

ABSTRACTS: REACHING YOUNG AUDIENCES CONFERENCE

Content

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PAPER SESSION 1a: Films for children and young audiences

ANDERS LYSNE: Remixing the youth film for the digital era: The Case of *Team Hurricane*

In a recent book on youth film and television, media scholar David Buckingham notes how the quest for authenticity remains a central preoccupation in fictional screen narratives of youth (Buckingham, 2021; see also Woods, 2017). That is, “the sense that a text not only offers an accurate, or at least recognizable, image of young people’s lives, but that it somehow ‘speaks’ to and from their everyday experience” (Buckingham 2021, p. 16). This paper will explore strategies of authenticity in the Danish youth film *Team Hurricane* (Berg, 2017). It will analyze how the film addresses its young target audience by incorporating their digital media culture into its aesthetic form, as well as its production and distribution.

Carrying the tagline “Radical Girls in an Ordinary World”, *Team Hurricane* was released in 2017 to wide critical acclaim. In a youth screen media context, the film coincided with the imminent rise of online youth fiction in the wake of the successful Norwegian teen drama *Skam* (Andem, 2015-2017) (Sundet, 2019), with whom the film shares both an online distribution model and the primary address to an audience of teenage girls. Firstly, the film seeks to reflect the personal style of its cast of non-actors, recruited through social media platforms Instagram and Facebook, by mixing documentary material, collated online videos and animation, and highly stylized fiction. And secondly, opting out of a conventional theatrical release, the film was instead made available through its website for the youth-friendly price of 20 kroner.

Drawing on recent discussions of authenticity in youth film and television in the digital era (Woods, 2017; Buckingham, 2021), as well as media theories of digital remix culture and mashup videos, the paper will analyze how *Team Hurricane* employs the forms and functions of digital media culture of its target audience to speak to and from a youth-centric position in ways that negotiate ordinary and the radical of its subtitle.

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Bio

Anders Lysne is Assistant Professor of Media Studies at Department of Information Science and Media Studies, University of Bergen. Research interests are youth fiction, Nordic cinema and television, and screen representations of gender and sexuality. Recent publications include Growing Up on Scandinavian Screens in *Oxford Handbook of Children's Film* (2022) and Unfeeling the Future: Euphoria, Teen Angst and the Micro-dystopic in *Microdystopias: Aesthetics and Politics of a Broken Moment* (2022).

JAKOB FREUDENDAL: The decline of the world's best public film funding scheme for children and youth? New strategies for public film funding in Denmark

Denmark and the Danish Film Institute (DFI) have long been praised as the home of the most favorable funding scheme for children and youth fiction, earmarking 25 % of all subsidies for films for children and youth. However, this position is challenged by a number of developments in the media use of the young demographic.

Following the intensified competition from global platforms and the proliferation of screens and screen content, audiovisual fiction for children and youth has become increasingly demand-oriented (Christensen 2023). The elusive young audiences now have the power of choice, in turn pressuring domestic film and television production, as this demographic's interest in national fare decreases rapidly in favor of US content (e.g. DFI 2022; Jensen and Mitric 2023). In addition to this, young audiences increasingly watch films intended for older audiences (DFI 2023).

Following this, the commercially oriented family film has become dominant and films for adults are increasingly supported with funds earmarked for children and youth (Freudendal 2023). For instance, adult fare such as *The Hunt (Jagten, Vinterberg, 2012)* and *Darkland (Underverden, Ahmad, 2017)* are registered as films for children and youth by the DFI. This raises serious questions as to how the 25 percent subsidies for children and youth are spent and the future of traditional children's films.

Based on a critical study of the films supported by the DFI in the past ten years as well as interviews with executives at the institution and other industry professionals, this paper investigates how a small nation film culture responds to global market-demands. The paper highlights the increasingly challenging environment for production of niche films for young audiences. I discuss how this affects the national children and youth offering and the unique position of Scandinavian children's films which appears to be in decline.

Through the locus of the Danish case study, the paper asks: Are there a place for traditional children and youth films in the competitive streaming era?

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Biography

Jakob Freudental is a Ph.D. fellow in media studies at Aarhus University. His PhD project is a production study of the new audience turn in Scandinavian film production and its effects on the creative practice of screen workers as well as the commissioning and distribution of films. He has published research on European screen cultures in transition, audience research in screen production and new institutional and productional strategies for reaching audiences. He was previously a research assistant in the collaborative project *Reaching Young Audiences* at the University of Copenhagen.

ANDERS ÅBERG: "D'ya know where they're from?": Migrants in Swedish Children's Film

This paper is about the representation of migrants (or the children of migrants) in Swedish children's film. Modern Sweden became an immigrant country after the Second World War. Before that, Sweden was a country where emigration was considered a major concern for the political leadership. During the period 1860 to 1930, about 20 % of the population born after 1850 emigrated, most of them to the United States. In the aftermath of the war, refugees came to Sweden. They were followed in the 1950s by labour migrants, much needed in the booming post-war industry. This type of immigration stopped in the early 1970s, and it has since then more or less been replaced by refugees and family members. It has been argued that Sweden in the 2020s is one of the most diverse and heterogeneous countries in the western world (second only to the United States), and that almost 35 % of the residents has what can be defined as a "foreign background".

The post-war period was also when children's film started to be produced in Sweden, which was, by and large, an effect and an aspect of the implementation of the so-called Swedish Model for a modern welfare state. One would expect that the very simultaneity of the growth of children's film, and the rather profound changes in the composition of the population after 1945 would leave traces in Swedish children's films. That is, one would expect the theme of immigration, the inclusion, and

thereby representation, of children of different national, cultural and/or ethnic backgrounds. In fact, migration and ethnic diversity are seldom treated or reflected in Swedish children's film.

This paper will discuss and contextualize this perhaps surprising fact, as well as some of the few films that focus on migrants and migration.

Biography

Anders Åberg is a senior lecturer in Film Studies at Linnaeus University. He has published research on art cinema, televised fiction, and Swedish children's film. He is most recently the author of *Blågula barn i bild: Barnfilm och nationalism i Sverige* (Mediehistoriskt Arkiv 2023) and "Nationalism in Swedish Children's Films and the Case of Astrid Lindgren" in *The Oxford Handbook of Children's Film* (Oxford University Press 2022).

BECKY PARRY: Beyond Stereotypes, Beyond Archetypes: The representation of girls in the contemporary Swedish children's films of Sanna Lenken

In this paper a feminist lens will be used to analyze the work of Swedish film director Sanna Lenken, who has made two full length films and a number of short films and TV series for a young audience so far. The close reading will include *Min lilla syster/My little sister* (2015), *Nattbarn/Night Children* (2018) and *Comedy Queen* (2022), demonstrating the possibility of children's films which represent young women in ways which run counter to both gender stereotypes and archetypes. The analysis will be considered within the broader context of the films' funding, production, direction, distribution, exhibition and reception to better understand how these processes contribute to the ways in which a film reaches and connects with its audience. The paper will call for further measures to support films which offer new and distinct representations of girls in films for children.

Biography

[Dr Becky Parry](#) is author of [Children's Film and Literacy](#) and was previously inaugural director for the Showcomotion children's film festival in Sheffield. Becky specialises in research focused on children's film, gender and film education. Her doctoral research won the UKLA Research Award, 2013 and insights from this research are published in [animated form](#) for teachers. Becky is currently working on creative learning projects with [XR Stories](#), [Chol Arts](#) and [Children's Capital of Culture](#). She is proud to be a board member for the [European Children's Film Association](#) (ECFA).

PAPER SESSION 1b: Edutainment and media literacy

Thitinan B. Common: *TrueLittleMonk*: When reality show meets Dhamma teaching for kids

This article explores the creative process of the making of *TrueLittleMonk*, the award winning Thai youth reality show which has been produced for 9 seasons. This Dhamma reality documentary for kids is a multi-platform media content aiming to offer wisdom training for young novices. The programme seeks 12 young contestants to participate in challenging quests and practices under the supervision of senior monks and special guests. The show essentially aims to cultivate compassion and kindness.

Within the theoretical framework of genre and production studies, the article focuses on how producers successfully designed and created this edutainment programme, integrating the learning of Buddhist philosophy, culture, arts, and history for young learners. Using content analysis and in-depth interviews, the article analyses cultural factors such as norms, values, and Buddhist monastic discipline which both guided and challenged the production choices. It also examines the ways in which producers have adopted their creative practice accordingly.

The study shows that balancing educational content with fun and creative activities within the Dhamma learning environment is a big challenge in the production process. In terms of its impact, the reality show genre offered participatory learning for young participants to learn and develop their social skills. The participants voiced that taking part in this project helped fulfil their aims to improve mindfulness through empirical observations. *TrueLittleMonk* won The Cannes Corporate Media & TV Awards in 2013. The project has long been established and has achieved success in terms of its social merit; however, its popularity in Thailand is still limited to small audience groups. To continue fostering the programme's value whilst popularising its content to engage wider markets is important yet challenging.

Biography

Assistant Professor Thitinan B. Common holds a PhD in Media and Cultural Studies from Northumbria University, UK. She is currently a lecturer in the Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University. She has also been working in media as a producer and broadcaster for more than 20 years. Her main research interests are health communication, media and cultural studies, third-culture kids, and cultural hybridity. She is now working on the media projects (funded by the Thai Health Promotion Foundation of Thailand) aiming to promote health literacy among the Buddhist monks and novices in Thailand.

Raffaele Chiarulli, Alessandra Augelli: Keeping the Earth: The contribution of animated films to environmental education for children and young people:

The care of the Earth and the attention to environmental sustainability are emerging themes in the socio-cultural landscape: alongside a reworking of themes and orientations there is an urgency to

concretely bring about some change through concrete actions and gestures in the exercise of global citizenship. In this sense, Agenda 2030 is directing educational attention toward sustainable development goals in which there is the maturation of awareness in individuals and the community.

The function of animated films in the educational pathways of the youngest can be particularly valuable: by being a lived experience, activating emotions and thoughts, emotional involvement and critical reworking of reality help to diversify and broaden the view of reality and to exercise new perceptions and choices. The paper aims to shed light on the communicative and reflective device of animated film in child development and specifically analyze its function in relation to the development of so-called "GreenComp," skills for sustainability.

We will focus in particular on the analysis of two animated films – Horton Hears a Who (2008) and The Lorax (2012), both adaptations of Dr. Seuss' texts.

The pedagogical perspective, through analytical and hermeneutical paths, intends to bring attention to the educational and informational purposes that these narratives offer to environmental education - the recognition of relationships within an environmental system and the meaning of artificiality. In addition, the formative skills that these narratives allow to be leveraged are highlighted, namely the capacity for decentralization, listening and caring toward invisible dimensions, the ability to feel part of a complex system, social participation and a sense of community. Aim of the contribution is, moreover, to bring out the conditions, languages and formative paths so that the meeting of entertainment functions and integral growth of children and young people can be fostered.

Biographies

Alessandra Augelli, after a Ph.D. in Education and a research grant in Ethics Research, teaches Social and Intercultural Pedagogy and Pedagogy of the Environment and Integral Human Development at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Piacenza. Author of several essays, articles and volumes on relational and emotional dimensions in human growth, with a focus on preadolescence and adolescence. Assistant Editor of Journal of Phenomenology and Education (www.enep.unibo.it).

Raffaele Chiarulli earned a PhD degree in Communication Studies at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart (Milan), where he is Research Fellow and teaches *Archives and Use of Audiovisual Sources*, *Audio Visual Languages* and *Contemporary Italian Cinema*. He wrote *Di scena a Hollywood. L'adattamento dal teatro nel cinema americano classico (Staged in Hollywood. Adaptation from Stage to Film in Classical American Cinema)*; Milan 2013) and he edited, with Armando Fumagalli, a commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics* for screenwriters (Rome 2018). In 2021 he won the international SRN Award for Best Journal Article, awarded by Screenwriting Research Network.

Jiow Hee Jhee, Adeline Tay: Nurturing young children in the digital world: A parental perspective

Young children of today are raised in the omnipresence of media. Normatively, children of 4 to 6 years old are expected to reach a plethora of developmental milestones, which are typically classified under the domains of Aesthetics and Creative Expression (1), Discovery of the World (2), Language and Literacy (3), Motor Skills Development (4), Numeracy (5), and Social and Emotional Development (6). Through qualitative interviews with 21 parents, this study investigated how parents wielded digital devices to foster children's development in these key domains, but deliberately ring-fenced them from pernicious use.

The study uncovered that parents intentionally utilised digital devices to facilitate children's learning. YouTube videos were astronomically employed to nurture development in domains like dance (1), vocabulary (3), self-help skills (4), and numbers (5). Moreover, a parent cultivated her children's delayed gratification by wielding digital devices as incentives (6). Additionally, numerous children were permitted to consume from age-appropriate content like YouTube Kids, consequently stimulating children's self-discovery (2), which some parents viewed sublimely. For instance, a child after consuming age-appropriate content – discovered a new scientific word which translated into an interest in volcanic science.

Furthermore, this study divulged favourable secondary and multiplier effects of digital use. For example, some children who watched cartoons on digital devices, petitioned for their parents to purchase related toys for them to play with their siblings; unequivocally, nurturing their motor skills (playing of toys) and social and emotional development (interacting with siblings). Some parents also found that watching popular children programmes graced their children with conversational topics with their peers in school, which in turn developed their language.

Surprisingly, while many studies have cautioned the unbridled digital media use for young children, this study found that parents were generally cognisant of such dangers; they had intentionally, and successfully employed digital devices to develop their child.

Biography

Adeline Tay is an undergraduate currently matriculated under Digital Communications and Integrated Media at Singapore Institute of Technology. Accredited with a diploma in Child Psychology and Early Education and having worked in a preschool for a year, she has extensive experience in teaching and interacting with young children. She has borne witness to how digital media quintessentially enabled children to assimilate information in novel ways, and how media affected children physiologically and psychologically. Passionate in improving the wellbeing of young children, she is bridging her expertise in early childhood and her knowledge of digital media to advocate for them.

Jiow Hee Jhee is an Associate Professor at Singapore Institute of Technology. He has lectured and trained over 50,000 students, parents and government officials on digital media topics. His research investigates the impact of digital media on the family, and he has

presented academic papers on parental mediation. He helped set up Singapore's first Cyber Wellness Centre in 2006 and was also involved in developing a body of cyber wellness values, ethics and best practices, to promote cyber wellness in schools. He currently serves as a member of the Media Literacy Council and Films Consultative Panel in Singapore.

PAPER SESSION 2a: Young audiences and media generations

Vilde Schanke Sundet: Youth as ‘global natives’? Strategies for reaching a new media generation

Unlike older generations, whose formative years were situated in homogenous and domestic media landscapes, today’s teenagers grow up in an era where global entertainment platforms are an essential part of their everyday life. This paper investigates the strategies used by national screen workers to reconnect with young audiences based on a Norwegian interview study. Three strategies are identified: First, the ‘*youth know youth best*’ strategy builds on the premise that young people make up a distinct new generation, hard to understand and often hard to serve, especially by older generations out of touch with teens’ everyday life. Hence, a natural go-to approach is to employ young people to make and spread youth content. The strategy also builds on audience research to get insight into young people’s everyday life and use local familiarity and relevance as a critical advantage in the competition with global players. Second, the ‘*lending fame and adopting talent*’ strategy use already popular content creators, influencers and online profiles to learn from their social media experiences *and* use their fame to appeal to the youth market. It reflects a well-known advertising method where brands use celebrities as ambassadors to benefit from their fame and status. Third, the ‘*bring back*’ strategy uses social media expansions and online profiles to create a relationship with young people where they are and (hopefully!) channel them back to legacy media platforms. This strategy includes making and sharing content on social media to create buzz, attention, and, most importantly, a relationship with hard-to-get teenagers. All three strategies have challenges and dilemmas: For most legacy media, massive use of third-party platforms is troublesome as it contests editorial decisions and challenges trust and control. Prominent use of influencers and online profiles likewise represents dilemmas regarding commercial bindings and exploitative collaborations. These strategies might also build on biased perceptions of youth as a new generation. Consequently, they need to be critically examined. For instance, while it may be true that young people know young people, it is also true that experienced content creators and storytellers make good content, even for young audiences. This paper discusses the strategies and the implications they hold.

Biography

Vilde Schanke Sundet is an Associated Professor in Media and Communication at Oslo Metropolitan University (from June 2023) and the Project Leader of ‘GLOBAL NATIVES? Serving youth on global media platforms’ at the University of Oslo. The GLOBAL NATIVES project focuses on youth entertainment media. It investigates youth as a potential new media generation and the actions taken by national media and policymakers to stay relevant. Sundet has published multiple journal articles and two books, including *Television Drama in the Age of Streaming*.

Juan Francisco Gutiérrez Lozano, Eduardo Ramos Rodríguez: Andalusia Regional Television and its youth programming: From the rise and fall of a specific channel to the triumph of formats linked to social networks

In 1998, with a programming focused on cultural and informative content aimed at children and young people, Canal 2 Andalucía, the second television channel of the regional Andalusian Public Broadcasting Service (RTVA, Radiotelevisión de Andalucía, funded in 1989), began its emissions. The channel achieved an increasing number of viewers from its creation until 2004, mainly due to its success in connecting with young audiences and children, with formats as "La Banda del Sur" ("The Southern Band") a magazine that was broadcast daily, in the morning and afternoon, and which ended up becoming one of the channel's historical formats. The proliferation of new commercial television channels, the generalization of its contents and schedules to other ages, and the lack of financial resources were some of the reasons why Canal Sur 2 was closed in 2012. But the challenges it battled for are still valid for most current public television channels, and especially for the Andalusian public regional television first channel, Canal Sur Televisión, with a marked profile of older audiences. With the disappearance for the last decade of specific schedules for youth and children's audiences, however, a recent RTVA format aimed at young people entitled "EnREDA2" ("Entangled", <https://www.canalsurmas.es/videos/category/7839-enreda2>) is achieving a current outstanding success. Premiered in November 2021, its multiscreen offering also features live broadcasts during the week on TikTok, Instagram and Twitch. The format is a magazine that claims for diversity and equality and tackles issues of social interest for young people such as bullying on networks, fatphobia or sexual diversity. In this paper we aim to highlight the history of children's and youth programming offered by Radiotelevisión de Andalucía (RTVA) since its creation in 1989, especially in the success of the specific offer of its Canal 2 Andalucía (1998-2012), up to the current offer, very reduced, but with a large following, of its formats linked to multiscreen options.

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Biography

Dr. Juan Francisco Gutiérrez Lozano (jfg@uma.es). Senior Lecturer of Journalism at the University of Málaga, Spain. His research interests include Television Studies, Spanish Television History, Memory and Audience, and Broadcast Journalism. He has been main researcher of six research projects about Spanish and Andalusian Television, including “Andalusian youth emigrated to Europe: media habits and identity in context of global digital communication”.

Dr. Eduardo Ramos Rodríguez (eduramos@uma.es). Associate Lecturer of the Department of Journalism. Faculty of Communication Sciences, University of Malaga (Spain). Journalist at Radiotelevisión de Andalucía (RTVA) in the Territorial Centre of Málaga. Author of the doctoral thesis "Canal Sur 2: A cultural television proposal for Andalusia (1998-2012)".

Louise Brix Jacobsen, Kim Toft Hansen: Gender equality through young adult drama

Can we teach gender equality for upper secondary school students through serial fiction? This is the central question for the research project “GEMINI: Gender Equality through Media Investigation and New training Insights” (EU-CERV, 2023-25). GEMINI studies serial consumption by 14–18-year-olds in upper secondary schools in Italy, Denmark, Romania, and Ireland. Through ideas of media engagement (Hill 2018), the project considers media consumption and production with the objective to produce new teaching material about mediated gender equality for European high school teachers.

In this paper, we introduce GEMINI’s overall project framework and present early empirical results from focus groups conducted with Danish high school students. We showcase preliminary ideas about how these empirical insights may be converted into an educational toolbox for high school teachers with an interest in teaching gender equality through serial fiction to contemporary young audiences and young learners.

Gender issues have been centre stage for many contemporary series from Denmark, the Nordic countries, and internationally. Series like *Natten til lørdag* (DR, 2017), *13 Reasons Why* (Netflix, 2017-20), *Ondt i røven* (TV 2, 2019), and *SKAM* (NRK, 2015-17) showcase how youth-oriented screened serial fiction may present gender issues in an emotionally engaged narrative context that, in a learning environment, may prompt opportunities for dialogues about gender representation, gender identity, and gender equality.

In this way, we will highlight how media research into screened serial fiction may facilitate a pedagogical turn towards media education and new insights into practical media production and media literacy (Buckingham 2019). Based on knowledge acquired in collaboration with

the target group, we will present early research results on the relationship between young adult dramas and teaching material focussed on gender issues in a youth context.

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Biographies

Kim Toft Hansen is associate professor in Media Studies at AAU. He researches Danish/Nordic television in an international context. He maintains a prolific interest in media production with special interests in the production of Danish television series. In collaboration with Valentina Re, his book *Peripheral Locations in European TV Crime series* is under publication with Palgrave Macmillan. As work package leader, he is a leading partner in the research project GEMINI (Gender Equality through Media Investigation and New training Insights, 2023-25). Lately, he has fiddled around with developing new teaching material as an integrated part of research processes.

Louise Brix Jacobsen is associate professor in Media Studies at Aalborg University. Her main research interests include Scandinavian TV series and identity construction, fake news and media hoaxing. She has published on contemporary media in various contexts (e.g. to the journals *Narrative*, *EJES* and *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*) and is currently part of the EU-SERV research project GEMINI (Gender Equality through Media Investigation and New training Insights, 2023-25), which investigates how the representation of gender identities in TV series affect the promotion of gender equality among young people (14-18 year-olds).

PAPER SESSION 2b: New platforms and formats

David Kleeman: The platforms and technologies that will form the metaverse, and what each might bring to real-world activism

Gen Z and the first wave of Gen Alpha youth are kickstarting the metaverse with user-generated content. They're native social gaming players and builders, and power makers and consumers of YouTube and TikTok. The smartphone provides powerful tools for exploration, play, learning, communication and socializing (per Dubit Trends kids first get one around age 8).

When young people can't find the games, experiences or videos they and their friends want, they create them. Dubit calls this intrinsically-motivated mastery "[the learnification of gaming](#)," and it yields valuable workforce skills.

Dubit CEO Matthew Warneford estimates that, within a decade, a million people will make their living from creating in immersive spaces. Another 100 million will do so as a pastime. What will Gens Z and Alpha – equipped with a strong sense of justice, responsibility and urgency – make? Can building in virtual worlds help make a better real world?

Movements like March for Our Lives, Fridays for Future, and the Iranian women's rights movement are powered by young tech natives using digital platforms.

This "builder economy" is important for two reasons. First, it will offer developers, designers, artists and others the flexibility to balance income-generating work and passion projects.

Second, virtual and decentralized communities can and must engage diverse global cultures. Whether the cause is climate activism, education equity, economic inequality or anti-racism, lived experience will be critical to authenticity and effectiveness. Increasingly, powerful creative tools are open-source, removing one economic barrier to equity.

As distributed, user-run platforms of Web3 emerge, communities and DAOs (decentralized autonomous organizations) will arise around shared concerns, structured uniquely to meet a specific need and symbiotic, not top down.

This session – delivered from an industry and market research perspective – will examine the platforms and technologies that will form the metaverse, and what each might bring to real-world activism.

Biography

Strategist, analyst, author, speaker, connector — David Kleeman has led the children's media industry in developing sustainable, child-friendly practices for 35 years. He is Senior Vice President of Global Trends for Dubit, a strategy/research consultancy and digital studio. David's career spans from three TV channels to the metaverse. He uses research, insights and experience to show that much may change, but children's developmental path and needs remain constant. David is advisory board chair to the international children's TV festival

PRIX JEUNESSE, on the board of the Children's Media Association (USA) and the Advisory Board of the Joan Ganz Cooney Centre.

Helle Kannik Haastrup: Gothic Heroines and Forensic Fandom on TikTok: Analysing coming of age narratives in Wednesday and Stranger Things and their online 'cultural forum'

This paper argues that social media narratives around a particular tv-drama can be analysed as a 'cultural forum' and addressing particular issues as a kind of 'meta-commentary' on TikTok (Bernabo 2019), with *Stranger Things* and *Wednesday* as case studies. *Stranger Things* (season 4, 2016-) and *Wednesday* (2022-) are both coming of age narratives in the gothic horror genre, with strong female leads in combination with high school drama tropes. They are also Netflix tv-dramas that were both trending on TikTok but in different ways: *Stranger Things* with a revival of Kate Bush's song *Running Up That Hill* and *Wednesday* with the titular characters' 'gothic dance'. *Wednesday* is firmly placed with the Tim Burton's gothic oeuvre depicting the teenage daughter from *The Addams Family* (1991) in a combination of horror, fantasy and comedy. The Duffer brothers' *Stranger Things* (season four) adds a new gothic element into the genre-hybrid of nostalgic, sci-fi, horror, coming-of-age narrative set in the 1980s. This qualitative analysis of audience texts (Hall 1980) investigates the narratives in the online cultural forum 'around' both series and identifies how their two heroines are investigated, remixed, and interpreted using the memetic video format on TikTok (Kaye et al 2023). The analysis builds on a combination of the classic study of television as a 'cultural forum' (Newcomb and Hirsch 1983, Lotz 2004) as well as recent studies of audiences and digital television culture (Bernabo 2021, Boffone 2021, Barker 2022) and the notion of forensic fandom (Mittell 2015). The analysis is also discussed in relation to the role of affective publics (Hautea et al 2022) and Netflix's online promotion e.g. their use of 'a fannish persona' on Instagram (Sligh and Abidin 2021).

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Biography:

Helle Kannik Haastrup is an associate professor at the University of Copenhagen. Her research focus on film and television culture in a cross-media culture and celebrity culture in digital media. She is currently a part a research project on silent cinema culture with a sub-project on Asta Nielsen and cross-media silent cinema culture. She has recently published in journals like *Popular Communication*, *Celebrity Studies Journal* and *MedieKultur*, and she has published the first monograph and introduction in Danish to celebrity studies as a new research area *Celebritykultur* (2020). She is co-founder of the Nordic Celebrity Network.

Clara Sánchez-Rebato Valiente: Welcome to my review! Subjectivity as a core element of the verbal communication of booktubers

Booktube is a user-generated content community based on YouTube where literature is the main topic of discussion. This space has been studied in academia from different perspectives in recent years, among others by Albrecht (2017), Ehret, Boegel and Manuel-Nekouei (2018), Lluch (2017), Rovira-Collado (2017) and Tomasena (2020). Our aim is to contribute to the state of art by delving into the representation of subjectivity in verbal communication, specifically in book reviews. This research is built up using the concept of participatory culture (Jenkins, 2009) which encourages users to create cultural products such as book reviews. Because of the personal approach of these videos it is common to find high level of subjectivity in the discourse. The current study explores the discourse developed in book reviews of Young Adult literature through an international female-focused case study. The sample involves creators from the United States, the United Kingdom and Spain. Methodologically in depth interviews and multimodal discourse analysis were used, the latter theoretically supported by Halliday’s (Halliday & Hasan, 1985) social semiotic approach to language, specifically the element of tenor, alongside broader terms such as cultural context and intertextuality. The results highlight the use of subjectivity as an eagerness to discuss about literature with others using their academic or personal knowledge, which is highly linked to their personal taste, emotions and experience. Reading becomes a public matter of

discussion through which the booktubers reflect on certain aspects they consider important of the book analysed, positively or negatively. This last characteristic shows how booktubers can be critical, strategy also extended to broader topics when the book commented include them as a core element of the plot. In conclusion, reviews are shown as safe space where booktubers can expose their reflections about books and the matters that are important to them.

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Biography: Dr. Clara Sánchez-Rebato Valiente is an assistant researcher at Complutense University of Madrid. Her research expertise is the user-generated literary community of Booktube and its communicative strategies, participatory culture and social media. Currently, she is also involved in several European projects that deal with responsible research and innovation practice aimed to ensure effective inclusion and representation of vulnerable groups, such as MILIEU (www.milieu-h2020.eu) and EDIRE (<https://edire.eu/>).

Pia Majbritt Jensen, Petar Mitric: Difference and multiplicity in the media diets of 8-17-year-olds

This paper presents the methodology and findings of a *mobile ethnographic* study on how Danish 8-17-year-old children and adolescents perceive quality and relevance when it comes

to their media use with a focus on series and films. Theoretically, our point of departure is that films and series, as other cultural experiences, have a ‘cultural value’ that is attributed by the beholder (Carnwath and Brown 2014), and these are the values we are interested in pinpointing, albeit from the perspectives of the children, and not from adult perspectives such as high and low culture, artistic quality, or good and bad taste (Drotner 1999).

We collected the data using the method of mobile ethnography, in our case via a qualitative research tool *app* called *Indeemo*. Through this method we gave them various tasks relating to their media use – communicated via short online videos and text – that the children in turn completed with a combination of ‘selfie’ videos, text and images gathered in the *Indeemo* app. The result of this was a rich, but still structured, qualitative data collection that took place in the comfort of their own home and, importantly, was removed from too much adult researcher interference. Hence, the method is different from traditional qualitative methods such as focus groups, observations, experimental settings and in-depth interviews, in which the researcher is relatively conspicuous and – as previous research has established (Coulter 2021; Rooney 2017) – may therefore influence the children’s behaviours and answers.

The results show that the children’s media diets and preferences – and media usage patterns in general – are extremely diverse. Although we do see some overarching tendencies, such as a preference for US films and series and a large consumption on global streaming platforms, the media preferences are extremely individualised among the children, even within the same families. In fact, the children seem to have as individualised a media consumption as adults do. The children are also extremely media literate in as much as they accurately talk about the cinematic qualities (such as acting, budget, plot lines, special effects and so forth) of the films and series they watch, which means that they do not settle for series and films that in their opinion are second-rate. Finally, we find that from the age of 12, children start orienting themselves very much toward content made for (young) adults and are thus no longer inclined to watch children’s content.

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PAPER SESSION 3a: Media use

Rebecca Breg: Ambivalences of media use behavior of children and adolescents in relation to their social milieu. A comparison on the media behaviour of children and adolescents aged 12 to 15 between middle schools and high schools in Bavaria

This paper examines the media use behavior of children and adolescents in relation to their social background and habitual patterns. The analysis of social inequalities and the reference to media is increasingly being researched in communication studies and serves as an anchor to identify these very social inequalities. The variable of media use was analyzed with the help of (n=262) questionnaires at German schools and examined with the theoretical background and construct of the media habitus. Explicitly, students were surveyed. The cross-sectional design, on the other hand, was chosen to represent several school types of different social milieus. In addition, 13 qualitative interviews were conducted with parents and children in order to explore further patterns of action. The data are fathomed with the help of SPSS and MAXQDA and content analyses. Initial research results show that media behavior is similar in different milieus, and that students see media as a general everyday companion. High school students, however, use them in a more reflective and concentrated way. Media are mainly seen as entertainment or socializing tools. This applies equally to all types of schools. A big difference is the interest of parents and how they set rules, impose restrictions and generally educate their children. This is particularly evident among high school students, whereas parents of middle school students express concern about their children's media use, but seem to have less knowledge about it. Rules are more difficult to implement with middle school students, as they struggle with other social inequalities such as poverty and other variables, and thus media use behavior is not prioritized by parents.

Biography

Rebecca Breg, BA., MA. is a Senior Scientist and PhD researcher in the Department of Media Use & Digital Cultures at the University of Salzburg. She studied Communication Science in Bachelor and Master and participated in the Media Communication Management Master Program in cooperation with Fudan University in Shanghai. Her current research focuses on media inclusion in schools, social inequality and social challenges in schools.

Andrea Esser, Matt Hillborn, Jeanette Steemers: The consumption of 'longform' screen content by 16-19 year-olds in Denmark and Germany

Drawing on survey, digital diary and interview data from a large online study undertaken with young Danish (Aug 22–Jan 23) and German audiences (Jan 23–June 23), this paper complements and updates findings from an earlier pilot study carried out in 2020, providing further insights into how today's 16-19 year-olds engage with films and TV shows ('longform content'). The paper will briefly look at how and where young Danish and German audiences find the content they watch before addressing their consumption habits and genre preferences around British shows, drawing on comparisons with domestic and

American shows. It will explore in depth the most important motivational drivers for watching UK content: humour and the English language. Recent findings confirm earlier findings from the pilot study: US-American films and TV series reign supreme in the consumption and appreciation of 16-19 year-olds, markedly surpassing their enthusiasm and appreciation of domestic longform content. Screen productions from other European countries, rarely manage to attract this age group's attention; with the exception of some British content—thanks to young people's recognition and appreciation of 'British humour' and their high English language proficiency. With very similar findings emerging in Denmark (traditionally a sub-titling country) and Germany (traditionally a dubbing country), the paper concludes by renewing its call for a theoretical paradigm shift, away from 'geo-linguistic regions' theory (Sinclair et al., 1996; also see Collins, 1989) towards a new theory of 'Anglo-American cultural and linguistic proximity' (Bengesser et al. 2023).

The paper is the joint work of the [Screen Encounters with Britain](#) team, based at King's College London. Funded by the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council, the team comprises Professor of Culture, Media & Creative Industries Jeanette Steemers, Professor of Media & Globalization Andrea Esser and Research Associate in Culture, Media & Creative Industries Matthew Hilborn.

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Merris Griffiths, Dafydd Sills-Jones: Preteens' Media Use in Minority-Language Environments: A Comparison of Cymru (Wales) and Aotearoa (New Zealand)

This paper reports on the early stages of a comparative project that aims to investigate the use of social media by preteens in two distinct minority-language contexts, Cymru (Wales) and Aotearoa (New Zealand), with a particular focus on content creation.

Social media have become an integral part of teenage communication and identity formation, in terms of both screen time and the activities arranged around social media consumption (Granic, Morita & Scholten, 2020). In addition, in a digital world where a dozen or so languages dominate, social media can enable a hybrid linguistic space in which

‘translanguaging’ can flourish (Belmar & Glass, 2019). However, research on preteens’ use of social media is limited, as is the literature around their mediated navigation of minority languages.

This pilot study asked preteen children at a school in West Wales to produce short-form content of the type they might already be making for platforms like TikTok, to communicate their connection to their *cynefin* (trans. ‘habitat, local area of belonging’). Analysis of the media content made by the children utilises the notion of ‘artifactual literacies’, where young people’s navigation of their material worlds (including the making and sharing of content online) are counted as part of their discourse (Pahl & Rowsell, 2013).

This study tests several nascent hypotheses within the wider project to consider the dynamics of highly useable mobile media-making devices and software (such as smartphones and Adobe Spark), and the identity formation processes present in children of this age (Manago, 2015). The study will illuminate questions of digital agency (cf. Clarke, 2009) and media literacy (Kafai & Peppler, 2011), and map these onto the processes of language acquisition, practice, and revitalisation (Wiklund, 2002).

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Biographies

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Merris is an interdisciplinary scholar, focusing on children and young people's relationships with the media, and the social construction of childhood. Combining textual analysis and audience research, she has published work on advertising to children, constructions and representations of children/childhood, children's free-time activities, and young people's use of social media in minority-language contexts. She has also published on media policy in Wales, with a focus on media literacy, and has developed creative research methodologies to facilitate bilingual fieldwork. Further, she has supervised industry-facing Knowledge Transfer Partnership work within children's Welsh-language television production.

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A native Welsh speaker, Dafydd is committed to an ally position towards tangata whenua and tangata tiriti, and is actively pursuing his own education in both te ao Māori and te reo Māori. As a researcher, he publishes in both 'traditional' scholarly mode (on history in the media, minority language media, documentary culture) and in 'screen practice as research' mode, making installations and films that have been screened in several countries and at major international festivals. Dafydd is a member of the The International Association for Minority Language Media Research (IAMLMR).

Anna G. Orfanidou, Nikos S. Panagiotou: Greek Young Audience perceptions and beliefs about different aspects of TV watching

Television plays a significant role in shaping the beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of young individuals. Understanding the factors that influence these beliefs is essential for comprehending the impact of television programming on the youth population. This paper aims to investigate the differences in beliefs regarding television programming among Greek youths aged 15-18, considering their demographic characteristics, parental educational levels, school performance, and daily television viewing habits. By identifying the factors associated with variations in beliefs and critical thinking, this study contributes to the existing literature on media influence and youth development.

The research sample consists of 204 Greek teenagers aged 15-18 years, selected using convenience sampling after obtaining parental consent. A structured questionnaire was electronically distributed to collect data. The findings of this research indicate a moderate level of critical thinking and reflection among young participants regarding different aspects of television shows, including their presentation to the public and their influence on perceptions and attitudes. Our findings suggest that youth audiences have low trust in TV news. The findings also revealed that teenagers moderately believe that the content of news is greatly influenced from the governments and political elite agendas while they consider TV as a major influential media in shaping peoples political opinions.

By employing various ANOVA tests, statistically significant differences emerged between the beliefs and critical thinking of young individuals, their school performance, and their daily television viewing habits, encompassing general television content, news programs, talk shows, and documentaries. Notably, youngsters who considered themselves high-achieving students, as well as those who engaged in more frequent television viewing, including documentaries, news, and talk shows, exhibited increased concern and skepticism regarding the information presented in the television programs they watched. It consists of an important finding in terms that despite the low trust in TV as a medium it continues to attract the attention of young people.

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Biographies

Anna G. Orfanidou

Ms. Anna G. Orfanidou is a PhD candidate in School of Journalism and Mass Media Communications, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. She has participated in conferences in Greece and other European countries. She has published research papers in scientific journals. For the past nine years, she has been teaching Journalism and Communication in Public and Private Educational Institutions in Greece. She is an active journalist and member of Greece Editors' Union.

Dr. Nikos S. Panagiotou

Dr. Nikos S. Panagiotou is Associate Professor, School of Journalism and Mass Media Communication, Aristotle University. He has been a visiting Professor at APU University, Japan and a visiting professor at Deutsche Welle, visiting professor at Sabanci University. He has been awarded the following scholarships: Chevening Scholar of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office UK, RCAP Scholar from APU University Japan, Scholar to Beijing Foreign Studies University and Scholar of the State of Luxembourg. He has an extensive research work which has been funded from Google (DNI Initiative fund). He is President of Digital Communication Network Global Director of Peace Journalism Lab, and in charge of the International Center for the Safety of Journalists and Media Professionals.

PAPER SESSION 3b: Strategies for reaching young audiences

Maria Skytte: DR's strategy for children's content in the digital media system

This project studies the strategic response of the Danish public service institution, DR, to the extensive changes in the media market for children's content that has taken place over the last 10-15 years. During this period, the media use of Danish children has been highly “digitalized”, paving the way for a fierce and markedly different type of competition from digital actors such as YouTube, Netflix, and Disney+, which has prompted DR to review its strategy for children's content (for instance DR, 2015; 2017; 2020; 2021; 2022).

The project's research questions are twofold: 1) How does DR as a public service institution respond strategically to the emergence of digital players into the media market for children's content? 2) What role does strategy play in the daily work of DR, and how does DR work strategically in terms of its children's content? Even though several projects have dealt with media strategies before (for instance D'Arma, Raats & Steemers, 2021; Sundet, 2021; Iordache, Raats & Afilipoaie, 2021; Enli & Syvertsen, 2016; Enli, 2013; Søndergaard, 2008; Søndergaard, 2006; Søndergaard, 2003), they rarely, if ever, provide any clarifications on what is meant by “strategy” or how strategy is perceived in the organizations they focus on. It is a particular focus of this project to do so. The project thus studies DR's strategy for children's content as a *product* in terms of its content (RQ 1), but also as a *process* (RQ 2) in terms of the context for this content and the work behind it. One of the findings of the project suggests that strategy plays a significant role in the daily work of DR because of the difficult competitive situation, making children's content an important instrument for DR in maintaining its position in the market for not just children, but Danish population in general.

Biographical note:

Maria M. B. Skytte (mariaskytte@hum.ku.dk) is a PhD student at the Department of Communication at University of Copenhagen. Her PhD carries the working title *DR's strategy for children's content in the digital media system* and builds upon her

longstanding interest in public service media, strategy, and children's content. Skytte has a background in Media Studies at Aarhus University and has work experience from the media industry, for instance from DR, where she worked with children's content, which became the inspiration of her research in this field. See more at:

<https://komm.ku.dk/ansatte/?pure=da/persons/544636>

Johan Nilsson: Bamse 2023: A 50-year Anniversary as an Unfolding Transmedial Event

The Swedish comic book *Bamse – The World's Strongest Bear* turns 50 this year. *Bamse* is a superhero fiction for younger children, and besides the comic book it is firmly established as a transmedial world through various media and merchandise. In this paper I will study the anniversary as an unfolding event (Hills, 2015) occurring across media such as anniversary comics, a gallery exhibition, books, news articles, social media posts, and podcasts. The unfolding event allows us to understand how any kind of media text is prefigured as a discursive project, configured via various paratexts, and ultimately refigured by different forms of cultural recognition (Hills, 2015; Grainge, 2020). The analysis involves a mapping of the event in temporal sequence, followed by in-depth analysis of the various texts and paratexts. What I find particularly interesting is how only some texts and paratexts are addressed to children, whereas others, such as the podcast and the exhibition, seem to be aimed at an adult audience. How, then, can we make sense of the event? Does it lead to a particular occurrence (a new animated film opens around Christmas of 2023)? Is it about looking back and promoting nostalgia for the adult audience, and if so, why? Is it ultimately about recommodifying a media property?

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Biography

Johan Nilsson is senior lecturer in Media and Communication Studies at Örebro University in Sweden. His research can be characterized by an interest in the connections between different media, understood through theories of intermediality and transmedia worldbuilding. His most recent article (forthcoming) is about commercial worldbuilding and transmedia economy in the children's franchise Bamse.

Helle Strandgaard Jensen: Global Sesame Street: Driving and Driven by Merchandise?

When Sesame Street was first sold to the world, it was the product of a highly commercial, multimedia enterprise. In this paper, I want to elaborate and extend some of my points from

my new book *Sesame Street. A Transnational History* to further investigate the multimedia nature of the show's production and promotion. Using a set of sources that I had to bypass when writing the book, I will investigate the connection between the production of *Sesame Street* as a globally distributed television show and a wide variety of merchandise such as books, magazines, dolls, LP's, etc. Doing so I want to understand how television production was not only driving the production of so-called 'non-broadcast' production (merchandise) but was also to some extent driven by it.

With this case study set in the 1960s and 1970s, I hope to provide a historical backdrop against which multi-platform phenomena today can be understood. Though the digital environment and highly commercial nature of today's distribution and consumption of children's media obviously make it very different from that which happened more than 50 years ago, *Sesame Street* was a highly global and commercially, merchandise-driven product/production right from the beginning in 1969.

Theoretically, I will draw on work about global television distribution (Bielby & Harrington), global media and childhood (De Block and Buckingham), and global history (Conrad; Hunt). In terms of methodology, the analysis provides a critical reading of sources from the producers behind *Sesame Street* and the possible buyers of the show in Europe, mainly in France, Italy, and Germany with an eye to establish the degree to which the Workshop's desire to raise revenue from merchandise on a global market influenced sales and production of the show in specific local settings.

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Biography

Helle Strandgaard Jensen is Associate Professor in the Department of History and Classical Studies at Aarhus University, Denmark. She is the author of *From Superman to Social Realism: Children's Media and Scandinavian Childhood* (2017) and *Sesame Street. A Transnational History* (2023). Her work has appeared in *Media History*; *Journal of Children and Media*; *Media, Culture & Society*; *Journal for the History of Childhood and Youth*; *The Programming Historian*, and elsewhere. She holds a shared directorship at the Center for Digital History Aarhus.

Fredrika Thelandersson, Carolina Martínez, Helena Sandberg: "I am there for the video, not the advertising": Children's voices on Youtuber sponsoring and merch

YouTube has become the number-one outlet for children's programming and video entertainment (Ahn, 2022). In Sweden, children spend several hours a day on the platform (Statens medieråd, 2021:58). 60 % of children aged 9–12, and 80% of Swedish teenagers follow a YouTuber or influencer (ibid:83). This form of micro-celebrity constitutes an important part of children's media culture and everyday life, contributing to commodification and commercialisation of childhood. YouTubers are not only singers, gamers or entertainers, they are "promotional intermediaries" (Jaakkola, 2020:239). Youtubers make a living from advertising products through sponsoring agreements (influencer marketing), or from advertising their own products and brands, in the form of merchandise ("merch").

Even though the YouTuber is a widely popular phenomenon, we still know surprisingly little of it from a child perspective. There is a lack of in-depth knowledge on how the child audience perceives and engages with Youtubers as commercial actors (Jaakkola, 2020). In light of this, the aim of the present paper is to further our understanding of how children appropriate sponsored content and merch within the context of the para-social relation between child and YouTuber.

To study children's appropriation of sponsored content and merch among Youtubers, we draw from an interview study with 19 Swedish children aged 10-13. The results reveal how children's meaning-making mainly centered around the relevance or irrelevance of this media content within the context of their everyday lives, and their moral economy (Silverstone, 1994) was an integrated part of their discussions. Children also expressed how they engaged in financial and moral support in order to enable Youtubers' content creation, for instance by purchasing merch or sponsored products, hence positioning themselves as active agents within the commercial media logic.

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Biographical notes

Fredrika Thelandersson: Thelandersson is a postdoctoral researcher in media and communication studies at Lund University, Sweden. She was a researcher in the collaborative outreach project “Digital marketing and young consumers” (2021-2022), which this paper grew out of. Additionally, her research interests include media, health, and gender, and she is the author of the monograph *21st Century Media and Female Mental Health: Profitable Vulnerability and Sad Girl Culture* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2023).

Carolina Martínez: Martínez is an associate professor in media and communication studies, at Malmö university, Sweden. Her research interests concern children’s commercial media environment, children’s media education in informal and formal learning contexts, and children’s digital rights. She has published articles in journal such as *Journal of Children and Media* and *Media, Culture and Society*.

Helena Sandberg: Sandberg is professor in media and communication studies at Lund University, Sweden; former leader of CAI@LU, Children Advertising and Internet at Lund University (2010-2017); currently PI for DIGIKIDS Sweden (VR grant no 2018-01261) investigating the introduction of digital technology in early childhood (0-3 years old) and modern family life. Sandberg has long experience of doing interdisciplinary, multimethodological research on children, digital media technologies, and commercial culture.

PAPER SESSION 4a: Children's TV around the world

Yuval Gozansky: Time for Multi-Platform Telestudies: Histories of Children's Television Around the World

Based on a recently published worldwide research book named *Histories of Children's Television Around the World* (edited by myself), this paper analyzes cross-national cultural changes in children's television, raising questions and pointing to patterns of change and continuity within its history (Hesmondhalgh, 2012). Based on technological developments and transforming platforms as well as economic needs, like for example methods of getting content through and devices for engaging with it, children's television presents a cultural form (Williams, 1974) that is continuously negotiated by its creators, producers, viewers and users, children and adults alike.

The analysis looks at similarities and differences in comparable time frames along children's televisions' first seven decades in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Ecuador, Germany, India, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Netherlands, and the United States. It examines how diverse children's television producers have defined their child audiences; discusses the changing nature of children's programming and the tension between local and public productions vis-a-vis global commercial media corporations; as well as the impact of new digital multi-platform technologies on this field.

The paper suggests a beginning for further discussion, about historical perspectives of current multi-platform children's television studies. It examines the tension between public, private, and educational children's television; political impacts on children's television; technological disruptions before and at the current age of multi-platform; the perception of childhood within children's television; children's television itself as a unique cultural form; trends and formatting shifts; pressures towards the creation of local as opposed to global children's contents; and the future of quality in children's television in a multi-platform era.

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Biography

Yuval Gozansky, is a Senior Lecturer of cultural studies in the field of children and youth media. Chair of the Communications Department at Sapir Academic College, Israel. He heads the Research Center of Media for Children and Youth. He is editor of *Misgerot Media* (Media Frames), the academic Hebrew-language journal of the Israel Communication Association (IsCA). He published books about the history of children's television in Israel (in

Hebrew) and around the world, and articles in leading academic journals. Prior to his academic career he was a director of numerous television programs for children in Israel.

Ruchi Kher Jaggi: Mapping the Reconfigured Ecology of Children's Media Content in India – Perspectives of Industry Professionals

According to government statistics, children under the age of 14 account for more than 35% of the Indian population. This official data is over a decade old, and the next census is now due. However, other estimates have this figure at around 26% for the year 2020. This equates to more than 362 million children aged 0 to 14 in a country with a population of more than 1.3 billion people. These figures are important in understanding the context of India in relation to examining children's media in this nation.

It is also crucial to comprehend India's 1991 economic liberalization, which allowed for the privatization of media as well as other sectors. Following economic liberalization, the private media expanded. In 2022, India had 906 television channels, with television having a 70% overall penetration. Children made up 7.4% of the audience. India also has the second largest number of internet users worldwide at 700 million and children's content on multichannel platforms over the internet, and Over-the-top (OTT) channels, has witnessed a sharp increase. One of the most significant voids in India's children's television ecosystem, however, is the absence of a public service broadcaster. With over 22 exclusive children's television channels currently available, private and commercial television programming dominates children's content in India. According to industry statistics, children's television viewing increased dramatically in 2020 after falling to 6% in 2019. There has been a lot of interest and investment in developing OTT platforms for kids, with some already launched and many more in the pipeline.

In this backdrop, the purpose of this research is to apply the 'Critical Media Industry Studies (CMIS)' (Havens et al, 2009) framework to analyze the Indian children's media content industry in the context of economic and cultural factors that have shaped it. Through comprehensive interviews with screenwriters, content creators, producers, and experts of audio-visual media content for children in India, the study would analyze industry practices around this content. The study's goal is to document and deconstruct the discursive practices surrounding media content for children and young audiences in India, as seen through the eyes of industry professionals who are constantly negotiating with the heterogeneous and unequal Indian context, as well as coping with the dizzying social, economic, and technological transformations that have reconfigured the audio-visual content ecology of children's media in India. The study would focus primarily on understanding the industry practices in content of emerging content formats in a multiplatform era, impact of new technologies, policy and regulatory framework, and changing production practices.

Biography

Ruchi Kher Jaggi, PhD, is Professor and Director of Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication, and Dean of the Faculty of Media and Communication, Symbiosis

International (Deemed University), Pune, India. She has published in journals like *Critical Studies in Television*, *Journal of Children and Media*, *Journal of Creative Communications*, *Journalism and Mass Communication Educator*, and has published chapters in books published by Peter Lang, Routledge, Sage, Wiley among others. Her research interests include television studies, media and children, media and creative industries, Korean dramas and digital cultures.

Paolo Russo: Developing and writing *Topo Gigio* – the series for a contemporary audience

Topo Gigio (RAI, 2020-) is the outcome of a creative overhaul that has updated and adapted the beloved puppet character created by Maria Perego in 1958 for a new generation of viewers in animated form. The TV series is a paradigmatic case study of a flexible, novel approach to developing and writing content for children and young audiences; one that looks at established creative practices from the US (e.g. writers' room approach, sit-com, short format) without sacrificing the essence of its iconic protagonist while, at the same, retaining its international appeal.

This paper is based on my own experience as a screenwriter on the writing team of Season One of the animated series. It will explore the creative process(es) with specific examples from the series bible and select scripts from individual episodes developed and written by me. Examples and data draw from defining elements of the series world, multi-ethnic characters and thematic range to illustrate the various stages of development (e.g. outlining stories, treatments, teleplays) as a case study of an animated series programmatically aimed at a “contemporary” audience.

Biography

Paolo Russo

Paolo Russo is Senior Lecturer in Film at Oxford Brookes University (UK). He is a member and former Chair of the Screenwriting Research Network. Among his publications: *Storia del cinema italiano* (2008); ‘Dream Narrative in *Inception* and *Shutter Island*’ (Routledge 2014); ‘Storylining engagement in *Gomorra* – *The Series*’ (*Journal of Screenwriting* 8:1 2017); ‘(The Facts Before) The Fiction Before the Facts: *Suburra*’ (Palgrave 2018); and ‘HBO’s *Boardwalk Empire*: constraining history into the serial drama format’ (Toronto UP 2019). He is co-editor of the forthcoming *Handbook of Screenwriting Studies* (Palgrave, 2023). A professional screenwriter and a member of the Writers’ Guild of Great Britain, Russo was on the writing team of Season 1 of *Topo Gigio* for Italian broadcaster RAI.

Christa Lykke Christensen: Reaching the youngest audience on the Danish broadcaster, DR’s, *Minisjang* platform

Denmark has a long and strong public service tradition of children’s television. However, the Danish Broadcasting Corporation, DR, did not cater for the youngest children under four

years of age until 2021, when they launched *Minisjang*, a platform aimed at one- to three-year-olds, digitally available via DR's general streaming platform, *DRTV*, a separate app, *DR Minisjang*, and on *YouTube*. *Minisjang* offers content including animation, puppet and live-action TV shows and, in particular, music, gesture-play songs and rhymes. The content addresses the youngest children, taking into consideration their specific cognitive, language and motoric development and level of experience.

DR is a modern, professional institution that has to a large degree to adapt to the logics and trends from the global media industry. The *Minisjang* initiative is an example of how a small-country media provider may be affected by globalization and digitalization. Small countries are vulnerable and reactive towards such external forces, and the question that will be discussed in this presentation is why DR, in times of highly intensified competition among providers of content for children, such as *Disney+*, *Netflix* and *YouTube*, decided the launch of this platform, and how DR consider planning content for this platform. A new platform like *Minisjang*, from the beginning may be involved in dilemmas between different interests and motives, regarding how to balance between a classic and a modern understanding and practising of public service.

Biography

Christa Lykke Christensen is an associate professor in Media Studies at the Department of Communication, University of Copenhagen, and the program leader for the educations in film and media studies. She is part of the research project "Reaching Young Audiences – Serial fiction and cross-media storyworlds for children and young audiences" (RYA), funded by Independent Research Fund Denmark and based at the University of Copenhagen (2019-2024). Her research interests include, among other things, children's and youth film and TV; of key interest is the study of historical changes in media representations of children and childhood. She has published widely within this topic, at the latest the chapter: "Relevance and identification in television content for children. Analysing DR commissioners' perceptions of children's media interests", in Jensen, P. M., Redvall, E. N., & Christensen, C. L. (Eds.). (2023). *Audiovisual content for children and adolescents in Scandinavia: Production, distribution, and reception in a multiplatform era*. Nordicom, University of Gothenburg.

PAPER SESSION 4b: Experiencing animation

Selma Aitsaid: Algerian Disabled Pre-teens' (twens) Identification with Disney

Disney canon texts (mainly animations) are believed to have authority over children's identities. However, much of the research on Disney tends to focus either on textual analysis, and/ or Western audiences. In fact, there is a lack in the literature on Disney child audiences from non-Western countries though Disney is a global media corporation that appeals to audiences from all over the world and is believed by some critics to be inclusive of minorities (Brode 2005; Resene 2017; Perea 2018). To address this, I have conducted qualitative research involving interviewing 25 Algerian disabled tweens between the ages 11 to 14 on their familiarity and identification with Disney animations in order to decolonise disability in Algeria and Algerian audiences, which are framed via Global North generalizations and hegemony. This paper will share some of my key findings. My findings suggest that the postcolonial context has an impact on how my participants identify with Disney animated texts. For instance, Disney becomes a social and cultural capital for Algerian tweens when dubbed in French, the colonizer's language. Another finding demonstrated that the Western concept of Tweenhood is imported to the MENA region through Disney animations, recontextualized/ censored in order to fit the conservative context. Tween themes such as same sex friendship and the sparkling pink for girls are emphasized whereas opposite-sex romance is replaced with marriage through Arabic dubbing. Despite these modifications my participants still showed an active engagement with Disney animations by interpreting the texts socially and politically while taking into consideration their conservative context.

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Author's Biography

I am a final year PhD candidate at The University of Leicester in the School of Media and Communication. My research interests are in preteen disabled audiences from the Global South, mainly Algeria, and how they identify with Western animations such as Disney that are imported to the MENA region either dubbed or subtitled. I also seek to research how the postcolonial context impacts Global Southern young audiences' interpretation of these texts. This will be a way to unpack the impact of colonialism that is embedded within young

audiences' background and the media texts they consume so that we are able to decolonise them.

Signe Kjær Jensen: Analyzing Children's Reception of *Frozen*, *Up* and *Shrek the Third* from a Musical and Multimodal Media Perspective

Animation is one of the dominant media forms targeted at young children, and it is a highly multimodal medium, where music is used in interaction with other auditive and visual modes.

Even though we don't always pay attention to music, music serves to create textual coherence, geographical and historical setting, and by creating a background for interpreting character emotion (see e.g. Kalinak, 2010). Music serves these functions by adhering to certain conventions and by directing attention and co-creating meaning with elements in the visuals (see e.g. Cohen, 2010). However, since children belong to a different interpretative community (Fish, 1980) than the adult researcher, we can't assume to know how music in animated films is understood by these audiences. 'Meaning' in media is never an objective and intrinsic quality, and children have a different frame of reference for interpreting film music and animation.

In my interdisciplinary PhD thesis (Jensen, 2021), I have performed multimodal analyses of the meaning potential in sequences from *Frozen*, *Shrek the Third* and *Up*. Moreover, I have conducted interviews and observational studies with Danish children aged 7-11 to analyze the children's reception strategies and background for interpreting the films and music in question.

In this presentation, I provide an overview of my findings, discussing children as active and critical audiences. The children draw on knowledge of film-musical conventions (or film-musical literacy) for creating mood and narrative expectations. The aesthetic elements of music and visuals are moreover a motivational factor for their enjoyment of the films, and the children use their personal experiences and cultural background for creating a frame within which to evaluate both the music, the characters, and the film as a whole.

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Biography

Signe Kjaer Jensen has a background in Musicology and holds a PhD in comparative literature. Her research interests centre on music and sound as parts of intermedial and multimodal media constellations, on which she has presented at international conferences such as the Society for Animation Studies (SAS), Music and the Moving Image (MaMI), International Society of Intermedial Studies, NordMedia, and at The International Conference on Multimodality (ICOM). Recent publications include *Musicalized Characters: A Study of Music, Multimodality and the Empiric Child Perspective on Mainstream Animation* (2021), and chapters in *Intermedial Studies* (2022), edited by J. Bruhn and B. Schirrmacher.

Maja Rudloff: “You look like Elsa, mommy!”. Media globalization, hyper-consumption and everyday experiences with Disney’s *Frozen* universe

Disney’s *Frozen* (2013) and *Frozen II* (2019) stand as the highest grossing animated films of all time, and its evolvement into a global brand and franchise demonstrates its power and broad appeal to audiences and young consumers. The *Frozen* brand’s “encroachment” (Habermas 1984) and “corporate colonization” (Deetz 1992) into the live worlds of children is underscored by its numerous promotional collaborations with media, merchandisers and toy manufacturers: Disney has reportedly collaborated with 67 brands across categories to bring alive and keep relevant the popular *Frozen* characters Elsa, Anna and more (Creswell 2022). The importance of Disney in general and its princess line specifically has drawn much critique from scholars. The critique on Disney’s representation of gender has been especially harsh with some studies proposing a positive development in recent Disney princess movies such as *Brave* (2012), *Frozen* (2013), and *Moana* (2016). Studies that focus on children’s own reception and negotiation of the gender roles presented in Disney princess movies and merchandising have been scarcer. Television studies have shown that, together with advertisements, animation belong to the media narratives that children are at the earliest able to distinguish as special genres (Dorr 1983), making this a particularly important area to explore further. Interestingly, the parents in a Danish 2003 (Drotner) interview-based reception survey perceived of the Disney name as a seal of quality and therefore set fewer restrictions and rules for their children's consumption of Disney than other media use. This abstract explores in an empirical study how Danish parents and their children negotiate their experiences with Disney’s *Frozen* in the context of their everyday lives by investigating the reception and consumption of Disney’s *Frozen* films and merchandise amongst Danish children age four to ten. Although Disney animations and products are hugely popular in Denmark, there has been few national studies focusing on the children’s perspective on Disney in general and none focusing on *Frozen* and *Frozen II* in particular. The aim of the present chapter is to remedy this research gap.

Biography

Maja Rudloff holds a Ph.D. in media and user studies. Her research covers media, marketing and cultural studies and she has a particular interest in visual, discursive and political dimensions of gender representation in the media. Among her publications are “(Post)feminist paradoxes: the sensibilities of gender representation in Disney’s Frozen” (2016).

Jonas Lindkvist: Ponyville Confidential – The use of parody for a young audience in *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic*

The first known use of parody is from Aristotle’s Poetics and since then it has been used for both transgressive and normative purposes. Several modern animated tv shows use parody or pastiche not only as a means for humor and derision, but also for political, social and aesthetic purposes. Research on parody have always focused more on its mean-spirited side, quite a few scholars even argue that without a polemic edge towards its source text, parody cannot be understood as parody. I disagree strongly with this, parody can be used in many ways, including ways that signal inclusion, social justice, friendship, and care for each other.

Parody has always been a common practice in animation from its inception at the start of the 20th century to the modern era of television ushered in by the likes of *The Simpsons* and *South Park*. Parody is not however exclusive to animated shows directed at an adult audience. Shows like *Animaniacs* and *SpongeBob SquarePants* rely heavily on cultural references, pastiche and parody in its humor and style, much like Bugs Bunny cartoons and *The Flintstones* did before them. One show directed at children that is of particular interest in the use of parody is *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic* (Lauren Faust 2010-2020).

Even though MLP:FIM also attracted an adult audience, it was directed at girls aged 3-6, but still contained a vast array of references, pastiches and parodies. For a parody to work, it needs to be recognized as parody, but how can an audience who does not recognize a source text still understand parodic representations? Is parody in children’s animation only for an adult audience, or can it be utilized effectively anyway? And if so, how does it look and how is it used? These are some of the questions I hope to answer in my presentation.

Biography

Jonas Lindkvist is a PhD student in Film Studies at Lund University, Sweden, with degrees in gender studies, history, creative writing, film studies and film & media history. Fields of research include humor, parody, satire, animation, high concept films, television, and fan culture, but also sports and media. His dissertation *Resistance and Subversion in Animated Parody* focuses on the use of parody, pastiche, and satire in modern animated tv shows such as *Archer*, *BoJack Horseman*, *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic*, *Rick & Morty*, and *South Park* through the lenses of the borders of parody, representations of queerness, nation and nationalism, and the notion of carnival and sitcom temporality.