

Foreword

Nora was one of our students in the Erasmus Mundus Master's program on Journalism and Media within Globalization. Students of this project come from all over the world, and they have the chance to study at different universities in Europe; in Nora's case in Aarhus, Amsterdam and finally Hamburg. Our students are usually experienced journalists that decide to come back to the university to obtain a second degree. When they turn their thesis in, they oftentimes reflect the experience in their own country – e.g. Brazil, Kenya or Indonesia – or they concentrate on transcultural questions – e.g. Vietnamese in Germany or Britain's perception of Poland.

Nora, however, showed an ardent interest in the relationship between journalism and literature. The moment I accepted to supervise her thesis, she presented a detailed concept of her scientific inquiry. Soon I realized that I can expect a truly exceptional piece of academic work. If the reader looks at the bibliography, he or she will find about twenty pages of references from many different countries, schools and academic fields. Indeed, the theoretical parts of this work are based on an extremely comprehensive extraction of the available literature on the theory of narratology, as well as about everything that has been written in literary studies and journalism on the essence of the reportage.

The study starts out with two fundamental questions: “Which categories of narratological analysis are applicable to and employed predominantly in selected journalistic reportages?” and “Which categories are constitutive of and employed predominantly in different types of journalistic reportages?”. To find a way to an answer, the author offers a three-step procedure. The first step includes the theoretical framework. What follows is the empirical part with methodological considerations and results of the case study, i.e., an analysis of short-listed German reportages. Finally, the author presents her critical reflections on the results and a conclusion that very much focuses on an outlook.

Central to the argument is the idea that different types of reportages exist, but are limited in number when it comes to the narrative functions and structures. The author uses a clearly interdisciplinary, transgeneric approach and talks about the wider

implications of the results of her empirical research. It becomes clear that Nora Berning finds complex and illuminating answers to the leading questions of the beginning and proposes to continue working along these lines. All in all, the argumentation is innovative and stimulating and certainly demands further research. It paves the way for rethinking the borderlines between journalism and literature. Last but not least, I am sure that this book will help us to gain deeper insights into the fascinating field of narratology.

Yes, please Nora, go on and tell us the whole story.

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