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How can global journalists represent the 'Other'?

A critical assessment of the cultural studies concept for media practice

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ABSTRACT

Many cultural studies scholars analyze media texts to show evidence of problematic representations of the 'Other'. I transfer these concepts to current global media practice, especially television journalism. As an exemplar, I use travel journalism as a site where representing the Other is the constitutive part of the work. Standard television production praxis is evaluated through insights from visual anthropology and cultural studies. Moreover, actual journalistic strategies are proposed that help create more open texts and encourage multiple representations. The cultural studies concept of 'Representing the Other' is helpful as a model for text and media critique. Yet it lacks the potential to overcome the epistemological dilemma journalists face when covering others. Only self-reflective and critical approaches towards traditional-ritualistic reporting and production strategies can help to disentangle problematic media representations.

KEY WORDS ■ globalization ■ poststructuralism ■ representation ■ travel journalism ■ visual anthropology

One of the most influential and enduring themes in cultural studies is the critique on representations of the 'Other'. This refers to a whole range of theoretical writings and studies about how 'our' identity is shaped by distancing ourselves from some perceived or assumed Other with regard to ethnicity, race, class or national difference. Brantlinger (1990: 3), for example, called it the main 'lesson' cultural studies has to offer: 'In order to understand ourselves, the discourses of "the Other" – of all the others – is that which we most urgently need to hear'. Hall (1996: 343) calls on cultural studies to 'mobilize everything that it can find in terms of intellectual resources in order to

understand what keeps making the lives we live, and the societies we live in, profoundly and deeply antihumane in their capacity to live with difference'. Many cultural studies scholars following Edward Said's (1981) work use media texts such as newspaper articles, television programs or advertisements to show evidence of this 'othering'. This article moves beyond that to another aspect of media production by interrogating the problematic issue of representing the Other from the perspective of media workers, especially television journalists. My main argument is that journalists have to adopt new professional routines to defuse the complex situation of representing others. Critical insights of visual anthropologists provide starting points that I translate into a new praxis especially for television journalists. I focus on travel journalism as a site where representing the Other is the constitutive part of the work. My examples draw on scenes from two programs, *Lonely Planet* and *Rough Guide*, which are aired in the United States on the Travel Channel, a cable channel owned by Discovery Communications International, the Bethesda, Maryland based global cable programming provider.

However, travel journalism is not the only journalistic field in the predicament of representing others. While the cultural studies concept 'Representing the Other' is helpful as a model for text and media critique, the concept lacks the potential to overcome the epistemological dilemma journalists face when covering others. Only self-reflective, open and critical approaches towards traditional-ritualistic reporting and production strategies can help to disentangle problematic media representations.

The essay is comprised of two parts. In the first part, I trace the theoretical background and criticize the cultural studies construct of 'Representing the Other'. In the second part, I transfer these concepts to current global media practice and reposition journalistic work based on insights from visual anthropology and cultural studies.

The changed situation of journalism

This article evaluates journalistic practice at a time when the profession has come under attack. Media critics have named several factors challenging journalism as it has been understood for more than 150 years (for a detailed discussion see *Journalism* 1(1), 2000). For instance, media globalization undermines the national frame of reference of journalists. Moreover, the increasing profit expectations and competition in the news business have led to a blurring of boundaries between information and entertainment. At the same time, technological developments such as the internet threaten the agenda-setting position of journalists in the public sphere. Overall, the traditionally

secure and privileged position of journalists in public discourse has become increasingly vulnerable. This situation urges scholars of journalism studies to re-evaluate many tacit assumptions and rituals of professional praxis.

This article re-examines one of the essential aspects of journalistic praxis – that of encountering, covering and depicting the Other. Traditional journalism studies have touched on the news routines that structure these situations. This work suggests that the newsworthiness of 'defiance', 'conflict' or 'novelty' as well as the professional value of 'ethnocentrism' (Tuchman, 1978; Gans, 1979) structure the encounter with people of different racial, ethnic or class background. Moreover, journalists do not constantly create new accounts but fall back on established and recurring 'frames' (e.g. Entman, 1993) often limited to a binary, following the US journalistic ideal of 'getting both sides'. This research, however, tends to downplay the power dynamic and the cultural significance of journalistic work (see Carragee and Roefs, 2000). Thus, beyond evaluating professional routines, I present a cultural studies approach that interrogates the cultural and epistemological dimension of this professional situation as a site of power.

By analyzing news as culture media scholars have shown that beyond simply transmitting information journalists establish the boundaries of civic discourse, normalcy and common sense (e.g. Campbell, 1991). This makes mass media decisive arenas where representations are established and maintained. The changing situation of journalism serves as my incentive for bringing otherwise marginal discourses (televised travel shows and the documentary work of visual anthropologists) to the center of attention. Following Hartley (1996: 35), I understand journalism not merely as a profession, occupation or a constitutionally privileged function, but as a textual system. As a textual system journalism is characterized by its intention to 'count as true' and its ability to construct its 'readers as publics'. This goes beyond understanding journalism as the professional function of transmitting information and its effects. Instead, journalism is a cultural practice, led by a community of professionals who use their cultural and interpretive authority to shape cultural memory (Zelizer, 1992) and the production of knowledge in general.

I use the term 'global journalism' to highlight the professional situation in a globalizing media system. Global journalists are not in Weaver's (1998) sense 'news people around the world'. Nor are they international journalists who cover foreign news from the perspective of one nation. The term 'global' relates to an increasing number of media workers who supply content to transnational media corporations and produce their content for a global market. This new global position for journalists challenges the established frames of reference of journalism – the national and the local level. The

development of journalism as a professional field has traditionally been tied in with modernity and the rise of the nation-state. The destabilized location beyond the national setting has the potential for a more complex framing of the Other.

Travel journalism and the programs of the Travel Channel¹ are exemplary cases for two reasons. The first one is travel journalism's special situations in position to the Other. Representing the Other is the *raison d'être* of the work. Second, the Travel Channel is part of Discovery Channel International, a US-based media company that operates cable and satellite channels in more than one hundred countries in the world. To maximize returns, Discovery buys international productions and actively programs shows that appeal to a largest possible audience in a global market. The shows analyzed were produced in England and Australia/US respectively and aired in many countries around the world. Thus, these shows provide a perfect example of the trend of global content providers that journalism, especially television journalism, faces. The question is, how is the Other constructed if the 'We' becomes an unpredictable category? This unstable relationship between location of production and location of reception may also offer a site where new experiments of representations are possible. While this seems to position my cases as *atypical*, outside the still prevailing national-local journalistic frame of reference, they are, at the same time, *typical* and ideal examples of an increasingly common professional journalistic situation fostered by media globalization.

However, not only travel journalists face the Other. The similarity to the situation of international news journalism is obvious, but I would argue that in multicultural societies most journalists report on difference. To rephrase Paul Watzlawick's famous dictum, journalists *cannot not represent*. As a rather homogeneous demographic group recruited from the dominant and established groups in society (Weaver, 1998) media workers are routinely placed in direct contact to a different class, ethnicity or nationality.

Using two travel programs on cable television as examples of journalism challenges traditional understandings of the profession and needs to be explained. Accepted definitions of journalism that dominate the professional and academic discourse tend to rank news and print journalism or so-called 'quality' journalism highest while disregarding 'popular' formats and other media such as television. Yet for more than a decade cultural studies scholars have contested the 'aura of the self-evident with regard to journalism' (Dahlgren, 1992: 1) and questioned the boundaries between journalism and other forms of media production (e.g. Fiske, 1989; Dahlgren and Sparks 1992; Dahlgren, 1995; Hartley, 1996). Dahlgren (1992), for example, constructs journalism as a variety of formats along a storytelling continuum:

To posit a storytelling continuum, between serious and tabloid news, between fact and fiction, between journalism and popular culture, is a subversive de-differentiation and contests the claims of journalism to anchor itself fully in the rational domain and be something wholly distinct from . . . 'entertainment'. (pp. 15–16)

On the storytelling continuum travel journalism holds an especially complicated position. Traditionally, the field is not considered valid journalism because it seems to defy several major values of journalism: objectivity, editorial independence and public relevance. Travel journalists often stay close to the literary genre and give subjective accounts of travel experiences. Even media workers themselves, as in our example, reject the label 'journalist'. Discovery labels the shows 'non-fiction entertainment'. Moreover, travel writers are besieged by public relation and advertising efforts which taint the independence of the field. Also, travel and tourism are often seen as trivial and private activities not worth serious journalistic and academic engagement. These arguments overlook some important issues, however. Far from being a trivial enterprise of a few, tourism is considered the largest and fastest growing industry in the world (McDowell, 1998). In addition to the traditional mass tourism of western travelers there is a growing number of Third World elites who travel internationally. Another factor is that currently there is a scarcity of television programs on US network or cable television that are designated to international journalism. Even if public service broadcasting systems such as in the United Kingdom or Germany still feature these types of television programs, they tend to be pushed to the scheduling margins as commercial competition forces a shift to entertainment during primetime. In the United States the amount of international news reporting across all media has been declining significantly over the last decades. Thus for investigating representations of others, even non-traditional outlets have to be considered. As traditional international journalism loses authority, 'non-fiction entertainment' such as the travel shows becomes more important for domestic viewers to learn about other countries and people. Lastly, travel journalism's problematic situation is closely tied to commercial interests and as such hints at the increasing commodification of information in general (Fürsich and Kavoori, 2001).

Both chosen shows are examples of television programs that are produced for a global market. The *Lonely Planet* series is aimed at 'a backpack crowd seeking maximum adventure on a shoestring budget' (Hall, 1998: 63). The Travel Channel co-produces the show with the British Channel 4, the French FR3 and the Australian Seven Network in collaboration with the Australian publisher of the travel guides of the same name. *Lonely Planet* is considered, if not the inventor, a strong promoter of backpack tourism. Each episode shows

the journey of a twenty-something traveler. *Lonely Planet* avoids typical mass tourist locations, and films off the beaten track often in Third World countries or formerly politically unstable countries (e.g. Ethiopia or Romania).

The one-hour show *Rough Guide* is produced by BBC and co-produced by the Travel Channel. Two reporters (always Magenta De Vine and changing co-hosts Simon O'Brian, Sankha Guha or Rajan Datar) host these tours through countries in Europe and elsewhere. Like *Lonely Planet*, this series is developed in collaboration with a publisher, in this case Rough Guide. The publisher located in London has been trying to compete with *Lonely Planet* since the early 1990s. The show tends to focus on urban centers and cities rather than small towns or nature. This series features a fairly traditional and critical journalistic approach mixed with the use of innuendo, irony and sarcasm. Magenta and partner criticize the political, social and economic situation in the country from a left-liberal perspective stressing human rights, equal access and environmental causes. The show also depicts and critically evaluates the very endeavor of tourism and the problems of mass tourism.

These shows were chosen because, despite their label as 'non-fiction entertainment', they present a relatively independent professional position and attempt to follow professional values established by traditional television journalism or documentaries. Several episodes and scenes of these two shows are used as examples of different approaches to representation. However, this does not reflect an uncritical endorsement of both shows; on the contrary, many scenes in these shows perpetuate problematic representations by exoticizing difference and favoring a western perspective. The scenes used in this essay, nevertheless, are moments of change and hint at new representational strategies. Not every televised travel show could be used for my argument. These two programs were selected because they focus on ethnic tourism and highlight encounters with people as opposed to travel shows that center on cultural artifacts, historic landmarks or nature experiences (as arguably a majority of travel shows does). My selection of these scenes and these shows was based on the expectation that their position on the margins of the journalistic continuum might provide some space for experimentation that the professional situation of traditional 'quality' journalism does not offer. The goal of this article is to use these scenes to illustrate a theoretical argument and not to provide an in-depth reading of these shows.

I employ visual anthropology for three reasons. First, the academic field presents another site where the struggle over representations of the Other is a constant issue. Second, its practitioners use film and video technology that is similar to that used for television work especially for documentaries. Third, unlike journalism, the practice of visual anthropologists is informed by the ongoing critical reflection on the limitations of its representational approaches.

The guiding question of this inquiry is how can journalists under the changing conditions of production within the globalizing media structure develop representational strategies that do not obscure cultural complexities? By proposing actual journalistic strategies, I deviate from both cultural studies and traditional journalism research. Much work in US American cultural studies derives from literature or rhetoric departments that traditionally neither embrace applied approaches nor provide suggestions for action. In contrast, much traditional journalism and mass communication research is grounded in journalistic practice and the media industry, but sometimes overlooks broader theoretical and cultural aspects of the media production.

The cultural studies concept of representing the Other

A main source of origin for studying the concept of the Other lies in the influence of French poststructuralist theory on cultural studies, cultural anthropology and literary studies. This argument of poststructuralist thought is first expressed by Barthes (1972). He names one of the main rhetorical figures of the bourgeois and petit-bourgeois myth of 'identification' as failed contact with the Other. On a more abstract and discursive level, poststructuralism builds a connection between the formation of discourse and 'othering' or marginalizing. Derrida notes this tension at the origin of the text. One of the main aspects of Derrida's (1976: 107) concept of deconstruction as a method for reading texts is to make clear how an underlying opposition structures a text and to put the binary into question. As Spurr (1993) explains:

Derrida argues that the writing produced by this confrontation always involves a 'violence of the letter' imposed by one culture upon the other, a violence, in other words, 'of difference, of classification, and of the system of appellations'. The very process by which one culture subordinates another begins in the act of naming and leaving unnamed, of marking on an unknown territory the lines of division and uniformity, of boundary and continuity. (p. 4)

Another important influence on the theorizing about constructs of the Other is Foucault. His focus is on 'the power of normalization and the formation of knowledge in modern [western] society' (Foucault, 1995: 308). Foucault analyzes how criminality, madness, sickness or sexuality are established by discursive formations. Influenced by Nietzsche, he tries to show how the 'will to knowledge' is always intrinsically connected to power that shows its discursive face in the institutionalized definition of what is normal by constantly reinforcing 'exclusions' (taboo, true-false, etc.) (Foucault, 1972: 216).

Following these theorists, several academic disciplines (e.g. anthropology), the production of knowledge in general (history of science) and the

culture industries were analyzed as possible sites for marginalizing processes. Cultural studies scholars highlight the discursive element of the process of 'Othering'. The single most influential scholar of the process of constructing the Other is Edward W. Said. Strongly influenced by Foucault, his seminal book *Orientalism* established how the 'West' (especially Britain, France and later the United States) through the academic field of 'Orientalism' has been constructing an image of Orient as Other to strengthen its identity. This construct became the basis and rationale for colonial oppression. Unlike Foucault he does not explore a united and historically situated discursive formation within a certain episteme, but shows the linear and uninterrupted construction of the 'Orient' over many centuries: 'Orientalism is – and does not simply represent – a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with "our" world' (Said, 1979: 12). Later, Said extended this critique and found the same discourse of the Orient in modern US media (*Covering Islam*, 1981) and in literature and art (*Culture and Imperialism*, 1993). Said's arguments have been challenged and extended but his work is still the governing voice that has led scholars in anthropology, literature, mass communication and post-colonial studies to critically analyze textual representations that demarcate 'us' versus 'them'.

The epistemological problem of representing the Other

An important issue raised by the research on constructs of the Other is that it seriously questions the possibilities of representing other cultures or marginalized groups (in anthropological accounts or literature as much as in journalistic accounts). Does this mean that any 'fair' knowledge about Others is epistemologically impossible? Clifford (1988) calls it a 'key issue': 'Can one ultimately escape procedures of dichotomizing, restructuring, and textualizing in the making of interpretive statements about foreign cultures' (p. 261). This problem has been addressed in two different ways: one group of scholars hopes that methodological and epistemological awareness of problematic 'othering' will automatically help to create a fairer representation in the future. Others highlight the need for active systemic proposals to foster change and the appeal to audiences to trans-code representations.

The first approach to answer the representational dilemma emphasizes the situation of knowledge production: knowing and fair representation is only possible if a situation of contact is established that allows equal access and input of all involved parties and a self-reflective evaluation of the epistemological problems. Fabian (1983) develops this concept for anthropology:

[T]he project of dismantling anthropology's intellectual imperialism must begin with alternatives to positivist conceptions of ethnography. I advocated a turn to language and a conception of ethnographic objectivity as communicative, inter-subjective objectivity. . . . Language and communication [have] to be understood as a kind of praxis in which the Knower cannot claim ascendancy over the Known (nor, for that matter, one Knower over another). (p. 164)

This idea strongly echoes Habermas' (1984) concept of communicative action and his 'ideal speech situation' that he outlines as a normative model for knowledge production and democratic decision-making. Habermas proposes a coercion-free discursive context to establish a 'communicative' rationality. Similarly, Clifford develops an active concept of anthropology by assuring that 'the vision of a complex, problematic, partial ethnography leads, not to its abandonment, but to more subtle, concrete ways of writing and reading, of new conceptions of culture as interactive and historical' (Clifford and Marcus, 1986: 25).

Said stresses that the critique of Orientalism is not just an 'ephemeral pastime' but has to have consequences with regard to intellectuals' interdisciplinary, self-reflective and multi-methodological efforts. Intellectual enterprises should help by 'defining a context and changing it' (Said, 1981: 229). This effort, he hopes, will lead to a 'humanistic knowledge' that takes into account 'communal responsibility for that knowledge' (p. xix).

The second approach goes further by emphasizing the potential and plan for action. Here theorists argue that the concept of constructing the Other should be transferred from a passive strategy of critique to an active strategy for change. The anthropologists Clifford and Marcus (1986) provide some ideas on how to actively overcome the problems of 'othering' by collaborating with indigenous ethnographers. They say that not only do those scholars provide an in-depth view of their own cultures, but other voices help shift the imbalance in academic discourse. Another idea explicated by Clifford and Marcus is the inclusion of new ways of writing including multi-vocal post-modern texts. Clifford (1988) stresses a new situation for ethnographic work that no longer should be based on static ideas of culture but has to take into account the movements and hybridization of current globalizing dynamics.

Beyond anthropology and literature, mass media are decisive sites where knowledge about the Other is constructed. Stuart Hall (1997: 270) provides some suggestions for trying to contest 'a dominant regime of representation'. His premise for the analysis of representation is the poststructural principle that 'meaning can never be finally fixed'. This, in turn, opens up a potential for shifting representations. Hall describes the concept of trans-coding as 'taking an existing meaning and re-appropriating it for new meanings'

(p. 270). He proposes a strategy located '*within* the complexities and ambivalence of representations itself, . . . [that] tries to *contest it from within* . . . in an ongoing struggle over meaning and representation' (p. 274; emphasis in the original). However, Hall's strategy is difficult to implement as an actual journalistic strategy. It assumes that it is clear which representations are clearly positive or negative. Also, Hall refers to the audiences as the main actors engaged in breaking up representations. Further, he underestimates the journalists' struggle over conflicting or ambiguous representations.

The journalistic problem of representing the Other

Journalism and media praxis hold a unique position in the creation of representations. Yet so far, the ongoing scholarly debate on the problems of representation has not dealt with the epistemological situation of media workers. How can the concept of representations of the Other be transformed from a passive strategy of text critique to an active strategy for change of media production? To find new journalistic strategies for reporting on the Other is of new importance in this emerging postmodern and media-saturated era in which the Other has become a prevalent part of the inexhaustible 24-hour media feed. What is the role of journalists at a time when the concept of 'foreign' is in transition, as, for example, the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman argues? According to Bauman, nation-states can no longer label the 'foreign' by keeping it outside national borders. Instead, clear national demarcations have been replaced by the unavoidable co-existence of a diversity of cultures, traditions and lifestyles, which cannot easily be integrated or neutralized. The question now is not how to define and represent the Other, and the 'foreign', in order to bring it under control but, instead, how to coexist on a daily basis (Bauman, 1997).

This issue demands media studies work on models that provide ideas for journalists and the culture industries 'on what basis may human groups accurately (and we must add morally) be distinguished' (Clifford, 1988: 273). Traditional media theory suggested that one of the main functions of democratic mass media is societal integration (e.g. Siebert et al., 1956). But this concept of integration is based on the idea of a strong nation-state. In the postmodern era, borders have become more transient and fluid. What are the new functions of the media when global and local centrifugal powers seem to explode? Travel journalism always operated under these conditions. In fact, the very acceptance of difference and the Other is constitutive to its existence. The analyzed shows can be taken as (effective and less effective) examples for new media strategies.

Media workers are not the only ones who are affected by this problem over representation. In fact, visual anthropologists are in an ongoing debate about the difficulties of representation that is especially relevant for television journalism. Therefore, I give an introduction to some pertinent issues in visual anthropology and critically evaluate their applicability for television journalism before moving on to the proposal of new journalistic strategies.

Strategies for difference: visual anthropology as an exemplar

As early as the 19th century, anthropologists used photography and later the methods of documentary film-making, but the field of visual anthropology itself was established as a sub-discipline around the Second World War with Margaret Mead's work becoming especially influential. Initially, solutions for technical problems occupied most debates in the field. However, since the late 1970s along with the general epistemological crisis in anthropology, the methods of visual anthropology came under question. Banks and Morphy (1997) define the range of the field: 'On the one hand visual anthropology concerns the use of visual material in anthropology . . . on the other it is the study of visual systems and visual culture' (p. 1). A considerable amount of research in visual anthropology analyzes the appropriateness of visual media (photography, film, video) and visual objects (art) as explanatory and documentary method and object of data collection (e.g. Hockings, 1995; Ruby 2000). Along with these methodological inquiries, the discipline has undergone – as has anthropology as a whole – an enduring process of questioning its epistemological and ontological premises of knowledge production. This reflexivity is where visual anthropology can be helpful for my project:

Anthropology as a discipline is itself a representational process, engaged in an activity of cultural translation or interpretation. It involves the representation of one culture or segment of society to an anthropological audience which itself includes people with different cultural backgrounds who operate on varying premises. (Banks and Morphy, 1997: 2)

Many visual anthropologists stress how the field should move towards a theoretical engagement with visual systems in general. A similar change would be necessary in journalism schools to move beyond uncritical skills education. Critical anthropological research on documentaries can inform many of these critical investigations.

Anthropology's long-lasting relationship with cinema led to an early objection to the realist paradigm (film as neutral data, observational realism). More reflexive anthropologists have tried to challenge the constructedness of film.

They have emphasized the presence of the filmmaker, the observer effect, and the techniques of editing. They have been concerned with releasing the potential of film to go beyond the constraints of a written genre by developing . . . 'participatory cinema' and by using indigenous voices as an important part of their texts. (Banks and Morphy, 1997: 26–7)

Recent projects in visual anthropology theorize the semiotics of visual and/or oral representation (Tomaselli, 1997, 1996).

Throughout many of the latest writings in visual anthropology there is the impetus to move from mere criticism to active development of new forms of representation. Banks and Morphy (1997) for example, insist that 'it is the task of visual anthropology, having been for so long in essence a deconstructive discipline, to transcend the political nature of presentation and to rethink its strategies for engaging with the world' (p. 31). They also anticipate productive collaboration between anthropologists and artists, documentary film-makers, photographers and television producers, hoping that 'if anthropology frees itself from rigid disciplinary boundaries, it may be possible for the television documentary to become a form of local anthropology, rather than a slot where anthropological films can be shown' (p. 30).

Loizos (1997), Nolley (1997) and Banks (1994) provide important criticisms to the visual logic of anthropological documentary work. By analyzing filming approaches and the problems of traditional documentary, visual anthropologists question the conventional realistic representational style in anthropological documentaries that 'conceal[s] its own constructive practice' (Nolley, 1997: 269). Robert Flaherty's 1922 *Nanook of the North* is often utilized to illustrate that staging of scenes, the hidden instruction of the camera, and the western structuring of the sequences (with titles) are all early examples of creating pseudo-realistic images on screen that had been imitated. Nolley (1997) explains:

At some moments, the world seems to speak directly from the documentary screen, and yet that simplicity and directness is always the product of a representational strategy mediated by a variety of forces which are rendered largely invisible by the documentary tradition . . . as it continues to be practiced on television. (p. 268)

Nolley also criticizes the use of a narrator as 'the authority and disembodied voice-over presence of the Voice of God narrator' (p. 271). Another point of critique is the fact that traditional documentary filming creates an effect of simultaneity and spontaneity, whereas in reality, directors and producers often actively stage events (e.g. simulated interviews where questions have been edited out). Nolley, instead, favors more open production methods. He uses as positive examples Pier Paolo Pasolini's 1969 *Medea*, Trinh T. Minh-ha's 1985 *Naked Spaces – Living is Round* and the more than 14-hour

documentary *The Journey* (1987) by Peter Watkins. Nolley favors strategies that break with viewer expectations. For example, the reflexive strategies by Pasolini who shows himself in a window with his camera. Nolley also prefers the fracturing and diverse scope of Trinh's filmic style that 'challenge[s] the Western viewer's habit of thinking . . . of a non-Western region as a unitary place or of its inhabitants as one people'. Instead of using one narrator, Trinh uses three with decisively different perspectives; the relationship between commentary and pictures is asynchronous at times to question the very act of commentary. Strategies (such as long pans that lead into nowhere) may stimulate active viewing. Nolley also approves of Watkins' strategy to interrupt and speak over his taped voice in interviews, leave silence and include different international perspectives: 'He constructs the film deliberately to provide multiple spaces for an audience to use to develop a dialogue with the film rather than being dominated by the film as a monologue' (Nolley, 1997: 280).

Loizos (1997), however, sees limitations of reflexivity strategies (such as showing of the production process, identification of film-maker, comments by the subjects of the film about the process). He warns:

Sometimes these devices and approaches are used in the service of a heightened realism. That is, the very dialogue about filming stands to add greater authenticity to the otherwise natural and spontaneous surfaces of the film's action. It is as if both filmmakers and subjects were saying 'This film is not the result of some sort of specially constructed situation to illustrate a point. It is rather a real record of the self-conscious interactions between filmmakers and film subjects. Here, see for yourself'. (p. 94)

Loizos presents an indigenous film project by Australian aborigines that depicts encounters between aboriginal women and white men. The film shows these women not merely as victims but more as members of a spontaneous resistance movement who with wit and humor reflect on sexual encounters. However, Loizos also problematized the idea of indigenous films, because they in turn can be essentializing, and the conditions of production may stay in the dark.

Banks (1994: 35) examines anthropologically themed productions on British television. He criticizes them for not 'alerting the audience to the contingency of anthropological knowledge' including indigenous voices. Banks favors anthropologist Maurice Bloch's idea of 'discussivness [sic]':

Words directly from the informant's mouth are no more truthful or accurate than those of the omniscient narrator, but when taken together or in combination with images that seem to tell a still different story, they may alert the viewer to the contingent nature of such knowledge. (p. 37)

Banks welcomes the almost universal use of sub-titles in place of voice-over translation in interviews with non-English speakers but complains that 'the indigenous discourse is still framed and bounded by the mellifluous tone of largely male, middle-class, British narrators' (p. 36). Overall on British television, he still sees a dominance of traditional conventions of documentary, such as staged interviews, reliance on cutaways and establishing shots, and avoidance of long takes. Banks also condemns the static fixating of cultures in televised anthropology programs and the tendency to present people without history. Banks suggests television could learn from anthropology by privileging history over culture, and by 'a recognition that members of other cultures do not always speak with one voice' (p. 38).

More recently, Ruby (2000) argues that the inherent limitations of documentaries and broadcast television demand anthropologists to reject the convention of these formats and develop their own visual style. Despite systemic and motivational differences, visual anthropology can be an important influence on television journalism covering the Other. Visual anthropologists have presented many important points on the process of representation. Whereas within cultural studies there are myriad examples of textual representation, there is hardly any work on how the process of encoding is culturally shaped. Here cultural studies can learn an important lesson from visual anthropology (see Tomaselli, 1996). The discussions of visual anthropologists draw attention to several main issues that will guide the following proposal of journalistic strategies:

- 1 The power relations of representation work have to be made obvious.
- 2 Culture should be understood as dynamic as opposed to static within the global–local nexus.
- 3 The Other should be accepted as actively creating and countering representations.
- 4 The 'reality' of film and documentaries are constructed; thus the pursuit of 'more real' or 'authentic' representations is inherently limited.

Mediated representations involve complex, active and always incomplete processes reflecting the ongoing global cultural developments.

Issues of applicability

The high degree of reflexivity makes visual anthropology an intriguing model for conceptualizing new forms of journalism on television. However, three

issues have to be considered when applying these concepts to television journalism. One issue concerns the influence of institutional constraints on new television strategies; the other addresses the epistemology of journalism; and the third refers to representational strategies and journalistic practice.

Institutional constraints

The examples of current anthropological documentaries seriously challenge common representational styles of television. Only a strong engagement of television producers and a commitment to experiments would allow the implementation of these concepts into regular television programming. Yet many restraints prevent a cable network such as Discovery or the Travel Channel from employing these techniques. Advertiser-funded television that has to appeal to global affluent audiences is likely to center its production on mainstream content and common production techniques that do not upset audience expectations. Advertisers opt for shows that have predictable audiences and producers expect audiences to be only moderately willing to engage with complicated material. The television-viewing situation is, after all, one of semi-attention. Furthermore, personalized viewing strategies (fostered by the remote control) hinder complicated scenes (visual and aural) and may also lead to viewer loss. This strategy tends to foster a risk-averse approach to program changes by continuously recycling established genres and production methods.

The position of journalism

Employing anthropologists as advisors may be another strategy that may improve cross-cultural television. For example, Banks (1994) criticized British television shows on anthropological topics for either not using anthropologists as advisors or not really implementing and reflecting current anthropological concepts. This idea has certain problems. I favor a position for journalism (be it anthropological, science, travel or political journalism) that is precisely between and not part of other institutions (science, travel industry, politics, audience). While I encourage the inclusion, to stay in Bank's example, of anthropologists as advisors or experts, a television show with an anthropological theme cannot be seen as a substitute for or replication of anthropological academic work (see Ruby, 2000). While the popularity of visual anthropology and the crossover of many anthropology students to documentary departments (at least in Britain) may have blurred the boundaries, there are distinctively different epistemological and ontological ways and routines of producing knowledge in the field of journalism and the field of

anthropology or any other academic discipline. This happens primarily because journalism caters toward a different, more general audience – broader than academic disciplines – and needs to generate a profit.

Critics may argue that journalism (and television production) will always lead to a watered-down version of ‘expert’ (anthropologists’, scientists’, travel consultants’, politicians’) knowledge. However, the exceptional (and often-constitutionally secured) position of media in democracies places journalism in its own specialist position. Inasmuch as I object to prioritizing journalism and its constructions of reality over other constructions, all constructions are synchronous productions of knowledge grounded in their respective political, economic and social conditions. Journalists are often – to use Langenbucher’s (1975) term – ‘mediators’ between other societal institutions of knowledge production. This demands a more active role – journalism that is critical and open about its methods and philosophies and does not hide behind the seemingly neutral stance of ‘objective’ journalism. Journalism in modernity tended to favor the presentation of a narrative leading to a solution or closure. The acknowledgement developed here of complexity, along with an open definition of ‘story’, may suggest a new form of postmodern journalism.

Altering journalistic practice

Representations, then, have to be judged according to their openness, i.e. how many possible aspects of the ‘story’ have been told and accepted, how ‘readerly’ or ‘writerly’ the text is (Barthes, 1974). Thus, strategies of media representations must be continuously questioned, because cultural practices are also constantly changing. It is up to critics to show if media elude, avoid or suppress certain elements (because of advertising pressure, institutional constraints, governmental pressure, technical shortcomings, hindered access or hegemonic thought systems such as in the case of lingering colonial representation). However, since at any given time not all possible aspects of any representation can be known, journalists have to create ways of illuminating its conditions of production and methods to allow for a possible range of decodings. Journalism and its academic institutions have to be active parties in criticizing and opening the methods of media representation. Based on some examples from the analyzed travel shows, I propose strategies that can alter journalistic practice. This provides more subtle strategies that television journalists can employ within the medium’s technical and economic constraints. If some of these strategies seem limited, they are. Nevertheless, these strategies, situated in the global television industry and focused particularly on travel journalism, provide critical new ideas for all areas of journalism.

Journalistic strategies of change

I propose a style of journalism influenced by postmodern aesthetics and explain how the analyzed shows already use aspects of this aesthetic. So far, postmodern theory often perceives television as an example of postmodern culture and its inclination towards surface and preference for pastiche. However, postmodern strategies can also be used to problematize representations.

Based on the concepts of critical visual anthropology, three inter-related themes are taken up in the following proposals of new journalistic strategies for travel shows and global journalism:

- 1 showing the production conditions of the programs;
- 2 providing space for other voices; and
- 3 working toward a fluid rather than a static and fixed television logic.

The underlying idea is that despite limitations, television in a global context does allow for certain creative latitude. While experimental television productions are a valuable genre, the advertising and subscriber financed global television such as the Travel Channel and its owner Discovery are unlikely to provide a forum for this work. However, there is a creative space even within the mainstream commercialized global cable television that can be expanded. Some of these strategies have already been employed in the analyzed travel shows *Rough Guide* and *Lonely Planet*; they can be taken as a starting point for teaching television production and documentary in journalism schools as well as implementing production variations in the field.

Contextualizing coverage

Despite the fact that Travel Channel broadcasts 24 hours of travel-related programs, its range is limited to themes of travel as a leisure activity (e.g. travel to foreign countries, travel and food, extreme sports and traveling, etc.). I suggest widening this thematic base to programs that explain the context of modern travel and mass tourism. The entertainment concept of the channel only allows for a limited range of critical and investigative reporting. Nevertheless, the Travel Channel could air regular specials on the social, historical, political and economic contexts of travel. There should be, for example, special programs that feature new forms of soft and eco-tourism. Other shows could highlight attempts to develop sustained tourism projects in Third World countries. Historical programs (e.g. on the rise and fall of British seaside resorts) would help place current tourism in perspective. Even if these shows were packaged under an entertainment concept, their content would still

contextualize contemporary tourism. These specials would also support the credibility factor on which the 'non-fiction entertainment' brand of the Travel Channel and Discovery relies. However, the development of the program lineup of the Travel Channel over the last several years documents the economic constraints of my proposal. Discovery seems to follow the risk-averse programming approach of major media organizations. Rather than extending the array of in-depth coverage and genres that a cable channel centered on one theme would suggest, Discovery (especially since taking full ownership of the channel in 1999) limited its range of shows to cost-effective popular formats which emphasize adventure travel and individualistic approaches to travel. Thus, applying these ideas to general media production, the trend to specialization and narrow-casting hinders the contextualization of representations and limits the openness of the text.

Alienation effects

The German dramatist and playwright Berthold Brecht developed the alienation effects (*Verfremdungseffekt*) for his epic theater in the 1920s. He used theatrical devices such as a non-emotional acting style, unrealistic dialogue or anachronistic costumes to disturb the audience's emotional connection to the play, instead forcing them into an attitude of critical distance (e.g. Banham, 1995). Brecht favored an anti-representational style of theater in which the audience should be prevented from identifying with the actors. He hoped to stimulate a rational critique of contemporary economic, political and social practices. The weight and effectiveness of these methods has been questioned with regard to the theater. Also, postmodern critique would challenge Brecht's idea that rational critique will automatically lead to change.

Nonetheless, television could effectively use Brecht's method to problematize its practice. It extends Nolley's (1997) and other visual anthropologists' preference for strategies that break with viewers' expectations. *Verfremdung* could break the narrative by displaying its production methods. This can be done directly by producers/journalists or indirectly through the selection of ambiguous scenes. The analyzed shows already included small moments of *Verfremdung*, often more passively than Brecht's active stage devices. The strongest cases of alienation occurred when 'locals' 'did not play along'. Traditional journalistic practice would edit these impairments, but these shows, by including them, created a break in the narrative.

For instance, when *Lonely Planet* visited a Pacific Island the anchor Ian Wright interviewed a local chief. They talked about the division of labor, the

chief explaining that women carry the main share of work while men do not participate. Suddenly, the chief turns to Ian and tries to convince him that this is a much more pleasant division of labor, suggesting that 'you should copy our custom'. All Ian can respond with is 'there would be a revolution' and an insecure laugh. The Pacific Islander does not receive an answer as to why it may not be acceptable for British women to follow the model. Put on the spot, Ian understandably cannot find a way of explaining complex gender relationships. But this is exactly the principle of many interviews with the visited cultures – having 'locals' explain in two or three sentences what complex traditions are all about. By leaving Ian's incapability as the 'interviewee' in the program, the shortcomings of sound bite interviews, a standard television technique, are visible. Thus, the traditional journalistic role of the interviewer as the all-knowing interrogator became overturned; this is a typical strategy of *Verfremdung*.

Another moment of *Verfremdung* is in a *Lonely Planet* visit to Namibia. The host Andrew Datta strongly emphasizes the remoteness of the part of Namibia (Ovamboland) and its tribes ('Some tribes have never seen white people'). At the village, the visit is framed like an anthropological contact. Through two translators Datta negotiates with the chief. Andrew asks the chief what he thinks about whites. The chief firmly points out that while it is clear to him that the whites are from beyond his area, he has learned how to cooperate. And he stresses 'You are coming from very far for making a lot of money with this film'. Andrew, flabbergasted, can only answer with a funny grimace and the remark that he is not making the money but rather 'them' (pointing at the camera). Showing the poignant comments of the chief breaks the anthropological narrative that positioned this tribe (through images and voice-overs) as an uncivilized and less intelligent Other. Even Andrew's condescending voice-over 'Back in civilization' which provides the transition into the next scene in a Namibian city may become less effective as a consequence of this alienation.

Another indirect *Verfremdung*, repeatedly used by *Lonely Planet* and *Rough Guide*, is the theme of disappointed expectations. For instance, during *Lonely Planet* host Ian Wright's climb of Kilimanjaro in Tanzania expectations are raised by interviews with passing western tourists who, on their return, stress how sensational the climb is. After an extremely difficult climb, all Ian can say on the peak is that this climb did not give him the promised 'sense of achievement', but rather almost killed him. By interrupting the traditional narrative of travel as adventurous discovery, it allows others to be framed differently from just picturesque exotic bystanders in a quest for western self-fulfilment.

Postmodern play with representations

Critics of postmodern aesthetics tend to condemn the postmodern inclination to self-referentiality (i.e. media relating back to other media constructions) as an indication of superficiality and simulated hyper-reality. However, as an aesthetic principle it can help illuminate the constructedness of television productions that some visual anthropologists favor in their work as well. Tourism has always depended on the successful creation of images. Juxtaposing the traditional dichotomized images with fluid hybrid images smashes the monolithic totality of those images. For example in an episode on Hawaii, *Rough Guide* host Magenta de Vine points out a poster with a traditional looking 'Hawaiian beauty' and compares this image to the contemporary situation of women on the islands, while the camera cuts to rapid images of modern Hawaiian women of diverse ethnic and class backgrounds. If these programs employed this strategy more aggressively, travel journalism could exemplify an open struggle over representation similar to that of Clifford's idea of exhibitions in multi-cultural junctures:

The relations of power whereby one position of humanity can select, value, and collect the pure products of others need to be criticized and transformed. This is no small task. In the meantime one can at least imagine shows [*here exhibitions*] that feature the impure, 'inauthentic' productions of past and present tribal life; exhibitions radically heterogeneous in their global mix of styles; exhibitions that locate themselves in special multicultural junctures; exhibitions in which nature remains 'unnatural'; exhibitions whose principles of incorporation are openly questionable. (Clifford, 1988: 213)

Play with representations can become a method of critique. *Rough Guide* and *Lonely Planet* sometimes play with traditional tourism language by mocking superlatives and the jargon of traditional tourist advertising and writing. *Lonely Planet* host Ian Wright is shown in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, in a scene in his hotel room imitating a writer of an adventure novel who after rolling in his bed 'restlessly' leaves his hot room to seek adventure and night-life. All Ian finds is a non-romanticized expatriates' pub where tremendous amounts of alcohol are consumed.

Another level of self-reflexivity that would help to open up the conditions of production (similar to some strategies of visual anthropology) is to invite the production crew into the scene. By showing the camera and the production staff, and through specific editing techniques, the constructedness of the shows and its representations could become more visible. These devices are rarely used in television shows. *Lonely Planet* normally hides the production methods in accordance with traditional television principles.

Rough Guide, on the other hand, reveals the production teams on several occasions; for example, one of their promotional trailers refers to the camera

and shows the camera team. Both anchors also carry a Hi-8 'tourist' video camera that they mostly use in transitions traveling from one location to another. With this camera they normally shoot each other and the shots are always in locations that, contrary to typical 'photo opportunities', appear to be boring, routine places (airports, stations). Seeing someone filming within a television program tends to break the closed logic of the television screen obviating its function as 'window to the world'. A similar effect is achieved when *Rough Guide* occasionally uses stand-up shots of the co-anchors in two or more versions including outtakes with slips of the tongue or other errors. Another step here would be to illuminate production and research principles even further. For example, it would be important to know why the producers chose certain locations and how they chose certain 'locals' as sources and interview partners.

Other voices

One of the most common suggestions to overcome the dominance of western media representations is to provide more space/time for other voices (e.g. Spurr, 1993). Changing video and audio technologies (lighter equipment, cheaper, easier to use) have opened up additional channels of communication. Indigenous people all over the world use media (radio, television, audio and video and now including the internet) to present and to preserve marginalized cultural practices. Visual anthropology uses these new techniques and theorizes their problems (e.g. Ginsburg, 1991; Tomaselli, 1996). Browne (1996) indicates how 'indigenous' no longer just means tribal communities 'out there'; cultural endangerment is often a problem at home (within the West). A public-service broadcasting system could take up these forms of indigenous presentation to add voices. However, the advertising-financed Travel Channel will be disinclined to broadcast programs solely for minority audiences.

Therefore it seems incumbent for critics to evaluate how voices of Others can effectively be integrated into current shows. To what degree do the shows reflect the unequal power situation between film-makers and subjects? Travel programs always deal with Others (not only indigenous communities) and different strategies for integrating these other voices exist. Of course, the power of representing the Others is always on the side of the production team (all western origin); therefore producers should be conscious of the impact of these strategies.

One positive aspect of all analyzed travel shows is that they provide images of Others not just as victims, a threat or exotic Others, unlike most regular news reporting. People from all walks of life are represented in these

shows. *Rough Guide* presents the widest variety of people and often juxtaposes different perspectives showing the Other as part of the social formations of contradictory and hybrid cultures. The interview situation in *Rough Guide* is the only program that names all interviewees and allows them to speak in their native language or dialect with translations provided in subtitles. Relying on speakers of English as a second language or ad hoc translations, as *Lonely Planet* does, diminishes the impact of their statements. Although struggling with language may sometimes reflect actual tourists' situation, in a television close-up it intensifies the demeaning portrayal, denigrating the intellectual capabilities of 'locals'. Speaking in front of a camera, even for native speakers, is an intimidating situation, and for Others in a language other than their mother tongue it can be devastating.

Another problem of television is that it has the inherent tendency to fixate its traditional logic of production and editing as well as its narrative structure forces closure (Dahlgren, 1995). However, the postmodern aesthetic exemplified by MTV (music videos) and others has opened up more flexible and ambiguous modes of representation. Instead of 'packaging culture' travel shows should embrace a more open 'unpacking of cultures' by displaying many different aspects of the country covered. *Rough Guide's* strategy to counter common tourist images is to show instances that dispute stereotypes (e.g. the life of female ranch workers, 'cowgirls', in the Australian outback). But although *Rough Guide* struggles to open up representations, they tend to fall into the objectionable 'counter-stereotyping' which Stuart Hall (1997) notes. The underlying journalistic statement of a travel program cannot be: 'We show you what this country is *really* all about'; but instead should be: 'We give you a selection of cultural aspects of this multi-faceted country'. By giving up the search for the 'typical' and the 'authentic' one can hold the representation 'in suspense' as Clifford (1988: 273) suggests: 'If all essentializing modes of thought must . . . be held in suspense, then we should attempt to think of cultures not as organically unified or traditionally continuous but rather as negotiated, present processes'.

The liminoid position of journalists

The strategy of open representation seems to diminish the control of the journalist/producer over the preferred reading of the text. In fact, this strategy engages the journalist, the institutions of production and the subject/object of journalism in the struggle of representation. This is contrary to the idea of the realist school of visual anthropology – i.e. to avoid producers' interference as

much as possible. For instance, Margaret Mead advocated there could have been an 'objective' account of the history of race relations that would eliminate every racism: 'If there'd have been a camera there running on its own steam with no human being there to press the button on or off what would have been on the film is what really happened' (quoted in Rony, 1996: 193). But technical interference of video equipment and production requirements forces its logic on the final film even if (or perhaps especially when) they are invisible. Even more, the professional rules of television journalism always shape the program. There cannot be an 'objective' journalistic (or anthropological) perspective; representations are always developed within a hegemonic cultural system.

Yet travel journalism, as does international journalism in general, places media practitioners in a special journalistic role 'outside' their usual system of reference. In close direct contact with the Other, the intricacies of this existential moment should not be overlooked. Instead of retreating to a seemingly safe position of 'objective' journalism, I suggest travel journalists and journalism in general should actively embrace a role of in-betweenness that Rojek and Urry (1997: 11) define as a role in postmodernity: 'A culture of flows produces spaces of "in-betweenness" inhabited by various types of traveller and tourist'. Victor Turner in his work on rituals and pilgrimages emphasizes the liminoid situation of travels (Turner, 1969). Liminoid situations allow the challenging of status boundaries and role expectations and foster playfulness and *communitas* experiences.

The idea of an actively liminoid journalism suggests that media practitioners use their position to challenge the traditional modes of journalistic representation. They also should enthusiastically integrate their own perspective into the program. This is the only way for audiences and 'locals' to understand the ideological point of reference of both journalists and journalism. In the analyzed programs the anchors are presented without history, class or ethnicity (except what may be deciphered from their use of colloquial English). Moreover, the liminoid stage extends from the travelers (travel journalists) to the foreign people who are featured in a show: to be under the tourist gaze (camera gaze) is a complex situation. Most travel journalism pretends that the people in the host country are represented as they 'really' are. But the 'subjects' of travel and tourism (tourism workers, locals) are performing (similar to the journalists) in an extraordinary situation. Travel journalism has to accept and depict this mutual out-of-place situation. This new journalism practiced at the 'in-between' dislocates and problematizes its situation in the contact zone (Pratt, 1992). It should become a model for all journalism.

A cultural studies approach to media praxis

The contribution of cultural studies informed by poststructuralism has been to explain the underlying power dynamics of any textual representations of the Other. It asks journalism and its academic research to call the praxis and routines of media representation into question. I have developed some new professional strategies that can be used by any journalist or media worker who has to report on the Other. The proposals emphasize techniques that allow for multiple representations by providing context, taking advantage of alienation effects, postmodern play with signifiers and active integration of the Other's voice as a way of breaking closed narrative structures. The anthropological idea of a liminoid position offers an approach to destabilize but not weaken the position of the journalist.

To develop professional strategies I used televised travel shows positioned as global non-fiction entertainment as a format on the margins of what is commonly accepted as journalism. This essay does not try to provide an in-depth analysis of travel journalism on television. Instead, it explores a production situation where productions are sold and have to find an audience in many different countries – expecting that these productions can potentially subvert common assumptions about 'us' and 'them'. The utilized scenes present only one possible reading of these polysemic texts. They may only hint at destabilizing practices, but they underscore my argument that critical and reflective travel journalism can give a glimpse of new representational strategies for all forms of journalism and media production. The limitation of these 'moments of change' is that they assume an active and critical audience, which can notice breaks in the narrative and open representation. Only more extensive media literacy training on the problems of media representation can help establish this type of audience. Overcoming the predicament of representation is a complex process that involves media production and consumption. The debates in visual anthropology elucidate the limitations of approaches by practitioners who expect quick fixes for representational dilemmas.

In sum, I would go so far as to say that most reporting is a form of representing the Other. This article theorized and evaluated the journalistic dilemma of representing the Other. Before we can embrace differences through journalistic representation we have to discuss and re-examine the communicative tools used to bridge the contradictions of international and intercultural communication. This essay integrated the concepts of visual anthropology to develop more reflective media practices and journalistic modes of conduct. In this media-saturated age, not only media texts – the output of media production – but also professional communicators and their

practices have to come under scrutiny. Yet the common approach of cultural studies to analyze textual representations of the Other does little to overcome the journalistic dilemma of reporting on others. Thus, I presented some self-reflexive and critical professional strategies that work on constructing multiple, open and even contradictory representations. Cultural studies, visual anthropology and postmodern aesthetics are utilized to advance journalistic practices. At a time when globalization and commercialization subvert the traditional environment of journalism, the field has to start developing new rationales and practices. All too often, economic incentives alone seem to prompt transformations of the profession. Academic journalism studies and media criticism appear satisfied with a posteriori evaluation. In contrast, this article attempts to provide an active cultural studies approach to journalism research and journalistic practice at a time of change.

Future studies can extend the ideas outlined in this article by interrogating 'othering' strategies of traditional international journalism in broadcast or print media. One could argue that in the new global media configurations where mediated information becomes a branded commodity the very concept of journalism has become a questionable category. Yet instead of giving up on journalism as a model for media work, I extend the boundaries of journalism to genres that traditionally have been on the margins of the field. These proposals express the hope for a renewal of the field but also remind media workers (whether they are called journalists, producers of 'non-fiction entertainment' or content providers) to critically reflect on the cultural impact of their work.

Notes

Earlier versions of this article were presented at NCA 1999 (Chicago) and ICA 2000 (Acapulco).

- 1 This article is taken from my dissertation that involved an analysis of the US cable network Travel Channel and its global potential combined with a textual analysis of several televised travel shows. The examples utilized here are from *Lonely Planet* and *Rough Guide* as two shows that focus on tourism that explores different cultures and people. The analysis was based on four weeks of the shows that aired and were taped between 8 February 1998 and 8 March 1998. *Lonely Planet* and *Rough Guide* are shown daily on the Travel Channel three times back to back during mornings, late night and prime time. The analyzed shows were all taped during primetime (9:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.). All episodes last one hour including several commercial breaks. The pool of recorded shows presents a mixture of frequent reruns of shows of the last three seasons and some new episodes, typical for the repetitive programming rhythm of cable channels that rely on accumulated ratings and use reruns to fill airtime (Brooks, 1997). One full

season of *Lonely Planet*, for example, consists of only 13 new episodes. The other programming slots are filled with reruns.

The Travel Channel is available in 41 million cable households in the United States (Pergament, 2000). But Discovery also operates travel channels in Latin America, the United Kingdom, and the Middle East. Moreover, it shows programs of the US Travel Channel on its international Discovery Channels (see www.discovery.com). Discovery Communication channels can be seen in 145 countries. The trademark cable outlet Discovery Channel is aired in 18 languages worldwide. The company generates a cash flow of \$300 million with its flagship channel alone and despite huge investments, is cost-effective in almost all of its international enterprises in Europe, Latin America, and Asia (Waters, 1999). Discovery Communication was launched in 1985 and is jointly owned by its founder John S. Hendricks, the publisher Advance Publications and the cable companies Liberty Media Group (AT&T) and Cox Communication.

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