AXEL SCHMIDT*

How to deal methodologically with Entertaining Hatred and Aggressive Humour on the Web (and Television)[1]

The mass media and mediated interpersonal communication have seen the development of a bizarre popular culture, one decidedly preoccupied with hatred and revenge. It was in the early 1980s that so-called hate sites first intersected Internet communication and were declared "art." Hate communication, noted at that time for its group anonymity, has become an everyday occurence, individualized and personalized on Web 2.0 sites like MySpace or YouTube: Individual players do their hating in an openly and readily identifiable manner. The normal setting for this aggressive form of audio-visual entertainment can be recognized in its aggressive sense of humor, which is currently common in the dominant medium of television (as one example: Stefan Raab's German television show *TV total)*. Using the pop group Tokio Hotel as an example of (anti-)fan communication, such hate communication transmitted by the media will be shown as navel-gazing and "image work" as part of the ritual communication of young people ("face work"), which, not least of all, inquires into the significance of fictional activities on the Web with regard to the real life actions of people (problematic side-effects, problems with compartmentalization). This contribution also attempts to clarify how to deal methodologically with different forms and styles of media communication respectively media products.

Keywords: hatred and aggression, humor, impression management and mediated interaction, youth culture, visual communication, Internet and YouTube, conversational analysis, methodological framework for communicative research.

* Universität Basel, axel.schmidt@unibas.ch

1. Introduction

When talking about hatred, vindictive feelings, disgust, loathing or shame, we initially describe an intrapsychic quality of perception that can be more or less clearly related to social objects and processes. However, such (alleged) emotions only become tangible and therefore accessible to empiric research when they are fed into communicative processes. This means experiencing a symbolic (indicative) expression that can be understood by observers,[2] and may cause social exchange processes or be caused by them (cf. Nedelmann 1983). This article relates to the communicative level of (social) emotions and addresses them in an interaction-sociological context as there is a demand for actions of (communicative) realisation and their interactive consequences. Within this context, linguistic descriptions serve as a safeguard and itemisation of the phenomenal database for a *social constitution* of emotions (cf. Fiehler 1990). The focus here is on cases of explicitly acting out such emotions, which means that not hatred as an emotion but the acting out of hatred as an action and/or as an act (of speech) are the main emphases of observation. The coupling of emotion (hatred) and action (e.g., using derogatory words) inevitably remains a presumption by (ordinary or scientific) observers. Consequently, such an interaction-sociological foundation implies a negotiating character of (social) emotions so that these are not established in advance but first outlined in interactive processes. This simultaneously means that hatred or the display, communication, and understanding of hatred can be modulated in and through a communicative exchange. In other words, the haters are capable of signalling how they hate and how they want their hatred to be understood and that recipients/observers are able to understand it in different ways.

[2]   Cf. basically Schütz (1974) and Goffman (1969), as well as – building and expanding on it – Knoblauch (1995). Schneider (1994, 1997, 2008) argues for the fundamental compatibility of social-phenomenological, system-theoretical and conversation-analytical approaches with regard to the principally public negotiation character of social reality. Such a detachment of emotions can occur in various ways with regard to the persons who feel them (as purely symbolic, indicative and therefore unintended expressions; as a portrayal or performance [cf. Willems 2009c]). This is also related to the fact that emotions such as hatred and revenge become part of social processes in very different ways (as an intentional message, subliminal modality of concrete communication or alleged attitudes of others, etc.).

A fundamental possibility for displaying hatred is using a non-serious modality so that serious intentions and contents are toned down or are understood as playful (cf. basically Bateson 1985; Goffman 1977: Ch. 3). For their part, such playful attacks can consolidate themselves into communicative genres[3] and mould forms of self-entertainment in specific group cultures (cf. Radcliffe-Brown 1965; Kochman 1981, 1983; Schmidt 2004). By doing so, (playful) attacks within the context of performances tend to shift the emphasis from communicative to expressive actions because they are (also) tailored to address a third party (an audience). This is why they have an assumed entertainment value (cf. Schmidt 2004: 209 ff.). So we must generally differentiate between a) an emotion (such as hatred), b) its expression (such as the use of derogatory words) and c) its communicatively negotiable meaning or (temporarily) ratified meaning through negotiation (e.g., flippancy).[4] Furthermore, the latter – i.e., the negotiation of meaning – is also decisively regulated by communicative methods and genres that are institutionalised by the fundamental modalities (e.g., seriousness/non-seriousness). While terms such as ridiculing, discrediting, verbally attacking, losing face, etc., emphasise communicative methods of regulating relationships[5], terms such as satire, parody, irony, etc., relate to (comical and/or humorous) possibilities and qualities of the corresponding social exchange processes as *(media-oriented) products of communication.*[6] In this respect – for example –, it makes sense to assert that ridicule or hatred appears or can be understood *as* satire. In this case, humour is understood as having the potential to entertain by means of amusement so that humour could be understood as a strategy for creating entertainment (or excitement in contrast to boredom) that only results in a complete picture as an interplay of aspects relating to the producer, product and recipient.[7] In this sense, a fundamental role is played by the

---

[3] On the concept of communicative genres cf. basically Luckmann (1986) and Günthner & Knoblauch (1997).

[4] This can also be understood as a type of meaning or frame (cf. Goffman 1977).

[5] Cf. Schmidt (2004) on differentiating various genres of (playfully) derogatory speech (such as ridicule, tattle, gossip, etc.).

[6] Knop (2007) provides an overview with a focus on television comedy.

[7] See Attardo (1994) for an overview of various humour theories. Integrative models of humour and/or entertainment can be found in Brock (1998) and Hügel (2007).

degree of intentionality or to what extent communication was *intended* to create humour. Phenomena such as involuntary comic effects or humour that is not perceived to be funny (laughter as an indicator of successful/failed humour or entertainment value from the recipient's perspective) only become comprehensible with this background.

Hatred is initially defined in this article as the intentional and serious objective of creating harm to others on the basis of continual aggressive affects.[8] Hatred can directly (clearly addressed hatred) or indirectly (hurting the feelings of others by producing and distributing specific products) create harm in this process through the verbal[9] or physical acting out of exactly this hatred.[10] Hatred is therefore the basis of a disposition for using violence and violent actions (cf. Haubl 2008), which acquire legitimation in and by creating an (group-specific) image of the enemy (cf. Haubl 2008a). On the other hand, revenge aims to restore hurt feelings and is a compensatory action for the pain that has been subjectively experienced. In this regard, revenge reacts to injuries in the form of inflicting injuries and should be understood as a complementary counterpart (motivated by hatred) to acts of infringement.

Playful communicative methods (such as ridicule) and *humorous formats* (intentionally produced entertainment products such as parodies) now represent the more or less toned-down (cf. basically Brown & Levinson 1987) and therefore relativistic realisation of such (hateful) intentions. This also includes the – related – intention of entertaining other people in this way, which means through the well-chosen interplay of

---

[8]   Haubl (2008: 26) understands hatred – in contrast to the primary emotions of rage, anger and wrath – as "a specific (complex) mode of emotional experience and action" with a high and sustained level of intensity. It is the result of "psychologically integrating hatred, together with the disposition to use violence that it is capable of motivating, into the personality structure of a person. This is how it gains the stability […] of a character trait" (ibid.). Cf. Haubl (2007) for more details.

[9]   Cf. Keppler (2006), who defines verbal abuse in agreement with Butler (2006) as the infringement of the individual's psychological integrity through verbal remarks. Butler (ibid.: 36) considers *hate speech* in terms of the theory related to the act of speech and/or performance as "the execution of harm, whereby harm is understood as societal subordination."

[10] Böllinger (2008: 51) emphasises in his definition of hatred that "hatred […] [contains] the desire to destroy the object and to make it suffer […]."

(counter)injury and toning-down. Such relationships often stretch and shift in a *media-communicative context* because the interaction of actors, contexts and communications becomes more flexible and therefore hazier. This is compounded by the fundamentally embedded staging of prioritisation for specific media communication in the identity and style-defining processes, which take the form of fandom in extreme cases (cf. basically Winter 1997; Wegener 2008; Roose, Schäfer & Schmidt-Lux 2010). On the one hand, corresponding products and the associated state of being a fan is again closely linked with emotions and/or serves as an appropriate medium of expression (cf. Schäfer 2010); on the other hand, this also represents a field of experimentation and projection that is detached or detachable from one's own persona.[11]

The following article equally assesses the above-illustrated negotiation-dependant ([un]intentional, [un]serious, etc.) aspects of (playful) hatred communication and the fundamental complexification that occurs due to (mass) media mediation and aesthetic-(fan)cultural orientations of styles conveyed by the media. This article aims to reconstruct such negotiation paths on the basis of a detailed case analysis. It shows how hurtful hatred experiences an adjustment (cooling out) through ritualisation processes that accompany the communicative toning-down within the context of group and/or fan-cultural orientations conveyed by the media in this process. This is how it becomes comprehensible as part of a (media-oriented) fun-loving culture.

2. Revenge and Art: the Early "Stinky Meat Project"

Anonymous revenge has a long-standing tradition on the World Wide Web. Whoever wants to insult an ex-girlfriend, neighbor or boss will find an adequate forum on the Internet. As is often the case, it began in the United States with a project entitled the "Stinky Meat Project" (Borsch 2000)[12]: For months, an American programmer was annoyed by a difficult neighbor. He drove to the nearest supermarket, bought a steak,

---

[11]   For example, Friedrichs & Sander (2010) estimate the function of the media in (adolescent) identity-forming processes within this context.

[12]   Our explanation of the "Stinky Meat Project" follows those presented by Frank Borsch (2000) in his text "Zur Rache, Schätzchen."

three hot dogs and some hamburger, put the meat on a plate and shoved it under the fence into his neighbor's yard. From then on, this vengeful person returned daily to the scene of the crime, took pictures of the plate and published the pictures on the Internet. Hence, the "Stinky Meat Project" was born. Its official goal, according to the initiator, was to find out how long a plate of rotting meat could stay in his neighbor's yard unnoticed and without police intervention.

According to *Wired* magazine this project attracted over half a million visitors within the first two weeks. The images of rotting meat were compounded with bizarre comments from the vengeful programmer, perceived by many as an idiosyncratic work of art. As one of the visitors expressed in the site's guestbook, "The Stinky Meat project is absolutely repulsive, yet I can't look away. It's like the most twisted soap opera in history" (cited in Borsch 2000).

This imaginative revenge campaign became one of the Internet's oldest traditions. The *Alt.Revenge* newsgroup was founded already 1983. There, in the anonymity provided by the new medium, people with a score to settle in the real or virtual world could congregate. They exchanged views on revenge methods and aspired to the high standard of making revenge an art form. The results can still be read in the official "Frequently Asked Questions" file.

In contrast, the banal reality of the average Internet user is something else: acts of revenge carried out by "normal" users, who show no particular interest in art, are usually childish, crude, obscene, rude, and sometimes criminal. What are the results when technologically savvy users with a bit of expertise and little interest in art become active on the Web, abusing, uncover and expressing hatred for people in their own responsibility? In addition to personal disputes (for example: ex-boyfriend discrediting his ex-girlfriend on the Web; cf. Naica-Loebell 2005) and the radical right supplys where horrible hatred of foreigners is presented as can be expected[13]

---

[13] Access to the network of neo-Nazis in Germany and to the interconnection of the national with the international neo-Nazi scene is possible through search engines. Furthermore, the software, "Children of the Holocaust" (also known as AKdH) based in Basel continuously and systematically searches the Internet for anti-Semitic, neo-Nazi and racist material. Consult their Website www.akdh.ch for further information.

(this issue will not be discussed further), there are "hate pages" which make it possible for open groups of people to vent anger and resentment in forums and guest books. Such hate pages have found an acceptance that should not be underestimated.

3. Entertainment Hate in Everyday Life on the Web and Television

Can hate be funny? A bizarre culture of conflict has been established in the mass media and on the Web, for example: heated arguments on talk shows and enthusiastic responses to jokes about blondes and Polish people, Comedians radically uncover stars and starlets in the name of humor, and so-called "hate pages" emerging on the Internet for amusement where anyone (especially teenagers and young adults) can contribute to the presentation of hatred and revenge. Dispute and conflict, slander and defamation seem to draw a particular fascination in the realm of entertainment, which raises the question of whether behaviors and mindsets, such as archaic revenge mentality and desires for revenge, are seeing a renaissance not only in the context of violent, armed conflicts between ethnic groups, but also (random coincidence?) in the broadcasts of the current media-driven fun-oriented society. Assessing this development is not easy. Doesn't the conflict shown on the Internet and television re-open graves and polarize tirades of hate between individuals and groups in an extreme manner; or is it all just quite simply "fun" and entertaining material prompting a "don't take it so seriously" attitude among friends and colleagues?

At the turn of the millennium, the German entertainment (media) world went through an extraordinary development. As part of the burgeoning television comedy-show genre, Stefan Raab first took the stage on television, beginning with his show *TV total,* based on aggressive humor, a campaign against good (television) manners (Schmidt 2002; Knop 2007). A similar trend surfaced on the Web: in the same time period the number of hate sites, where other human beings aren't exactly handled with kid gloves, increased. For example, in 2001 a German hate page was created for users to express displeasure with the German pop singer Blümchen. In other words, it was an anti-fan page, that means the opposite of fan-activities as we know such from corresponding magazines

(*Bravo,* for example). Some teenagers and young adults (invariably men) took great pleasure in defaming this famous pop star in cyberspace, constructing a specific revenge tactic aimed at the music of Blümchen, which they considered akin to torture. Numerous entries could be found on the pages, where Blümchen was made into a sex object and a victim in form of verbal attacks. The young (at that time) singer was degraded as a sexual object and raped in all imaginable hardcore variations (users didn't even stop with pedophilic fantasies, everything conceivable was done). And if that weren't enough, almost all possible varieties of punishment and torture were also played out, even chain saw massacres and Holocaust scenes such as the "gas chamber for worthless life."

Today, the aforementioned site cannot be found in this form (the former moderator, "bacman," currently operates www.cali-mirko.de). At the turn of the millennium, more than 300 *fun*-based revenge, hatred and slander pages appeared on the net. Currently, hate sites (link: www. hatepage.com) are still available in German and German-speaking areas, but predominantly in *commercialized* form (link: www.rache-is-suess. de and www.hatepages.com). They aren't, however, anywhere near as extreme as the one described above (use the phrase "Assi Toni" to find one recent, often-discussed example of a pointedly misogynistic video clip given cult status on YouTube).

4. What is at Stake, or: When the Levee breaks

In our first assessment of this complex topic (Neumann-Braun 2002), we focused on the core problem of content like the Blümchen hate site or the Assi Toni video clip, provoking the question, "What effect does this communicative behavior in *virtual* space (Web) have on communication in *real* people's everyday lives?" Socio-psychological research calls this the problem of compartmentalizing reality. Extreme hate fantasies are practiced on the Internet by groups of users, whose validity is verified by the members. From the perspective of normative theory, this is a crucial process because the verification of standards and morality depends on the approval of members. If something has already been considered verbally and in writing, *and* is still practiced in the virtual togetherness of the Web then it must be attributed to the routine of everyday life. Only a stable

system of reality compartmentalization can ensure that those affected, or persecuted, can feel safe from the unpleasant consequences of such hatred. Only the users' own knowledge that certain actions are allowed in a given situation (the communicative field of the Web) without fear of penalties, whereas those same actions would result in penalties in a different situation (the everyday communicative field), guarantees protection. But how stable is such a distinction, this boundary between fiction and reality?

Several questions arise with regard to the "Assi comedy" on the Web for instance: When are slander and defamation "just" jokes, and when should they be considered serious? What is "just" contempt? When does it become hatred?

The problem of aggressive humor in audio-visual media lies in seeing that an out-of-bounds area exists. Not seeing this makes it difficult to make clear distinctions, analysis and forecasts regarding descriptions of phenomena, process dynamics and estimation of consequences. The fact that fantasies of contempt, violence and hatred are increasingly considered legitimate components of pop culture must be taken into account, as part of the drama of "pure" entertainment in peer-to-peer communities and strategic advertising communications in the entertainment market (sex and crime sell).

5. Continuation and Differentiation: Hate as Navel-gazing and Image Work

People perceive themselves and their identities in terms of their everyday interactions and perform a certain kind of image work as a starting point. This self-perception is done as part of natural communication such as face-to-face discussions. This also happens in communication media (especially in interpersonal communication using the computer, such as chats and sites like MySpace or YouTube with slogans like "Broadcast Yourself!"). (Self-)representation, or (self-)staging, processes are part of the ritual of everyday social exchanges. In particular, Erving Goffman has shown in his research that social interaction can still be observed not only in terms of instrumental (means to ends), normative (cooperation, social integration) and communication (information, intention) aspects, but also in terms of ritual aspects (cf. in particular, Goffman 1969, 1971). The manner in which something is done and how the players go through

the form of their interactions in relation to given situations, in short, how people perceive what they do or how they set the stage with reference to the anticipated structures of expectation, indicates how the players want others to see them and the situation.

On the one hand, images (self-images) are established in the interchange of presentation styles, how the players more or less reflexively perceive themselves in interactions, by tentatively referring to structures of expectation (social events, frameworks) which in turn provides "interpretation and direction" (Soeffner 1989: 150) to other people (participants and observers). On the other hand, images are created by attributions, which other participants actually make on the basis of such references, accumulated over time (communicatively) and flattened into an image of the person. Identification of the self and others, or attribution processes, also access all kinds of "social information" (social identities, identity symbols, previous self-images, social (media) framing, etc., as specific forms of knowledge about the context. Thus, the image that someone brings into the communication process moderates the (attributed) context of their perceptions. Once formed, images operate as "social guides, [...] as identifying meta-texts, [...] whose stereotypical nature [...] is hidden" (Willems 1997: 153). This tendency on the part of the observer to "judge the book by its cover, implies a counterfactual existence" (ibid.), which confronts the individual as a stereotyped external image and requires attention and maintenance because of its dramatic relevance.

Images as "positive social values" reclaimed by the individual for themselves imply moral (self-)expectations and depend on everyday ritual negotiation processes based on skills which contain both ritual cooperation as well as ritual competition (Goffman, "collecting plus points", 1971: 30; cf. also Willems 1997: 209 f.) and are (or can be) used with others. In particular, in a playful (verbal) debate, designed primarily to bring about changes to the image[14], the demonstration of ability "that he can handle himself as an interactor better than his opponents" (ibid. 31), even has symbolic distinction value, as such (cf. ibid.: 209).

---

[14] Goffman refers to this as "plus points" or as "aggressive use of techniques for image building" (1971: 30 ff.) Elsewhere, he speaks of "interpersonal action" (ibid.: 226 ff.).

Impressions of the senses as part of impression management (cf. Goffman 1969) are eventually reconstructed as forms of theatricality and include such diverse phenomena as fashion sense, personal styles (such as style of speech and movement), forms of role dissociation, etc., up to immediate, small area phenomena associated with interaction sequences (how an uncomfortable question is answered, for example). Image maintenance therefore always implies (to one degree or another, depending on the context) the (strategic) orientation towards the observational framework and others who are considered relevant, as image attributions essentially result from observing others (cf. Willems 1997: 85 ff.).

This context, which applies in face-to-face situations, is carried into the mass media an the mediated interpersonal communication and their programming in radicalized form. Mass media can (according to Willems & Kautt 2003: 30) be understood as the "largest image of the societal forums" which are, unlike any other social subsystem, inherently designed to construct gripping images and clichés, and (as is generally understood) to update stereotypes and hold them on center stage[15]. In our modern society, images are commercial constructs, above all (ibid.: 30 ff.). They can also affect a variety of social entities, for example individuals, groups, organizations, nations, products, and more. Through its structure, mass media possesses the power and the resources assigned to it by others in the form of presentations, making an immediate reaction and correction of presented persons impossible (since feedback is structurally not allowed for). According to Schneider (2002: 297 ff.), sensory assignments, therefore, tend to be of a form that an author and/or affected party would confirm.

The presentation of face-to-face interactions as the basis of the formation, negotiation and defense of image within the mass media (especially television) can be understood as a "special creation" of the media, the creation of inter-subjectivity in mass media communication may appear necessary to the sequenced structure founded on interaction processes

---

[15]   This frequently happens, as Willems & Kautt (2003), following Goffman (1981b) argue, in hyper-ritualized form. The mass media, advertising in particular, take everyday mundane stereotypes (such as the stereotypical housewife) in order to process stereotypes of stereotypes (e.g., the figure of Clementine in detergent advertising [Ariel] in the 1980s).

(ibid.). In this way, the subjects respond temporarily and within specifically framed discussion contexts (such as talk shows) and assigned roles (talk show guest) and are given the chance to react to current or previous third-party perceptions and present their own (contradictory) self-presentations. Furthermore, this type of "establishment" of temporary grants of direct feedback represents self-presentation of the media (of the station, of the show) in particular. Precisely in and through the temporary suspension of their intrinsic principle (in the case of traditional mass media, making third-party evaluations without the direct feedback and corrective capacity from the people affected), mass media may appear spontaneous and authentic and close to the common man.

All the same, images ultimately remain connected with the primary assessment experience (evaluation, judgment) of a person's behavior in face-to-face interactions[16], whether in the form of more "highly aggregated" social constructions (as in the case of organizations), or less direct constructions removed from personal experience (as in the case of a media agency or the case of products). Therefore, mass media enterprises act (in addition to their role as image-builders) as facilitators of image processing and distribution in particular. "In every manner specific to divisions and categories (differing for soap operas in comparison with the news or advertising), the mass media are always about creating meaning and images from pre-existing materials and information (including existing images)" (Willems & Kautt 2003: 30).

In the case of television shows (cf. Müller 2003; Plake 2004: 157 ff.; Hügel & Müller 1993) it is initially less about image structures, which would concern an external reality, but rather about the internal reality of the television show itself. Image construction and maintenance for television shows, as visible and identifiable social entities (usually mediated by the proper name of a specific program or the "face" of the host), are essentially based on the (self-)production strategies of (the masters of) the show and mainly on those elements that draw on forms of interaction equivalent to everyday life.

---

[16]   This does not mean that this reconnection leads to an interference that is inductively correct but only that properties are attributed and evaluated on the assessment model through direct interaction. Thus, it is possible for a nation to be perceived as proud, a program as naughty or a product as temperamental.

In short, image building and maintenance is done primarily through processes of identity negotiation at the personal and organizational level (cf. Willems 1998: 57 ff.) within the show itself, which also means the effectiveness of the (mass) image rises to the same level so that the (image) recipients believe that they were "observing the real behavior" of real people[17] (for details, cf. Schmidt, Teuscher & Neumann-Braun 2009).

In the case of Internet communication using portals such as YouTube[18], the operations of the mass communication (one-to-many, mass distribution, public image construction; limited or delayed feedback capabilities, which primarily provide the ability to make an uninterrupted presentation to an audience) merge with those of interpersonal communication (the "transmitter unit" corresponds to a person; the feedback channel is open to anyone, and there is no institutionalization in the sense of a "dominant channel"). At its core, the YouTube motto "Broadcast yourself" therefore means that the user will present short, self-made clips or "personal" media discoveries (upload to the network)[19], which can be absorbed and discussed by other users. This occurs under the special condition that no one moderates the flow of communication. Rather, the forces and interests at issue can operate freely, and under such conditions, each user is free to act as the primary communicator (uploading a clip as an "opening

[17]   The concept of factuality, which is attached to registered data (see Bergmann 1985), corresponds on one hand with the claim of television to "be where it's happening" and is therefore, on the other hand, a significant technology for the production of authenticity. In the case of television shows, this effect is rooted in the structural conditions of the genre itself, as television shows do not refer primarily to an existing reality, but occur as representations of themselves.

[18]   YouTube is a video portal founded in February 2005, which allows users to upload and view video clips for free. On 9 October 2006, YouTube was acquired by Google. The *tube* in YouTube refers to the cathode ray tube, the traditional component of the television, which makes it to mean something like "Your TV."

[19]   Next to the not very innovative addition that excerpts from the traditional mass media (especially the television) are staged as a clip discovery by commercial vendors or extensions of the traditional mass media. This is done mainly on sites like Clip Fish (a German video community, launched in June 2006 by the RTL subsidiary, RTL Interactive), where some excerpts from television shows like *Big Brother* or *Deutschland sucht den Superstar* may be found, which are advertised in the respective schedules. In this way, television and video portals have been short-circuited (for purposes of advertising communication).

move"), as a responding communicator in the form of written comments or in the form of *reply or response* clips, or act merely as a recipient of the clips or clip sequences. At a secondary level, (observable) communicative events unfold in this manner, such that a clip will be treated as a message to be responded to by means of a second clip.[20] This means that the individual clips (contrary to television broadcast units) can be seen as communication events maintained by individuals. The result is (in contrast to the *flow* of television)[21] coherence through the systematic, reciprocal participation in the production (mediated by the medium) of the counterparty's symbols. In short, it creates a form of indirect interaction. Now, this does not happen (and this is the point) as in face-to-face communication or their performances in mass media (such as *talks)* in the form of "real" co-presence (simultaneous presence which is thus under continuous observation in the here and now), but by crafting their own physical performances and/or self-expressive object (in this case, user-created videos), which interact with each other through style, placement and meta-communicative discussion. In other words, the communication occurs through identities extended into the media. With regard to self-presentation and the negotiation and constitution of self-image, it can thus be stated that it isn't people and their physical manner of expression (spontaneity) that are meeting, but rather constructs in media, which act as personal representatives, or can be (and are often meant to be) read as such. It is in this sense we are talking about well-composed, deliberate and "excessive" (through art form) expressions of self, which are predestined (if they refer to each other) to set in motion audio-visual processes (exchange of blows) of identity self-presentation and self-assertion within the medium.

---

[20]   In the sense of Luhmann (information is understood as a message and is reacted to accordingly) communication has taken place (cf. Luhmann 1984, 1988).

[21]   See fundamentally Williams (1975, 2002). The program flow of television is usually consistency in the form of inter-textual references or explicit bridge units (e.g., trailers), but is usually not created in the form of interactive linkages. These only re-occur in the context of individual broadcast formats, as a sort of represented content (such as in fictional film dialogues, or non-fiction in news interviews and talk shows).

6. Continuation

6.1. "Anti-Fan-Communication" today: Tokio Hotel[22] YouTube Clips as Example, (Anti-)Fans

Although the classical "hate pages" still exist (cf. Section 3 above), it seems that a majority of aggressive outbursts appear to have migrated to video portals (YouTube, Google Video, Mytrash.tv, Clipfish, etc.) because they are much more flexible and reciprocal and therefore more attractive.[23] At the very least, static home pages (however questionable the content), do not focus public interest as much as the seemingly contingent proliferation of Web 2.0 applications, those with (audio) visual content in particular. Using (anti-)fan communication about the music group Tokio Hotel (or TH), as an example, we will show how a teenage girl caught between fans and bashers of TH positions herself, or rather, is positioned, by using audio-visual self-presentation. She began as an avowed fan of TH, was heavily attacked and denigrated, only to announce her defection in a new clip. She was no longer a TH fan, a statement which will also be discussed.

The following examples came from the YouTube[24] Website and were followed either explicitly in the keywords about the clip, or presented in the oral statements made by the protagonists under the heading "TH-Hass(er)" (German for TH-Hate[r]). The clip of a teenage girl (calling herself "Angie") is the focus. The clip received more than 600 responses on YouTube and has been viewed more than 700,000 times (cf. Kortmann 2007). In due course, it went beyond the sphere of the video site to become noted elsewhere (in blogs as well as in the traditional print[25] and

---

[22] *Tokio Hotel* is the name of a German boy band from Magdeburg, which was founded in 2001.

[23] As Web 2.0 services, they only provide the technical framework, the communication is neither thematically ("Hatred against …") nor interactively (one can only comment on the pre-existing content) preset.

[24] Date of last access: 01.07.2007. The reference to video material includes the URL and the length and the title of each video.

[25] As an example, Kortmann (2007) in *Süddeutsche Zeitung,* and Winter (2007) in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* magazine, *Jetzt.*

television media). In short, it produced a chain of events which can be observed and reconstructed as normal communicative action. A description of this sequence will be attempted in the following paragraphs.

At an initial preliminary level, two steps can be identified at the core of the communicative event: self-presentation (in this case a person calling herself Angie) and the reactions of others. Starting from the obvious, the reconstruction of events may then begin from two points of interests, namely: first the question of the content and design of the clip having triggered these reactions (hereafter "the focal clip") and secondly in a typological order of reactions.

6.2. The Focal Clip: Angie's Pleas

Title of the clip: "Leave Tokio Hotel Fans Alone" (1:43)
For a transcript of the protagonist's speech: see down page
URL: http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=coCA_mPKx5Y&mode= related&search =

We see a teenage girl fiddling with something, head bowed, apparently sitting at the computer in a private living room. She switches on the microphone of her Web cam at a medium distance from the camera when she begins speaking.[26] She seems to have prepared herself for a speech. She is wearing make-up, a pink sweater with a brooch and a necklace. She begins by addressing a non-specific (disperse) audience ("Hey people" [Line 1]), in order to, as it initially appeared, provide information about her private life ("here's more [...] about me, my friends, my sweetie..." [Line 2]). From line 4, however, the real issue comes to light ("and I want to say something...") about the relationship between "Tokio Hotel fans" and "Tokio Hotel bashers" (Line 5). A major thread of her speech consists of pleas, in which Angie positions herself as part of a community ("We are..." [...] "proud Tokio Hotel Fans" [Line 20]) addressing a request to the enviers and bashers (Lines 5 and 7) of her clique to leave them alone ("Just leave Tokio Hotel Fans in peace" [Lines 19], "just quit

---

[26]   For the phrasing of Angie's speech, see the inset. Quotes from the speech appear in double quotation marks including the line reference number.

it" [Line 7]). In line with this (primary) issue in her speech, she asks for understanding and mutual tolerance (Lines 17–19), following a model of peaceful coexistence. This is quite different from a secondary thread in her speech, where she attempts to represent herself and her clique as the truly dominant group. This part follows the Godfather model of a (cultural) struggle: only "we" ("us") and "the others" ("you/your") exist, and "we" are clearly the better, more superior choice. She uses different strategies to illustrate, beginning with threats ("And if you think you can run us down, we'll run you down properly, y'know," [Lines 8]), then prohibitions ("So you should keep your mouth shut" [Line 9]) and simple returned insults ("If you think they're fags, then you're fags yourselves" [Line 12]) one. In addition to such rather archaic eye-for-an-eye, or infantile tit-for-tat, strategies, she tries to place herself above the hostility by rationalizing and discrediting the other side's hostile motives, assuming an instructive manner ("But look, people, see here …" [Line 22]) insinuating jealousy to be the real motive of the "hatred" or claiming to be unassailable by the "hate" tirades of others ("I shit on that, I don't give a shit" [Line 25]). Finally, she sets the scene for her fan base as a persecuted minority ("We are proud Tokio Hotel fans, and we'll stick with it (some maybe not) because they are afraid of getting beaten up at school or something" [Lines 20 and 21]), implying that they deserve protection and thus ennobling them. She and all the TH fans inversely appear as fearless and steadfast advocates of a "good" thing "to which they will hold onto" (Line 26) and of which they can be "proud" (Line 4).

As a consequence however, the production characteristics (in the sense of Goffman: information of expression) of her speech are primarily taken up by the responses. Angie's expressions are framed as a speech (to a public audience), so they seem (especially with regard to the subject and the intention) out of place, pathetic, presumptuous and naive. Their linguistic manner is reminiscent of defiant, precocious children. Sometimes the topic appears to carry her along with it. A further aspect is the lack of elaboration of her speech: Although she has obviously prepared her speech, she has difficulty staying on topic, hence the speech appears redundant (the core statements can be found roughly three times in the speech in total). Speech mistakes and uncertainties add to the lack of argumentative rigor (including grammatical mistakes, uncertainty in phrasings,

"You know who you're fans of, whatever kind of music or whoever you like, whoever they are, y'know?" [Lines 17 and 18]).

Contextual argumentative inconsistency coupled with the formal lack of elaborated speech, an inflated claim (pathos) and an apparent miscalculation of the effect of her speech in public, created a sense of ridiculousness and stupidity (the latter particularly aggravated by black-and-white simplifications, "tit-for-tat"-morals and nonsensical threats, which in this form take the shape of yet more absurd arguments, like "if you think they're fags, then you're fags yourselves" [Line 12]), which is what most of the video replies respond to. The clip is consistently treated as an extension of identity, as a testament to ability to reject the protagonist herself, which is why the responses should consistently be viewed as "personal" attacks in turn.

Angie's Speech (wording)

1   Hey guys, it's me again, Angie.
2   So, I just wanted to say that there will soon be more videos of me, my friends, my sweetie…
3   …because I'm spoken for now, since a short while ago.
4   And, I wanted to say something else: I'm a proud Tokio-Hotel-Fan…
5   …and if you think, if the Tokio Hotel bashers think, you can run down us Tokio Hotel fans…
6   You don't get it anyway…
7   So, just quit it. You're just jealous of Tokio Hotel anyway.
8   And if you think you can run us down, we'll wear run down properly, y'know?
9   So, you should just keep your mouth shut.
10   …and stop always being like "well, look how stupid they are" and "they're fags, anyway" and so on.
11   They're not fags, you know!
12   If you think they're fags, then you're fags yourselves. Or, whatever.
13   I don't give a shit, but just leave Tokio Hotel alone.
14   And above all, leave Tokio-Hotel-Fans alone…
15   It's getting to be enough that you always think you have to run Tokio Hotel down…
16   …any above all, the Tokio-Hotel fans.
17   You know who you're fans of…

18 …whatever kind of music or whoever you like, whoever they are, y'know?

19 But just leave Tokio Hotel fans alone, y'know?

20 We're proud to be Tokio-Hotel-Fans, and we'll stick with it,

21 … (some maybe not) because they are afraid of getting beaten up at school or something…

22 But people look, you're all just jealous…

23 …when you run us down, and above all, when you insult Tokio Hotel, y'know?

24 People have a go at us sometimes at school, as well,

25 …because we are Tokio Hotel fans, and then, what do I do? I shit on that, I don't give a shit…

26 …aside from that, eh, I'm a Tokio Hotel fan, you know, and I'll stick with it.

27 And if you think you have to have a go at us, we'll have a go at you.

28 So just drop it, and we'll leave you alone. Understood?

29 Okay. Done.

6.3. Responses to Angie's Plea

The one factor connecting all 600 responses to Angie's appeal is that they focus on the thematic points of reference to Tokio Hotel, pop culture questions of taste and their expression, the manner in which pragmatic treatment is expressed namely in the form of evaluation and judgment and condemnation of the cult object itself (TH) and the attitude towards it (Angie being a fan), and in particular the way in which to express it (in Angie's case, in the form of a sincere plea). Angie or the identity construct (image), which is reconstructed on the basis of the testimony of her speech, is treated as a prototypical representative of the social category, "Tokio Hotel fan," and ridiculed. The following types can be distinguished in general.

"Simple" responses on the original material (without reference or imitation of the original material):
– Self-recorded videos, in which Angie's statements and behavior are evaluated, criticized, ridiculed, made ironic, or subjected to (judgmental) comments.

– Self-recorded videos in which Angie's performance is discussed, and something is shown or done in order to discredit the other person's taste (for example, burning a Tokio Hotel T-shirts, or promoting something in contrast to the rejected opinion, like a musical perform-ance titled "That's better than Tokio Hotel").

"Complex" responses in the form of media collages:
– "Eclectic" mix of self-produced or recycled music- and speechmaterial, (film) image responses, audio comments, and language inserts.

Meta-comments on the event:
– Moral judgments and pleas ("leave her alone")
– Responses to the resulting "hype" (like the article "10 Things You Have to do to Become Popular on YouTube.")

Parodies as imitations of the original material reference the video by imitating:
– voice, gestures and/or facial expressions
– language content (quotation)
– parlance (intonation, speech impediments, etc.)
– speech behavior (complaining, owning up to being a fan, whining, lamenting, threatening, etc.)
– appearance/styling (hair, etc.)
– (vocal) expression ("snippy," "bitchy," "whiny," "adolescent," etc.)
– sense of overall behavior (confession, "outing," speech to the nation, etc.)

Parodies through modification of the original material:
– Inspired by media aesthetics and genres (written inserts, end titles, film scores, songs/video clip, trailer, video game, interview format, news/coverage, image/sound scrambling, terrorist video messages, film genres (horror, science fiction, etc.)
– Inspired by other media formats (such as: *South Park, TV total, Sponge Bob,* etc.)
– Sound-/image manipulations
– modifying the voice or changing the content
– original sound with other images (for example: a posterior made up as a face reciting Angie's words) or original images with a different sound track

- Inspired by famous YouTube clips (like sampling "Assi Toni" responses in order to evaluate Tokio Hotel; Elmo laughs about Angie, etc.)
- Inspired by sub-cultural styles (Gothic, HipHop, Rock, etc.)
- Inspired by known real or fictional people (such as Bin Laden, Hitler, Captain Jack Sparrow, etc.)

On a *secondary level,* this phenomenon can be understood as a multi-step communicative event complex. First, Angie's opening words in the focal clip need to be acknowledged as a case of addressing the public yet again ("Hey guys, it's me again, Angie" [Line 1]). Therefore, it would not appear to be the first time that she has made a public appearance. At least this seems to correspond to the perception that she already has a performance history. This is also indicated by hints in the speech (for example, "soon [...] more videos of me..." [Line 2], which imply that there have been others, for whatever public) and the reference to an antecedent communicative event context, respectively appropriate intentional insinuations ("if you think you [...], [...] can run us down" [Line 5], and "you don't get it anyway" [Line 6 to semi-Lines, Line 10]), and a communicator group ("You," "the Tokio Hotel bashers" [Line 5]), which her message seems to respond to. Finally, she speaks in the gesture of resistance ("aren't fags, y'know" [Line 11]), justification ("I'll stick with it" [Line 26]), and defense ("[...] alone" [Lines 13 and 14], "so just quit it" [Line 7]), making self-protecting claims of emotional indifference ("I shit on that. I don't give a shit" [Line 25]), threats ("we've had enough" [Line 15], "So just drop it, and we leave you alone. Understood?" [Line 28]), commands ("So you should keep your mouth shut" [Line 9]), prophesy ("you don't get it anyway" [Line 6]), and assumptions ("you're just jealous" [Lines 7 and 22]).

All are communicative acts which refer to an established discussion with existing participants (fans and anti-fans) and known attitudes (enthusiasm and hatred) and arguments ("fags" and "not fags"). In short, the focal clip appears, from this perspective, to be a reaction to a reaction, namely in response to the "hate tirades" and the ridicule of others, because they made themselves known as TH fans *(outed).* In terms of interaction theory, the clip should be placed in a *third position* (cf. Schegloff 1997; Depperman 1999: 71 ff., Schneider 1994), i.e., a sequence

position in the communicative process, in which the speaker shows how he or she positions him/herself with regard to prior responses (hate) to the (initial) action ("outing" as TH fans). Where, if and how this prior communication occurred is irrelevant at first. The fact is that the focal clip implies the given context. Otherwise, the focal clip does not have any meaning without its proper placement in such pre-existing communication.[27] This corresponds to the following sequence:

a) *Confession ("outing" as a Tokio Hotel fan)*
   Starting point: The assumption must be that the person is a TH fan and that this has manifested itself in some form before. That fandom – or "passion" – is known.

b) *Reaction(s): rejection, ridicule, and hate tirades by others*
   In addition, it must be assumed that on the basis of this commitment, the person has already been subjected to negative reactions in the form of degradation of the revered object ("they're fags" or "well, look how stupid they are" [Line 10]) or person ("running down"[Line 5] or "getting beaten up at school" [Line 21]), which are typically condensed in this speech ("and stop always being like" [Line 10]). This is the motivation of the person's own message, and therefore the meaning of the video message.

c) *Replies to the (real, anticipated or imagined) hate of others*
   Read as a case of *Third Position*, the focal clip is therefore a response to the hatred of others (perceived subjectively or implied) regarding one's own life, in the course of which a renewal and deepening of a confession ("proud Tokio Hotel Fan" [Line 4], "I'll stick with it" [Line 26]) emerges.

With this background, the reactions to Angie's clip can now be understood as responses on the audience's part, as well as replies to communicative action in order to be understood. Four such reactions (6.4.1.–6.4.4.), which reflect notably different design aspects and points of contact within the overall responses in terms communicative assets, are presented as follows.

---

[27] For example, one justifies or defends one's self, when attacked as a rule. In addition, the speech contains explicit references to past events, which take the form of assumptions ("If you think you can run us down," [Line 8] or "when you insult Tokio Hotel" [Line 23]).

6.4. Reactions to Angies Reply

6.4.1. Hate Satire

Clip Title: Re: Leave Tokio Hotel Fans Alone
by www.MyTrash.TV (0:43)
URL: http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=B0is2TTORVw

This video shows a young man wearing a balaclava[28], sunglasses and black clothes standing in front of a nondescript wooden partition, rudely attempting to put Angie in her place by imitating ghetto slang[29] and gestures (gestures borrowed from hip-hop culture, such as emphasizing what is being said by throwing arms forward). This is done using frontal and medium camera distances and making a direct and derogatory speech ("Hey, girl, listen up, yeah."). This is followed by insults ("you're fat, have greasy hair and are staring stupidly into the camera") and counter-appeals to attack Tokio Hotel violently ("All of Germany, throw your beer bottles at Tokio Hotel when you see the pigs, man," "they have to be destroyed"). The video is a satirical personification of the type of "Tokio Hotel basher" to which Angie refers several times in her speech. Pragmatically, it appears as a counter-appeal (reversal of the original intention), stylistically, the camouflage gear recalls contexts of deviant youth, terrorism and the guerrilla resistance, within which the camouflage mainly serves the purpose of (identity) protection against possible prosecution. In the present context the need for camouflage is to be seen as hyperbole (present in the speech even through the emphasis on the intended audience, "All of Germany, all of Germany"), and therefore, to be read as an ironic refraction. According to the protagonist, it

---

[28] Although originally a military item, the balaclava (named for a Ukrainian city) has become known as the camouflage tool of the so-called "Autonomous" or the "Schwarzer Block." Adoption of military clothing as a whole is considered an aspect of juvenile fashion trends (see Richard & Neumann-Braun 2006).

[29] It is a mixture of the teenage slang and "Kanak Sprak" (cf. Zaimoglu 1995, Deppermann 2005), thus a stylistic reference to deviant youth cultures, often found in the hip-hop culture, which frequently recruit male adolescents with immigrant background.

is not about actual revolutions and guerrilla wars, but about taste wars, which would have to be addressed, in particular in the case of Tokio Hotel (adherents), a potential message, with "heavier guns." In perform-ance terms, the video displays just what Angie intended to prevent in her video: Hatred of Tokio Hotel and their fans.

6.4.2. Degradation through Rationalization

Title of the clip: Re: Leave Tokio Hotel Fans Alone
by www.MyTrash.TV (04:06)
URL: http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=G1DRp4fjuKc

This contribution also came from a young man. He wore long, loose hair and black clothes, sitting in a private setting, also at medium camera distance. He spoke quietly and pretended to be pointedly polite ("Dear Angie, I saw your video on YouTube and I noticed a couple of little things"). Consequently, he reads Angie's words (more or less) in their original phrasing and comments on the individual passages, meaning to imply that he is dedicated to repeating a sequential reproduction of Angie's speech. He also takes the material foundation to which his speech replies seriously, supporting this in part through theatrical ges-tures of deliberation and thoughtfulness. The purpose of this procedure is to objectively prove to the previous speaker that she spoke nonsense by trying to confront her with the contradictions in her own statements (starting points include the frequent redundancy in Angie's appeal, the discrepancy between the claim that she doesn't "give a shit" and her clear commitment, the strategic assumptions of jealousy, the pejorative and discriminatory use of the term "fags" as well as the discrepancy between tolerance and pleas, (discriminatory) insults and threats). Overall, he presented himself in this manner as a kind of reconnoitering analyst. Accordingly, his replies seem condescending, ironic and pedantic. Through the nature and content of his speech, he makes himself the enlightener, whereby he assigns Angie (and the fan base) the position of the ignorant (blinded) person to be guided to the light. He seems to be pre-ordained for this job. He correspondingly calls his reply (as some sort of absolution), "The Answer."

6.4.3. Adaptation of Media Genres

Title of the clip: "Tokio Hotel Fan Angie XXL" (4:35)
URL: http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=VIem_yDZaBs

This clip takes a step further into the medium: Unlike Angie, a real person did not speak to the camera, but rather communication was done using (mass) media set pieces, an extension of the hidden identity in a sense. The speaker became director. He did not speak, but allowed the images (collages) to speak for him. According to the differentiation of participation roles (Speaker, Arranger and Director, Animator), in other words, in the sense of Goffman, a more complex *footing* (cf. Goffman 1981c), the maker of the clip helped himself to a well-established model of media. In addition to simple captions (such as endorsements by Angie's ironic insinuations "But of course ... we are sooo jealous"), passages from Angie's speech were commented on by means of the so-called Nipple Board[30] from the television sit-com, *TV total.* Without going into the diversity of the messages in detail at this time, this example still shows how patterns of mass media comedy prevail as blueprints within the communication framework of the Web and which effects can be achieved by them. In this case, the maker of the clip was able to frame his contribution reliably as comedy (by using the Raab format) and made the reference words ridiculous without having to talk himself or use words. The whole thing is therefore humorous by virtue of format. The excerpts themselves were already funny in their way, and combining them with the focal clip does the rest.[31] In other words, the adaptation of Raab's Pushing Buttons skit proves to be a humorous automaton, for some eyes and ears, at least.

[30] This is a board with buttons, which when activated show a certain, very brief excerpt of a current television show. The show's host, Stefan Raab, uses this board for humorous commentary (cf. Schmidt 2002).
[31] For more information on the *TV total* strategies for creating humor, in particular also the so-called "buttons," cf. Schmidt (2002).

6.4.4. Communicative Event Capture by the Mass Medium of Television

> Title of the clip: Angie and www.MyTrash.TV at Pro7 taff! (5:17)
> URL: http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=tW0sc-QgMGk

Furthermore, Angie's plea and the digital "tempest in a teapot" produced by her appeal, landed in the mass medium of television: The *Taff Street Journal* on Pro 7 devoted a short broadcast to the subject, which, needless to say, also became available as a video clip on YouTube.[32] In a concluding sequence, the publication of defection by Angie arrived, along with reactions to her response.

6.5. Reaction by the Protagonist, Angie, to the Replies in the Form of a Recantation

> Title of the clip: "Angie is not a Tokio Hotel fan any more" (1:49)
> URL: http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=bndBVw7o00w

In a second video, which appeared about two months after the first set of videos, Angie announced that she is no longer a TH fan. Put briefly, she recanted. The reasons she gave for this change of heart were that, people have been giving her "a piece of their minds," and that she now realized "that it was not right to be a Tokio Hotel fan." As a result, she rationalizes her decision by listing the negative aspects of TH, including her former status as a fan. This attempt (severely lacking in credibility) could easily be seen as an implicit plea to the scoffers to stop taunting her personally by removing the causative factor, namely her support for Tokio Hotel. The fact that this experiment was once more unsuccessful (see below), shows that it is mainly about ridiculing people by communicatively keeping the focus on them. And while Angie remained center stage, she is ridiculed, regardless of what she said and how credibly she said it. Each additional sign of life should be read as "Look how stupid she/they are."

---

[32] Tracking such discourses in the media and international media references in the context of primary, secondary and tertiary references, or respectively to reconstruct their authors, as this example shows, would appear to be becoming more relevant. This cannot be accomplished by this paper but claimed as a research desideratum.

6.6. Responses to the Recantation

Title of the clip: "Re: Angie Tokio Hotel Fan is no longer
by www.MyTrash.TV" (1:05)
URL: http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=ykAohkjX-rg

Even the recantation, which was supposed to terminate the avalanche
which was unleashed, produced commentaries in turn. Just like the first
video, this one backfired. In addition to numerous written replies[33] and a
few video messages, we will take the video of a young man as an example
at this point, who used a digital "Angie wig" and parodied her recantation
by mimicking and insulting her and repeatedly lampooning her inability
to speak freely.

7. Discussion

Overall, we are dealing with a form of audio-visual duel, which can be
understood as a hybrid of older forms of the Web communication (hate
sites, forums), television genres (public speaking and oration, daily talk
shows, confession shows and aggressive sitcoms), television aesthetics
(speaking to the camera, addressing a dispersed audience, *"liveliness,"*
theatricality) typical patterns of activity for television shows (mass appeal
to the public) and forms that jokingly negotiate peer communication
identities (mockery, *"dissing" or disrespecting).[34]* The first step is presenta-
tion to the public enabled by such portals, which may be connected with
any replies and in turn used to respond. Thus, a time-delayed, non-syn-
chronous communication (as opposed to contexts such as chat or video
conference) develops on the basis of similar patterns of activity (in this

---

[33] Some of the written comments detect some strategic intent, such as the desire to
save herself through recantation, and judge with an expert eye, "But she's still a
Tokio Hotel fan."

[34] See Deppermann & Schmidt (2001), Neumann-Braun, Deppermann & Schmidt
(2002) and Schmidt (2004). Undertaken with a view of the activity, the heading
"to diss" or "diss" (disrespect) is used explicitly in the title by some of the clip re-
plies, in other words they frame it as a joke, or attempt to damage "face" or honor
in a verbal duel.

case [joking] evaluation/"dissing") around thematic nuclei (in this case, TH), which may be reconstructed as a sequence of interactive events (cf. above). The proximity to public speeches or pleas (as in Angie's case) or performances for an audience (as with Examples 6.4.1. and 6.6.) create a proximity to video messages, as does television in its role as an intermediary medium of mass communication, predominantly in the form of reality shows (such as the private messages from the relationship show *Nur die Liebe zählt;* cf. Keppler 1994; Reichertz 1999). A specific effect of such mediatory activities reaching outside daily life in the mass medium of television is that more than one specific recipient receives a message ("I love you"), but also that others are invited to look at this event ("Look how they love each other"). Its foundation is a kind of trade-off system: transcending everyday life in exchange for public displays and possibly uncomfortable exposures of personal life relationships. The audio-visual (self)presentations on YouTube seem to connect to these forms of production and transcendence of (everyday) reality (cf. Keppler 1994). Again, it would appear that the publicity (for whatever initial purposes)[35] and positive response should be weighed against the risk of being mocked and ridiculed. However, because the organizing framework of the television and its broadcast formats is missing, possible responses are highly contingent in both quantitative and qualitative terms, due to the overall design of the communication events.[36] Web 2.0 applications like YouTube are, in terms of communication structure, designed in such a manner that, in addition to an inner clique[37], an outer group always exists (though partially observed only in the imagination), which can observe the development of communications and engage in the communication in terms of a virtual "open state of talk" (Goffman 1981c). For this reason, predicting who can be reached, who will respond and how

[35] In Angie's case, it is the obvious, but naïve, intent of improving her (fan) world through public communication.

[36] But precisely therein lies the attraction of such communication services, namely that a "digital irrelevance" (Winter 2007: 1) can cause such a "tempest in a teapot" and this again shows that "awareness thresholds" (ibid.) and in the wake of such, that control and planning capabilities of public communication have shifted.

[37] By this, we mean the communicative interaction in a narrower sense. In this case the inaugural duel which consists of tracks, a commenting function (as a technical solution to the problem of addressing) and thematic *threads.*

can be quite difficult.[38] Additionally, by means of the audio-visual code as such, the co-presence of face-to-face communication is simulated, so that as a result of a plethora of symptoms of those (reciprocally) presenting themselves (body, voice, expressive behavior, appearance, etc.), both the impression of a real duel (if one looks at the clips one after the other, such as cinematic conventions like point/counterpoint do occur) and an additional range of communicative connectivity[39] is achieved. In short, it is getting yourself noticed and attacked in mediated distance communication in media approximating face-to-face communication.

In the case outlined above (Angie), the argument is limited to a dispute, which appears to be predestined for such conflicts. Taste in pop culture often contrasts with the industrial cultural aesthetics of a mediated life style, which are assigned identity-forming functions, especially in adolescence. In other words, the (symbolic) field of youth and fan culture serves as a sphere of tentatively acquired identifications ("I'm a proud fan," "I'll stick with it") and as the location of identity negotiation processes. *The (mutual) hating, and this is the core of the second ongoing written perspective of entertainment hate, is offset at a distance in this manner and mitigated both by genre, namely as "dissing," as well as in terms of object of conflict.*[40] If, as in this case, (mass) communication naiveté or

---

[38] The fact that Angie's clip spoke to people who had never previously taken TH into consideration, but provides them with incentive to respond, is obvious (see, for instance http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XutCqHEXZa4). Her clip provoked them into offering an opinion in the first place. Paradoxical effect: By explicitly addressing "TH bashers," Angie probably makes people who do not fit into this scenario respond with a discrediting statement and thus increases the circle of the (explicitly professed) anti- fans. In short, her appeal "Leave Tokio Hotel alone" had the opposite effect.

[39] Similar to face-to-face communication, audio-visual events invite people to respond to communicative side issues. For example, the way someone speaks, moves, or how they appear. Unlike written communication, because of the abundance of physical symptoms, the expression of behavior stays in the mind, which can always be read as expressive information (Goffman 1981a).

[40] As a rule, "to dis" (disrespect) is used by the protagonists as an unexpected, playful face-based attack, aiming to negotiate positions in the group with skills in verbal duel. This is done through the presentation of one's own (communicative, performing) skills in comparison with others, and in the context of specific group norms. Accordingly, formal (and aesthetic) criteria dominate content. An operative

lack of media competence is the issue, manifesting itself predominantly in the idea that a person can communicate with and influence public communication as they could in real world communication ("Hey guys, it's me, Angie, [...]. And I wanted to say something else [...] Do you get it?"), then the (well-intended) plea will quickly become a boomerang, in the form of media attention neither intended nor anticipated in this way. Accordingly, Angie seems to have quickly understood that "the (media) spirits she invoked" can only be appeased by a public recantation of her former confession.[41] This sacrifice is performed quickly. Fortunately, it merely involved Tokio Hotel.

References

ATTARDO, S. (1994).Linguistic Theories of Humor. Berlin; New York: de Gruyter.

BATESON, G. (1985). Eine Theorie des Spiels und der Fantasie. In: Idem. (ed.). Ökologie des Geistes. Anthropologische, psychologische, biologische und epistemologische Perspektiven. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp: 241–261.

BERGMANN, J. (1985). Flüchtigkeit und methodische Fixierung sozialer Wirklichkeit. In: W. BONSS & H. HARTMANN (eds.). Entzauberte Wissenschaft. *Soziale Welt* Special Vol. 3. Göttingen: Schwartz: 299–320.

BÖLLINGER, L. (2008). Hasskriminalität als psychosozialer Interaktionsprozess. In: S. UHLIG (ed.). Was ist Hass? Phänomenologische, philosophische und sozialwissenschaftliche Studien. Berlin: Parodos: 49–56.

BORSCH, F. (2000). Zur Rache, Schätzchen! *Zeitung zum Sonntag* 02.07.2000: 39.

BROCK, A. (1998). Ein integratives Modell der Humorrezeption. In: A. BROCK & M. HARTUNG (eds.). Neuere Entwicklungen der Gesprächsforschung. Tübingen: Narr: 69–84.

BROWN, P. & LEVINSON, S.C. (1987). Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage. Cambridge: Cambridge.

culture of disrespect is in many peer groups the basis of interleaving of standards, positioning and intimacy (cf. Labov 1978; Kochman 1981, 1983; Schmidt 2004). Problems arise only when the person attacked does not understand the humor and responds seriously (as a normative problem in the small group) or when the immediate world of disrespect is transposed from the general community to personal (social) proximity.

[41] The fact that this isn't everything shows that the recantation is parodied (see Case 6.6.). Generally speaking, this shows that communication can (only) evoke communication (and not non-communication and the destruction of the discussion thread). The second lesson of the YouTube adventure: "Speech is silver, silence is golden."

BUTLER, J. (2006). Hass spricht. Zur Politik des Performativen. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.

DEPPERMANN, A. (1999). Gespräche analysieren. Opladen: Leske + Budrich.

DEPPERMANN, A. (2005). "Was sprichst du?" Sprachen und Identitäten in Zeiten von Migration und globaler Popkultur. In: K. NEUMANN-BRAUN & B. RICHARD (eds.). Coolhunters: Jugendkulturen zwischen Medien und Markt. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp: 67–82.

DEPPERMANN, A. & SCHMIDT, A. (2001). "Dissen": Eine interaktive Praktik zur Verhandlung von Charakter und Status in Peer-Groups männlicher Jugendlicher. In: S. SACHWEH & J. GESSINGER (eds.). Sprechalter – Osnabrücker Beiträge zur Sprachtheorie (OBST) 62. Oldenburg: 79–98.

SCHEGLOFF, E.A. (1997). Third Turn Repair. In: G.R. GUY et al. (eds.). Towards a Social Science of Language. Volume 2: Social Interaction and Discourse Structures. Amsterdam: John Benjami: 31–40.

FIEHLER, R. (1990). Kommunikation und Emotion: theoretische und empirische Untersuchungen zur Rolle von Emotionen in der verbalen Interaktion. Berlin: de Gruyter.

FRIEDRICHS, H. & SANDER, U. (2010). Peers und Medien – die Bedeutung von Medien für den Kommunikations- und Sozialisationsprozess im Kontext von Peerbeziehungen. In: M. HARRING et al. (eds.). Freundschaften, Cliquen und Jugendkulturen: Peers als Bildungs- und Sozialisationsinstanzen. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag: 283–307.

GOFFMAN, E. (1969). Wir alle spielen Theater. Die Selbstdarstellung im Alltag. München: Piper.

GOFFMAN, E. (1971). Interaktionsrituale. Über Verhalten in direkter Kommunikation. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.

GOFFMAN, E. (1977). Rahmen-Analyse. Ein Versuch über die Organisation von Alltagserfahrung. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.

GOFFMAN, E. (1981a). Strategische Interaktion. München: Hanser.

GOFFMAN, E. (1981b). Geschlecht und Werbung. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.

GOFFMAN, E. (1981c). Forms of Talk. Philadelphia.

GÜNTHNER, S. & KNOBLAUCH, H. (1997). Gattungsanalyse. In: R. HITZLER & A. HONER (eds.). Sozialwissenschaftliche Hermeneutik. Opladen: Leske + Budrich (UTB): 281–308.

HAUBL, R. (2007). Gattungsschicksal Hass. In: R. HAUBL & V. CAYSA (eds.). Hass und Gewaltbereitschaft. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck: 7–68.

HAUBL, R. (2008). Ärger, Wut, Zorn – Hass. In: S. UHLIG (ed.). Was ist Hass? Phänomenologische, philosophische und sozialwissenschaftliche Studien. Berlin: Parodos: 23–28.

HAUBL, R. (2008a). Feindbilder. In: S. UHLIG (ed.). Was ist Hass? phänomenologische, philosophische und sozialwissenschaftliche Studien. Berlin: Parodos: 29–34.

HÜGEL, H.-O. (2007). Lob des Mainstreams: zu Begriff und Geschichte von Unterhaltung und populärer Kultur. Cologne: Halem.

HÜGEL, H.-O. & MÜLLER, E. (eds.) (1993). Fernsehshows: Form- und Rezeptionsanalyse. Hildesheim: Universität Hildesheim.

KEPPLER, A. (1994). Wirklicher als die Wirklichkeit? Das neue Prinzip der Fernsehunterhaltung. Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer.

KEPPLER, A. (2006). Mediale Gegenwart. eine Theorie des Fernsehens am Beispiel der Darstellung von Gewalt. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.

KNOBLAUCH, H. (1995). Kommunikationskultur. Die kommunikative Konstruktion kultureller Kontexte. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter.

KNOP, K. (2007). Comedy in Serie. Medienwissenschaftliche Perspektiven auf ein TV-Format. Bielefeld: Transcript.

KOCHMAN, T. (1981). Black and White: Styles in Conflict. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

KOCHMAN, T. (1983). The Boundary between Play and Nonplay in Black Verbal Dueling. *Language in Society* 12: 329–337.

KORTMANN, C. (2007). Das Internetvideo der Woche. "Kuck mal wie doof die sind" (last retrieved on 05.07.2007, from: http://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/artikel/59/101957/print.html/).

LABOV, W. (1978). Regeln für rituelle Beschimpfungen. In: Idem (ed.). Sprache im sozialen Kontext. Vol. 2. Königstein/Ts.: Scriptor: 2–57.

LUCKMANN, T. (1986). Grundformen der gesellschaftlichen Vermittlung des Wissens: Kommunikative Gattungen. In: F. NEIDHARDT; R.M. LEPSIUS & J. WEISS (eds.). Kultur und Gesellschaft, Sonderband 27 d. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie.* Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag: 191–211.

LUHMANN, N. (1984). Soziale Systeme. Grundriss einer allgemeinen Theorie. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.

LUHMANN, N. (1988). Wie ist Bewusstsein an Kommunikation beteiligt? In: H.U. GUMBRECHT & K.L. PFEIFFER (eds.). Materialität der Kommunikation. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp: 884–904.

MÜLLER, E. (2003). Show. In: H.-O. HÜGEL (ed.): Handbuch Populäre Kultur. Stuttgart: Metzler: 408–413.

NAICA-LOEBELL, A. (2005). Am Internet-Pranger (last retrieved on 08.11.2005, from: http://www.telepolis.de/r4/artikel/21/21018/1.html).

NEDELMANN, B. (1983). Georg Simmel – Emotion und Wechselwirkung in intimen Gruppen. In: F. NEIDHARDT (ed.). Gruppensoziologie. Sonderband 25 d. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie.* Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag: 174–209.

NEUMANN-BRAUN, K. (2002). Hass, der integriert? Form und Funktion der Hate-Pages im Internet. In: K. IMHOF; O. JARREN & R. BLUM (eds.). Integration und Medien. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag: 306–320.

NEUMANN-BRAUN, K.; DEPPERMANN, A. & SCHMIDT, A. (2002). Identitätswettbewerbe und unernste Konflikte: Interaktionspraktiken in Peer-Groups. In: H. MERKENS & J. ZINNECKER (eds.). Jahrbuch Jugendforschung. Vol. 2. Opladen: Leske + Budrich: 241–264.

PLAKE, K. (2004). Handbuch der Fernsehforschung. Befunde und Perspektiven. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag.

RADCLIFFE-BROWN, A.R. (1965). On Joking Relationships. In: Idem (ed.). Structure and Function in Primitive Society. Essays and Addresses. New York, London: Cohen & West: 90–104.

REICHERTZ, J. (2000). Die frohe Botschaft des Fernsehens. Kulturwissenschaftliche Untersuchung medialer Diesseitsreligion. Konstanz: UVK.

RICHARD, B. & NEUMANN-BRAUN, K. (eds.) (2006). Ich-Armeen. Täuschen – Tarnen – Drill. Paderborn: Fink.

ROOSE, J.; SCHÄFER, M.S. & SCHMIDT-LUX, T. (eds.) (2010). Fans: soziologische Perspektiven. Erlebniswelten. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag.

SCHÄFER, M.S. (2010). Fans und Emotionen. In: J. ROOSE; M.S. SCHÄFER & T. SCHMIDT-LUX (eds.): Fans: soziologische Perspektiven. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag: 109–132.

SCHEGLOFF, E.A. (1997). Third Turn Repair. In: G.R. GUY et al. (eds.). Towards a Social Science of Language. Volume 2: Social Interaction and Discourse Structures. Amsterdam: John Benjami: 31–40.

SCHMIDT, A. (2002). Aggressiver Humor in den Medien – am Beispiel der Fernseh-Comedy-Show "TV Total". *Medien- & Kommunikationswissenschaft* 50: 195–226.

SCHMIDT, A. (2004). Doing peer-group. Die interaktive Konstitution jugendlicher Gruppenpraxis. Frankfurt a.M.: Lang.

SCHMIDT, A.; NEUMANN-BRAUN, K. & TEUSCHER, A. (2009). "Duell der Formate" – (Selbst)Inszenierungsstrategien der deutschen Comedy-Show "TV total". In: H. WILLEMS (ed.). Theatralisierung der Gesellschaft. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag: 263–294.

SCHNEIDER, W.L. (1994). Die Beobachtung von Kommunikation. Zur kommunikativen Konstruktion sozialen Handelns. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.

SCHNEIDER, W.L. (1997). Die Analyse von Struktursicherungsoperationen als Kooperationsfeld von Konversationsanalyse, objektiver Hermeneutik und Systemtheorie. In: T. SUTTER (ed.). Beobachtung verstehen – Verstehen beobachten. Perspektiven einer konstruktivistischen Hermeneutik. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag: 164–227.

SCHNEIDER, W.L. (2008). Systemtheorie und sequenzanalytische Forschungsmethoden. In: H. KALTHOFF; S. HIRSCHAUER & LINDEMANN, G. (eds.). Theoretische Empirie: zur Relevanz qualitativer Forschung. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp: 129–162.

SCHNEIDER, W.L. (2002). Grundlagen der soziologischen Theorie. Vol. 2: Garfinkel – Habermas – Luhmann. Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag.

SCHÜTZ, A. (1974). Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt. Eine Einleitung in die verstehende Soziologie. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.

SOEFFNER, H.-G. (1989). Auslegung des Alltags – Der Alltag der Auslegung. Zur wissenssoziologischen Konzeption einer sozialwissenschaftlichen Hermeneutik. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.

WEGENER, C. (2008). Medien, Aneignung und Identität: "Stars" im Alltag jugendlicher Fans. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag.

WILLEMS, H. (1997). Habitus und Rahmen. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.

WILLEMS, H. (1998). Inszenierungsgesellschaft? Zum Theater als Modell, zur Theatralität von Praxis. In: H. WILLEMS & M. JURGA (eds.). Inszenierungsgesellschaft. Ein einführendes Handbuch. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag: 23–80.

WILLEMS, H. (2009). Theatralität als (figurations-)soziologisches Konzept von Fischer-Lichte über Goffman zu Elias und Bourdieu. In: Idem (ed.). Theatralisierung der Gesellschaft. Vol. 1: Soziologische Theorie und Zeitdiagnose. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag: 75–110.

WILLEMS, H. & KAUTT, Y. (2003). Theatralität der Werbung. Theorie und Analyse massenmedialer Wirklichkeit: Zur kulturellen Konstruktion von Identität. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter.

WILLIAMS, R. (1975). Television. Technology and Cultural Form. London, New York: Routledge.

WILLIAMS, R. (2002). Programmstruktur als Sequenz oder flow. In: R. ADELMANN et al. (eds.). Grundlagentexte zur Fernsehwissenschaft: Theorie, Geschichte, Analyse. Konstanz: UVK: 33–43.

WINTER, R. (1997). Medien und Fans. In: SPOKK (ed.). Kursbuch Jugendkultur. Mannheim: Bollmann: 40–53.

WINTER, S. (2007). Eine kleine Geschichte des YouTube-Humors (last retrieved on 29.11.2011, from: http://jetzt.sueddeutsche.de/texte/anzeigen/357870).

ZAIMOGLU, F. (1995). Kanak Sprak. 24 Mißtöne vom Rande der Gesellschaft. Hamburg: Rotbuch-Verlag.