contributions presented at the conference of the same name organised by Paderborn University in September 2014. A total of thirteen texts by various authors have been compiled by the editors Jarmila Mildorf and Till Kinzel. Different aspects of the field of audionarratology as a discipline and as part of post-classical narratology are the shared topics of these papers. Since this is a fairly new term, the authors are interested in, among other things, defining its meaning and the key subjects to which it applies.

The unifying element of the papers is the relationship between sound and storytelling and the use of sound in the narratives of various types of creative works. Sound is considered here as a self-sufficient narrative device that has the power to create images and meanings in the mind of the listener and therefore help with the understanding and experience of the story. These topics have been treated in a fairly non-systematic fashion thus far in the field of radio studies. *Audionarratology* is consequently the first publication which pursues the questions of the relationship between sound, narrative and listener in greater detail, even as far as the range of the analysed forms of art is concerned.

This book serves as a valuable source of interdisciplinary methods of sound study for the field of radio studies in particular. A number of the papers enrich the audionarratological concept with findings from cognitive theory, semiotics, linguistics and musicology. In terms of the study of radio drama production itself, the middle section of the book devoted to the relationship between sound and narrative in sound art is particularly interesting. The two other parts of the

publication thematically expand the field of study to the sound aspect of videos, video games, audiobooks, music and even theatre.

In the opening chapter of the book, the editors summarise the theoretical background of audionarratology, its basic terms and topics. In terms of methodology, audionarratology is mostly grounded in post-classical narratology represented by David Herman, but also has a sociological and mediological background. A number of audionarratological terms, such as soundscape, perception, sound, perspective, narration and experience come from various fields of theory of art, sociology and mediology.

The individual contributions are dedicated to the relationship between narrative and various forms of sound: music, sound effects and voice. Each author chooses an entirely different topic of study and, to a certain degree, a different theoretical background. This is evidence of the still quite unclear boundaries within the field of audionarratology. It is apparent that it cannot as yet be viewed as a stable theory providing clear methods of study of auditory works.

Storytelling with Music

The first part of the book deals with the relationship between music and narrative. The paper by M. Dolores Porto Requejo entitled “Music in Multimodal Narratives: The Role of Soundtrack in Digital Stories” deals with the sound aspect of so-called digital stories through the lens of cognitive theory. Using the example of these short amateur videos which combine voice-over, photos, video, sound effects and music, the author demonstrates the role of music in their overall composition. In this case, music does not have a mere “decorative” function but creates its own meanings and, with its melody, volume and rhythm, helps to inspire the emotions of the listener. Requejo also views music as a means of orientation in the story as it serves to separate the individual story segments.

Alan Palmer takes a similar theoretical approach in his paper “‘Put the Heart Into it’: Narrative in Country Music and the Blues,” where he analyses the nature, behaviour and inner world of characters from selected American country and blues songs. He sees the great potential of sound (in particular the singer’s voice, rhythm, pitch etc.) in the rendering of the mental processes, emotions and experiences of the characters, in other words, the so-called fictional mind. The listener perceives the character based on this information.

Storytelling by Sound

Another group of papers deals with radio plays in particular. These include a study by the media theoretician Elke Huwiler who has dedicated several years to the analysis of radio drama production. Her study from 2005, *Storytelling by Sound: A Theoretical Frame for Radio Drama Analysis*, where she studies the levels of narrative and meaning of sound, is particularly well-known. She adds a semantic analysis of the individual sound features to the narratological aspect. She has contributed to this publication with the paper “A Narratology of Audio Art: Telling Stories by Sound.” Here she argues that not only speech (or word) has the nature of a sign in the radio play. According to Huwiler, sound creates its own meanings that affect the narration and the understanding of a story. She distinguishes between voice, music, noise, fading, cutting, mixing, the stereophonic positioning of the signals, electro-acoustic manipulation, original sound and silence as the systems of signs applied in the auditory arts.

Although the semiotic approach is not completely unique in the field of radio studies, none of the theorists have used it systematically. Götz Schmedes, whose publication *Medientext. Hörspiel*

was an inspiration for Elke Huwiler, is among the authors who have made use of this concept. Schmedes applies the triadic system of the linguist Charles Sanders Pierce to a radio play. Andrew Crisell has a similar approach to the issue of radio semiotics in the publication *Understanding Radio*, where he emphasises the iconic and symbolic nature of sound signs. Apart from Huwiler, the authors of *The Radio Drama Handbook*, Richard J. Hand, Mary Traynor, Martin Shingler and Cindy Wieringa agree with him on this topic (*On Air. Methods and Meanings of Radio*). Elke Huwiler, however, is the only one who combines the terminology of narratology and semiotics in her analytical procedures and thus creates a fairly unique method of analysis.

Apart from the narrative, sound features such as music, sound effects, editing, etc. are also notably used in the building of the space-time of drama, as argued in the paper by Bartosz Lutostański “A Narratology of Radio Drama: Voice, Perspective, Space.” According to Lutostański, word, sound, music and silence have the nature of signs of radio art and, at the same time, lead the listener through story, space and time and present individual characters. He argues that the microphone and its position are crucial. On the one hand, it becomes a tool of focalisation, and on the other hand, determines the spatial dispositions. Lutostański understands radio as a “present medium” which can induce a feeling of direct participation in the ongoing events in the listener, particularly by connecting the narrative and its space-time setting.

Wider Connotations of Sound

The last part of the publication is devoted to the relationship between narrative and sound in audio formats such as audio tracks in video games, the reading of a monologue, audiobooks and audio guides in galleries. The shared element of these texts is also the topic of sound perception as an experience and a means of engagement in certain situations.

The paper by Sebastian Domsch “Hearing Storyworlds: How Video Games Use Sound to Convey Narrative” is remarkable, particularly in terms of its sophisticated terminology. Domsch studies the function of sound in relation to the player of a game. Video games construct a fictional world using sound effects and music, but also communicate with the player and react to their activity. These sounds are referred to as ludic sounds in a studio and Domsch explains in detail how the interaction between them and the player works and what meanings are formed in the process.

More Paths of Audionarratology

Each part of the publication corresponds to the study of the forms and functions of sound across the forms of auditory art and their relationship to the narrative. The aim of the authors is not always to provide a clear and definitive answer, but rather to encourage further questions and discussions. The contributions also vary in terms of the degree of sophistication of the methodology and the analytical procedures. Certain authors proceed more intuitively, rather than systematically and according to a clearly defined method, during the study of the given works. This can be understandably expected in a theoretical field this young. Everything resides in the process of grounding, argumentation, searching and discovery.

From the point of view of the Czech study of auditory art, I appreciate the fact that the fundamental aspect of the study of the works is the listener and their perception, i.e. the premise that the acoustic work is not complete without the mind, the active listening and the imagination of the listener. This idea is not all that developed in Czech radio theory and the approaches of foreign colleagues are truly inspiring.

The distinct advantage of this publication is the wide range of research fields ranging from radio art, video games, music genres to theatrical production and audio guides in museums. There are additional audionarratological research opportunities regarding fiction and non-fiction radio production where the audio track plays an extremely important role and is closely linked with the narration. The collection of contributions to the field of audionarratology has truly provided a variety of procedures, technical terminology and methods for the further study of auditory production which will be, hopefully, further developed.

Translated by Jindřich Klimeš

Cable Guys: Television and Masculinities in the 21st Century

Review by Jana Jedličková

Amanda D. Lotz, *Cable Guys: Television and Masculinities in the 21st Century*. New York, London: New York University Press, 2014. 241 p. ISBN 978-1-479-80048-3
<https://nyupress.org/books/9781479800483/>

Gender studies have left quite an impact on an area of TV studies in general. From the very beginnings of the academic field there have been numerous scholars, both male and female, who have focused on the role of the female viewer in the matter of TV scheduling. The groundbreaking work of Ian Ang needs to be mentioned in this context. There have been a number of studies which have dealt with the issue of representation of female characters on TV as well as papers regarding the impact of the Feminist movement on TV programming. These studies tend, however, to place females at the center of a world inhabited by their male counterparts. Television is usually understood as a male medium, or better said a medium which prefers male viewers over female ones. Female characters or topics connected with female viewers are still down-played to a great extent. Women undoubtedly also have less access to the medium as professionals. Academic papers are consequently usually more focused on the position which is occupied by women. It is they who are considered a minority. It is therefore surprising that there is a significant lack of papers focused on male characters or masculinity and masculinities in the context of TV broadcasting and the TV industry. In actuality, there are a number of academic texts focused on male leads in TV series, these being genres that are traditionally connected with male viewers (such as western, action TV, crime drama, news, etc.) or single male TV professionals who become famous (e.g., Walter Cronkite, Milton Berle, Ed Sullivan and others). Although feminism has influenced the position academics take towards TV, it is femininity which is more likely to be studied than masculinity. Amanda D. Lotz has consequently taken on the challenge and provided the academic space with a book focused on contemporary variations of masculinity in so-called male-centered TV series.

Lotz argues that we are living in an exciting age of male-focused TV that significantly differs from previous forms of TV programming. It provides its viewers with a wide range of masculinities which lack a clear-cut position as to which male characters are positively dominant and which represent a weak form of masculinity. Additionally, Lotz argues that contemporary male lead characters live through a so-called crisis of masculinity or actually negotiate approachable forms of masculinity under the influence of feminism and changes in female social roles. She frequently points out that contemporary male characters in male-centered TV series (series that address the entire life of male characters) struggle to learn how to be “a man” instead of merely knowing and behaving like a true man.

In the introductory chapter Lotz briefly suggests that even if TV is a male medium and American history is a history of men, there is actually no history of masculinity, men or manhood on American television. TV studies are lacking a typology of archetypes or thematic analysis of stories about men on TV. The author then explains why is it that we tend to be more drawn towards female characters and femininity on TV than towards men. She connects feminism and

the question of the natural roles women have been considered to have with the lack of interest in male characters. They have been viewed as natural, normal and hence were not interesting enough because there was actually no disruption of the status quo. Male identities were not opened up for discussion. Lotz is consequently interested in contemporary TV and its male-centered TV series. She argues that as of the 1980s changes in TV masculinity constructions have begun to influence what male TV characters look like. They have complicated inner lives and are part of a family life on the outside. They are missing instructions on how to be a proper man and thus are often lost and wondering. They are not even meant to be role models which differentiates them from previous male archetypes.

Lotz focuses on cable TV series because it is specifically the cable stations which provide most of the male-centered TV series at present. They also deal with complicated male characters in the issue of negotiating what it is to be a man in today's society. She skillfully explains in chapter one the connection between contemporary gender politics and the way television often works with male characters and topics regarding men. Although she does not attempt to focus on gender politics in detail, she does investigate the area of TV production, legislation and branding in order to explain in depth how and why the new way of constructing masculinity has developed.

Chapters two and three are focused on specific examples of male-centered TV series and its male protagonists, namely *The Sopranos*, *The Shield*, *Rescue Me*, *Dexter*, *House M.D.*, *Breaking Bad*, *Sons of Anarchy* and a number of others. The chapters are focused on the topic of masculinity as part of a serial narrative. Lotz argues that the actual forms of masculinities are closely connected to how the story is told and which tools are used therein. Chapter three probes even deeper into how and why male characters try to solve their problems through illegal means or how their identities are influenced by growing anxieties.

Chapter four explores the new sort of environment for male characters, this being the so-called homosocial enclave, a space that is more connected to other males. It is accessible to female characters but usually only in the position of a spouse or girlfriend. Lotz describes a shift in perception of masculinity and male identity in an age of changing perception of gay identities and new forms of male friendship. Series such as *Men of a Certain Age*, *Rescue Me* or *The League* specifically come to mind.

Finally, chapter five introduces the concept of a fraternal environment where men can be in a close non-sexual friendship with one other. The chapter is especially valuable in its depiction of techniques of avoiding gay panic or disrupting heteronormativity by creating male characters that can be intimate with each other but not be considered gay or flawed as men.

Cable Guys: Television and Masculinities in the 21st Century is a fresh and valuable contribution to an area of gender studies focused on TV representations. Lotz is able to clearly explain the complexities of the TV industry in the context of constructions of male characters. She skillfully describes the specifics of contemporary cable male characters and is able to analyze in depth the techniques which are used to negotiate "traditional" versions of masculinity with more contemporary ones. Finally, *Cable Guys* is one of the very few works which is focused on complexities of male characters and is therefore an extraordinary source of impression for scholars who are interested in focusing on male characters in more depth.

I would only add one last note. *Cable Guys* was published in 2014. I personally believe this to have been a year when US cable TV finally discovered female audiences and thus began to brand its programs towards women more than ever before. It would certainly be interesting to determine how this new approach has changed "cable guys" once again.

Television Audiences Across the World: Deconstructing the Ratings Machine

Review by Jana Jedličková

Jérôme Bourdon, Cécile Méadel (eds.), *Television Audiences Across the World: Deconstructing the Ratings Machine*. London, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. 274 p. ISBN 978-1-137-34510-3 <http://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9781137345097>

Television Audiences Across the World represents an exceptional study of rating systems throughout the world. It is a truly ambitious collection of papers focusing on how rating systems actually work in specific environments, TV industries and social climates.

Although there have been a number of studies regarding the use of ratings and measuring of TV audiences, there is a significant lack of papers on topics such as the connection between viewing numbers and the way the industry works with them, the technique of creating ratings themselves or even the specific use of ratings in the context of TV institutions and TV professionals. One important point in the book comes specifically to mind. The authors suggest that even though we live at a time when diversity is a positive value, TV ratings actually create homogenous TV nations which often ignore (sometimes even intentionally) minority audiences in the process and thus further confirming ratings as “the true voice of the masses.”

The strongest part of the collection lies at the beginning of the book, although the rest of the book is also valid. The authors deconstruct the way ratings actually work and are created in great detail. The explanations of the value, existence, history and working of ratings allows us to understand the importance of such measurements and their nature as a constructed method of counting viewers. They go even further and compare several rating systems and techniques with one other, making mention of the USA, the UK, Germany, France, Brazil, Italy, Russia and Sweden among others. Each of the named countries is, on the one hand, a great example of the need for measuring TV audiences but, on the other hand, also represents the cultural or social specifics ratings have to deal with in each and every nation. The authors suggest that even if TV is a global medium at present which has the great potential to transcend nations, it is still a very local platform operating on the national level.

The book itself is divided into three large sections containing fourteen chapters in total. The first part is focused on the history of measuring audiences and the types of methods and organisations executing the ratings. Chapter 1 provides insight into the history of various British systems used for counting the audiences up until 1980. There is also a chapter considering a debate over the contemporary British system BARB which is later compared to the American one – Nielsen. Especially valuable are the chapters dealing with often down-played TV nations such as Canada, Germany or France.

The second part demonstrates how one can use ratings in socially specific spaces. It points towards several ways of using rating numbers in politics, the entertainment business from the perspective of actors or even the possibilities of adapting Anglo-Saxon conventions and practices in Australia. The strength of those chapters is a knowledge of local relations towards rating systems, this being an often-overlooked topic.

The third and final part focuses more on contemporary challenges which rating systems have to face. For many decades, for example, ratings only included audiences actually watching TV sets. Only in the age of Internet and easily accessible screening technology, have other ways of watching a TV program arisen. There is also the need to follow social networks and their ways of communicating with audiences. Finally, there are laws that regulate the use of ratings, most of them outdated, failing to consider the digital revolution at all.

All in all, *Television Audiences Across the World* represents a rare and detailed study of the deconstruction of rating methods, their social and cultural positions and their local and global specifics which are often ignored in other studies using ratings more as a tool justifying the explained processes in the TV industry.

Contemporary Television Series: Narrative Structures and Audience Perception

Review by Jana Jedličková

Valentina Marinescu, Silvia Branea and Bianca Mitu (eds.), *Contemporary Television Series: Narrative Structures and Audience Perception*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014. 205 p. ISBN 978-1-4438-5986-8
<http://www.cambridgescholars.com/contemporary-television-series>

Contemporary Television Series might appear to be a typical collection of somewhat unrelated chapters on popular TV series. It provides, however, a fresh and insightful take on mostly fictional TV series from the western (and Turkish) part of TV land. It turns its attention towards locally famous, yet internationally mostly unknown, TV projects that reflect current state and trends in TV broadcasting. Additionally, TV studies suffer from “overamericanization” of sorts as the majority of the studies are focused on American or British TV series while local, national TV productions are overlooked as they are not so “cool” in comparison. Contemporary television series offer certain fascinating examples of TV programming which are undoubtedly worthy of analysis.

An introduction and summary are unfortunately missing in the publication. Those two chapters would help us understand trends in contemporary (mostly European) television production in more detail. Even if the chapters are not obviously tightly linked in terms of their content, one can nevertheless appreciate a range of topics which are usually neglected in academic studies.

The collection contains thirteen chapters which could technically be divided into three separate sections. The first part is focused on a specific genre often connected to a particular region. Marianne P. Colbran, for example, writes about British crime drama and its perception by the actual police. Yves Picard and Pierre Barrette analyse the topic of televisual fiction in Quebec. Valentina Gueorguieva discusses new Bulgarian TV series dealing with crime, money and power. Finally, Anastasia Veneti, Achilleas Karadimitriou and Stamatis Poulakidakos provide a contribution consisting of a study of postmodern Greek reality TV. Those “genius loci” chapters deal with locally unique features of TV programming, TV series or the genre itself. They are rare examples of a general, yet contemporary and highly valuable approach telling us a great deal about local formats and their background. I would specifically like to mention the need for knowledge regarding local broadcasting influenced by a historically and socially specific background.

The second part contains texts on particular TV series, such as *Dexter*, *Dead Like Me*, *Pushing Daisies* and *Grey’s Anatomy*. All of them are analysed through one topic, usually as a form of audience reception analysis. There is one more chapter I would like to especially highlight. It was written by Cherie Taraghi and focuses on the Turkish TV series *Muhteşem Yüzyıl* (Magnificent Century) in the context of the controversy surrounding the discussion of a crisis in Turkish identity. These kinds of studies are unique not only in terms of providing information about local TV background, broadcasting and audiences but as they actually connect fictional worlds to the reality the audiences have to live in. The chapter explores various reactions to a historical soap opera about the life of Ottoman Sultan Suleiman, a great historical and by now even mythical

figure, which is deeply linked with contemporary Turkish identity. Taraghi also describes the impact of the series on the public and the political area.

The third thematic section of the book picks up several theoretical topics describing new ways of thinking about audiences, narratology or often awarded TV shows. I would like to make special mention of the chapter “Narrative Structure Analysis of the 2012 Emmy Nominees for a Drama TV Series” by Célia Belim. Åsa Pettersson is deserving of recognition as well for a chapter about children’s programmes and the narration of TV technology. Angie Chiang writes about interactivity in the context of the post-television viewer. The final chapter which concludes the book is focused on the Indian social reality TV drama *Satyameva Jayate*. Sony Jalarajan Raj and Rohini Sreekumar explore the connections between social service TV formats and Bollywood stardom. Chapters such as these are rare examples of infrequently mentioned TV regions outside Euro-American TV broadcasting.

Overall, *Contemporary Television Series* pursues the theme of new TV programming with dignity and a sheer scale of not very well-known information on the TV industry and its reception, both by the public and academics. It describes and brings to light often forgotten or unknown, but nevertheless interesting, TV series and also deals with contemporary politics concerning the historical and social changes Europe along with the rest of the world are currently undergoing.

The CIA in Hollywood: How the Agency Shapes Film and Television (Revised and Updated Edition)

Review by Milan Hain

Tricia Jenkins, *The CIA in Hollywood: How the Agency Shapes Film and Television*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016, revised and updated edition. 222 pp. ISBN 978-0-292-77246-5
<https://utpress.utexas.edu/books/jenkins-cia-in-hollywood>

The CIA is one of the many U.S. government agencies with close ties to the entertainment industry. In her book *The CIA in Hollywood*, film and media studies professor Tricia Jenkins (Texas Christian University in Fort Worth) discusses how the CIA maintains both formal and informal relationships with Hollywood with the purpose of creating and disseminating positive images of its activities. The CIA, established by Harry S. Truman in 1947, has influenced numerous films and TV series, particularly since the mid-1990s. These include *JAG* (1995–2005), *Enemy of the State* (1998), *In the Company of Spies* (1999), *The Agency* (2001–2003), *Alias* (2001–2006), *24* (2001–2010), *The Sum of All Fears* (2002), *The Recruit* (2003), *Homeland* (2011–), *Zero Dark Thirty* (2012), and *Argo* (2012). Moreover, retired CIA officers have made significant contributions to films such as *Meet the Parents* (2000), *Syriana* (2005), *The Good Shepherd* (2006) and *Red* (2010). Since the extent and precise nature of the CIA's involvement in these productions is often shrouded in mystery with the most relevant documentation being classified, Jenkins has had to rely primarily on interviews and textual analyses of selected films and TV series in order to provide what she acknowledges is a limited insight into the topic. (p. 3) Nevertheless, a number of her findings are fascinating and raise important moral, ethical and legal questions.

In the first chapter, “Rogues, Assassins, and Buffoons: Representations of the CIA in Film and Television,” Jenkins explains that it was not until the 1990s that the CIA began to systematically collaborate with the media and entertainment industries. Prior to this, negative images of the organisation prevailed in film and television. The CIA was represented as “an outfit [...] intent on assassination, [...] comprising rogue operatives who act with little oversight, [...] failing to take care of its own officers and assets, [...] operating on morally ambiguous and perhaps morally reprehensible grounds, or [...] bedeviled by its own buffoonery and hopeless disorganization.” (p. 11) Concerned with the circulation of these unflattering images and realising the importance of positive public relations, the CIA first attempted to produce its own TV series, *The Classified Files of the CIA* modelled on a similar program supported by the FBI. When the plan did not work out, the agency adopted another strategy and hired an entertainment liaison officer whose task was to maintain close ties with film and TV producers and ensure that the public image of the CIA would turn for the better. This was seen as a necessity at the time as, following the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the USSR, many were calling into question the very existence of the organisation.

In chapters 2 and 3, Jenkins discusses the era of the first entertainment liaison officer appointed to the function, Chase Brandon (1996–2007), and his involvement in pre-production and production of the TV movie *In the Company of Spies* (produced by Showtime) and the TV series *The Agency* (CBS). Combining textual analysis with information obtained from personal interviews and a handful of declassified documents, Jenkins identifies several functions these

programs fulfilled for the Agency. Not only did they serve to convince the public of the CIA's need for national security, they also aimed at bolstering recruitment levels, argued for an increased budget and intimidated potential terrorists by highlighting the organisation's competence and technological superiority. (p. 70) Brandon's engagement with Hollywood went, however, beyond these two isolated projects with fairly limited cultural impact. Chapter 4 discusses his contributions to more prominent productions, which included the TV series *24* and *Alias* and the films *The Sum of All Fears* and *The Recruit*. Although some of these were (wholly or in part) originally conceived in the 1990s, they were released after 9/11 and thus acquired new significance. The CIA, once again, faced harsh criticism for not being able to prevent the terrorist attacks and needed positive PR more than ever.

It is precisely this concerted effort to swing public opinion in its favor that raises the most crucial and disturbing questions. In chapter 5, Tricia Jenkins analyses the legal and ethical implications of the CIA's involvement with Hollywood and comes to the conclusion that the Agency – by only lending support to sympathetic filmmakers – “may violate the right to free speech guaranteed by the First Amendment.” (p. 12) Furthermore, the CIA may be also involved in propaganda, thus violating “the spirit, if not the letter, of the publicity and propaganda laws, which forbid the government from engaging in self-aggrandizing and covert communication.” (p. 12–13) Although lawyers and various experts do not agree on how to precisely classify the CIA's conduct and its contacts with the media industry, there is no doubt that Jenkins' account deserves serious consideration – if only because the CIA has repeatedly (and rather unconvincingly) claimed that its only concerns in its dealings with Hollywood have been realism and the education of the public.

Chapters 6 and 7 focus on the role of CIA veterans as Hollywood technical advisers and providers of story material. Jenkins first discusses the contributions of the retired CIA officers Robert Baer and Milton Bearden who were associated with the productions of *Syriana* and *The Good Shepherd*, respectively. Disillusioned with their thankless work for the Agency, they dared to depict its methods in a negative light. The CIA responded by criticising both films as inaccurate and inauthentic. Other retired officers remained loyal, in contrast, to their former employer. The most prominent of these was Tony Mendez whose memoir *The Master of Disguise* was adapted into the Oscar-winning Hollywood film *Argo* directed by and starring Ben Affleck. As Jenkins demonstrates, the film showed audiences “the lighter and brighter side of the Agency” and was celebrated as a definite PR success. (p. 146)

In the last chapter, the author indicates that the CIA might be entering a new era as over the last couple of years, it has provided assistance to projects which do not present its procedures in an entirely laudatory way. Kathryn Bigelow's *Zero Dark Thirty* and the celebrated TV series *Homeland* contain truly disturbing elements (torture, assassinations, surveillance) with their presentation of the CIA often being ambivalent and morally problematic. Jenkins claims that lending its support to productions such as these does not entail that the CIA is no longer interested in promoting a positive public image of itself. It may suggest, however, that “its Public Affairs Office is now comfortable supporting texts that refuse to whitewash the Agency's past or depict its officers in only a positive light.” (p. 174) If this relaxation of rules is a temporary trend or a long-lasting policy remains to be seen.

Jenkins' book is a lucidly-written account of the largely hidden mechanisms that connect the CIA and Hollywood. Although the readers will probably catch themselves asking for more detailed (and “explosive”) information from time to time, it is fair to say that the limitations of the text must be attributed not to the author but to the nature of the subject. Most of the primary documents are not accessible to researchers and interviews with CIA employees – both

active and retired – and representatives of Hollywood can only provide limited insight into their mutual collaboration.

Since its first publication in 2012, Jenkins has added two chapters on *Argo*, *Zero Dark Thirty* and *Homeland* to bring the book more up to date and topical.¹ Although the cover claims that the remaining chapters have been revised, I have detected occasional inconsistencies where it seems to me that the text has provided outdated information. (See for example page 6 where contradictory information is provided as to whether the position of the entertainment industry liaison is currently occupied or not.) There are no illustrations in the book but three recently declassified CIA documents are reprinted. Not only do they make for interesting reading in and of themselves, but they also allow us a peek inside the writing process behind Jenkins' path-breaking book. Further research into the topic depends on the willingness of the CIA to declassify and share with the public more documents of this kind.

¹ See also the recent article Tricia Jenkins and Tony Shaw, "From Zero to Hero: The CIA and Hollywood Today," *Cinema Journal* 56, no. 2 (winter 2017): 91–113.

The Future of TV and Radio Studies (Poll) |

On the occasion of this special issue of the *Czech and Slovak Journal of Humanities* dedicated to TV and Radio Studies, we asked several leading scholars and TV and radio practitioners a simple question: *What do you think are some of the challenges currently facing TV and Radio Studies?* We are grateful to Jonathan Bignell, Kevin Brew, Christopher Cwynar, John Hartley, Janet McCabe and Toby Miller for providing insightful and provocative answers.

Prof. Jonathan Bignell, University of Reading, UK

Prof. Bignell specializes in television history and the methodologies of television and film analysis. He has been involved in several major collaborative externally-funded research projects including Spaces of Television (2010–15), Acting with Facts (2007–10), Beckett and the Phenomenology of Doodles (2006–9) and BBC Wednesday Play and Post-War British Drama (1996–2000). His current project is Harold Pinter: Histories and Legacies, funded by AHRC, in which he leads research work into Pinter's work for television and cinema.

Our work will need to grapple, as it is already doing, with the conceptual problems posed by new ways of delivering programmes to viewers and listeners, and for viewers and listeners to experience and interact with programmes, because these developments are changing the role of each medium. One of the key aspects of this process is that interactivity with television and radio is enhanced by the convergence of the “traditional” media with Internet communications, mobile phones and recording devices. Changes in medial identity will need to be correlated with the historical evidence that television and radio have always had a developing and changing relationship to each other and to other media that they complement or compete against. We will need to assess how new ways of using television and radio build on their capacity to generate and shape social interactions between people. It will be important to understand how, for the makers of television and radio, building up strong brands for channels and programmes while exploiting media convergence helps them to shape and adjust to the changes in how television and radio are used by audiences. We will also need to think about our own contribution, as academics. As communicators of knowledge about television and radio, we will want to document and theorise how viewers and listeners enjoy opportunities to use television in both “old” and “new” ways. We will want to make the argument that understanding the past, present and future prospects for television and radio is increasingly important.

Kevin Brew, RTÉ Radio 1, Ireland

Kevin Brew is a graduate of University of Limerick and Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology. He joined RTÉ Lyric fm in 1999 as a Production Co-ordinator and RTÉ Radio 1 as a Producer in 2003. He has done production work for Radio 1's Rattlebag and The Arts Show while creating series such as Sound Stories, Mixtape and Sound Stories Live. He joined RTÉ Radio Drama in 2009 and his production of In Praise of Darkness by Luke Clancy won Best Editing at the 2011 New York Festivals for Radio Programming.

I'm fortunate to work as a radio producer in our Irish national broadcaster, RTÉ. I've worked in RTÉ for almost eighteen years and as a member of our Radio Drama department for eight. Considering the huge breadth of talking points in radio and television today, I feel like I'm still learning how to sit in a small room in a gigantic house. These are the views of just one

programme-maker, who is also a viewer and a listener, afraid to count the hours spent browsing and spontaneously clicking on so-called “smart” devices.

One challenge for Radio and Television Studies is to define its scope given the infinite menu offered by new types of broadcasting like Netflix and Facebook Live. Maybe you'd like to click on that video of a woman fending off a saltwater crocodile with her flip-flop; or listen in to a legal briefing on immigration restrictions carried live over Facebook; or watch the winner of The World of Dance perform “I’m a Barbie Girl;” or see a live concert from the roof of Apollo House in Dublin, commandeered by activists to provide shelter for some of the city’s homeless. In terms of content, it’s all radio and television. In terms of equipment, the new broadcasting network includes anyone who owns a phone.

Redefined in this way, Television and Radio Studies can play a vital role in helping us understand what happens to us when the infrastructure of the broadcaster becomes pocket-sized. What happens, or fails to happen, when, through the handheld viewfinders of citizen journalists, we enter besieged Aleppo? What happens when a global population of 2.32 billion smartphone users is empowered to create news, both authentic and fake?¹ What happens to the highest standards of journalism when the advertising revenues of conventional broadcasters are threatened by online competitors who do less fact-checking? How do conventional radio and television programmes integrate the narrative styles of online storytelling? What new forms of storytelling will emerge to harness the footage of collaborating social networks of camera-people and recordists? The list goes on.

But back to the small room I work in. Radio is very popular in Ireland, though of course people like me wonder about the future when young people side-step our work completely, digging instead for their stories on Youtube, Snapchat and Instagram. I'd like to think that the authenticity and quality of storytelling will endure as the most important things – irrespective of what medium is trying to message you.

Whether the next chapter in broadcasting history is an identity crisis, a renaissance, or both, the field of inquiry for Radio and Television Studies promises to be deep and wide.

Prof. Christopher Cwynar, Defiance College, USA

Christopher Cwynar is Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at Defiance College, Ohio. His research encompasses several primary interest areas including public (service) media institutions, genres, texts, and audiences during the neoliberal paradigm, mediated identity, particularly in terms of the discursive construction of national identities through and in relation to mediated communication, and promotional culture and mediated publicity in the network society.

There are numerous challenges facing TV and Radio Studies as these maturing fields continue to move beyond a century defined in large part by broadcast media and into one dominated by networked digital media. These challenges include the increasing difficulty of defining and understanding object(s) of study, the expansion and fragmentation of the fields themselves amidst the broader unmaking and remaking of disciplinary boundaries, and the need to account for an increasingly broad range of perspectives, methods, and political imperatives in an increasingly globalized academic world.

With digital convergence, it has become increasingly difficult to establish coherent and durable conceptions of TV and Radio Studies’ respective objects. This is partly attributable to

¹ “Number of smartphone users worldwide from 2014 to 2016,” Statista.com, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/330695/number-of-smartphone-users-worldwide/>.

evolving media technologies and industries. Just as digital convergence has made it increasingly important to understand the nature of media forms and their role in our various lifeways, it has also made it more difficult to maintain stable, widely shared conceptions of the key issues and questions concerning them.

The challenges addressed in the preceding paragraph are not merely a function of the evolution of the objects of study, but also the fields of inquiry. TV and Radio Studies now represent dispersed sub-disciplines that exist across a broad range of scholarly disciplines and communities from Communication to English to Sociology to History. To this, we must add the proliferation of journals and events. It has effectively become impossible to keep up with all of the relevant literature and the range of questions, methods, and subjects addressed and political imperatives advanced. Just as networked digital media have enabled us to access a broader range of materials, they have also made it far more difficult to map out and understand an increasingly fragmentary and heterogeneous field that overlaps so many others. In addition, the boundaries between scholarship and other forms of criticism and analysis are becoming increasingly permeable. While this is a positive development in many respects, it also makes it that much more difficult to map out and position one's self within these fields. Finally, the broad shift away from the arts, humanities, and social sciences and toward the "hard" sciences and "practical" disciplines provides an uncertain backdrop for the aforementioned changes. It may be that these young fields will increasingly evolve outside of traditional research institutions.

To sum up, TV and Radio Studies face the interrelated challenges of dealing with increasingly complex and unwieldy objects in the context of increasingly fragmentary fields of scholarly inquiry. In some respects, these are good problems to have as they are a function of both the evolution of networked digital media and the expansion of scholarly interest in the subject. In other respects, however, these issues are perhaps symptomatic of the pressures currently bearing down on fields that themselves have only just begun to stabilize and mature.

Prof. John Hartley, Curtin University, Australia

John Hartley is John Curtin Distinguished Professor of Cultural Science, the former Director of the Centre for Culture and Technology at Curtin University in Western Australia and Professor of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies at Cardiff University. He has published over 200 articles and 25 books, including The Uses of Digital Literacy (2009), Communication, Cultural and Media Studies: The Key Concepts (2011), Digital Futures for Cultural and Media Studies (2012), and A Companion to New Media Dynamics (co-editor, 2013). He is a member of the Australian Research Council College of Experts, Fellow of the International Communication Association, Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, Life Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and recipient of the Order of Australia.

Communicative Causation and Mediated Subjectivity

The big challenge for TV and Radio Studies has always been the same: to do justice to the medium as it operates in the world, without being tied to a particular technological platform or organisational arrangement, because these are so varied and change over time. In the era of mass media, the problem was solved by adopting the Claude Shannon model of physics-based linear communication – sender-message-receiver – which resulted in the long tradition of studying TV and Radio broadcasting via the "producer-text-audience" model.

In my opinion, despite the interest of the individual components, this model was always deficient in one crucial respect: there was no compelling theory of causation along the “value chain” of meaning. The physics model (based on electrons in a wire) assumed linear force, with causation running from sender to receiver. But after several generations of “effects” research, there is still no agreement on whether or how that works. Instead, producers’ intentions are one thing; textual forms are another; and audience or users’ actions cannot be predicted from either of them.

Now we are well into the digital age, with global connectivity among users as well as producers, and apps so varied and specialised that it’s hard to find a technical boundary for “television” and “radio” (streaming, podcasting). Profound changes have occurred within and between all three of the links in the old model: the production system; textual system (e.g., the relations between TV and film); and at the “receiver” end of the chain, where we find not only audiences and consumers, but also users and producers. Now, every consumer is a producer, publisher, journalist (etc.).

Such a situation offers a new challenge to TV and Radio Studies. The solution will not be to “define” these media (especially not in relation to their legacy technical forms), but to have another crack at solving the problem of causation. Here, we need to start not from physics-based fields of forces and chain-link causation, but from bioscience-derived models of evolutionary and complex systems, where what matters is not the direction of electrons in a wire but the relations among components in systems, the rules by which such systems maintain themselves in some sort of equilibrium even as they adapt to external changes, and the interactions among neighbouring systems.

In short, the humanities and social sciences need to become evolutionary and complexity sciences, studying populations (users), change (uncertainty; dynamics) and the emergence of “newness” (as Michael Hutter calls it).

It is immediately apparent that there is another model of communication that was neglected throughout the broadcast era: language. It is an evolutionary-adaptive system (and system of systems); it works at population level; it changes over time; it is both universal (every society has it and each language seeks applicability to everything in the world) and adversarial (our language can be trusted; theirs is duplicitous). Indeed, separate languages may be a naturally-evolved security system, functioning efficiently to identify “we” groups and to unmask “they” groups, when such things mattered in a different way from what confronts users now, in a globally connected but still divided world.

Personally, I find the work of Yuri Lotman, the Estonian-Russian semiotician, compelling when trying to fathom how textual-cultural systems work, but there are other theorists, ranging from Niklas Luhmann (society as a communication system) to Stuart Kaufmann (machine information systems). I’ve been working with evolutionary-economist Jason Potts to apply some of these insights to culture, media and communication (see our book *Cultural Science*, published by Bloomsbury, London, in 2014, and accessible at bloomsburyconnections.com).

One big difference between “old” technical Radio-TV-Film studies and “new” evolutionary-systems models is in the way they conceptualise the subject or agent of media communication. In the modernist linear causation model, the idea of “mass communication” was simple: one source; many receivers. It followed that TV and Radio Studies would be concerned with what (ideology) and how (psychology) “influence” or “effects” could be sent down the line, to change individual behaviour at scale. Such changes were seen as both positive (advertising, public broadcasting) or negative (propaganda, hate-speech), but the mechanism was the same: private consumption by individuals of central/corporate “content.” Audiences were being taught how to be a “modern subject” (individualist, competitive, consumerist, ideological).

The concerns of the field were inevitably about power, leadership and accountability in a system where “senders” (Murdoch, Bertelsmann) were thought disproportionately to affect “receivers” (citizens), although still no-one knew exactly how this text (say, Fox News, BBC World Service, *Game of Thrones*) affected these citizens (say, the analyst) in order to produce compliant behaviour (say, voting – not to mention hating, loving, relating, thinking).

Meanwhile, there were other models of subjectivity in play, especially those associated with postmodernism, poststructuralism, Continental Philosophy, semiotics and Cultural Studies. Here, the methodological individualism and behaviourism of the social sciences, yoked to the linear-force model of communicative causation, were never convincing. Instead, from structuralism onwards, there was an unorganised but increasingly compelling effort to understand culture from a systems perspective. Here, the “subject” is not an individual with behavioural agency, but a distributed and decentred system. Everyone is a user, defined in their relations with others in the system and with other systems, and where rules for creative productivity are encoded in semiosis itself, whether that be natural language use, cultural and technological forms (like TV and Radio, but also literature, religion, law, and other human-made fictions binding on groups), or even physical objects (roads, walls, cities as signifiers).

Thus, for me, the challenge now is to reorientate TV and Radio Studies to pick up the winds of change blowing from the biosciences (evolutionary processes), systems theory (information, computer and web sciences) and complexity theory (autopoiesis, populations of rules; borders, interactions/relations), in order to understand mediated communication as a dynamic cultural system, making meaning under uncertainty.

Here, the most important invention of the Internet is not its technical specification or global extent but the concept of the user – one who is always a speaker as well as a listener; producer as well as a consumer; citizen and publisher as well as audience, and only ever encountered in relation to other users. The challenge for TV and Radio Studies is to understand the user in the context of sociality and group-based knowledge and action, within a web of relations. Group-made rules apply, but innovation can come from anywhere in the system (by breaking them).

Here, the “postmodern subject” is normal, just as likely to make TV as to consume it; more interested in connectivity and sociality than power; just as likely to be female, young, old, differently abled and oriented mobile, migrant, with multiple identities and group allegiances, compared with the abstract adult-male individual of the social-science imagination. New knowledge is made by difference, via inter-group interaction across boundaries between different rule-systems, not by the will of Rupert Murdoch.

TV is pretty good again: from self-made amateurism on YouTube to compelling drama both online (*The OA*) and broadcast (*Humans*). Radio holds its own, from sport and comedy to science podcasts and music bundles shared among millions. How does it work in the era of the social user, when both global connectivity (universal extent) and cultural conflict (border-zones of intense semiosis) are the new normal? Let’s find out!

Prof. Janet McCabe, Birkbeck, University of London, UK

Prof. McCabe is a Senior Lecturer in Film and Television Studies at Birkbeck, University of London and Co-director of the Centre of Media, Culture and Creative Practice. Her research and teaching interests are principally concerned with contemporary television, gender politics and feminism, cultural memory and representations of the historical imagination in the media. She is the author of The West Wing (2012) and Feminist Film Studies: Writing the Woman into Cinema (2004) and the managing editor of the TV journal, Critical Studies in Television: The International Journal of TV Studies.

Getting Connected

Challenges confronting contemporary TV Studies are as invigorating as they are formidable. New multi-screen digital technologies and delivery platforms offer the opportunity to provide a truly converged service. This has, in turn, led to a shift in traditional TV viewing patterns, whereby research claims that in North America and the UK 89% of consumers access audio-visual content on connected devices and 87% use more than one device while viewing television.² What this research on the migration of the audience to online services illustrates is the growth of a global middle class, from Asia to Argentina. Understanding the dynamic effects of convergence culture presents us with a new set of questions. Not only is it important for us to map this new media ecology, but also to find the most appropriate ways of defining how this new kind of connected TV delivers value-added content for viewers, tailoring online material and on-demand programming. Still, we must not lose sight of the fact that most people across the world still watch a lot of television, often on a television set.

While the emergence of new TV products and digital services facilitated by convergence, and prompted by the rise in satellite and cable channels, cut across older, more national-centric borders and open the TV market to competition, it is important to remember that television remains consumed at a national, local level. This leads to questions about nations, regions and national TV cultures, and it is a debate that has profound implications for public service broadcasters and the issue of overlapping regulatory jurisdictions. TV historians agree that public service broadcasting has always been vulnerable to economic downturn and the vicissitudes of State intervention. Still it is key for us to recognise the forces shaping what it means to be a public TV body and how it represents a nation, in and through its business practices, programming strategies and forms of governance.

My latest research into Scandinavian series – *Forbrydelsen*, and *Broen* | *Bron* – and their various adaptations, *The Killing* (US), *The Tunnel* (UK/France) and *The Bridge* (USA/Mexico) – seeks to explore some of these issues named above, as I weave contemporary feminism and theories of representation with debates on television, transnationalism and the public sphere. Discussion will centre on female protagonists like Sarah Lund and Saga Norén, representational types psychologically complex and inherently contradictory precisely because these textual females are produced in and through a storytelling form consumed with defining new rules for talking about gender, identity and power. I ask why this Scandinavian female TV detective has captured the television zeitgeist and travelled far beyond its original borders, and flows in and through various public and private media channels, to inquire how female representation and feminist ideas are produced in various encounters at a border – of cities and public spaces, the nation State and (trans)national broadcasters, local jurisdictions and international law. The emergence of a truly globalised media network of trade and fiction exchange has I believe given rise to a particular heroine designed to circulate, and one who is changing the aesthetics and politics of representation, as well as challenging older feminist genealogies. Looking at how discourses of feminism travel, interweave and dialogue within a globalised media world, my work seeks to re-vitalise feminist television studies as I argue for an alternative vision of public spaces and national TV cultures in the age of globalisation.

² Adam Flomenbaum, "Accenture Report: 87% of Consumers Use Second Screen Device While, Lost Remote," Adweek.com, last modified April 20, 2015, <http://www.adweek.com/lostremote/accenture-report-87-of-consumers-use-second-screen-device-while-watching-tv/51698>.

Prof. Toby Miller, University of California, Riverside, USA

Toby Miller is Distinguished Professor in the Graduate Division, University of California, Riverside; Sir Walter Murdoch Professor of Cultural Policy Studies, Murdoch University; Profesor Invitado, Escuela de Comunicación Social, Universidad del Norte; Professor of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies, Cardiff University/Prifysgol Caerdydd; and Director of the Institute for Media and Creative Industries, Loughborough University London. He is the author and editor of over 30 books, has published essays in more than 100 journals and edited collections, and is a frequent guest commentator on television and radio programmes. His research covers the media, sports, labor, gender, race, citizenship, politics, and cultural policy, as well as the success of Hollywood overseas and the adverse effects of electronic waste. Miller's work has been translated into Chinese, Japanese, Swedish, German, Spanish and Portuguese.

Vibrant and Threatened

I am honoured that Palacký University Olomouc has invited me to comment on its new area, Television and Radio Studies. Palacký University is a leader, and is forwarding the concerns of a vibrant, but threatened, field.

Why do I say 'vibrant' and 'threatened'?

The field is vibrant because it has taken off in terms of scholarship over the last thirty years. In contrast to the longstanding dominance of media-effects studies and their focus on whether watching violent texts makes people violent, or listening to educational ones makes them learned, TV and Radio Studies have been enriched by contributions from feminism, queer theory, critical race studies, political economy, public policy, ethnography and law. Drawing on textual analysis, participant observation, and institutional critique, we have achieved a great deal.

At the same time, we are threatened by the advent of a powerful "new media studies" that has largely failed to engage seriously with what has gone before. As a consequence, effects studies are largely unchallenged on this new terrain, while the lessons of political economy and active-audience research have been forgotten as analysts reach back to pre-capitalist philosophy to focus on narrative, play, and pleasure to the virtual exclusion of power, inequality and exploitation.

And three pressing topics are left unaddressed. I refer here to the environment, labor and popular democracy/human rights.

1. For centuries, emergent and established media have wrought havoc on the natural environment, from early print to today's Internet.³ Conventional media, cultural and communications studies have never seriously engaged this issue;
2. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, we have seen the increased impact of a New International Division of Cultural Labor, as Barrandov Studios in Prague and Fox's in Sydney, *inter alia*, offer sweetheart deals and highly-skilled labor to Hollywood and others. As more and more media jobs become contingent, unions and life-long employment are rapidly turning into relics in our cobwebbed minds. Our graduates become obedient but frustrated members of the cognitariat;⁴

³ See Richard Maxwell and Toby Miller, "Greening the Media. How media technology contributes to the global ecological crisis," blog at *Psychology Today*, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/greening-the-media>.

⁴ See Toby Miller, "The Cognitariat," *Cognitariat. Journal of Contingent Labor* 1 (2013), <http://oaworld.org/index.php/cognitariat/article/view/4/4>.

3. And then there is the challenge of popular democracy and human rights. As many democracies turn towards the populist right,⁵ human-rights violations pile up in the United States and elsewhere,⁶ and journalists encounter ever more-perilous conditions.⁷

So studies of sports, drama, news, current affairs, music and other genres that proliferate across radio and television need to engage such issues. That starts with the carbon footprint of watching the World Cup on a TV versus a phone⁸ and enjoying the latest releases from Netflix on your desktop.⁹ Then it moves to the working conditions of part-time radio labor,¹⁰ whether in producing drama or cleaning studio space. And it never loses sight of our crucial role in democracy.¹¹

⁵ "Democracy Index 2016. Revenge of the 'deplorables,'" *The Economist*, http://pages.eiu.com/rs/783-XMC-194/images/Democracy_Index_2016.pdf.

⁶ "Populists and Autocrats: The Dual Threat to Global Democracy," Freedom House, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2017>.

⁷ Carolina Morais Araujo, "Violence against journalists: finding the media's role in reporting press freedom violations," Ijnet – International Journalists' Network, last modified July 15, 2015, <https://ijnet.org/en/blog/violence-against-journalists-finding-media%E2%80%99s-role-reporting-press-freedom-violations>.

⁸ "Carbon Footprint of the FA Community Shield," Carbon Trust, <https://www.carbontrust.com/media/360767/carbon-bootprint-infographic.pdf>.

⁹ Gary Cook, "Why we need Netflix to join the race towards a green internet," Greenpeace International, last modified January 27, 2017, <http://m.greenpeace.org/international/en/high/news/Blogs/makingwaves/click-clean-netflix-green-internet-tech/blog/58602/>.

¹⁰ Michelle Innis, "Australia challenges unpaid internships," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, November 10, 2014, <http://www.smh.com.au/business/australia-challenges-unpaid-internships-20141110-11juo1.html>.

¹¹ "Media and Democracy," Common Cause, <http://www.commoncause.org/issues/media-and-democracy/>.

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