

Behind the scenes of cultural production

Mediatization of Culture Seminar
Thursday 25 and Friday 26 September 2008
Room 16.1.20 (KUA) University of Copenhagen

This seminar focuses on how production analysis opens new perspectives and generates new knowledge about the role of film and media in culture and society. The study of the “mediatization of culture” is qualified by production analysis because the way cultures increasingly become mediatized is influenced by both agency and structure related to the production of cultural objects. Drawing on case studies, the seven presentations investigate structures and dynamics in media production, i.e. decision-making, intentionality, creative and market oriented strategies, and power relations.

Program:

Thursday 25 September

13:00-13:15: Introduction to the seminar and the research priority area The Mediatization of Culture

13:15-14:30: The production of television satire in Danish Public Service Television – Preliminary results

Hanne Bruun, Associate Professor, Institute of Information and Media Studies, University of Aarhus

The study of the production of television satire in Danish Public Service Television aims to shed light on why television satire programmes have changed in terms of quantity and quality during the last 10 years in Danish public service television. Hanne Bruun will present preliminary results based on the first case study: “Tv-Ansjosen” (DR 1995-98) focusing on how a specific professional understanding of the genre structured a prototypical production model. It will be discussed why this production model ended by the late 1990s and some issues central to the study of the later developments of the satire programmes will be suggested.

14:30-15:00: The glocalisation of the political thriller: Production analysis from the perspective of communicative action

Cecilie Givskov, PhD Fellow: Department of Media, Cognition and Communication, University of Copenhagen

As a dimension of a general market orientation and professionalization of the Danish film culture, the ongoing “glocalisation” of Hollywood genres has increased during the last 15 years. This makes the film professionals notion of the relationship between genre and target audiences an important focus point in the investigation of contemporary film culture. Using the emergence of political thrillers in Danish cinema as cases, Cecilie Givskov outlines theoretical and empirical dimensions of production analysis in the perspectives of glocalisation and communicative action.

15:00-15:15: Coffee break

15:15-16:15: ”News you can use” - when journalists internalize the demands of the media industry

Stig Hjarvard, Professor, Department of Media, Cognition and Communication, University of Copenhagen

News production has become increasingly dependent on audience research. Using a recent example from news production in Denmark's Radio's television news programme *TV-Avisen* as its point of departure, Stig Hjarvard discusses the tensions between the demands of the media industry, the professional values of journalism and the requirements of the political public sphere. Journalists' internalization of conception of audiences promoted by audience research divisions is considered as an example of the mediatization of politics.

16:15-16:30: Coffee break

16:30-17:15: Rule Regimes in News Organization Decision Making: Explaining diversity in the Actions of News Organizations during Extraordinary Events

Eva-Karin Olsson, PhD Fellow, Crismart/Swedish National Defence College and Dept. of Journalism, Media and Communication, Stockholm University:

This paper argues for research on news organization to move beyond the previous reliance on structural and bureaucratic routines in order to explain organizational decision making. As a way of moving beyond the previous focus on homogeneity in news organizations responses, a neo-institutional framework is proposed. The following is a case study on management decision making during September 11, 2001 in three Swedish broadcasting organizations: Swedish Radio (SR); Swedish Television; and; TV4. This article aims to explain why two of the managerial bodies (SR and TV4) made scheduling decisions that never had been applied before as a response to the terror attack, whereas SVT chose to broadcast according to their previous established policy on extraordinary events. In the context of organizational 'rule regimes', the article examines the reason for news organizations adopting routine or inspirational decisions.

Friday 26 September

10:00-11:00: 'It's not surprising I'm neurotic': the screenwriter and the Screen Idea Work Group

Ian W. Macdonald, Research Director, Louis Le Prince Centre, Institute of Communications Studies, University of Leeds

The status and legitimacy of the screenwriter is often characterised in negative terms; the Hollywood screenwriter William Goldman explained his famous statement that 'nobody knows anything' by saying 'you will constantly have people who don't understand what you do trying to change it.' There is clearly more to 'it', however, than the bruising of the screenwriter's ego. Researchers are now beginning to look at the development process as a focal point in film production where notions of status, power, negotiation, and creativity interact to drive the development of the Screen Idea. Film development is a complex business, and I shall suggest that Bill Nichols' notion of a community of practitioners can be thought of in terms of individuals congregating around a Screen Idea as a Screen Idea Work Group.

11:00-11:15: Coffee break

11:15-12:00: Scriptwriting based on research and “reality checks”

Eva Novrup Redvall, PhD Fellow, Department of Media, Cognition and Communication, University of Copenhagen

Research is a fundamental tool for writing most film scripts by generating new ideas as well as important knowledge about the environments, characters, and conflicts for the creation of a fictional story. However, the use of research can also be part of a deliberate strategy to challenge narrative clichés and to legitimize a certain story. Based on a case study of the writing of a new Danish feature film, this presentation investigates the process of using research and continuous 'reality checks' not only as a source of initial inspiration, but also as a source of creative gifts and constraints.

12:00-12:45: If you want me to whistle, I will whistle: Rethinking the relationship between economic and political power in film production in the post-communist states

Spela Zajec, PhD Fellow: Department of Media, Cognition and Communication, University of Copenhagen

In exploring some of the correlations between economic factors (funding sources, financial arrangements, infrastructure ownership) and political power in film production Spela Zajec's presentation - taking the cases from three post-communist states in the territory of the Former Yugoslavia - focuses on the actual forms and processes through which film industry segments organize symbolic and material production.

Everybody is welcome. No registration needed!

The seminar is organized by The Mediatization of Culture, Section of Film and Media Studies, University of Copenhagen www.medialisering.media.ku.dk