DE GRUYTER OPEN

doi:10.1515/nor-2016-0016
Nordicom Review 37 (2016) 2, pp. 33-49

The Prism of Change

'Continuity' in Public Service Television in the Digital Era

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Abstract

This article presents and discusses the communicative behaviour in the continuity texts produced by public service television providers in Denmark in the digital era. Based on a case study of the two main channels, DR and TV 2, the article argues that, after previous trends towards convergence in the way the two providers communicate, the present developments exhibit a divergence. Three major differences are found in the efforts to (1) hold on to and 'herd' the viewers within the scope of products and platforms, (2) strengthen the provider–viewer relationship, and (3) stand out with a distinctive set of institutional values. The findings are interpreted as a consequence of the challenges and opportunities facing the providers in terms of funding and in terms of meeting public service obligations, in a situation of tension between a traditional linear model of broadcasting and an emerging non-linear model.

Keywords: continuity, public service media, television, digital era, non-linear television, branding

Introduction

> The time is 19.55 on a Wednesday night in November 2014, and the male voice on the DR1 channel addresses me with the following words and audio-visual material: "Yes, bon appetit! [ironic comment directed at the hosts and guests of the previous programme eating cooked insects]. Later tonight we might meet *At Clement's* [title of an entertainment talk show]". At the same time the live logo for *At Clement's* is shown.

The above is an example of what takes place on television in the ephemeral texts that are placed between the programmes, also known as 'continuity'. These texts have been produced throughout the history of television, and thus the communicative interface between the providers and the viewers has been constructed in many different ways. Continuity is perhaps one of the most distinctive features of television as a textual phenomenon, and it creates a setting for the individual programmes. This communicative interface has a number of functions to perform:

- It is where the provider has to produce a televisual text that informs the viewers of upcoming content, holds the viewers' attention during these intermissions, and even attracts new users. The text produced must tackle the tension between, on the one

hand, the schedule and the programmes, and, on the other, the time viewers spend waiting for the next programme to begin. In short, it needs to *inform* and to *entertain*.

- Continuity is where the provider explicitly tries to *brand itself* and its products (Stigel, 2004, 2006), and where the quintessence of the specific 'house style' (Ellis, 1982) of the provider's portfolio of channels, specific channels/platforms and content is presented.
- Continuity is where the dominant *business model* of commercially financed, linear television (with or without public service obligations) unfolds, in the form of advertisements and sponsorship announcements, as breaks either within or between the programmes.
- In the communicative interface constructed by continuity, we also find the quintessence of the *immediacy and 'live-ness' of the television experience* as a time-structured mass medium (Ellis, 1982; Williams, 1974). A perpetual 'here and now' is presented, first, in which the different parts of the day (daytime, prime time, late fringe) and the week are mirrored, and, second, to which the different temporal and spatial settings of the individual programmes (e.g. the here-and-now of the talk show; the there-and-now of the television transmission of an event; the there-and-then of the television drama) return (Stigel, 2001).
- It is in the communicative interface built by continuity that the *acknowledgement of the viewers' presence* is persistently recognised. Continuity is probably an important component of the 'anyone as someone' structure of the television experience, interlinking the private sphere of the viewer(s) and the public sphere of television in everyday life (Scannell, 1996). In this way, continuity is probably a fundamental component of the qualities of the 'daily-ness' and the 'taken-for-granted-ness' of television, as Scannell (1996) argues.

Given this long list, it is appropriate to regard continuity as a special genre of television, as Søndergaard has argued (1994, p. 41). During the 1990s, there was a small wave of interest in studying scheduling and continuity, in the light of the deregulation of television in Europe, and the providers' growing channel portfolios (Ytreberg, 2000; 2002). However, television studies have been strangely indifferent to continuity as a specific textual phenomenon. Recent research contributions will be considered in detail below, but it is noticeable that this lack of interest coincides with a period when television studies have otherwise been marked by a keen effort to understand television as an aesthetic, a socio-cultural and an industrial phenomenon. Currently, television is undergoing profound changes. From the perspective of the providers, the proliferation of transnational, internet-born providers of audio-visual content, the growing channel and platform portfolios, and the streaming services are changing the competition in the market. From the perspective of the viewers, the digital era has extended choice and enhanced the viewers' control over what content to watch, and where and when to watch it. These changes represent a dual challenge to continuity, as a communicative interface associated with linear television, which calls for investigation.

Continuity Studies in the Digital Era

A renewed interest in continuity studies is emerging in the light of the present changes to television in the digital era, described above. Important contributions question the theoretical understanding, which developed in the pre-digital era, of television as a flow-organised textual phenomenon. Using branding theory, Johnson (2012) provides us with a comprehensive analysis of the efforts made to work the identity of the provider into a single brand with distinctive values in the eyes of the viewers. This is done in the context of intensified competition for attention in the economic and emotional markets. Johnson's study compares the channel branding strategies and campaigns of the BBC, ITV1 and Channel 4 with the American networks ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox over a thirty-year period. As Johnson's findings suggest, it has become increasingly difficult to predict linear viewing patterns. Nevertheless, efforts to attract and hold the attention of the viewers are still paramount, and they have become more important than ever. Caldwell (2003) terms the providers' new strategies and tactics to hold on to their audiences in a non-linear multi-platform environment 'second-shift media aesthetics' (p. 127). Identity branding becomes essential, as does thinking in spatial metaphors, such as giving the viewers the opportunity to 'graze' on content outside the boundaries of the individual channel. However, Caldwell emphasises the ways in which the providers try to 'herd' the viewers towards profitable user flows.

In line with Caldwell's interest in how the American television industry adapts its industrial logic and business models, Ihlebæk, Syvertsen and Ytreberg (2014) compare how schedulers and promoters of public service and commercial channels in the Norwegian television market revise and renew their 'toolkit' (p. 14) to face these scheduling challenges. Special attention is given to building so-called 'junctions' (ibid., p. 9) in continuity, where the multi-platform provider uses different forms of cross-promotion in order to 'herd' the viewers to stay tuned within its environment of streaming services, websites, and main and niche channels. These findings are largely supported by Doyle's analysis of the work of schedulers at MTV UK (2013). These new tools, which aim to support continued viewing on a different platform, are also an obvious difference observed at a textual level by Johnson (2013). In her comparative study of continuity on the BBC on one evening in 1985 and in 2010, the need for spatial metaphors is underpinned by the effort to describe the new temporal structures and the generic changes to the providers' communicative behaviour.

In many ways the findings in these research contributions underline how continuity production has become an increasingly difficult task. On the one hand, it is more important than ever; on the other hand, it may be a task that loses its importance in the shift towards a more non-linear use of television content. It is safe to say that the generic functions of continuity need to incorporate the viewers' enhanced choice and content control (Bulck & Enli, 2014a). The communicative interface has to be constructed in new ways, and a revised conceptualisation of the audience probably needs to be used as a guide. However, it may be assumed that the industrial logic of the dominant business model still in place and inherent to linear television might have an impact.

Divergence in Public Service Continuity

In this section of the article I will present the main findings from a case study of the continuity texts produced by the two Danish public service media (PSM) providers, DR and TV 2/Danmark, for their main channels, DR1 and TV 2. The aim of the study was to understand how the two providers attempted to 'herd' their viewers, and how the provider–user relationship was staged in the new television landscape of the digital era. The analysis is based on the broadcast schedules of November 9th to 15th 2014, from 18.00 to 24.00 on DR1 and TV 2. The two public service providers in the small Danish market were chosen because the scope of public service obligations put to them differs, and they have very different funding models and organisational structures. DR is a public provider of radio and television that is 100 per cent funded by a licence fee. It offers five television channels, the streaming service DRTV and the website dr.dk. All of DR's activities are part of the public service obligation, and access to the content regardless of platform is given priority as a result of the Danish public service regulations. A mixture of subscriptions and advertisements funds TV 2, and TV 2 only provides television. Furthermore, TV 2/Danmark is a limited company, entirely owned by the Danish state. It has two divisions. The first is a public service division that includes the main channel TV 2 and has scheduled 'windows' for the eight regional news providers that are supported by the licence fee. Second, TV 2/Danmark has a large commercial division, TV 2 Networks, which is completely financed by subscriptions and advertisements, *and has no public service obligations*. This division includes the website, tv2.dk, five niche channels and the streaming service, TV 2 Play. Danish law allows commercial breaks only *between* what are considered 'programmes', or in 'natural breaks' within programmes, for example at half time in a football match.

These differences in the public service model applying to the two providers were presumed to have an impact on the generic characteristics and present developments of the communicative behaviour and, as a consequence, on *the kind* of interface produced in continuity. A research contribution informing the analysis was Stigel's work on the developments in the use of self-promotional texts (trailers, logos, stills, schedule outlines, speaker-in-picture) and channel voice between 1993 and 1996 in Danish television across two public service (PS) channels and two commercial channels (Stigel, 2004). The main conclusion drawn by Stigel is that the increased use of self-promotional texts means that there is a trend towards *convergence*: the PS channels and the commercial channels are looking more and more alike in the amount and kind of promotional texts they use. This development is regarded by Stigel as a gradual slide towards the commercialisation of PS television in the light of increased competition for audiences.

The findings in this study of the communicative behaviour in continuity show that a *divergence* is emerging: DR1 stands out as quite different from TV 2 in three ways. First, differences are found in the efforts to 'hold on to' and 'herd' the viewers *within the scope of products* offered by the provider; second, there are differences in the efforts to strengthen the provider–user relationship, using the channel voice and its interplay with the audio-visual material; and third, differences are found in the efforts to stand out with a distinctive set of institutional values.

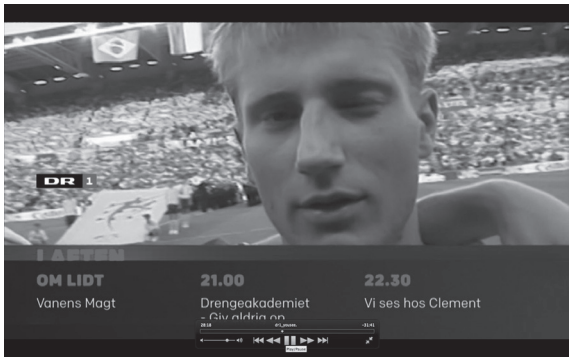
Trend 1: ‘Crossroads’, ‘Roundabouts’ or ‘One-Way Streets’

As documented by Ihlebæk, Syvertsen and Ytreberg (2011) in their analysis of the relationship between NRK1 and its niche channels, DR1 serves, in terms of programming, as a kind of ‘mother ship’ in the fleet of channels and non-linear services provided by DR. This means that continuity is marked by a high frequency of information pushing the viewers to other DR channels and/or platforms, in the present or in the near future. These, which I term ‘crossroads’, are placed at the intersection between programmes with a potentially strong change in content and/or target group appeal. An example of these frequent ‘crossroads’ is found at DR1 12.11 at 19:58, directing the viewers to an alternative choice.

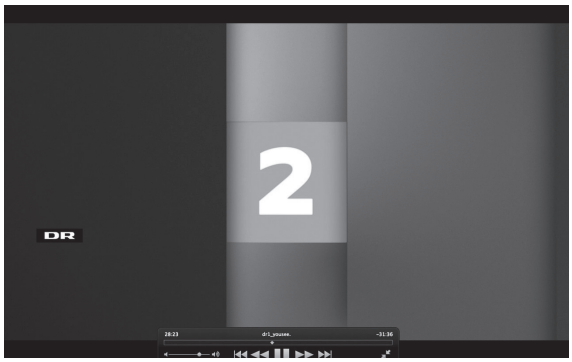
The alternative to *Vanens Magt* [‘The Power of Habit’], an everyday-life, problem-solving and host-driven factual series is an episode of a factual, investigative critical series on DR2:

Figure 1. *Crossroads*

Channel voice: ‘And now…



over to DR2, which wonders why…



840,000 Danes have tattoos. However, there is no control and authorisation of the tattoo artists. This is something *DR2 Investigates* in a moment.’

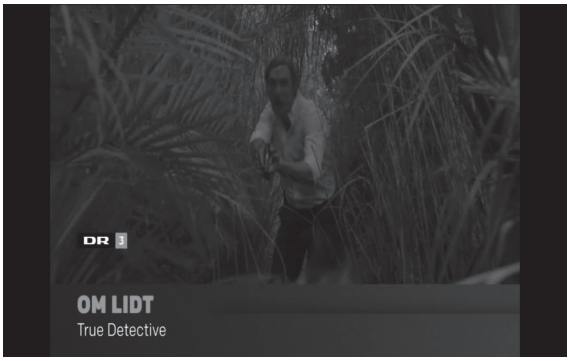
This is basically a choice between two different kinds of television journalism. All the continuity sequences in the material from DR1's prime time schedule contain 'crossroads' for an immediate, alternative choice. In many ways, this is an internal form of counter-programming tactic, which is also used between competing providers. However, 'herding' is used to avoid losing viewers, even if it might split the mother ship's 'herd'. In addition to this very frequently used tactic, DR1 uses what I would like to term 'roundabouts', in specific time zones of the schedule, with the same purpose as the 'crossroads'. An example of a 'roundabout' would be the one aired on 9.11 after the Sunday fiction series at 20.00, which has a very high expected share of viewers, and before the special Sunday newscast at 21.00, which normally also has a high share of viewers:

Figure 2. *Roundabout*

Channel voice: 'Before *21Søndag* [the special Sunday evening newscast] in a few moments, we just need to have a look at what is happening on our other channels. DR2 offers satire in the shape of *Nyt fra Jylland* ['News from Jutland'], and

Over at DR3, years of contention between the detectives Hart and Cohle end, in the serial *True Detective*.

And



Over at DRK, you can catch a documentary by Anders Østergaard, about the fall of the Berlin Wall.

This is all happening right now.

Here at our place, Kim Bildsøe Lassen [the anchor's name] is standing by with more details on the OWBunker scandal. Here is *21Søndag*.'

The temporal structure of the 'roundabouts' has the obvious function of 'herding' the intended viewer to switch channel or platform if something more interesting is on offer somewhere else within the environment (linear or non-linear). The other function is to brand DR as a provider with an abundance of content on offer for all its viewers to choose from, and to show that DR has the surplus energy to help the viewers to find what they want. It communicates a conceptualisation of the intended viewers as a heterogeneous group with varied tastes and interests, and finally, it communicates diverse content and universal access as core values of PSM.

The use of 'crossroads' at TV 2 is very different. In the sample, only six examples of 'crossroads' to other channels were found, three directing viewers to TV 2/Fri, two to TV 2/Zulu, and one to TV 2/Charlie. However, 'crossroads' that direct the viewers to the streaming service, TV 2 Play, using a banner in the top right-hand corner of the screen (see figure 3), or opportunities to chat on the website tv2.dk with participants in the programme just shown, are also used. In the sample, this happens twice on the Sunday (9th November), and on the Wednesday, the 12th. The 'crossroads' offer viewers the option to view more episodes of drama and documentaries produced by TV 2, to chat with the scriptwriter of the crime series, *Dicte*, and, on the Wednesday, to chat with the participants in the documentary, *Children of Sperm Donors*. 'Roundabouts' are, however, used only once. In this way, TV 2 stands out as a kind of 'one-way street', trying to make the audience stay tuned to the main channel. It may leave a much more traditional impression of a standalone television channel addressing an intended audience, conceptualised as a homogeneous group with a limited choice.

The reasons for the difference between TV 2 and DR1 are, first and foremost, connected to the business model and the organisational split of TV 2/Danmark (between a public service division and a commercial division), and because of the legal framework for TV 2/Danmark. Cross-promotion is allowed between the products produced, because, according to Danish legislation, this is not considered to be advertisement. However, the main channel, TV 2, has to generate a reach in the population so that it can keep up its viability as a commercial channel with public service obligations. The advertisements are sold in bundles *across* the channels in the portfolio, and are priced accordingly. It is crucial to maintain the relatively high share of viewers on the main channel, because the niche channels generate only between 1 per cent and 4 per cent of audience share. Furthermore, TV 2's share has been declining since 2007, and in 2014 it was 24 per cent.

Another reason for this 'one-way street' strategy is connected to *the model* applied by TV 2/Danmark in order to segment the audience. As with DR, a kind of 'mother ship' model is applied, with mixed programming and the mainstream audience as the target group. This is very different from the model applied to the Danish market by the commercial provider MTG/TV, for example. MTG uses 'a portfolio of equals' model, where all channels are aimed at the same commercially important target group (those aged 15-55), but with differences in content that make cross-promotion more relevant. In line with the segmentation model applied by TV 2/Danmark, the *segmentation tools* it uses are a third reason. TV 2/Danmark uses age (TV 2/Zulu for the 15- to 40-year-olds, and TV 2/Charlie for those aged over 55) as a segmentation tool, as well as channels with mono-generic content (24/7 news, lifestyle and sports). This strategy results in a kind of segmentation that leaves the main channel to fight for a commercially interesting mainstream target group who will watch a schedule of mixed programming, which makes cross-promotion less relevant. SBS Discovery also applies these segmentation tools, and has a similar 'one-way street' strategy for the Danish market. DR's segmentation tools are a mixture of age (e.g. two channels for children, and one for young adults), and a nexus between lifestyle segments and mixed programming, with relatively sharp generic profiles (documentaries and current affairs; (high) culture and art house films).

To sum up this first trend towards *divergence,* TV 2 seems to be positioned somewhere between offering viewers a choice of products within its portfolio and needing to hold on to a large and commercially important mainstream segment of the audience, because of the role of the traditional business model: selling eyeballs. As a provider that is 100 per cent funded by the licence fee, DR is inclined to behave as a *curator*, and to be indifferent to whether the viewer switches channels or drops the linear flow, as long as he or she stays within the DR portfolio. Furthermore, DR may be indifferent about which device or distribution channel is used. The present 'currency' problem in the television industry, as a result of the fact that on-demand and live streaming are not (yet) measured daily, does not have an immediate economic impact. However, it will be a political problem in the long run as linear television viewing continues to decline.

Trend II: The Informative Value and Relationship-Building in Continuity

The continuity texts produced by the two channels are characterised by two common and concurrent principles: first, compression of information, and second, accumulation of information. The aim is to save time and to keep viewers waiting for as short a time as possible for a (new) programme to start. For TV 2, airing advertisements and sponsorship announcements during the intervals leaves little time for other types of interstitials. This means that the interface layout at TV 2 depends heavily on stills, in combination with schedule outlines and the channel voice addresses. In comparison, DR1 is marked by an elaborate use of channel voice addresses, schedule outlines and, especially, trailers (between five and ten of them) that are piled up during a short (2-5 minute) interval. In particular, the use of trailers, schedule outlines and channel voice addresses, and the way these components are edited, are important to the differences between the two providers, and will be the focus of this section of the article.

Trailers:[1]

A total of six different kinds of trailers are used, containing three different time frames – present, immediate future, and future – combined with two different (imagined) spatial frameworks – here and there.

1: here and now, in a few moments

2: here and in the immediate future, just after this programme

3: here and in the future (a few days from now, or later this season)

4: there and now, on a niche channel and/or non-linear platform

5: there and in the immediate future, on a niche channel and/or platform

6: there and in the future, on a niche channel and/or platform (including DR's radio channels).

DR1 uses what I would like to term a 'collage' strategy in its composition of the individual trailers, the schedule outline and the channel voice, following a set pattern lasting around one minute:

1: here and now, in a few moments

2: here and in the immediate future, just after this programme

3: here and in the future

4: there and now, on a niche channel and/or non-linear platform

1: here and now, in a few moments

However, in many of DR's continuity sequences placed around the 'tent poles' of the schedule with high audience shares, such as the Sunday fiction series, the lifestyle programme and the main newscasts, there are very high numbers of trailers accumulated, and an example is this three-minute sequence from Sunday 9.11:

1: here and now, in a few moments

2: here and in the immediate future

3: here and in the future

3: here and in the future

3: here and in the future

3: here and in the future

5: there and in the future

4: there and now

4: there and now

4: there and now

1: here and now

The sequence combines 'one-way street', 'crossroads' and 'roundabout', and the sense of the chronology of this information (what is on next?) is almost dissolved, because the temporal and spatial deixis in the discourse (when and where) shifts at a very rapid pace. However, it may leave the impression of an abundance of content on offer, which

is promoted by the channel voice. Furthermore, parts of the *content* of these trailers are repeated, with small variations, several times during prime time, adding to the impression of a dissolved chronology.

In comparison to DR1, the temporal-spatial construction of continuity at TV 2 is much simpler, partly because of the limited use of trailers. When used, only type 1, type 2 and type 3 trailers occur frequently; on rare occasions, type 4 or type 5 trailing is added for immediate and future programming on the niche channels TV 2/Fri or TV 2/Charlie, or the live and on-demand streaming service, TV 2 Play. The obvious reason is that time for promotion and relationship-building is scarce, because the blocks of advertisements and the many announcements by sponsors for the programme just shown, future programmes and the upcoming programme have to be placed in the breaks between programmes. Instead of piling up trailers, TV 2 puts the weight on a chronology of shifting explicit narrator identities: the channel voice, the block of advertisements labelled by a jingle, and the sponsors labelled by special voiceovers. TV 2 uses a split-screen strategy during the credits, to promote the next programme, in order to save time:

Figure 3. *Split Screen*

Credits, *Badehotellet* [‘The beach hotel’] and ‘crossroads’ to TV 2 Play

Credits, schedule outline, trailer for *Avatar* and channel voice: ‘We will be ready with a brand new weather forecast in a moment. And after that, you can join the journey to the moon, Pandora… [trailer takes over full screen]

You will see James Cameron’s blockbuster film *Avatar* just after *Vejret* [the weather report].’

However, this kind of information compression or invasion of the interstitial into the programmes proper (Ellis, 2011) is also used elaborately by DR1. All in all, DR1 has radically intensified its use of trailers as a branding tool, and perhaps this has been done

to such a point that the informative value – information about what is on the schedule next – is compromised.

The Channel Voice Persona

In line with the differences found in the number and variety of trailers used, the use of the channel voice represents a profound difference between the two providers. As Stigel (2004, p. 30) points out, the channel voice is the explicit, and in Denmark, the *invisible*, representation of the provider (Bulck & Enli, 2014b), and the use of the institutional and inclusive pronoun, 'we', is the typical mode of address. Presently, the first person singular pronoun, 'I', has been added to the pronouns used by the channel voice at both channels. An example is the verbal reaction of the channel voice, just after showing a trailer for the Sunday night historical drama, *1864*, in which one of the main characters says: 'I am sure that there will soon be a sign from God':

> Channel voice (female): I am not able to tell whether there will be a sign from God, however, the most horrible side of the war shows itself in the fifth episode of *1864*. Watch it shortly… (9.11. 2014 19:58)

In addition to the use of 'I', the many 'crossroads' and 'roundabouts' in the continuity sequences at DR1 mean that the explicitly-addressed viewer is not always the same unit. The second person singular pronoun, 'you', is frequently used, sometimes for a member of a special target group in the audience. An example is the collection of trailers and channel voice addresses to children when Friday night's long-running programme *Disney Sjov* ['Disney Fun'] is over, at 19:58. A 'crossroads' to the children's channel, DR Ultra, follows the programme, promoting an event organised by DR Ultra around the children's Christmas serial, *Tidsrejsen* ['The Journey through Time'], in December (DR1 14.11.2014). This increases the focus on the channel voice as an independent television persona talking to shifting, individual viewers and having qualities normally found only among programme hosts in genres such as talk shows and quiz shows. Furthermore, DR's staging of the channel voice as a persona is intense. First, the DR1 channel voice talks much more than TV 2's, as this example from both channels on Sunday 9.11 illustrates:

> DR1, 20:56: Channel voice (female) during credits for *1864*:
> It can be increasingly difficult to keep track of all the characters in the serial *1864*. However, we will help you [second person singular pronoun/SPSP] to do so. With just a few clicks, you [SPSP] can get an overview of all the characters and their interrelationships at dr.dk/1864. And, in a few moments: from the war against the Germans, we will move on to the celebration of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Today it is exactly 25 years since the East Germans were able to freely cross the border to the West, and in *21Søndag* [the Sunday news at 21.00], in a little while, there will be pictures of the atmosphere directly from Berlin. And here there will also be news about the case of one of the biggest recent scandals of the corporate world … that is, the bankrupt OWBunker. Kim Bildsøe Lassen asks how it is possible for this to happen again and again, and whether we have learned anything from past history. Join us in watching this in a little while. Later tonight something unexpected happens in the crime series about Annika Bengtzon… [New trailer is

> shown, and the channel voice address is intersected by trailers that continue for another 3½ minutes.]
>
> TV 2, 20:54: Channel voice (female) during credits for *Badehotellet* ['The beach hotel']: We will be ready with a brand new weather report in a moment. And after that, you [SPSP] can join the journey to the moon, Pandora…[split-screen of trailer for *Avatar*, and credits and schedule outline take over]

There is much less friendly, self-promotional discourse (including self-praise and quality claims) directed at the viewers on TV 2. TV 2 is far more focused on short announcements of upcoming and future content in the present time slot of the schedule, to make the viewers stay tuned during the advertisements, and to hand over to the other institutional voices in the schedule: the advertisers and the sponsors. Furthermore, to save time, the channel voice is skipped, and the programme hosts in the trailers address the viewers directly. As a consequence, the two channels differ with regard to the weight given to delivering the standalone entertaining qualities of the channel voice persona (Johnson, 2013; Stigel, 2004). On DR1, the channel voice persona tries to present the provider as good (para-social) company, and the first way of doing this is by witty links between the speech and the audio-visual material shown. An example of this strategy is a pun on the content in the trailer for the Swedish crime series, *Wallander*:

> DR1 22:30: Channel voice (male):
> *Deadline* [a highbrow news and political debate talk show] is on DR2. Here at DR1 we start off the late part of the evening with a crime show about a neighbourhood watch team taking its job a little too seriously. Wallander is on the case, and it seems straightforward [in Danish: 'in front of your right leg'].

During this speech, the trailer shows the main character, Kurt Wallander, finding a right leg in a rubbish skip, which turns out to be the right leg of a mannequin:

Figure 4. *The Co-Viewer Relationship*

The DR1 channel voice also tries to build the experience of a *co-viewer relationship* with the intended viewer, by being emotionally synchronised with the content of programmes, and transmitting trailers that mirror the feelings the viewer is expected to have. An example was given in the introduction to this article, where a shared feeling of disgust was emphasised as a reaction to the actions in the programme just broadcast. Another typical mode of address used to achieve this co-viewer relationship is to comment on what has been said, as in the example above, where the channel voice, as an 'I', comments on the statement of a character in the trailer for *1864*. The shifting intonations of the channel voice are used to strengthen this position as a co-viewer. The sample is crammed with this kind of communicative behaviour, and it leaves the impression of a humanised provider, eager to build a smooth, sociable, and almost intimate emotional relationship with the individual viewer.

To sum up, with the exception of the use of 'I', the delivery of the channel voice persona on TV 2 is very much like the persona found by Stigel (2004). This suggests that the traditional business model of linear television implemented at TV 2 may have a conservative impact, preventing the development of the channel persona for promotional purposes. On the other hand, the institutional persona is less dominant and self-promoting, and less eager to please. The informative value of what is said may even be higher, because of the simplicity of the continuity sequences produced by TV 2. In comparison, the strategy at DR1 in these ephemeral texts may be seen as a manifestation of a clash between the fundamental principles guiding public service television under the regulatory framework in Denmark. On the one hand, the obligation is to secure universal *access* to the content, and to offer *diversity* in content and in target group appeal. On the other hand, the obligation to produce a mixed programming schedule translates into an ideal of *mixed viewing*.

Trend III: Cultivating Institutional Values in Continuity

The third major trend in the communicative behaviour found in the continuity texts is a common emphasis on *egalitarian values*. Both providers seem to be eager to place themselves at eye level with the viewers, cultivating an atmosphere of personal and sociable contact between the provider and its audience. However, this is done in very different ways.

TV 2's strategy is marked by two fundamental approaches. First, the provider's contact with the TV 2 viewers is emphasised. This is shown in the many live audio-visual snippets leading into and out of the commercial breaks in the schedule. These snippets show real situations from the everyday lives of ordinary Danes, and they all contain cute emotional situations such as fun between kids and parents, family pets performing tricks, or the kids playing. Every snippet is provided with information on who the people in the picture are, and where in Denmark they live. A similar version of this is used in connection with bank holidays. An example from the sample is the snippets used on the 10th November, Martinmas. All these display how the traditional dinner (duck) is being prepared in many different parts of Denmark on this particular evening.

Figure 5. *TV 2 snippets*

First of all, the snippets support the existence of an actual relationship between the viewers and the provider, and not just a para-social dynamic. TV 2's otherwise conservative, generic profile embraces the digital era by giving access to the top level of the discursive hierarchy. Second, they all support a conceptualisation of the viewers as heterogeneous, with regional and local cultural identities, in line with the provincial identity of the provider: TV 2/Danmark's headquarters are situated outside the capital, and it has a network of eight regionally-based news providers. At the same time, they support a conceptualisation of the viewers as sharing a homogeneous socio-cultural identity: we are all Danes celebrating this Christian holiday in the same way across the regions; this is in line with the mainstream channel identity of TV 2. Third, national and cultural cohesion is underscored by the fact that all these snippets are user-generated content from the tv2.mindag site ['tv2 my day'] at the website tv2.dk:

Figure 6. *Min dag website*

The viewers upload videos of their daily lives, and on the site it is possible to view the video clips uploaded by others. Some of these videos will be used as clips in the continuity sequences. This strategy of including the viewer in the construction of continuity

may also serve to bridge the gap between the commercial and the editorial dimension of continuity at TV 2, and to play down the commercially dominated discourse; this is especially true of the shifts between the many different sender identities at work.

The efforts at TV 2 to construct the impression of a *mirrored identity* between provider and viewer are not part of the communicative behaviour found in the continuity sequences at DR1. The egalitarian values there are promoted by the emphasis put on the roles of *curator* and *co-viewer*, serving the choices of the individual viewer, and sharing his or her emotional experience. In this way, the audience is conceptualised as a heterogeneous phenomenon, and the provider–user relationship is created to serve and share these differences in taste, content preferences and emotions. However, compared to TV 2's strategy, the relationship functions only as a para-social relationship, and, in addition, there is a trend towards conceptualising the viewers as a mass phenomenon. An example of this ambiguity is the portraits of the imagined viewers, presented in snippets placed randomly and very infrequently among the many trailers and channel logos. These snippets show slow-motion clips of ordinary people walking along the streets, riding bicycles and coming out of shops, for example, all in an urban environment:

Figure 7. *DR1 snippets*

In these snippets, the provider demonstrates an audio-visual and non-verbal conceptualisation of the viewer who is extensively addressed by the curatorial witty co-viewer persona. The people shown are anonymous representatives of a *potential* audience, and not the viewers of DR1. The clips are provider-created promotional material, and not user-generated content. In these interstitials, the heterogeneous community of viewers addressed by DR1 remains an anonymous mass of city inhabitants from nowhere. There is no display of contact, either between the inhabitants, or between the provider and the inhabitants, and the provider is positioned as an observer who is unnoticed by the city inhabitants. The infrequent use of the snippets, and the conceptualisation of the viewers they reflect, comes across as rather a contradiction of DR1's attempt to cultivate egalitarian institutional values. This ambiguity may add to the impression of a somewhat self-centred provider preoccupied with branding itself rather than connecting with its audience.

Conclusion: A New 'Golden Age'?

The three trends in the changes to the continuity genre highlight growing differences between the two PSM providers who dominate the Danish television market with a combined share of 60 per cent. The immediate conclusion is that the communicative behaviour at DR1 makes the channel stand out as a provider embracing the multi-channel and multi-platform possibilities of the digital era. DR, and perhaps others from the small group of PSM providers in the world that are 100 per cent funded by a licence fee, seems to have the upper hand in adapting the continuity genre to the viewers' extended choices and enhanced content control. The public service obligation of DR in the present Danish media policy is to make its content available and accessible on all relevant platforms in the overall media environment. This obligation is underscored in the latest public service contract between the Minister of Culture and DR (*DR's public service contract for 2015-2018*). By comparison, TV 2/Danmark's main channel seems to follow a more traditional strategy, and one of the core explanations for this 'conservatism' is the impact of the limiting of the public service obligations to only the main channel, and the effect of the business model inherited from the pre-digital era. This is preventing TV 2 from developing the many generic functions of continuity in new ways, and from promoting its identity as a PSM provider instead of a traditional broadcaster. As a consequence, TV 2's ability to meet its PS obligations could become more difficult.

DR1's enormous emphasis on promoting and branding the provider's many individual channels and services on offer, and on scaling up the emotional provider–user relationship, means that continuity runs the risk of destroying itself. It turns into seemingly endless, self-serving promotion of the provider, instead of serving the basic needs of the audience for information. As pointed out, the informative dimension has become more difficult to comprehend, and continuity demands more attention by the viewers and is swamped with replays of the same trailers. This is somewhat paradoxical in a media environment marked by enhanced user control, and with an enormous amount of content and number of channels available. In this way, DR1's communicative behaviour may hurt DR's image, because it might annoy the large majority of viewers who are still watching linear television and waiting for the (next) programme to start. Furthermore, DR's promotion of its abundance of content and platforms may fuel commercial and political interests in downsizing the provider's activities.

In comparison to DR1, TV 2's conservative, generic profile supports an institutional ethos of stability and simplicity, as well as accessibility and community, with much less weight on the promotional needs of the provider. This may serve the image of TV 2, and silence its commercial competitors in the Danish market. However, whether this is a feasible survival strategy for attracting viewers to commercially-funded public service television in the long run is questionable. At the moment, the gap in (linear) viewing shares between DR and TV 2/Danmark is closing. In 2013, the combined share of all DR's channels was 31.2 per cent, and for TV 2/Danmark it was 34.8 per cent. In 2014, these figures were 33.7 per cent and 34.9 per cent, respectively (*Medieudviklingen, 2014*), and DR seems to be profiting more than TV 2/Danmark from its new opportunities. Furthermore, TV 2/Danmark's business model is facing difficulties. First, TV 2/Danmark's channel subscription income is reaching a limit in the Danish market, according to Tore Hauerbach, a strategic consultant at TV 2/Danmark (personal interview 7.5.2015). Second, advertising is slowly moving out of linear television into other media groups,

primarily social network media. Whether streaming television programmes (catch-up and 'simulcast') at TV 2 Play and the still very popular TV 2 website will be able to attract the commercial revenue needed in order to close the gap is a key issue. All in all, the digital era represents new challenges to the internationally very common commercially-funded PSM model, and these will need attention in the media regulations and policy initiatives guiding PSM, and perhaps especially in small markets such as the Danish one.

Note

1. In this article, I use the generic term, 'trailer', for all kinds of moving images that promote upcoming programmes.

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