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**Media socialisation and the culturally dominant mode
of representation – On the way from the coherent media
to semiotic spaces, the example of *Popstars***

The cultural relation between media and its users is undergoing transition. One influence comes from the changing quality of the interrelation of media, commodities and events. The following essay is an attempt to reveal the quality of this development by using two strands of argumentation. Firstly the *cultural form* (Raymond Williams 1975) of the relation between media, commodities, and situation for which *Popstars* is an example. In this transitional perspective of the *cultural form Popstars* is not at all unique, could be replaced e. g. by Pokèmon, the arrangement of a programme offer for a children's audience, which consisted of TV plus the Nintendo *Gameboy* plus commodities like playing cards. To explain these phenomena several more or less adequate or metaphoric concepts are on vogue like *Media convergence* (e. g. Uwe Hasebrink et al. 2004, Goldstein et al. 2004, p. 2), *Age of Multimedia* (e. g. Julian Sefton-Green, 1998, Paus-Hasebrink et al 2003), *Intertextual Relation of the Media* (e. g. Ulrike Meinhof et al. 2000, Marsha Kinder 1991), *Media Environment* (e. g. Sonia Livingstone 2002, Hutchby, Ian et al. 2001. p. 13 ff.), *Children's Media* or *Popular Culture* (e. g. Hutchby, Ian et al. 2001. Buckingham, David, Julian Sefton-Green 2002; Claudia Mitchel et al. 2002), *Digital Landscape* (Keri Facer et al. 2003, p. 67 ff.) or *Cultural Space of Childhood* (Claudia Mitchel et al. 2002).

The second strand of the essay will deal with the socialization process resultant from of this transitional cultural form. Differently expressed with

a more actual wording of the available theories, a specific socialization process emerges with the complex of multimedia, intertextual cultural products, landscapes and mediated spaces of childhood. In general the concept of socialization deals with the typical and sustainable personality in a society. In the context of the industrial society with a variety of standardized programme offer and cultural products which are consumed and acquired by the individual, media as the easily visible part of these processes influence, perhaps mould the formation of a typical personality.[1]

The interrelation of programme offer, cultural products, situations of activities, reception and acquisition is moving. In this process the relevance of the coherent media like the film with distinct narrative story is diminishing. Therefore the relevant argument to discover a new combined cultural dynamic between the media sphere and socialization is the diminishing function of the coherent media. Looking at the conglomerate of media, commodities and events of *Popstars* or similar phenomena like other casting shows, game programmes like *YU-Gi-Oh* or real life shows like *Big Brother* the emerging irrelevance of the traditional coherent media like a film leaps to the eye. Therefore this essay proposes that multimedia and multimodal programmes function like a *cultural space*. Influenced by Stuart Hall's concept of *representation* and Gunther Kress's concept of the modality of mediated representation a genre like *Popstars* functions as a *semiotic space*. In the theoretical perspective of Stuart Hall this *space* results from the interrelation of the programme elements as «meaningful cultural objects» and the «signifying practices» of the producers and users of the genre and its elements. Gunther Kress definies the semiotic function of the material quality of a sign as being an image, a physical element or a body, a sequence of typed words, or an event on a stage.[2]

The idea of a *semiotic space* refers explicitly to the Renaissance and its dominant mode of representation, the *central perspective*. The Florentine artists of the Renaissance put the viewer as subject in opposition to a

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1 Further down the essay uses the term subjectivity to express the argumentative basis of socialisation on a persons «productive processing of the inner and the outer reality» («Sozialisation als produktive Verarbeitung der inneren und der äusseren Realität»), Hurrelmann, Klaus: *Einführung in die Sozialisationstheorie. Über den Zusammenhang von Sozialstruktur und Persönlichkeit.* Weinheim (Belz Verlag) 1998 (6th edition). p. 62.

2 A similar approach in the perspective of culture and literature was launched by Hans U. Gumbrecht and Ludwig K. Pfeiffer 1988. Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich, Pfeiffer, K. Ludwig (Hrsg.): *Materialität von Kommunikation*. Frankfurt a. M. (Suhrkamp) 1988.

depicted object. The viewer had to reconstruct the relation between the artist and the depicted object by a specific attitude of spatial watching. But this cultural tradition of a subject- object relation is on transition to which the fragmentation and re-integration of the media contributes. This fragmentation of the media correlates with an integrative mode of the cultural products and adequate modes of personal experiences. Fragmented cultural products receive coherence by aesthetic similarity, which opens a functional frame for specific users and their way of acquisition. The integrative modes of cultural products function just by specific modes of experiences, which are based upon a personal formation of meaning within its individual world of living.

The central perspective suggests to combine the analysis of the cultural dominant mode of representation with the concept of socialisation as result of this representational mode. The dominant way to construct images is considered as a representation of the dominant cultural form which influences socialisation by the acquisition of the images as cultural product. Especially Norbert Elias' historical analysis of the changing cultural process at the end of the middle ages supports this conceptual and methodological way. Elias' analysis is based on the observation of the objects of everyday life like knife and fork is supporting the relation between the actual media development and socialisation.

This concept implies a methodological consequence. A cultural product as objectivation (Objektivation) is open to an hermeneutic analysis, which is also valid for single elements, its interrelation and its entity because a cultural product objectifies the specific cultural form, in which or by which it is produced. Knowing that empirical research prefers at this time the concrete investigation of the results of the reception process the following guiding question is legitimate: What objectifies a programme element? (Was ist in einem Programm-Element angelegt?) The suspicious empirically oriented reader can considers the results as the heuristic part of developing a concrete hypothesis, which makes sense e. g. in the context of the *Grounded Theory etc*.

The Structure of the Essay
The aim of this essay is to discuss the actual media related cultural transition by means of *semiotic space* which absorbs the coherent, distinct media. On the platform of Norbert Elias' cultural analysis of the everyday life a model for media socialisation is drafted. Present day examples

(*Popstars*) and others from distant (Dürer's images) and recent history (in the 1980s a boy talks about his favourite films) are presented under the aspect of assumed socialisational impacts, which cling to the objectified *cultural form*. Because the socialisational function of cultural products depends on reception and acquisition the trend to specific patterns like «milieus» and lifestyle schemes will be attached.

1. **The old fashioned TV as a normal feature of everyday life – just a reminder**
Already a superficial look at casting shows such as *Popstars* or children's games such as *Pokémon* needs a more profound explanation than just watching a new genre. Already at a first view one remarkable feature can be discovered, i. e. that the programme of the dominating TV is going to become just one element together with many others, including merchandising products. The range of offerings in the field of popular entertainment is moving away radically from the former situation where the media consisted of single, coherent and easily readable outlets. By now, more than one generation of children has already developed its media habits and media literacy on this cultural ground. Looking into the future, traditional, established forms of children's TV viewing seem old fashioned; this mode now seems closer to that of the reading of traditional books than to the consumption of commodities.

A view back to the 1980s
As an example of a viewer observed for own research, 11-year-old Jens illustrates the main feature of this kind of old-fashioned media reception and processing. Children look for, acquire and process a medium in their personal perspective of the actual theme of their life. Jens likes the comedy of Eddie Murphy *The Distinguished Gentleman* (USA 1992), in which the protagonist acts as a con-man who is *late but successful at last*. As a powerful politician the character performed by Murphy listens to a girl suffering from cancer, who hides the loss of hair resulting from her cancer treatment by wearing a wig. What is relevant for an 11 year old boy? The vulnerable girl? The successful con-man? The morality of the normal people? First of all Jens reads the film as a story which matches the actual issues of his life: moving to an unknown city, feeling alienated and probably somehow threatened, having to hide his cultural origin and

identity in the unknown eastern part of Germany. However, he usually acts with the positive view of eventually becoming successful, and so on.

Two selected statements out of seven

Jens fifth statement:

> «And then he was late to the meeting where they pick offices and so he got the worst one. They weren't even done building it. So he worked on it himself. Then he went to lots of, uh, receptions.»

This statement refers to film images like the following one:

Jens sixth statement:

> «and one time people came to him and one was a girl who had some sort of cancer or something and she got it from playing on the playground where there were some power lines. They were made out of a metal that causes cancer.»

This statement refers to film images like the following one:

On the basis of his genre competence he transforms the film story into his personal story by using main film sequences in the time order of the film.

His seven statements result in a kind of personal short film, which offers one or more messages to a listener. Jens' verbally presented short film is easily reconstructed by video cuts. With this reconstructed personal short film in mind, Jens' actual situation and themes can be understood.

One can generalise this feature of reception and acquisition: A media user sets up a relation to media

– in the perspective of his or her actual situation and in the history of his or her personal life, i. e. his or her own personal theme,
– on the basis of already achieved competency within the social frame of his life, e. g. family and peers and
– the self-referential frame of media.

2. A model for media socialisation which follows Norbert Elias and his explanation of the «Process of Civilisation» from 1937

This model of reception and acquisition highlights just the specific situation of TV as the leading medium of mass communication. In this function TV was linked symbiotically with people's everyday life. This was neither a coincidence nor a planned produced development but a process that belongs to the long-term dynamics of our culture and that nevertheless changes this dynamic. Of course people have established themselves within our industrial society by means of their symbolic capabilities particularly in the way they communicate, interpret things for themselves or to others and in the way they enjoy the moving images. But this fits into a specifically developed subjectivity with everyday life as the realm of reality of the industrial society.[3] The long term development was theorized by Norbert Elias, who interpreted the end of the Middle Ages and the flourishing Renaissance also as the development of new tools of everyday life.

What is the basic socialisation model behind the cultural historical development? Briefly, the specific knowledge and experiences are *inscribed* into new tools e. g. using the knife and fork for eating. Theoretically it would me more appropriate to replace *inscribed* by *objectified*. This objectified specific knowledge and experience is acquired by using the cultural object (fork, knife) in everyday life. The concept of

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[3] This a key argument of Alfred Schütz' sociology of the western societies, which he wrote in the 1930s. See Schütz, Alfred: *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt. Eine Einleitung in die verstehende Soziologie.* Frankfurt a. M. (Suhrkamp) 1974. 1st Edition Wien 1932. English version: The Phenomenology of the Social World. Evanston, Northwestern University Press 1970.

socialisation deals with this relation: A everyday tool objectifies the cultural features of its production and use by the parental generation, which can be acquired by the next generation by using these cultural objects in everyday life. In this environment and these processes of socialisation a specific kind of subjectivity becomes dominant.

In the perspective of Norbert Elias' functional description of everyday tools like fork and knife for the development of subjectivity within a culture, also media form cultural objects like other commodities and tools of everyday life, in which the experiences of the members of a culture are inherited. By using these objects of everyday life the «inscribed», i. e. the objectified cultural experiences are acquired by the children's generation. Socialisation works within the generations, (a) by the parent generation's production of cultural goods and procedures in everyday life and (b) by the children's acquisition of the cultural heritage during the activities of everyday life.

Back to media socialisation! From the 1960s until now TV has been a main cultural object for socialisation, but in the mode of that time, which was the fictional film in the private context of the family, at the beginning without, later with advertising as a window on the world of consumption. The leading question regarding TV as a device for socialisation concerns the cultural experiences contained in television. This question needs a frame, which explains the specific relation of an individual to its *world*, i. e. the factual, social and cultural *outer world* as well as the personal *inner world* of emotions, desires, dreams, experiences etc. By entering this basic relation of the individual to himself or herself and the *outer world*, media contribute to the formation of a specific and culturally dominating subjectivity.

The major media of our culture are able to fulfil an important socialising function because of their integration in the everyday life of our society. At least there are three connecting points between media and everyday life:

– The integration of media in meaningful activities like reception and interaction.
– Setting up institutional relations within a society, e. g. between the industrialised production of programmes and its individual reception in a self-determined context.
– Connecting generations. The rapid emerging and changing of technical media itself contributes to the relation of the generations, because both generations, the one of the parents and that of the young have to acquire the usage skills of new media, but within their different contexts and

modes of experiences. The Internet and the use of PCs are a recent example. For example, the young look primarily for entertainment, they discover the functions of the Internet and PCs through play. The older generation looks for information and knowledge; they learn how to use the Internet and PCs in a scholastic manner.

In the 1930s Norbert Elias did not just describe a model of socialisation and cultural development, he also depicted the modern type of personality, which emerged in the Renaissance by using and acquiring cultural products. He asked especially how the modern self-controlled and self-organised personality became dominant. The main feature of this modern personality is defined by its dissociation from the social and material world. The modern being conceives the world as being in opposite. Self-organisation, self-control and dissociation as defining elements of a modern personality became the prerequisites for a successful industrial society, in which blue as well as white collar workers guide themselves through their self-targeted professional labour. An important prerequisite is to grow up e. g. with the fork, because this tool negotiates the feeling for distance to the vitally necessary food already at a very early age. But recent industrialised food also indicates a big cultural change in the dynamic of socialisation, which leaves behind dissociation and distance as main features. Instead the integration into system structures becomes important. The cultural and social change from distance to integration into system structures is reinforced by new food, e. g. by Mc Donald's food units, which allow free choice in the sense of combining elements within a system. But there is no longer the social need to become familiar with distance by using a fork.

In the cultural history one crucial mechanism to develop distance and dissociation from the world was the central perspective of the Renaissance. For centuries in the western societies the central perspective provided distance as a way to gain experiences. Painting and drawing pictures in the depicting mode of the central perspective put the viewer in opposition to the world. The organisation of an image supports a spatially constructed world in the mind of the viewer. By deciphering an image based on the central perspective a viewer learns to translate the construction of the image into his own spatial imagination. With the depicting mode of the central perspective as taken for granted the viewer was no longer an integrative part of the world but rather its observer, who could understand

the principles of the world's function and reconstruct it as his own product. In this cultural development of subjectivity television became culturally possible, at its beginning just by the definition of the BBC, which defined a TV programme as balanced representation of information, education and entertainment. But with the dominance of entertainment in mass communication from the 1980s onwards an important step was taken from the cultural moulding line of the distant reconstruction of the world by images. It is the integration of the television as one element within a larger system. Television is taking the same path a good dish took when it became part of McDonald's food system. The actually emerging system of multi-medial and multi-modal cultural products is going to swallow the coherent media like the Eddie-Murphy movie. This new system will reinforce specific modes of socialisation and finally new types of subjectivity.

To summarize, subjectivity is formed by using everyday objects, which function as objectified cultural experiences. This means by using cultural products a child acquires the objectified cultural features as a personal feature, which functions in two directions. By applying these objects its cultural features are personally acquired and amalgamated into the relation (a) to the personal inner world and
(b) to the social, cultural and material environment.

In this sense media as cultural products interfere with the relation of a subject to itself (inner world, which consists of self-perception, dreams, fantasies etc.) and the relation to the social, the cultural and the factual environment.

The socialising function of cultural products can be condensed in the following model of socialisation:

> Everyday objects including media interfere with the relationship of a child to its
> – *Inner World*,
> – Social Environment,
> – *World* of Objects and Events,
> – *World* of Culture.

What does this model of socialisation contribute to the explanation of the phenomenon, which is in the main focus of this paper? Obviously, the coherent TV film like the one Jens talked about played its role in the media socialisation of almost two generations. During the period of the growing

of the Internet and the PC a fragmentation of mediated representation as well as the establishment of new modes of its integration occurred. The phenomenon of the media is undergoing transition, in which it is becoming a complex of several media and events. The casting show *Popstars* is a typical example. In the theoretical perspective of media socialisation these complexes or arrangements of different representational products interfere with the relationship of children/ young people to their inner and outer world. In the case of *Popstars* one can assume the following concretised relation to the

– *Inner World*: success, happiness, being a star, ego-oriented identity
– Social Environment: lifestyle-oriented balance between competition and integration
– *World* of Facts and Objects: to find a personal way to select the relevant symbolic commodities out of the overwhelming prefabricated system and transform them into elements of a personal world of living by formation of meaning.
– *World* of Culture: non-reflexive media literacy which includes reading as a modern skill (processing discontinuous texts); integration of a pre-fabricated variety of consumptive objects by individual acquisition.

In order to examine the socialisation model of the objectified cultural experiences more closely paragraph 4 will list the elements of the arrangement *Popstars* and try to look at socialising influences of some of these elements. But first the draft of the integrative frame of such an arrangement of media, commodities, services, and events will be attempted. The concept of a *semiotic space*[4] as the dominant system structure is proposed.

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[4] This refers to the concepts of Gunter Kress and Theo van Leeuwen on «The semiotic landscape: language and visual communication» (p. 15 ff.) and «Representation and interaction: designing the position of the viewer» (p. 119 ff.) In: Gunter Kress and Theo van Leeuwen: Reading Images. The Grammar of the Visual Design. Routledge. London. 1996; Start Hall' «Work of Representation". In: Stuart Hall (ed.): *Representation. Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Sage. London 1997, p. 13 ff., p.36.

3. The cultural heritage of the Renaissance: from the *central perspective* to *semiotic spaces*

After having outlined the model of media socialisation we should be able to identify a crucial and moulding dynamic of our western cultural development. The western culture defines space as one of the key modes of our experience, which is also a heritage of the Renaissance. The proposed concept of a *semiotic space* refers, as already mentioned, to the concept of the central perspective, which was invented by Florentine artists in the Renaissance. They put the viewer as subject in opposition to a depicted object. The viewer had to reconstruct the relation between the artist and the depicted object through a specific attitude of watching and perceiving. To understand the specific idea of space the reflection of the German Renaissance painter Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) is helpful, because he depicted his theory of how to construct the real and the beautiful by using a spatial frame. Because of its general validity over centuries this spatial relation, which was objectified by the fine arts, negotiated the socialisation in the above described way of acquiring cultural products of everyday life. The spatial relation of the central perspective and its diminishing actual relevance is a kind of anchor to indicate the actual changing of main features of socialisation.

The world of the central perspective

Albrecht Dürer looks from his self-portrait, painted in 1500, as a master-piece of the German Renaissance, like a contemporary person to today's observer. This is possible because of the picture's organisation and the high degree of correlation between the subjectivity of the Renaissance and that of today. One main correlation is the central perspective and its view of the world from a distant viewing point to the facts and ongoing events. In its consequence the Renaissance used the central perspective as Archimedes' point, first to analyse and then to reconstruct the world. Because the human being is not an integrated part of the world, it is able to reflect the world analytically and construct it deliberately. This requires a subjectivity and mode of perception, which is based especially on distance in perception and emotions together with self-control. In his graphic work Albrecht Dürer reflects this mode of perception and construction. For example in 1538 he drew an artist, who used a grid between himself and the depicted object, e. g. a vase or a lute. A ruler helps to give reliability in handling distance.
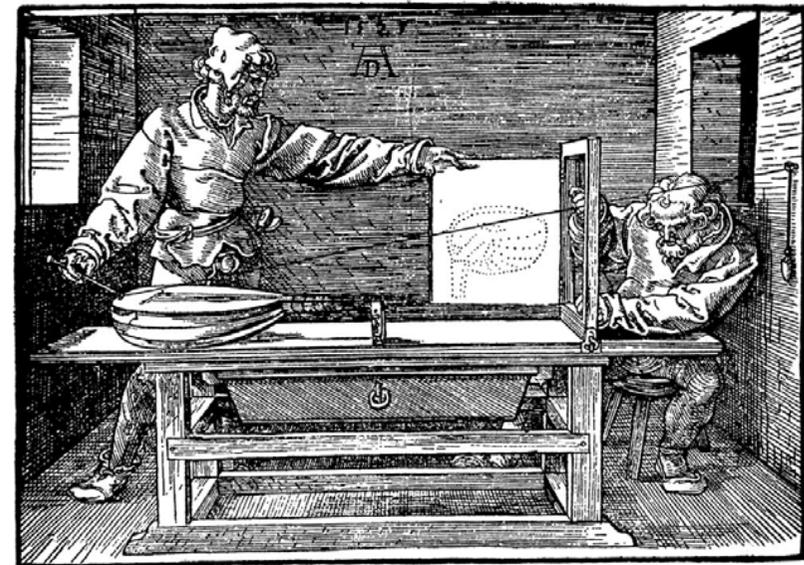
Der Zeichner der Laute. 131 x 188
[Meder 269; Panofsky 362; Knappe 371]   [1458]

The same constructive constellation shows an image of a woman positioned in an erotic attractive and suggestive way in front of a painter, also with a dissociating grid in between.
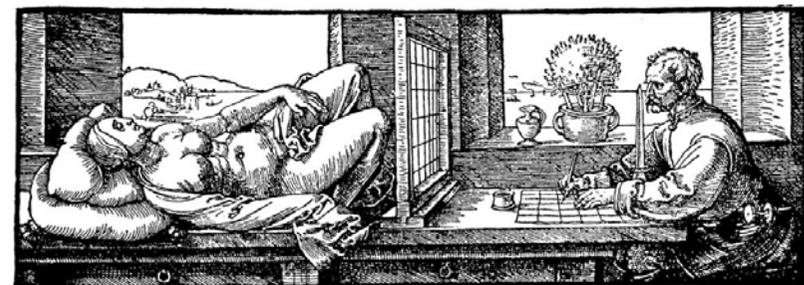

Der Zeichner des liegenden Weibes (erschien 1538 in der
3. Ausgabe). 75 x 215   [1460]
[Meder 271; Panofsky 364; Knappe 373]

Distance is taken for granted and internalised, acquired by the technique of a central perspective as the ruling mode of experience. Albrecht Dürer revealed the engineering procedure for constructing a realistic and beautiful

image like his self-portrait. A human body is displayed frontally and in profile with added names for parts of the body. The matching of names and body parts is done with numbers.
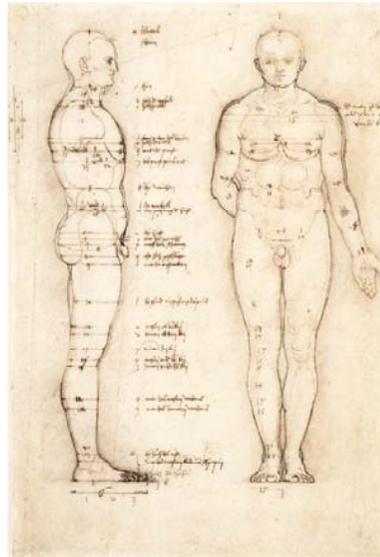
This mode of depicting, in general, of representing the world is based upon a spatial organisation of painter and depicted objects, which is represented in the image by means of the central perspective. From the Renaissance until the end of the 19th century this was the definitional basis for representing the real and the beautiful.

Main changes in media and in socialisation

This spatially negotiated cultural tradition of the subject-object relation is currently undergoing transition. One mechanism is the fragmentation of the distinct, coherent media and the integration of multimodal representations into complex arrangements. The fragmentation of the coherent media correlates not only with an integrative mode of the cultural products but also with adequate modes of personal experiences. Fragmented cultural products receive coherency by aesthetic similarity, which opens a functional frame for specific users and their mode of acquisition. The integrative effects of cultural products function through specific modes of experiences, which are based upon a personal formation of meaning within an individual life-living. The following outline drafts both sides of the actual transition of a mediated culture.

Functional changes in media

– The amalgamation of mediated mass communication and the market of commodities pushes back the single and coherent medium and enforces complex arrangements of media, commodities and events. Arrangements like *Popstars* offer a kind of space, which is made up of its elements and their interrelation among each other.

– Media become just one *provider* among others of symbolic materials for the everyday world. More or less all commodities and services can be used and offered in its communicative, symbolic function. This symbolic function is growing beyond the practical function and it now defines cultural products. E. g. a t-shirt with the word *Popstars* is more important as a social sign than being a piece of clothing, which protects the body.

– The traditional and familiar relation of a sign, a signifier and the signified is no longer reliable, not only because of the lack of a concise regional cultural frame but for the arrangements like *Popstars*, which work as a temporary frame for the relation of cultural products, signifier and signified. In this sense arrangements of media, commodities and events are a kind of cultural circus of symbols, which is presented and managed by the producers and the audience.

Changes on the side of children and young people

– The main trend is the emerging of new modes of experiences with the following characteristics: The attentive reception of an object, e.g. a media programme, becomes just one approach within a variety of patterns of acquisition and activities. The attentive reception is a heritage of the Renaissance's opposition of painter and viewer to the world as object, which loses its dominance for the patterns of acquisition. Therefore the following chapter will take a closer look at the elements of the casting show *Popstars* as an example of such an arrangement of media, events and other cultural products, which offer a space where meaningful activities are possible.

– Within a fragmented cultural society without general and valid frames constructive modes of living and acting move into the foreground. Together with the growing and variable symbolic function of commodities, services and events the personal formation of meaning with regard to the cultural products is a necessary task for the young generation.

– A transitional cultural and social world needs individuals as self-responsible actors in his or her own world of living. The main social focus shifts from the objectified needs, values, obligation, and the definition of general frames to the actor's individual world in his or her personal sense. Explaining and understanding the *world* occurs through personal experiences and the dynamic of evaluation. In this sense the

young generation acquires facts, commodities, culture, society etc. by and mainly through their personal experiences. The modern individualised world exists through everybody's concrete experience with eyes, ears, body, and the personally acquired experiences.

4. The casting show Popstars – analysis of the programme offer5

Media are on the way of becoming just one symbolic source within a complex arrangement of a variety of media, events and commodities. These elements are forming and offering a *semiotic space* in which and to which an recipient can react by individual forming of meaning.

What are the mechanisms which combine the variety of elements into a coherent space? Coherence is provided by aesthetics. But not only integrative aesthetic features given by the producers deliver the semiotic space, also the recipients form coherence by interpreting the given products and their common aesthetic feature. Generally explicated, a recipient forms his or her own meaning, e. g. by calling the casting agency, buying a CD as a prerequisite for voting on the preferred displayed music band or by becoming a part of the fan groups.

The following list tries to depict an overview over the relevant elements of the casting show *Popstars*, which was produced and broadcasted by the major German TV channel *ProSieben* for a German speaking audience on the basis of an Australian model. The TV show with the subtitle «Das Duell» (The Duell) was on screen throughout three months in the year 2003. The following list is organised in respect of the dominant mode of representation and tries to formulate first and not empirically confirmed assumptions on the possible socialisation function of the elements.

Of course one has to ask, if this analytical procedure is adequate to a complex arrangement of elements, which is offered by the producer as an entity and also re-organised as an individual entity by the user in processes of the formation of meaning. What is the methodological difference of these complex arrangements to a traditional coherent media like a movie? For a single media it is possible to investigate both sides empirically, that means to analyse the offered movie as a *meaningful cultural object* and to

uncover to received and acquired movie.[6] In the case of a variety of programme elements the analysis of the single elements one by one makes sense, not just because of the complexity of an integrated analysis of the entity of *Popstars*. More relevant is the fact that different users can put different elements in the foreground of their personal relevance scheme. Therefore especially a pedagogical approach has to reflect the programme and its elements as personally acquired. Therefore an analysis has to be made in the perspective of the *signifying discourses* of the audience. Within these discourses the elements of the programme can assume a different relevance and different relations to each other and to the entity of the programme. For example, although the TV elements are of high relevance for the producer, a recipient can prefer instead the life events or the internet. The objects of the analysis, therefore, are the programme elements and their potential socialisation impacts within the context of the whole programme offer.

In the case of *Popstars* almost no information on reception is available other than the standardised reception data (market shares) for the main TV presentation which are presented below. These data are just superficial but also empirical indicators for the signifying discourse of the audience. They reveal a female bias because e. g. in the age group of female viewer between 14 and 29 years almost 33% are women, in the same male age group around 12 % less. (Further data see below.)

To summarize the general frame of this analysis: At the beginning of a deliberately empirical investigation of a complex programme offer the adequacy of the investigative method and the investigated object has to be considered, which begins with the definition of the object of the analysis.

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5 Fiona Sánchez investigated the elements of *Popstars*. Sanchez Weikgenannt, Fiona A.: *Multimediale, multimodale Programmangebote in der Perspektive von Ökonomie und Sozialisation. Eine empirische Betrachtung von Popstars – Das Duell*. Dissertation Universität Kassel 2006.

6 The methodological model is depicted in Bachmair, Ben, Hofmann Burkhard, v. d. Hövel, Martina, v. Waasen, Michaela: Medienanalyse im Handlungskontext – Handeln und Sprachbilder eines Mädchens verstehen. In: Charlton, Michael; Bachmair, Ben (Hrsg.): *Medienkommunikation im Alltag – Interpretative Studien zum Medienhandeln von Kindern und Jugendlichen*. Schriftenreihe des Internationalen Zentralinstituts für das Jugend- und Bildungsfernsehen, Bd. 24, München (Saur Verlag) 1990, pages146–171.
English version: Media Analysis within an Activity-Context – Understanding a Girl's Behaviour and Verbal Images. In: Charlton, Michael, Bachmair, Ben (eds.): *Media Communication in Everyday Life – Interpretative Studies on Children's and Young People's Media Actions*. Communication Research and Broadcasting No 9, München, New York (Saur Verlag) 1990, pages 116–136.

This object is defined as a *semiotic system (semiotic space)* which consists of *cultural objects* (media, commodities, events etc) within different discourses of *encoding* and *decoding*. This approach refers to Stuart Hall's model of mass communication as encoding and decoding discourses (*signifying practices*) which are linked by *meaningful cultural objects* like the coherent media or live events. The following attempt to display and analyse the elements of *Popstars* is based, as already said, on the elements as objectivations (Objektivationen) of the encoding discourses. Each element of *Popstars* has to be discussed, because the elements can be acquired in different ways by users and can stimulate a potential function for setting up a general pattern of personality, that means socialisation. Referring to Norbert Elias' theory of the process of civilisation and his analytical method the following assumptions on the potential socialisation impulses comes from the embedded (objectified) functions in everyday life. Finally the potential socialisation impulses of an element will be summed up in a *pattern of socialisation* (*Sozialisationsmuster*) of the whole programme offer (see chapter 4, point 9).

In respect to the elements, also to the programme as a whole an analysis can operate on two dimensions. One dimension reaches from the pole *obvious/ evident* to the pole *disguised*. (This pole *disguised* needs an elaborate process to lay bare the embedded content.) The other analytical dimension covers the possibility of an element to be in the *centre* or at the *periphery*. The decision on the status of an element on these two dimensions (*evident – disguised; centre – periphery)* depends on the framing discourses of production, distribution and reception. (Expressed in the categories of Stuart Hall the framing discourses of production, distribution and reception are *encoding* and *decoding*.) The following results aim at what is *evident* and in the centre for an approach on socialisation. This should be acceptable because no practical conclusions for media production or education are intended.

(1) Short description of the logo[7]

The logo consists of a red background with red and white characters. It contains the title of the show *Popstars* (red characters on a white shield, which includes a red and white star). This main title is subtitled for the current series: *Das Duell* (the duel), which indicates a sophisticated, rather noble kind of battle or competition. This subtitle uses the biggest characters in white. It is accompanied by an imperative in small white characters: «Lebe Deinen Traum!» (live your dream), which also runs through all the show's trailers.

Assumed impulses for socialisation

– Also in German the title *Popstars* carries a meaning: to become a star in the music world of pop. This is underlined by the symbol of a star. «Das Duell» (the duel) represents a comparatively strong noun for a fight, but the fight of aristocrats. A duel is transformed from a an affray to a civilised competition by strict and noble regulations. The competition is additionally framed by the imperative to portray the personal dream as real life, not as a day dream or watching fictional programmes.

(2) TV programmes
(2.1) The weekly TV programme
The third series of the internationally licensed casting programme *Popstars* was broadcast in Germany from August to November 2003. Every Monday at 20:15h a show of 60 to 90 minutes was aired on the major private TV channel *ProSieben* for 14 consecutive weeks. Due to the great success of the programme, five additional episodes were put together ad hoc and screened during prime-time on Friday. «Germany's most emotional casting show», as the programme is labelled, cuts into three sections. The initial phase shows the casting process of close to 12.000 candidates in four national German cities. The best 46 aspiring youngsters compete against

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[7] The logo runs more or less through all modes of representation and is not an autonomous element.

each other at the show held at Düsseldorf airport. About half of them get to jump on the plane which is part of the show and part of the programme. Phase two began with the arrival of the plane in Orlando, Florida. For four weeks the potential *Popstars* are drilled to dance, sing and compete against each other. Close to exhaustion, the candidates who do not make it to the next round break down in tears when they are sent home. Two bands, a girl and a boy group called *Preluders* and *Overground* respectively, are formed out of the best eight remaining candidates. Since the bands do not perform in the way the music producers would like them to, two additional candidates, one male and one female, are nominated into the groups – thereby adding pressure and excitement. The third round consists of the road show of the two bands. Recording and promoting their singles the final winning band is chosen during a final live show. The group is the winner which sells the largest number of CD singles and which gets the most telephone votes on the day of the show. Both bands receive a production contract, but the more successful group gets to release their new single and album first.

The overall programme is organised more in a documentary style than a show. Stories are shown in a chronological sequence, thereby focusing on emotional scenes. There is no anchorman to be seen, only the voice also used in the programme trailers guides through the episodes. The jury comments very frankly on the candidates' performance as well as their outward appearance, thereby often hurting the youngsters' feelings. The board consists of the well-known German rap queen Sabrina Setlur and the very strict and hard working dance coach Detlef D! Soost, labelled the «drill instructor». The third member of the jury is Uwe Petersen-Fahrenkrog, the only German producer who ever managed to achieve a number 1 hit on the US music market with Nena's «99 red balloons» in the 80s. He also produced the energy-packed title song to the programme called «Leb Deinen Traum» (i. e. «Live your dream») as well as the first hit single of the girl band Preluders. All three members of the jury are well respected by the candidates.

Market shares[8] of «*Popstars* – Das Duell» on ProSieben

Adults. 14-49 years	Children 3-13 years	Women 14-29 years	Women 30-49 years	Women over 50 years	Men 14-29 years	Men 30-49 years	Men over 50 years.
15,1 %	21,1 %	32,9 %	12,1 %	1,5 %	20,9 %	9,1%	1%

The main viewers belong to the age group of 14 to 29 years. One third (32,9%) of the TV viewing female audience in the age of 14 to 29 watches *Popstars* (see 3rd column), which is a very high score. The children (boys and girls, 3 to 13 years) follow on the second rank (21,1%, see 2nd column). That means, that around a fifth of the TV viewing children watches the show. On the third rank is the viewer group of young men (age 14 – 29, see 6th column), which includes around a fifth (20,9 %) of this TV viewing age group. For the group of TV viewer between 30 to 49 years *Popstars* is not really relevant (9,1%, see 7th column). For the male and female age group of viewers over the age of 50 *Popstars* does not seem to be attractive at all (1 %, see 8th column).

Assumed impulses for socialisation
– Becoming a star by one's own activities and achievements,
– Formalized learning and working as prerequisite for becoming a star of entertainment; pressure and excitement belong to success,
– Competitive but social integrative,
– The pursuit of an attractive body as prerequisite for an attractive life,
– Being expressive, never timid,
– «Female» in the sense of a gender attitude is in the foreground,
– The style pattern of action and suspense, of being modern is dominant.[9]

(2.2) TV: Promotional programme trailers
There are several trailers which deliver a few but carefully chosen images of the casting and the pop group performance. The treatment follows a kind

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8 *Share* is the percentage of the population tuned to a particular programme or channel out of all those using television at that time.
9 See the «scheme of suspense» (Spannungsschema). In: Schulze, Gerhard: *Die Erlebnisgesellschaft. Kultursoziologie der Gegenwart*. Frankfurt a. M. (Campus) 1992, page 157 ff.

of count down to the first presentation of the show with clear links to the calendar.

Assumed impulses for socialisation
– A trailer is highly relevant for a complex but homogenous product like *Popstars*, because it supports integrating activities of the viewers. Finally a viewer has to form a coherent system out of the variety of programme elements. The programme trailers provide the audience with relevant information, what belongs to the programme system etc.
– They deliver the social «plo» for orientation and integration.

(2.3) Cross-promotional on the air activities
During the period in which *Popstars – Das Duell* is broadcasted on *ProSieben*, the *Popstars* theme can often be found in programmes produced for and aired on the channel. The daily screened lifestyle magazine «taff» promotes the *Popstars*' short messaging quizzes played via mobile phone and advertises the ring tones as well as *Popstars*-related news provided for download. Furthermore every Monday at 18:00 o'clock the magazine shows a «taff Spezial» – a special programme solely dedicated to *Popstars*. Also the popular late night show «TV Total» aired Monday through to Thursday at 22:15 o'clock features Popstars and provides a platform for live appearances of candidates and jury members. Various other programmes include so-called «plings» and «crawls» emerging in written form on the screen and promoting games and quizzes dealing with the casting format.
The climax of the cross-promotional entwinement of the *Popstars* theme is reached on the day of the final show in November 2003. Starting at 11:25 o'clock, all programmes deal with *Popstars* issues, thereby emphasizing the importance and relevance of the topic. Either former candidates, jury members or one of the two bands perform in the different programmes.

Assumed impulses for socialisation
– The difference between a programme, its announcements and the connected advertising are no longer differentiated, but merge. Knowledge on the differences become relevant just in specific contexts like shopping.

(3) Ceefax offerings
The ceefax offering gives a brief overview of current *Popstars* related programme information. The predominantly black screen is divided into four sections, which are separated from one another by bright red borders. While the main section of the screen displays the TV channel's logo, a red «7», and some short information aimed at inciting the reader to participate actively in the castings, the bordering lower part of the screen only contains arrows to navigate through the ceefax pages. On the right hand side two separate boxes of equal size are displayed. The upper one provides headlines such as «News», «Weather» or «Football», the lower showing a picture of a remote control to call up the desired pages.

Assumed impulses for socialisation
– Reading literacy: discontinuous texts,
– Looking for and using additional information, which is presented on a simple level of reflexivity.

(4) Short description of print elements
(4.1) Programme announcement posters
In order to promote the programme also through off the air campaigns, large posters advertising *Popstars* are posted at the stops of public transportation. There are two different posters featuring either a female or a male singer performing in front of a huge crowd of fans. Both young persons are shown from below their eyes downwards, thereby leaving room for interpretation. Due to the long red hair, the face of the slim, disco-style dressed girl cannot be seen. The well-built male wearing a partly unbuttoned red shirt and black trousers cannot be identified either. The two figures seem to be standing on stage, singing into a microphone. Fans are cheering with their hands raised high in the air.
The slogan «Lebe Deinen Traum» (i. e. «Live your dream») is printed in large white letters across the belly of the poster protagonist and the *Popstars* logo is printed below their feet. Furthermore the programme scheduling information «Ab 11.8. jeden mo 20:15» (i. e. «Staring 11.8. every mo 20:15») is given. Here the reader obviously is supposed to be familiar with the abbreviation of Monday as «mo» as well as interpreting «20:15» as the scheduled programmetime, even though it does not contain any information such as «h» for «hours» or «o'clock».

Assumed impulses for socialisation
– Being familiar with an important feature of advertising and the details of the schedule of a TV channel. Reading is not necessary. Without the ability to read in a narrow scholastic sense one can not identify the message of the posters.
– Without reading literacy a main idea of stardom is made visible: to be part of the audience, which is in bodily relation to a star.

(4.2) The official fan magazine
Two issues of the official *Popstars* magazine are published on the German speaking market. The print medium consists of 68 colour pages, is printed in 280.000 copies and is sold for 2 Euro through the normal magazine sale outlets. The first issue is available immediately after the two bands are announced and it appears in two different versions. While one of them shows the girl group *Preluders* on the cover, the other one depicts their male counterpart *Overground*. The second issue is published after the final winner is chosen and therefore gives a picture of the triumphant boy band. Both issues have all the features of a regular magazines targeted at a young audience. The magazine's title is printed in large red letters across the cover page. On the left hand side next to the main band picture the magazine contents are advertised. Hereby, special interest is placed on the posters, which make up a large section of the magazine.
The magazine gives a large array of background information on the nine candidates, who have qualified for the two bands. The personal details offer the reader possibilities to identify with the individuals. Furthermore, information on former *Popstars* bands as well as lyrics of the current songs and a vast amount of band posters are included in the publication.

Assumed impulses for socialisation
– The target group of the youngsters and the children are expected to read longer and discontinuous text, which consist of a mix of images and characters.
– The fan magazine offers reflection in the way tabloids cover celebrities in a personalized and non-critical way.

(4.3) Sponsoring print commercial: Popstars party tour in youngLisa
youngLisa, a pocket-sized glossy magazine targeted at the young female, success-oriented audience is one of the three companies sponsoring the

Popstars party tour. In their December 2003 issue they include a full-sized one page advertisement promoting the events. The background of the page is bright red and announces the tour in large white writing. In the centre of the page the photographs of both *Popstars* bands incorporating the programme logo are shown. Furthermore a prize game featuring an 'exclusive meet & greet' with the band members is advertised as the event's highlight. The lower third of the page provides further information on the tour dates and offers web links leading to more detailed information on the events. In the two upper corners the logos of *youngLisa* and Fiat are shown, the broadcaster's claim «We love to entertain you» as well as the ProSieben company logo are printed on the bottom edges of the page.
An almost identical content and layout were also used for the posters and flyers promoting the party tour.

Assumed impulses for socialisation
– Stardom becomes part of personal and body related experiences which produces the impression of reality. The magazine brings the realm of celebrities to normal everyday life.
– Making fiction and fantasies real for the personal imagination.

(4.4) Flyer for the acquisition of new members for ProSieben Club
The first page of the Din-A6 sized 4-page flyer is designed in almost exactly the same way as the print advertisement in *youngLisa* (the sponsoring print commercial described above under 4.3). The cardboard front page gives even more details on the tour dates and locations and favours the address of the broadcasters Internet page over that of the others. Inside the red-coloured leaflet, information regarding the live performance of the *Popstars* bands is given. Furthermore, three event programme points are listed as «fun factors». All this information is accompanied by the relevant photographs. Guests who would like to participate in the ‹meet & greet› with the bands Preluders or Overground are invited to proceed to Fiat's stall, where they are given a t-shirt necessary for the prize draw. YoungLisa's styling lounge is promoted as a location offering expert styling advice and a pop star like make-over. Also a singing and dancing contest is advertised, showing the picture of the product package.
The flyer can be torn apart so that the final page can be used as a postcard. This card needs to be filled out in order to become a member of the ProSieben Club. Since the leaflet mentions that members get to enter the

tour parties for half of the regular price, it should catch the eye of the predominantly young and financially sensitive fans. Furthermore, in order to obtain the t-shirt, which serves as a prerequisite to join the ‹meet & greet› price draw, a completed member application needs to be handed in.

Assumed impulses for socialisation
– Assumed impulses of the other printed elements including the reading of discontinuous texts the possibility of being a part of a real fan group is in the foreground. This links the *real* life of the everyday world, for example getting a ticket for half price, with the *real* events of the star groups, in which one could meet bodily the stars in flesh and blood. A feeling for reality and its different qualities is possible.

(5) Online elements
(5.1) Background information on the programme content online
A vast array of information regarding the *Popstars* programme is offered online. Starting from the TV channel's homepage at www.prosieben.de the programme *Popstars* can be selected from a drop-down menu. After selecting it, the user is taken to the according web page. The screen is divided into four parts. On the top a header with links to the different programming categories ranging from «film & kino» (i. e. film & cinema) and «community & dating» to «shop & more» are offered. *Popstars* is part of the «music & sound» sections and the programme logo serves as an additional, sub-sectional header. Below the logo further *Popstars*-related links such as «casting», «workshop», «jury» or «games» are offered. Once one of these links is selected, another layer of subcategories emerges. However, in order to help the user keep track of the section in which he is moving about, the selected category path remains open. The path to the section is shown in small writing right on top of the logo (e. g. «home > music & sound > popstars > mobile > sms quiz»).

The information provided in the specifically programme related sections such as «casting» or «workshop» mainly contain some written background information on the programme phase, accompanied by photographs. The fewer candidates remain in the programme and the more the personalization of the individual characters takes place, the more detailed the information provided on the candidates is.

Assumed impulses for socialisation
– Reading literacy: discontinuous texts,
– Looking for and using additional information, which is presented on a simple level of reflexivity.

(5.2) Popstars community and discussion platform
In order to enter the *Popstars* community pages online, interested users first need to register. After providing the required information such as name, user name, age, gender, etc. and accepting the business terms and conditions, the user enters the overall ProSieben community zone. Generally speaking the online page is set up similar to the background information on the programme content online (described in section 4.1). However, it seems surprising not to be directly guided to a we page depicting the large *Popstars* logo. Between categories labelled «Grammy 2004», «Madonna» or «Grand Prix Eurovision» *Popstars*-related forums can be found. They range from general *Popstars* – Das Duell programme groups to specific forums dealing solely with either the male or female band. Furthermore also forum sections regarding the individual band members are available.

Assumed impulses for socialisation
– Integration of texts and events, which are industrially produced and delivered, into mediated modes of concrete communication. Strengthening of the concrete modes of experiences and reflection.

(5.3) Online live chat with the Popstars bands
In October 2003, shortly after the two bands emanate out of the Orlando workshop, they get together at one of the offices at the television channel in Germany in order to communicate with their fans live and online. The chats for both bands are organized separately on two subsequent days. In order to facilitate the communication, the broadcaster sets up a particular forum in the community area of his web pages, which is quite similar to the *Popstars* community and discussion platform (see above 5.2). About a week prior to the live chats registered members have the possibility to post messages to their favoured band and individual group members. The forum is very popular, almost 1.500 letters and notes are posted by the day of the latest chat. Particularly female fans do not hesitate to publish private information

such as their full name, email addresses and mobile phone numbers, begging band members to contact them.

Assumed impulses for socialisation
– Integration of texts and events, which are industrially produced and delivered, into mediated modes of concrete communication. Strengthening of the concrete modes of experiences and reflection.

(5.4) Casting application form
As a prerequisite for the participation in the casting, aspirants need to complete an application form. The one page paper is available for download on the *ProSieben* web pages but can also be obtained at the actual casting itself. On the top of the paper the red *Popstars – Das Duell* logo can be seen, further to the left the equally red «7», the broadcaster's logo, is shown. Below the logo section the form contains fields in black writing and personal information such as name, date of birth and contact details are asked for. Furthermore data of possible agents and also professional artist schools visited prior to the casting are to be named. At the bottom of the page a declaration of consent is printed in smaller letters. By signing the form the candidate agrees to resign from any rights regarding picture or tone material on which he or she appears. Colourful logos of the production company and advertising partners are printed at the very bottom of the page.

Assumed impulses for socialisation
– Becoming active for the purposes of one's own personal development,
– Reading and writing literacy.

Further Online elements
(5.5) E-Mail newsletter sent on Mondays prior to the broadcast
(5.6) Instructions for content downloads to mobile phones
(5.7) «Public Relations Lounge» providing information (in written, audio and video format) for downloads to journalists

(6) CD and merchandising products
(6.1) CD sales as a voting tool to determine the final winning band
McDonalds sold the CDs, which functioned as a voting tool to determine the final winning band, before January 2004. Within the contest period of

three weeks during the programme screening more than 600,000 copies of the Preluders CD and over 400,000 copies of the Overground CD. Both singles reached the gold and platinum label and reached number 1 on the charts.

(6.2) Merchandising products
A large selection of *Popstars* merchandise ranging from t-shirts, sweatshirts, coffee mugs, pillows and calendars are advertised in magazines and on the broadcaster's web page. The high quality goods come with the print of either the *Popstars* logo or with the claim «We Love» used in ProSieben's marketing campaign. For both of the logos it is striking that they are mainly typed in bright red letters on white ground. (This design element is condensed in the logo.) An exception are a black t-shirt and a black baseball cap, as well as some t-shirts offered in popular colours of the season, e. g. in pink and olive-green. All merchandise is exclusively sold via the internet and by calling a 0180-phone number.

Assumed impulses for socialisation
– Consumption and participation go together,
– Showing that one is part of a social event,
– Active interference of a programme and normal life.

(7) Mobile, Telephone
(7.1) Mobile
SMS news, SMS ring tones, Mobile phone logos, SMS prize games and quizzes, SMS competitions among fans are offered with regard to *Popstars*.

Assumed impulses for socialisation
– Integration by communication
– *Telephoning ergo sum* – self reflexivity
– Being independent from a location

(7.2) Telephone
Prize games and quizzes, purchase of merchandise, audience calls as a voting tool to determine the final winning band

(8) Live events

(8.1) Castings
Castings offered as the initial stage of application for potential participants in five cities within Germany

Assumed impulses for socialisation
– Working for success and stardom
– Starting at the very first step
– Competition and cooperation

(8.2) Popstars Party Tour
From the end of November until the middle of December 2003 four *Popstars* parties took place in large cities throughout Germany. On air and print commercials advertised the events and posters as well as flyers promoting the happenings were distributed at the locations upfront. Targeted at a young teenage audience, the events began at 20:00h and were held in discotheques catering to the young crowd. The locations were decorated predominantly with red colours. Hereby especially the large *Popstars* banners and the illuminated «7»-icon representing the broadcaster's channel logo added to the glamorous atmosphere. The programme included the live performance of the *Popstars* band as well as an exclusive 'meet & greet' with the members of the band for the winner of a prize draw. In order to participate in the prize game, guests had to wear one of the limited t-shirts stating «Ich bin Popstar» (i. e. «I am Popstar») handed out at the event location. Furthermore the fans could enjoy a make-over at the styling lounge and participate in a dance contest.

The party concept provided an additional marketing ground for the broadcaster as well as it made available a platform for financing this activity. Various sponsors were integrated into the concept, e. g. the ‹meet & greet› prize game was run by the automobile manufacturer *Fiat* while the female youth magazine *youngLisa* operated the styling lounge at the party and *Big Ben Interactive* provided the mats necessary for the dance contest.

Assumed impulses for socialisation
– The physical reality is an anchor for the world of entertainment and celebrities,
– Celebrities can be observed and seen in between the fantasy world of the celebrities and the normal big party,

– The real functions as sign in a mise-en-scène. The fans are just props of a mise-en-scène of a promotional tour and of marketing strategies.
– Concrete social learning of life-style attitudes.

(9) Keywords to the assumption on the pattern of socialisation of the whole programme offer
– To select elements (e. g. casting or merchandising products) as relevant and re-organise the programme offer in the perspective of this element in a personal scheme of relevance,
– To read written texts,
– To watch and consider what success and how it functions; to aim at becoming successful,
– To integrate competition within the social life of a group,
– To feel or to understand life as a stage; to intend to be at the centre of attraction,
– To experience one's own body as the centre of the *world of living*.

5. Aesthetics deliver a coherent frame which correlates with patterns of activities, values and experiences – a short amendment
The following short chapter outlines the path by which the user's discourse of reception could be integrated into a holistic approach to define and analyse multimedia and multimodal arrangements as *semiotic spaces*. The first chapter of the essay referred to the traditional reception of a coherent media like watching TV. For more than a decade the quality, that is the functioning of the media/ user-relation has been under discussion.[10] Just one further theoretical approach should be added: the concept of lifestyle and the aesthetic of every day life. What is the main argument? The diversity of elements of an arrangement of media, commodities, services and events etc. provides a space for acquisition and expressive activities which is integrated by a coherent symbolic feature. The symbolic feature of *everyday life aesthetic* as a general structure links a programme as an arrangement of media, events, commodities to the basic functions of the world of living like values, basic orientations, social integration or exclusion.

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[10] Contribution to the discourses of reception are presented among others by Kim Schroeder et al., Michael Charlton, Ben Bachmair (1990), Michael Charlton, Silvia Schneider (1997), Rainer Winter (1995), Uwe Hasebrink and Friedrich Krotz (1996).

Silvia Livingstone's starting point of argumentation in this field is the «individualisation thesis», which «proposes that the traditional social distinctions» «are declining as determinants of the life trajectory of young people» (p. 109) but «lifestyles» as new «patterns of action» are emerging. Lifestyles are social structures which function by *aesthetics*. *Aesthetic* is based on elements of everyday life like media and other commodities and refers to symbolic coherent structure. In the context of the German cultural theory the sociologist Gerhard Schulze explained from empirical data[11] how to define and discriminate cultural products in a coherent frame for social segmentation within the dynamic of fragmentation and individualisation. Fragmented cultural products are interrelated by aesthetic features and individualisation is accompanied by social milieus, which pre-structure typical activities. Aesthetic features together with social milieus and their typical activities lead to concise lifestyle schemes. Arrangements of cultural products like *Popstars* receive their coherency by aesthetic schemes, which correlate with one or more specific social milieus and their preferred cultural products as well as their preferred modes of activities, acquisition and expression. In this perspective *social spaces* like milieus are organized by correlating aesthetic, activity patterns and basic values.

An arrangement of cultural products like *Popstars* delivers the symbolic, or in other words, delivers the aesthetic interrelation, which offers a spatial frame for reception, interpretation, expression, communication and other activities to an user.

Because of its openness and due to its cultural uncertainty an arrangement of cultural products challenges the user's formation of meaning. The cultural uncertainty results from the lack of traditional cultural frames for using and interpreting cultural products. But by means of its aesthetic feature an arrangement like *Popstars* offers a platform, a symbolic space for activities and social integration or exclusion[12], which is prefabricated by its interrelating elements. The elements reach interrelation by an aesthetic coherency, which opens a semiotic space for the users' meaningful activities. These meaningful activities are pre-stabilised by the social

spaces like milieus to which arrangements like *Popstars* belong or correspond to.

Milieus and lifestyle schemes

As already mentioned milieus are organised by correlating aesthetic, activity patterns and basic values. Based on the data accumulated at the end of the 1980s Gerhard Schulze describes the interrelation of the following elements to the coherent feature of a milieu and their specific styles, which result from users' meaningful activities. User put together:
– the symbolic material of **cultural products** like media,
– their **aesthetically differentiating schemes,**
– their **essential approaches** for orientation to the world,
– their leading images, orienting myths or **values**.

Milieus and their corresponding lifestyles arise by the producers' and the users' activities to combine the symbolic material of media and other cultural products like clothing with values, myths and leading images. Following Gerhard Schulze categories, arrangements of cultural products emerge by being produced, offered and used within:

Aesthetically differentiating schemes with the following alternatives:
– classical music in the scheme of high culture,
– folk music in the scheme of triviality,
– action or disco in the scheme of suspense.

Existential approaches with the following alternatives:
(a) To be anchored within an outside world.
    Possible modes of this approach:
    – Living in a hierarchy and striving for a higher rank,
    – To fulfil social expectations and search for conformity,
    – The world is conceived as difficult and threatening, which leads to a striving for comfort,
(b) To be anchored in one's own self.
    Possible modes of this approach:
    – Developing a centre of identity and striving for self-realisation,
    – To fulfil one's desires and needs, striving for stimulation.

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[11] The data base is not sufficient for drawing valid conclusion for the actual situation, but display a concrete model of argumentation.

[12] The market share of POPSTARS main TV series indicate, that specific age and gender groups react consenting or assenting in the sense of belonging to the social space to which POPSTARS correlates by its aesthetic feature.

Leading values, images and orienting myths
and their modes of realisation

– Sources and target areas: (a) politics and society, (b) religion, (c) individual freedom,
– Modes of realisation of values, leading images and orientating myths:
  Alternative modes of reflection: (a) complex and controlled; (b) simple, direct, without negotiation, striving for relief,
  Alternative modes of acting: (a) security and standards, (b) spontaneous, self determined activities,

Aesthetically differentiating schemes, existential approaches and leading values, images, and orienting myths are basic feature of the formation of life worlds within the Western industrialised societies[13].These try to explain phenomena like *Popstars* and Yu-Gi-Oh, or Pokémon and WWF-Wrestling[14], which can meanwhile be considered out of date. The final conclusion is, that *semiotic spaces* function as frames and structure of the mass communicative discourses, which equalize the function of media, commodities, events, services etc. as meaningful culture product (*Objectivationen*) within a specific variety of signifying practices which link the *encoding* and *decoding* activities. Referring to Raymond Williams' central idea, which was quoted in the introduction, *semiotic spaces* are a new cultural form which offers socialisation in the continuity of the Renaissance but transfers the personal world of living to *a* or *the* main mediating cultural pattern.

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[13] This argument follows the theoretical proposal of Alfred Schütz, e. g. «Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt. Eine Einleitung in die verstehende Soziologie». Frankfurt a. M. (Suhrkamp) 1974. 1. Edition Wien 1932. English version: The Phenomenology of the Social World. Evanston, Northwestern University Press 1970

[14] For WWF-Wrestling, an arrangement of media, commodities and events from the 1990s see the German analysis of Bachmair, Ben, Kress, Gunther (eds): Höllen-Inszenierung Wrestling. Beiträge zur pädagogischen Genre-Forschung. Opladen (Leske + Budrich) 1996

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