ONLINE FEATURE JOURNALISM
A clash of discourses

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Although online journalism still is dominated by breaking news coverage, new genres are emerging that differentiate it more and more from old media journalism. This article explores the emergence of feature journalism in online newspapers. Through comparative qualitative text analysis of feature journalism in the US online newspaper palmbeachpost.com *and the Norwegian online newspaper* dagbladet.no, *two widely different approaches to the production of feature journalism on the web are uncovered and a critical perspective on the remediation of journalistic genres in online newspapers is elaborated. The analysis shows that both these approaches display a clash between discourses of traditional feature journalism and discourses of online communication. It further reveals that genre development in online journalism is a complex process marked by contradictions and inconsistencies and that online newsrooms are struggling to find solutions on how to differentiate online journalism from old media journalism*

KEYWORDS Discourse analysis; feature journalism; genre analysis; online journalism

Introduction

Journalism in new media entails changing journalism. New styles and genres tailored for a world of new readers are emerging. However, no one is in the position of knowing exactly what suits this new world. Experimentation -- trail and error -- is thus the guiding principle for players trying to shape the future of online journalism.

This article takes a closer look at two widely different approaches to the remediation of *feature journalism* online. The first approach is found in US online newspapers where the practice of publishing feature journalism as multimedia packages created using the software Adobe Flash is becoming increasingly popular (McAdams, 2005). The second approach is found in the Norwegian online newspaper *dagbladet.no*, which in 2002 -- as the first online Scandinavian newspaper -- established a section dedicated to feature journalism produced exclusively for the web.

Both these approaches to producing feature journalism online serve as examples of a widening diversity of genre in online journalism. There is little doubt that online journalism so far has been dominated by breaking news coverage, thus promoting immediacy as the main asset of online journalism (Rasmussen, 2006; Domingo, 2006). The dominant discourse of online journalism therefore seems to contrast with the dominant discourses of feature journalism as we know it from print media. Feature journalism is often associated with glossy magazines and newspaper weekend sections where readers are invited to spend time, relax and take pleasure in their reading. Most newspapers (at least in Scandinavia) have opted out from publishing content from their print feature sections online, indicating that the newspaper industry considers feature journalism and online journalism as non-compatible types of journalism.

It is therefore of interest to investigate what happens when these two different journalistic worlds come together. Research on this development is however scarce close to non-existing, as it

so far has focused on the production and presentation of online *news*. Only three studies that focus on online feature journalism can be found. Royal and Tankard Jr. (2004) investigated how literary journalism techniques worked with new media technology in a feature story published at the *Philadelphia Inquire* web site. Their aim was to trace such traditional techniques in the web production, leaving discussions on the differences between newspaper and print feature journalism out. Engebretsen (2007) searched for occurrences of feature journalism in 13 Scandinavian online newspapers. His aim was to trace innovative use of new technology and he concluded that properties of new media technology were used to a limited extent in the few occurrences of feature journalism he found. Steensen (2006) uncovered similar findings in a study of 60 web exclusive feature stories in the *Magasinet* section of *dagbladet.no*. Multimedia technology was seldom exploited in these stories. Linear text was the preferred style of presentation, though interactive features like hyperlinks were used extensively. Both these studies did however not discuss what other kinds of impact the online production and publication environment had on feature journalism.

With their focus on (lack of) utilisation of new technology, these studies have failed to produce any significant knowledge on three key questions: How does an online production and publication environment alter the generic characteristics of feature journalism? What are the communicative purposes of online feature journalism and how does it differ from traditional feature journalism? What can analysis of online feature journalism tell us about genre development in online newspapers in general?

To find answers to such questions, discourses and generic characteristics of online feature journalism must be traced. To do so, a methodology of qualitative, comparative discourse and genre analysis of two deviant cases of online feature journalism is chosen. Only by such a methodology can in-depth knowledge on the complex nature of genre evolution be found. The analysis will show that the two cases share a similar kind of clash of discourses: Discourses of online communication collide with discourses of feature journalism, indicating not only changing genres, but also a practice of journalism uncertain of what direction to follow.

Discourses and Genres in Feature Journalism

Text analysis is a method used by many different fields of research which tend to label concepts differently or allow different meanings for the same concept. A good example is the concepts of discourse and genre. These two concepts are useful when analysing journalism, because they embed the social processes which the texts are part of. However, these concepts can be difficult to grasp.

Both van Leeuwen (1993) and Fairclough (1992; 1995; 2003) point to two different traditions of understanding the concept of discourse. In linguistics, there is a tradition of understanding discourse as something which occurs when people interact in social situations. In social science there is another tradition that develops from Foucault's understanding of the concept, where discourse is understood as a form of knowledge based on a social construction of reality.

Fairclough's project is to unite these two different understandings of discourse. He defines discourse as "the language used in representing a given social practice from a particular point of view." (1995 p. 56). I will adopt this understanding of discourse here. It implies an understanding of language use as social action based on a particular perspective. When we communicate, we do so based on certain ways of understanding the world. These perspectives are not finite and endowed by nature -- they are socially and culturally constructed. They therefore change over the course of time, and they may be different from culture to culture.

The analysis of discourses in texts aims at uncovering the perspectives from which the communication embarks. Through detailed textual analysis social structures and cultural practices are revealed. Simultaneously it is an aim, not only to understand the connection between language use and socio-cultural processes, but also to uncover interests in and effects of the communication. This is the very core of Critical Discourse Analysis, according to Matheson (2005).

The concept of genre might be equally difficult to grasp as the concept of discourse. As Swales states: "The word is highly attractive [...] but extremely slippery" (1990 p. 33). Swales

(ibid.), and also Berge and Ledin (2001), have given excellent overviews of the different understandings of genre. They describe a major dividend in the history of genre theory between those who understand genres as structuring principles on a high level of cultural context where texts are embedded, and those who understand genres as dynamic but yet common features of texts in the lower level of situations where texts operate. The school of American new-rhetoric is an example of the latter, the Australian genre school an example of the former, according to Berge and Ledin (ibid.). The most fruitful view of genres must lie somewhere in between, they argue.

Like Ledin (2001), and also Hågvar (2007), I will here arrange discourse and genre hierarchically, as I interpret discourse as something happening on a higher level then genre. Discourse describes the perspective from which the communication is directed, while genre assigns a recognizable form of social practice to these perspectives. However, the two concepts work independently; a discourse can be expressed in multiple genres and multiple discourses can appear within one genre. A news story (genre) on a Christian democratic political party (e.g. the Norwegian *Kristelig folkeparti)* can embed a political conservative discourse, a religious discourse and a family-oriented discourse.

A text mixing different genres and discourses belongs to what Fariclough labels a *creative discursive practice* (1995 p. 60). Media texts are by definition such complex texts, according to Fairclough. He labels media texts as "sensitive barometers of cultural change" (1995 p. 60). Studying feature journalism in new media is therefore not only suited for commenting on changes in journalism, but could also say something about socio-cultural changes at large.

What is Feature Journalism?

The distinction between news and feature journalism is blurred. A feature story can range from a short piece providing exemplification or background to a news story, to a heavily investigated multi page narrative with no affiliation to the news flow at all. Though journalists at big newspapers usually are specialised at one or the other, their local newspaper colleagues might find the distinction of less relevance as they constantly mingle between news and feature journalism.

Reviewing literature on feature journalism leaves an impression that the term is rather loosely connected to generic characteristics. Garrison, for instance, views feature journalism as something that exceeds news journalism and becomes "special" (2004 p. 7). Like Williamson (1977) he stresses that feature writers are creative and subjective in designing stories suited to inform and entertain. Other scholars seem to agree on these characteristics, but leave out further discussion of feature journalism as genre (see Alexander,1982; Blundell, 1988; Granato, 2002 and Shapiro, 2005).

In Scandinavia, Roksvold (1989) has defined feature journalism as one of three basic types of journalism, the other two are news journalism and opinionated journalism. Within these three types of journalism several genres exist which might operate in any three types, including article, review and reportage, Roksvold argues. This distinction between *type* and *genre* represents a fruitful view on journalism, but the term *type* might be confusing since *text type* is a common concept in linguistics that describes basic aspects of writing, including *descriptive*, *narrative* and *argumentative*.

In line with Fagerjord (2003) I will therefore instead view feature journalism as a genre family. I will argue that it is possible to pinpoint some basic characteristics of this family as it is represented in newspapers, and through these generic characteristics one might also find what discourses are commonly present in print feature journalism. Based on my own experience as a feature writer for Norwegian newspapers for more than ten years, my experience as a teacher of feature journalism and a review of English and Scandinavian literature on feature journalism[1], I will summarize the main generic characteristics of traditional print feature journalism in the following five points:

1. Feature journalism is often *narrative*, and is thereby distinguished from the inverted-pyramid structure of news journalism.

2. Feature journalism is usually *not so deadline sensitive* as news journalism.
3. Feature journalists are allowed to *colour their text with subjective descriptions, reflections and assessments*.
4. Feature journalism often portrays people and milieus and is therefore usually *personal and emotional*.
5. Feature journalism is usually *visually attractive* and presented in delicate layouts using multiple illustrations, mainly still photos.

Not all these characteristics will be present in every feature story, but we can expect that one or more of them will dominate stories we perceive as feature journalism.

Discourses in Feature Journalism

Based on these five generic characteristics, which discourses seem to dominate traditional print feature journalism? First, we recognize several of the characteristics as belonging to genres of fiction, and hence we might say that a *discourse of fiction* is present in traditional print feature journalism, implying that elements of fiction, journalists with storytelling ambitions and readers wanting to be entertained influence the perspective of the communication. Second, many of the characteristics are oriented towards providing readers with adventures. A *discourse of adventure* is therefore present, which Engebretsen (2007) also has recognized. Third, recognizing the subjective, personal and emotional impact of feature journalism, we might say that a *discourse of intimacy* is present in traditional print feature journalism.

In a television commercial for the Norwegian print feature magazine *Dagbladet Magasinet* which ran during the spring of 2007, these three discourses were clearly present. The commercial featured a mother picking up *Magasinet* from a living room coffee table before she retreated from the noisy family activities into a quiet room where she leaned back in a comfy sofa, relaxed her shoulders and opened up *Magasinet* with a dreamy smile of satisfaction on her face. She used *Magasinet* as an escape from the stress of everyday life, just like one would do with a novel or a motion picture film. It was almost as if she took *Magasinet* into her most *intimate* sphere in order to be seduced by a *fiction-like adventure*.

Remediating Feature Journalism Online

What happens to feature journalism when it is remediated in an online environment? As mentioned above, media texts are usually creative discursive practices that embed many discourses and genres. Since new media like the Internet represent social and cultural change, we can expect that journalism in new media to an even greater extent involves creative discursive practices.

In the following I will analyse generic structure and discourses present in two stories taken from two different publishers of online feature journalism: *palmbeachpost.com* (US) and *dagbladet.no* (Norway). These two online newspapers are chosen because they represent most different approaches to the production of feature journalism online within two different cultures, thus strengthening the validity of the study if commonalities are found. *Palmbeach.com* -- relying on a cross media production strategy -- produces multimedia feature journalism using the software Adobe Flash in the section *Multimedia and Special reports*. *Dagbladet.no* – relying on a web exclusive production strategy -- produces text-based feature stories in the section *Magasinet*. However, comparison between the two is made justifiable because they both remediate traditional print feature journalism. *Palmbeachpost.com* produces online versions of lengthy print feature stories, while *dagbladet.no* produces web exclusive stories in an online version of a the newspapers traditional print feature magazine *Magasinet*. We can therefore in both sites expect a certain kind of interplay with newspaper traditions in line with what Bolter (2001) labels *remediation*[2] and Fagerjord (2003) labels *rhetorical convergence*[3]. In addition, both online newspapers are acknowledged for their willingness to experiment[4, 5] and they are associated with traditional print media of approximately equal size.

Furthermore, the *dagbladet.no* story is chosen because of its typicality based on a previously

conducted quantitative study of stories published on the section *Magasinet* (Steensen 2006). The *palmbeach.com* story is chosen because it represents a typical online Flash package as described by McAdams (2005). Another factor making this story interesting is that a translated and slightly reedited version of the print story ran in the newspaper *Dagbladet*. It therefore represents a piece of journalism which clearly adheres to the journalistic values of *Dagbladet*, thus making comparison even more justifiable.

The Provocation of *Dagbladet.no*

The section *Magasinet* was launched on *dagbladet.no* in February 2002 as the first section in a Scandinavian online newspaper devoted to the feature journalism. The section got its name from *Dagbladet's* Saturday print feature magazine. The story "Kjøper biler de ikke kan kjøre" ("Buying cars they can't drive")[6] (see Figure 1) was published in the section on 27 March 2007. The story deals with a new possibility for Saudi Arabian women to buy their own cars, even though the country's legislation forbids them to drive. The story is written exclusively for the section by the journalist who has also been appointed to lead the section.

[Insert Figure 1 here]

The way the story is presented strikingly resembles what readers might be used to from the print edition. This resemblance is established not only because the section bears the same name as the print edition, but also by the use of similar font types and other graphic elements. Several of the recurring elements of the print edition -- including food and wine columns and the weekly portrait interview -- also appear in a left sidebar menu. The story itself also immediately seems quite similar to stories in the print edition; it is approximately the same length as a standard story in print and it is illustrated with several photos, as is also common in the print edition.

An interesting detail is the placement of the journalists byline, which is written in capital letters and placed at the top of the story, above the title. In the other sections of *dagbladet.no* the byline is placed below both the title and the lead, and it is written in small letters[7]. This byline design also mirrors the print *Magasinet* and it creates a stronger emphasis on the journalist who has produced the story. On the section front the journalist who heads the section is also profiled with a picture and her name. This type of profile cannot be found in the other sections, and this feature therefore provides the reader with an expectation that the journalism here is more personal and perhaps even subjective.

How then is the story composed? The title ("Buying cars they can't drive") and the short lead ("Saudi women go shopping") accompanied by a picture of hijab-covered women in a car shop are well-suited to arouse curiosity. Why are they not allowed to drive cars? And why are they buying cars if they can't drive them? The body of the text starts with some background information on Saudi Arabia, before the journalist reveals the news of the new female car shop which has opened despite the still valid legislation. This way of creating and preserving suspense is a typical feature of composition techniques common in storytelling, for instance Hollywood motion picture productions and crime fiction. Discourses of entertainment and fiction are in other words present in our story. News discourses are marginalized. One could imagine a more news-oriented title and lead, for example: "First car shop for women opened in Saudi Arabia" followed by the lead: "Saudi women can now buy their own cars, even though legislation still prohibits them from driving."

A first impression of the story would therefore be that it is dominated by both discourses and generic characteristics of traditional print feature journalism. However, a closer look reveals a more complex picture.

Sources and Voices

A special feature of the story is how voices[8] are represented by what Fairclough labels "Intertextual chain relations" (Fairclough 1995, p. 77). The female car salesperson Widad Merdad,

for instance, is represented by a direct quote. A hyperlink reveals that the quote is translated from the Lebanese online newspaper *Ya Libnan* (which publishes stories in English). Following the hyperlink, we find that the quote in *Ya Libnan* is derived from the British news agency *AP*.

The original statement of Widad Merdad in other words has passed through the following chain of communicative relations: She is originally interviewed by a journalist from *AP*, who has interpreted her statement, probably translated it into English and placed it in a context of a news story. Then the news desk and maybe an editor at *AP* have assessed the statement and maybe altered the context, before the story is released to the subscribers of *AP's* news feed, among them *Ya Libnan*. A journalist, or perhaps a subeditor, at *Ya Libnan* has then interpreted and assessed the statement as it is presented in the *AP* story and placed it in a new context, which an editor or the news desk at the Lebanese paper yet again may have altered, before the journalist at *dagbladet.no* has interpreted and assessed the statement as it is represented in *Ya Libnan* and placed it in a new context, which might have been altered by an editor and/or another journalist[9]. Then the statement reaches *dagbladet.no's* readers, who interpret it once again and place it in new contexts when they talk about the story with friends, family or colleagues, comment on it in *dagbladet.no*[10] or write about it in their own weblogs[11].

The original statement of Widad Merdad in other words is transformed in a potentially endless chain of intertextual relations. According to Fairclough, such constructions of intertextual chain relations are common features of news discourse, making this discourse complex because each link in such a chain exposes the statement to new interpretations and frames of understanding. However, what is special in our story is that *each and every* voice represented -- apart from the journalist's own voice -- is interpreted and assessed in other media before it is represented in *dagbladet.no*. The journalist herself has not interviewed any of the persons whose voices are represented in the story. This makes the choir of voices more complex in this story than in traditional news stories, and even more complex than in traditional print feature journalism where the discourses of intimacy and adventure work to minimize the distance between the reader and the voices represented in order to present up-close and personal encounters with people and their milieus. These discourses in other words are marginalized in our story. Instead we find traces of a totally different discourse: a discourse of online communication.

Influence from Online Discourse

A well-established feature of online journalism -- and online communication at large -- is its tendency to reproduce texts (Pavlik, 2001; Deuze and Yeshua, 2001 and Rasmussen, 2006). A study conducted by Baruchson-Arbib and Yaari (2004) even suggests that online plagiarism is considered (by students) less problematic than print plagiarism. This might be interpreted as an essential characteristic of online discourse. After all, weblogs, web portals, search engines and other types of web sites are constructed based on the principle that web pages are linked to each other and content copied and pasted from one page to another. Manovich attributes this feature of online communication to the basic database structure of new media:

> […] creating works in new media can be understood as either constructing the right interface to a multimedia database or as defining navigation methods through spatialized representations. (2001 p. 215)

Content published online is automatically made accessible as in a searchable database, and web sites therefore have a tendency to become windows displaying old content in new ways. *Reproduction* is in other words a distinct feature of online discourse.

The complex chain of intertextual relations representing the voices in the *dagbladet.no* story is clearly influenced -- and might even be explained by -- this perspective in online discourse. The journalist has made no attempt to hide this reproduction feature as the story is dominated by a total of 21 in-text hyperlinks directing the reader towards the original material.

Another perspective of online discourse that also sheds light on the fragmentation of voices

in the story is the fragmentation of and experimentation with identity common in online communication. Tapcott (1998), Donath (1999) and Wood and Smith (2005) among others, find that assuming different identities has become normal practice in online discourse. Chat rooms, discussion forums, multiplayer online games and virtual worlds like Second Life allow and even encourage participants to express themselves through transformed identities, thereby creating distance between the real life participants through a process of alienation. Even though this might evoke a different kind of adventure and even intimacy, it is clear that the discourses of adventure and intimacy as they are represented in traditional print feature journalism oppose both this alienation perspective and the reproduction feature of online discourse.

A Different Kind of Implicit Reader

An interesting point is how the alienation perspective of online discourse described above contributes to the construction of presuppositions and thus a specific type of implicit reader in the story. For instance, the story presupposes that something which is strongly conservative (Saudi Arabia) is negative, and that governance based on religious legislation is equally bad. This becomes evident because Saudi Arabia is described as a "regime" (instead of a more neutral description such as "form of government"), which in turn is connected to a description of the country as "strongly conservative" and "ultra-conservative", which again is connected to the sharia-based legislation.

Further on, the story presupposes that women cannot possibly be happy in this country, and that there is a deep divide between us (Norwegians) and them (Saudi Arabians) since the story continuously emphasises what separates "us" from "them". Eide (2002) has pointed out that such dichotomies of "us" and "them" can contribute to the marginalization of other cultures and hence function as confirmations of prejudice rather than providing valuable insights into other cultures. She attributes feature journalism with a greater possibility than news journalism to avoid such dichotomies, because feature journalism potentially presents up-close and personal encounters with people of different cultures. In this respect, our story is yet again opposed to discourses of traditional feature journalism, even though pieces of print feature journalism might also oppose this particular feature.

Summarizing all the presuppositions in the story uncovers an even greater presupposition: Saudi Arabia is a country one cannot take seriously. This becomes evident since the story, in certain paragraphs, is distinguished by a mocking tone, e.g. in sentences like: "This is a country that creates headlines when women are allowed to watch soccer games"[12]. These presuppositions create an implicit reader with a Christian-democratic perspective on the world who is sceptical towards all things foreign and exotic, particularly things dealing with Islam and the Muslim world, and who feels that his own values are better than others, especially Arabic/Muslim values. Readers commenting on the story mirror this implicit reader. The most popular comment[13] is written by a reader who calls himself "LudaKåre". He writes: "I thought I had seen and heard everything from the Muslims, but no... (...) Thinking of all the 'Norwegian' Muslims and listening to debates on TV makes me shudder."[14]

One might say that the presuppositions in the story, along with the implicit reader created, imprints the story with a discourse of xenophobia. This strongly opposes the discourses of adventure and intimacy that are present in traditional print feature journalism, where close encounters with people and their milieus are promoted. These discourses often work together in traditional print feature journalism to create a discourse even more remote from a discourse of xenophobia, namely a discourse of charity.

Confused and Provoked?

Another dimension of online discourse that contrasts discourses of feature journalism as we know it from print is the possibility of interactivity and thereby the inclusion of user-generated content (Deuze, 1999; 2003 and Matheson, 2005). The implicit reader of traditional print feature journalism is likely to be a passive consumer who withdraws into a sphere of privacy and perhaps

even gets lost in dreams provoked by the story (like in the television commercial for *Dagbladet Magasinet* described above). The implicit reader in a story dominated by online discourse is quite different: She is an active participant who expects to be able to make her own choices while reading (by clicking on hyperlinks) and immediately state her opinion publicly on what she has read. To adapt to such an implicit reader, the *dagbladet.no* journalist has done two things: She has equipped the story with numerous hyperlinks, providing it with an (apparent) hypertext structure; and she has provided readers with the opportunity to comment and discuss the story.

The interactive dimension of the story creates a conflict with the discourse of fiction present in the story's opening that -- as I mentioned above -- is characterized by linear storytelling composition techniques. The coherence of the story is established by a linear structure created by consecutive sentences, independent of the hyperlinks. The story is not deprived of meaning if the hyperlinks are removed. On the contrary, by clicking on a hyperlink, the reader is taken out of the story and thus loses the linear thread running through it. The hyperlinks therefore potentially weaken the story's coherence if the reader chooses to click on them. Analysing the composition of the story therefore makes it evident that the discourse of fiction clashes with online discourse in a way that might be perceived as confusing to the readers. Should they read or should they click?

Inviting the readers to comment and discuss stories, as *dagbladet.no* does, might influence what topics are considered interesting enough to write stories about and it might influence how stories are written and presented. The topics of choice should be suited to create debate and they are likely to be presented in a way that might even provoke debate. Topics involving Islam and the Muslim world are "hot" topics (in Norway) and stories involving such topics are likely to be debated. When the story, as I have shown, in addition plays on prejudices and thereby creates polarization between the implicit reader and the "strange" Muslims, provocation is definitely present. However, in order to establish provocation, discourses of traditional feature journalism must be dwarfed. Both the discourses of adventure and of intimacy seek understanding and empathy rather than provocation.

The analysis presented above makes it evident that the *dagbladet.no* story is characterized by what we might label a practice of cannibalization: Discourses of traditional print feature journalism represented on the surface are eaten up by discourses of online communication represented on a deeper level of the story. In the *palmbeachpost.com* story that I will analyse next, it is the other way around: Here it is immediately difficult to find traces of anything traditional.

Train Jumping with *Palmbeachpost.com*

The story *Train Jumping: A desperate journey*[15] (see Figure 2) was originally published -- covering 13 pages -- in The Palm Beach Post newspaper on 11 November 2006 as a traditional, in-depth feature story. Simultaneously, the story was presented online as a multimedia package produced using Adobe Flash and mainly based on photo slideshows with audio[16]. The story deals with poor Hispanics trying to immigrate to the United States by jumping trains going north -- a journey involving great danger and resulting in several deaths each year.

[Insert figure 2 here]

The story is presented in a pop-up window reached from the *Multimedia and Special Reports* section. It is not framed by ads or hyperlinks to other stories. The reader is first asked to choose the language of preference -- Spanish or English[17] -- before the story starts. To say that the story *starts* might seem odd, but without any further interference by the reader, an introduction starts to play. This introduction lasts for 56 seconds and consists of six sentences and six photos presented consecutively on a black background. Each sentence fades in and out followed by a photo that fades in and out. Most photos are close-ups of Hispanic faces marked by strong emotions.

The first sentence reads: "They went north for a better life". It fades out and is replaced by an image of a man crossing a river on foot, waist high in water. The four following sentences follow the same linguistic pattern: A complete sentence starting with "They" followed by the same

subordinate clause (with some minor adjustments): "in search of a better life". The last sentence breaks this pattern and consists only of a complete sentence: "They rode the train". This sentence therefore stands out more than the others, tearing the reader out of the repetitive pattern established by the five previous sentences. We must assume that this is a deliberate rhetorical effect established to create a sudden and somewhat abrupt stop thereby underlining the extraordinary fact that all the dramatic and life-changing events that "they" have embarked on in the first five sentences are caused by such a trivial thing as riding a train.

The stop effect made by the last sentence is also underlined by an audio track consisting of Spanish voices and the repetitive sound of a train in motion. Just before the last sentence fades in, a train toot is heard, loud and clear, that abruptly awakens the reader from the repetitive pattern established.

The introduction comes to an end when the title of the production fades in and out, before a photo with two transparent text boxes on top and a menu fades in (see Figure 2). The upper text box is titled "Welcome", and as nothing more fades in or out, the reader realizes that the introduction is over.

Concerning genre, this introduction plays like a movie trailer. It is approximately the length of a movie trailer, it uses both photos and audio to create visual effects, the title of the main product marks its finish, and it is produced to create interest in the main product. However, the introduction also plays on other genres. The fact that it stops and awaits further "orders" from the reader creates a resemblance to computer games. Computer games often start in a similar fashion: A cinematic introduction is replaced by a more or less static display where further action depends upon interaction with the player.

The poetic word-crafting skills displayed in the six sentences create associations to genres of poetry. If we line them up one beneath the other, they look like a poem.

Moreover, we also recognize characteristics of traditional print feature journalism. The introduction is narrative, it is colourful in its multimodality, it is visually pleasing, it plays on emotions, it is personal, and it takes the reader on a ride, so to speak, to meet strangers and new environments (in fact, the introduction can be seen as an invitation to join these desperate strangers on a train ride). In addition, the story is not driven by news genres. We can imagine a more news-oriented introduction where the first sentence could read: "Two young Guatemalans died last week when attempting to jump a train in motion." Such a start would make the story more up-to-date, but it would also detach it from any emotional and personal impact.

Familiar Discourses

From the analysis above it is evident that the story initially draws upon discourses of adventure, intimacy and fiction -- just as we are used to in traditional print feature journalism. This initial picture does not change when reviewing the complete story. In the text box titled "Welcome", which greets the reader when the introduction has finished, the first sentence reads: "Experience the lives of the train jumpers in the seven chapters below." Here the discourse of adventure is present as an imperative, and the discourse of fiction is equally explicit since the story is divided into "chapters" -- as if the reader is about to read a novel. The focus lies not on hard news (which there are many examples of in this story), but on getting to know these people and their motivations -- in other words, a discourse of intimacy.

The reader is in principle free to choose in which order she would like to read/view the chapters. However, the layout of the story's welcome page clearly indicates a desired reading order: One should begin with the chapter at the bottom left, since this chapter is named "Beginning the journey", and continue in a traditional left-to-right reading fashion.

Every chapter resembles the introduction in that a click on each and every one of them automatically starts a new slide show with audio. The chapters are between one and three minutes long and at any time the reader can stop, pause and start the playback using control buttons on a time line displayed below the playback window. The reader might also, during the playback of one chapter, start the playback of another chapter by clicking that chapter's hyperlink in the menu that is

always displayed below. However, the chapters are not composed in a way that favours such acts of interactivity. They all follow a linear, narrative structure and the photos in the slideshows fade in and out in close interplay with the audio tracks. The reader is directed towards leaning back and enjoying the different chapters, just as the woman in the TV commercial for *Dagbladet Magasinet,* as I mentioned above, leans back on her sofa.

The interplay between the discourses of adventure, intimacy and fiction is so tight in this story that it in total resembles a discourse of charity. This discourse is explicitly articulated in the "Welcome" text box, where the reader is encouraged to contact a charity NGO (run by a person called Doňa Olga). In a submenu beneath the chapter menu we find the same call for charity in the form of a hyperlink reading: "Contact Doňa Olga to help".

The Construction of a Traditional Implicit Reader

As the analysis above illustrates, a compassionate and charitable implicit reader seeking adventure and entertainment in order to be touched at an emotional level is constructed in the story. A mirror of this implicit reader can be found by following the hyperlink "share your thoughts on this story" at the very bottom. Here readers are invited to comment the story. Most comments are displays of emotional reactions, such as this comment from "alisha": "My heart goes out to those less fortunate than us." However, we also find comments from readers more like the implicit reader of the *dagbladet.no* story, such as this outburst from "fed up": "This is propaganda bs. since we know how they are getting in, let's go plug that hole."

An interesting point concerning the invitation to comment and discuss the story is how it is formulated as an invitation to "share thoughts". Such an invitation is part of the online discourse as described above. However, this discourse is to a lesser extent present here than in the *dagbladet.no* story, since the invitation is not a call for stating opinions in a public debate, but a call for sharing thoughts. To share one's thoughts is something one does after experiencing something on a personal level. Such an invitation in other words is as much inspired by discourses of adventure and intimacy. *Palmbeachpost.com* does not intend to provoke readers with this story, but still we find readers -- like "fed up" -- who are provoked. This indicates a clash of discourses between online discourse and traditional discourses of feature journalism.

Conclusion

What do these two analyses tell us? First, it is obvious that both texts are results of creative discourse practices. They are both complex and contain many, partly incompatible discourses and genres. This indicates that the texts are representations of socio-cultural change where known genres are subjected to change and new genres rise. The two texts therefore illustrate how feature journalism changes when remediated online.

Second, we see that *dagbladet.no* and *palmbeachpost.com* represent two different strategies for producing feature journalism online; *dagbladet.no* remediates traditional feature journalism in how the story is presented. The presentation immediately is reminiscent of feature journalism as it is known from the newspaper. However, we simultaneously find discourses quite different from those normally present in print feature journalism. We can therefore say that *dagbladet.no* uses familiar genres in order to adapt new discourses to feature journalism.

In the *palmbeachpost.com* story it is the other way around. Here the story immediately is presented as belonging to different genres than feature journalism, namely movie trailers, computer games and poetry. However, the discourses present in the story are all discourses of traditional feature journalism. We can therefore say that *palmbeachpost.com* uses familiar discourses in order to adapt new genres to feature journalism.

Third, we see how online discourse clashes with discourses of traditional feature journalism. *Palmbeachpost.com* tries to undermine this clash of discourses by marginalizing online discourse. They try to guide and control how the readers navigate through the story by presenting it in linear chapters following a fixed order. They also try to reduce reader comments to monologue thought-

sharing instead of dialogical discussion -- a marginalization which is not quite successful.

     Dagbladet.no tries to marginalize discourses of traditional print feature journalism. The readers are encouraged to be active, both by using all the hyperlinks displayed throughout the story and by the invitation to comment on the story -- an invitation which is implicitly provocative. The story offers no adventures or intimate encounters with people and their milieus.

     These two approaches to producing feature journalism online might differ as a result of how the two newsrooms are organized. *Dagbladet.no* is a separate company with a separate newsroom that does not cross-publish much content between the paper and the online edition. However, they want to attract readers from the newspaper to the online edition, making it a logic strategy to remediate the newspaper in form, while the content, that is produced by online journalists, is influenced mainly by discourses of online communication. The newsroom of *palmbeachpost.com* is organized differently, with much more cross-publishing. Here the content is created by the newspaper staff and it is therefore logical that traditional newspaper discourses dominate. However, the form (Flash production) is produced by the online staff, and the genres therefore differ from newspaper genres.

     Whether all instances of feature journalism online are characterized by such clashes of discourses is of course a different question. However, given the different nature of the two approaches analysed here, it seems that online newsrooms are struggling to find solutions on how to differentiate online journalism from old media journalism. The evolution of journalistic genres in online media has just begun.

Notes

[1] In addition to the ones cited above, I draw upon the following sources: Hansèn and Thor (1999), Elveson (1979), Eide (1998) and Roksvold (1997).

[2] Rob Runett, Director of Electronic Media Communication in the Newspaper Association of America (NAA), gave the following comment on *palmbeachpost.com's* online edition in a story on NAA's web site: "They have a very strong approach if you play around on their site. Credit should be given to them for having the vision to say, 'We want to be the leader in the market'" (Url: http://www.naa.org/home/presstime/2004/june/presstimecontent/2004-best-practices-awards-new-media.aspx (Accessed July 4th 2007)).

[3] Both *Dagbladet* and *dagbladet.no's* slogan is "Always in front" ("Alltid foran").

[4] Remediation means that "a newer medium takes the place of an older one, borrowing and reorganizing the characteristics of writing in the older medium and reforming its cultural space." (Bolter, 2001 p. 23)

[5] "Rhetorical convergence is the coexistence in one text of means of expression that we are used to regard as belonging to different media" (Fagerjord, 2003 p. 1).

[6] http://www.dagbladet.no/magasinet/2007/03/26/496131.html (Accessed 31 January 2008)

[7] This layout was changed as part of a redesign in 2008.

[8] I understand the concept of "voices" as Fairclough -- based on Bakthin -- does: "Voices are the identities of a particular individual or collective agents" (1995 p. 77).

[9] *Dagbladet.no* has no subeditors, but the journalists normally read and edit each others' stories before they are published.

[10] Readers are allowed -- and encouraged -- to comment on most stories published on *dagbladet.no*

[11] A *Google* search reveals that at least one blogger has referred to the story.

[12] "Dette er landet som får toppoppslag på nyhetene når kvinnene får lov til å bli med på fotballkamp".

[13] In *dagbladet.no*, an advanced commenting system allows readers to recommend other readers' comments. The more recommendations a comment receives, the higher up it is presented. At the time of the reading this particular comment had received 217 recommendations, making it the highest ranked comment.

[14] "Jeg trodde jeg hadde sett og hørt det meste fra muslimene, men neida.. (...) Grøsser når jeg ser

tallene over 'norske' muslimer og hører debattene på TV."

[15] URL: http://alt.coxnewsweb.com/palmbeachpost/photos/accent/tj/trainjumping.html (Accessed 26 June 2007)

[16] The analysis is based only on the multimedia package.

[17] The analysis is based on the English edition.

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Figures

Figure 1: Grab from *dagbladet.no/magasinet*

Figure 2: Grab from *palmbeachpost.com.*

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