

MARIE DENWARD

PRETEND THAT IT IS REAL! CONVERGENCE CULTURE IN PRACTICE



Pretend that it is Real!:

CONVERGENCE CULTURE IN PRACTICE

Dissertation series in New Media, Public Spheres, and Forms of Expression,
Faculty of Culture and Society, Malmö University

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MARIE DENWARD

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Marie Denward

INTRODUCTION

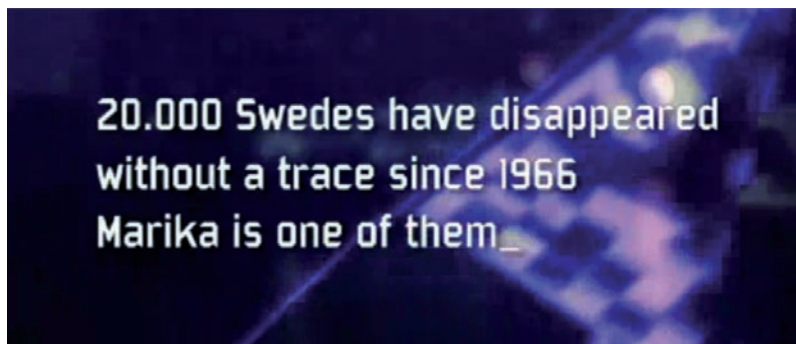


Figure 1:1. Screen shot from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iX_ZJkvwKR8, accessed 24th November 2010.

A promotion snippet for a television drama thriller ‘based on real events and people’ rolls up when you turn on your TV one evening in October. Marika, a young woman has disappeared on her wedding night and her best friend has started searching for her. Later that evening you watch the first episode. The episode ends with the URL <http://www.conspirare.se> flashing by. Hints are presented pointing out that she disappeared voluntarily.

When you go online to check it up a pop-up warning appears saying that you have come to a fictive creation, and if you decide to take part you do it at your own risk. What is this? Confused you browse different pages. A young woman claiming that the drama thriller is about Maria, her best friend, manages the site. Adrijanna, as she calls herself, claims Maria disappeared in 2005 and that SVT took advantage of her situation, now making a TV show of the unlucky event. You are urged to join the group of people already searching for Maria.

This is the start of a few of the most intense weeks of your life. Almost daily you collaborate, investigate and discuss with others in the forum and chat. You are invited to events and activities, to meet up with others in your hometown. New information and clues appear continuously. Traces of Maria lead to a secret organisation. Has Maria ‘disappeared’ into it? Adrijanna urges everyone to become members to find out. People start to put up matrices with ciphered messages around Sweden trying to communicate with the organisation. In the forum and the chat people exchange experiences from their search. Slowly Maria is tracked down.

The SVT production team seems to search too, the TV show has a site at www.svt.se. According to SVT, the produc-

tion team spotted Adrijanna's poster messages about her friend a few years ago, contacted her to learn more about her story and then used some of it as inspiration for the drama. SVT publicly announces that they will create a debate program following the drama to discuss disappearances and other serious matters. SVT will report on both their own findings and on the evidence from Adrijanna and her friends.

Online SVT publish the slogan 'There is only one rule: pretend that it is real' and announce that the production is fictive, no real Maria exists. But on www.conspirare.se you are met with an opposite message: 'SVT is lying, believe us, Maria exists, she has disappeared and please help out in the search!'

The messages are ambiguous. Neither the webpages, the forum nor the chat gives any explicit answers of what is true and what is not. Even the live broadcast debate program is contradictory, with its familiar TV host and relatives of Maria as program guests... And why invite professionals to debate in the program if it is all a fake?

1 AN EXAMPLE OF CONVERGENCE CULTURE

This PhD Thesis is a case study investigating a phenomenon within its real-life context - the transmedia (game) production *Sanningen om Marika* and its birth process. *Sanningen om Marika*¹ (Eng. The Truth About Marika, hereafter *SOM*) is a rare example of a hybrid genre production that spanned broadcast television and radio programs, webpages, a mobile telephone application, and several real-world as well as online game activities and events. Social media like *YouTube*, *Flickr* and *GoogleMaps* held important functions in the production. The introduction above is a depiction of one fictive participant's experiences. Swedish Television (SVT), the nation's largest public service television broadcaster, collaborated with a small experimental games producer, The company P (P)², to craft the production. It was 'based on facts' like the fact that thousands of Swedes disappear every year. Together with the participants, the SVT employees and the protagonist Adrijanna and her friends initiated a search for her disappeared friend Maria, investigating each and every possible clue that could shed light on her disappearance. During five months in 2007, the production offered Swedes nationwide rich possibilities to interact and participate - or just to watch or lurk on the production's various platforms.

The creators called it a 'participation drama', indicating it was more of a story than a game. The aim was to create a (pilot) format that would invite a mass audience to more than ordinary TV spectatorship. The production would support a wide range of engagement levels, based on the individual's choice of frequency, depth and immersion. The collaborators' inspiration came from a range of recently emerging games and game types. It was not a game with clear conditions regarding winning or losing, but a collection of game-like experiences held together by a dispersed narrative. It offered collaborative activities like puzzle solving, deciphering, and missions to be corporeally performed/enacted in physical world settings. In socialising, the producers and participants together created a coherent game world. The production did not resemble anything ever experienced in media in Sweden up to that date.

A number of different types, or aspects, of media convergence that SOM contains belong to the main findings of my study. The two media companies had the ambition to create new forms of audience interaction, or participatory culture, as P, the games developer called it. They were driven by this strong unanimous ambition and were unified by a number of goals: if strong engagement could be created it would pull the users into different tiers of participation. The methods were to utilise each companies' speciality and professional skills, and use the strength of each medium and its platform - broadcast television, online gaming and the cityscape as a playground for physical play. Collaboratively they would amalgamate and merge their two medium specific types of storytelling for games and television drama, and form a novel format. It was a conscious decision to make the different media converge.

Research aim and questions

As a researcher, I had a unique and unusual opportunity to study the entire production process, from the early planning stages to the running of the participation drama and beyond. I observed the two teams, their (daily) work and their co-operation. I followed the participation both on- and offline. This allowed me to conduct a detailed study of the birth process, the final result and its deployment. I was able to conduct research both during the design and implementation process as well as during the production phase, well supported by SVT and P in gathering broad empirical material.

My research scope lies in the area of the changing relationship of producers and consumers in today's media landscape. Supported by my choice of method, to approach the production and its creation process holistically, I have had the possibility to stay open in my inquiry and gradually let particular questions emerge. I knew from the start that the teams would intertwine production and consumption as tightly as they found possible. I assumed that I would gain another type of knowledge if I approached my research object more openly compared to selecting one of the following: the (primary) producers and their production process, the participants and their reception or an analysis of the (game) design and the production per se. This can also be viewed as a methodological consequence of the studying of contemporary society where media, culture and economy is intimately amalgamated and the previous well-defined spheres of production, distribution and consumption are blurred, and therefore, with my intentions, would be less fruitful to study as separate entities.

Firstly, my open and broad approach enabled me to study the deliberate production of participatory culture: as designed and implemented and produced. I was able to study the birth of the production per se, what it consisted of and how the parts worked together. I could conduct research on the cultures of production of the two companies: the thoughts, ideas, emotions and perceptions that guided the professional workers and their companies. I was also able to examine actions and practices connected to them and study whether and how the media logic of the two companies differed, and the impacts on the collaboration and outcome.

Furthermore, as an observing participant-researcher I was able to study the participatory culture from the participants' perspective: observing actions, communication and reactions. I observed the producers' interplay with the participants and the collaborative work/play among and between them. After the production ended I carried out a participant web survey and a number of participant interviews to find out more about their perceptions and experiences. To conclude, I had access to the entire production process, both from the perspective of the producers and of the participants.

My research questions can be summarised as follows.

1. The collaboration. In today's hybrid media ecology, what does the collaboration and creation process of a joint cultural production look like? How do the (media) logics and cultures of production steer two company players and their practices, and as a result, what kind of issues do they face? How do they manage the interplay with participants?
2. The production. How do the companies' media logic(s) and culture(s) of production affect the joint aims to create a production with participatory culture as its main focus? How do different design choices/strategies affect participation? What effects do the different media logics of television and games, expressed in collective and participatory storytelling, have on the amalgamation and the final production? Do they work well together or do they clash? How well are the parts integrated?
3. The reception. How did participants interpret, react to, and experience the production? What did their participation/gameplay look like? What kind of activities appealed to them? How did they take part in the different parts of the production: the television programs, the online game activities (the chats and forums) and real-world game activities?
4. My overall research questions are: As an example of convergence culture, what kinds of media convergence were evident in *SOM*? The mission was to craft a converged and hybrid media production. What conclusions may be drawn from the analysis chapters 1-8?

Earlier research

Hybrid productions like *SOM* are examples of recent contemporary art forms, where media consumers are invited to actively participate in the creation and circulation of new content applied on several media platforms. These productions, commonly described as *transmedia storytelling* productions, emerge as an effect of media convergence (Jenkins 2006a). The storytelling travels across multiple forms of media, where each element carries a distinctive contribution, or function, to a consumer's understanding of the story world. In this section I briefly address research that have enquired similar productions and with research focuses corresponding to mine. In my theory chapter I will return to some of this research, a chapter that deals with the concept of media convergence and the different types, or aspects, of convergence.

Participatory culture is the term used by media theorist Henry Jenkins to denote the kind of culture that emerges when users are invited to participate in the creation of a production's content. Jenkins defines it as 'a [c]ulture in which fans and other consumers are invited to actively participate in the creation and circulation of new content' (2006a: 257). Jenkins (1992; 2006a; 2006b) has focussed in particular on fan cultures where audiences deal with a primary producer's product. They are 'modding' it, amending it, expanding it, adding greater diversity of perspective to it, and then recirculating it, feeding it back into the mainstream media. Christy Dena (2008a) augments this list by addressing hybrid media productions where the primary producers intentionally design gaps for audiences to fill in, and where they even expect audiences to find unintended gaps and fill them in. My research review is limited to media productions that have intentionally designed gaps and that include game-like activities/count as games (for a definition of games see Theory).

Two game types are of interest. Dena addresses one recently emerging game genre called *alternate reality games* (ARGs) as an example of these kinds of productions where the designed gaps are tiered and adjusted to fit and target different kinds of audiences, or participants. Alternate reality here means that the fabricated game world lies close to, or layered with, the ordinary. In the context of the SOM production, another recent game genre is equally important: *pervasive live action role-playing games* (larps). These are similar to ARGs in that the (primary) producer also designs gaps and open spaces for participants to act, or more specifically, role-play in. In this context, pervasive means that the games include and intrude in the ordinary lives of the players and are played in public places (Montola, Stenros et al. 2009). In alternate reality games tiers are created for mass audiences; for 'non-playing audiences' through the content created by a small audience, or player group (Dena 2008a: 41). Pervasive larps are also (often) designed to include non-participants/non-players, passers-by in public places that the game uses as its playground (Montola, Stenros et al. 2009).

These emerging forms of games have been studied from several perspectives: as designs, technology, and cultural phenomena. Scholars have defined, described and classified them (Szulborski 2005; Montola, Stenros et al. 2009), and dealt with their game designs (Stenros, Montola et al. 2007), their gaming cultures, and their potential societal and political uses (Flanagan 2009; McGonigal 2011). Research has focused on participant roles as in online role-playing and how role-taking differs from common online gaming (Montola 2005) and tiered participation as in alternate reality games (Dena 2008a). Of particular interest for this thesis are the ethical and moral perspectives, as with involuntary inclusion of passers-by, and the responsibility that lies on game designers (Niemi, Sawano et al. 2005; Harvey 2006; Montola and Waern 2006a; Montola and Waern 2006b). Jenkins claims that transmedia storytelling productions may empower participants (2006a). But research shows that the opposite also may happen. Participants' agency is lessened due to the media companies' urges to use, particularly alternate reality games for marketing and branding; they thus tend to keep control over the narrative of the production and also to set the limits (Örnebring 2007). Similar issues are of interest in my study. Questions of ownership of fan-produced games, secondary games that explore the primary producer's games, have also been posed (ibid.).

Many researchers have analysed the two types of games, and produced analytic descriptions of how they work, what they consist of and the kind of participation they support/create (Tylor and Kolko 2003). Researchers have also previously studied the design of the games and game organisers' intentions to improve design (Montola and Jonsson 2006; McGonigal 2006c). Others have focussed on design issues, like how real-world information and facts may be amalgamated to enhance immersive player experiences and make the game world feel more authentic and responsive (Jonsson and Waern 2008) and how players negotiate this blur (McGonigal 2003b). This research has focussed on the pervasive aspects of the games, how they blur fabricated and fictive elements with real-world facts (Montola, Stenros et al. 2009). Such research is particularly relevant to my studies of the reception of the *SOM* production. Poremba (2007) argues that the strength of this blur, in what she calls 'brink games', lies in their ability to both observe and critique everyday life. In her study of the game *The Beast*³, McGonigal (2003a) concludes that alternate reality games provide players with a transformative power with its game-inspired and game-learned practices of immersive aesthetics and real-world action. McGonigal has also conducted case studies to examine how large groups of players collaborated and cooperated in a massively collaborative knowledge network to solve the complicated game tasks in the distributed fiction of *I Love Bees*⁴ (2008). She analysed the stages of 'collective intelligence', or 'wisdom of crowds', that the player groups went through, also highlighting game design issues. McGonigal (ibid.) argues that popular culture and online entertainment will remain an effective space for learning how real-world massively collaborative participation works. *SOM* was designed with the 'intelligence of crowds' in mind.

The production process of games is an under-researched area: how games are produced and the work processes and practices of design and implementation. There are several possible explanations. It may be difficult for a researcher to get access to media industry work and production processes, since it commonly calls for an ethnographic approach where the researcher needs to get full access to work environments and come close which may be delicate from a business perspective. Many (game) researchers also design and produce games, in collaboration with game developing firms or by themselves. They are probably more focussed on crafting well-working, well-designed or fringy and novel games, and are thus more interested in evaluating the game to be able to improve, for example, the players' game experiences or other aspects of the games found important to research. Contrary to many other researchers that would like to study commercially produced games, I got full access to the design, implementation and production process of *SOM*. The two companies were part of an EU-financed pervasive games consortium; researchers' enquiries and activities were thus essential parts of the pursuit and their result seen as having potential for further commercial development.

2 MY STUDY

My involvement in *SOM* has been as a participant observer, as mentioned. I was fortunate to be allowed to join the production at an early stage. I conducted research for nine months in 2007, the time period when the interactive, participatory parts of the production were designed, implemented and produced. During

this period I spent long periods with the production teams, observed meetings, interviewed the designers and game masters, attended game events and met with and observed participants. Towards the end of the production I also conducted in-depth participant interviews and a participant web survey.

As an example of convergence culture, the *Sanningen om Marika* production was significant and very intriguing to study. There were several reasons. First of all, all four processes of media convergence that Jenkins identifies were manifest in SOM: technological, industrial, cultural and social. When adopting SOM as my study object I already knew in advance that a number of media platforms, new technology and social media were to be utilised. It was a novel and slightly unusual collaboration regarding the actors involved, a large public service broadcaster with many years of broadcast production experience and a small games start-up, with a track record of extreme productions. Due to my knowledge about P's previous productions, I expected that the production to a great degree would be generated by the audience/participants. So, when I was asked by a research colleague to evaluate the design and implementation of the audience participation of the production (see chapter 1) this matched my own PhD research focus well - the changing roles of producers and consumers in today's media landscape.

Already at my initial meeting with the producers at P, in mid January 2007, I was captivated. I was intrigued by the unusual design strategy to merge the background facts into the production's narrative. However, at that stage I was not aware of how strongly this design aesthetic in the end would affect the entire production. Moreover, quite early I perceived that The company P had a different view of audience interaction and participation than SVT, coloured by the team members' connection to the Nordic role-playing movement and by, what I at that stage could grasp, their democratic and political aspirations.

The teams were aware of their different cultures of production from the start and consciously worked to overcome and overlap them. But the cultures created different types of frictions between the teams, and within the SVT organisation. Another kind of friction also appeared - the friction between the two different forms of storytelling that the television and game media are ruled by. The teams were not fully aware that these medium specific demands would become problematic. On the contrary, the idea was that the differences inherent in the media would enrich the story world and the tiers of participation. The teams' collaboration, work processes, different cultures and the emerging frictions and how they were treated and solved are illuminated throughout my thesis. The analysis sheds light on different aspects of convergence throughout the design, implementation and production between the teams and includes the participants' reception, perceptions and interpretations.

3 CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF THESIS

The two first chapters, Theory and Methodology, set the scene of the thesis work. In the theory chapter I present core theories and concepts that I apply in my analysis. The methodology chapter accounts for my epistemological approach, rooted in ethnography as methodology. With different foci and depth, chapters

1-8 and Convergence culture: Concluding the analysis, constitute an analysis of *Sanningen om Marika* and its actors. I analyse the teams' collaboration and the design, production and implementation of participation, participatory culture, as well as participants' reception/participation. The analysis is a reconstruction and an interpretation of the activities and events from a second order interpretation.

The analysis is divided into four parts, each containing two chapters. Part one embraces the early ideas and the final production. The second part is devoted to the production process and the collaboration. Part three consists of detailed analyses of two production parts. The fourth part analyses the reception in general, but a special focus is also put on the blurring of facts and fiction in the production. The ethnographic now is 2007 in the entire thesis apart from a few places where it is then marked out. In more detail each chapter deals with the following:

Analysis part 1: The background and the participation drama

Chapter one is a reconstruction of the prehistory of the collaboration and the teams' initial objectives and imaginations of the production and its audience. I identify the producers' two main design ideals: participatory culture and the 360° illusion (an extreme reality-fiction blur). Although there seemed to exist a coherent idea to begin with, the analysis unveils the slightly different views of the production goals at a rather early stage of the design process. Chapter two is a reconstruction of the final production. It deals with the content and construction of the story universe and how the teams managed and monitored the game during implementation and runtime. I first address the design of the entire production: the narrative of a TV drama set in the past, the game activities and the TV debate taking place in the present. The various parts, with their content and construction, are then depicted.

Analysis part 2: The production process

Part 2 deals with the two production companies and their collaboration process. In chapter three I unveil and contrast their two opposing cultures of production. The analysis is supported by examples showing the difference in interaction methods regarding how participants were invited to co-create/submit contributions. By using quotes from interviews with the team members, the analysis in chapter four shows the frictions and tensions that the differing cultures of production resulted in. It also gives an account of how the teams addressed the opposing views and how the conflicts were (partly) solved. Another kind of friction connected to the medium specific differences appeared - the friction between the two different forms of storytelling that the television and game media are ruled by. The chapters depict this friction too.

Analysis part 3: The debate and the *Conspirare* chat

The chapters in part three are detailed analyses of two crucial production parts, the chat system at the *Conspirare* website and the debate programs aired by SVT. What these parts have in common is that they were realised in a way that greatly differed from what was originally planned; the television debate in the

case of creating innovative audience participation and the *Conspirare* chat because it had not even been planned. Chapter five deconstructs the television debate. I examine how it followed and broke with the (Swedish) genre of current affairs programs (Örnebring 2001). I show that the debate had difficulties connecting the TV drama series with the ongoing game activities, as was the intention; and that the intended novel audience (television) participation that would be crafted, was left out by the director . Leaving out audience interaction was a direct consequence of the television medium's specific quality demands. The *Conspirare* chat is scrutinised in the following chapter, chapter six, due to its role as the central real-time communication platform in the game. The internet medium's networking and interaction potential was discouraged by the producers' demand to control both the narrative and the participants' interaction in the game (the chatting). I problematise the implicit rules to participate by applying the philosopher Jacques Derrida's (2000) notion of hospitality with its inherent contradiction, and I unveil the game masters' and participants' communication strategies. My analysis shows the producers' strategies and demand to control the chat and narrative, constructed in an on-the-fly manner, to keep it within the fictional frames and thus not allowing any communication about the fictional nature of the production. The analysis moreover shows how the early participants co-created and upheld these interpretive frames with the game masters.

Analysis part 4: The participants

Part four is devoted to the participants and their reception both on a general level (chapter seven) and more specifically regarding the experiences of the reality-fiction blur (chapter eight). Chapter seven accounts for the general picture of the perceptions, interpretations, reactions and activities according to the respondents of the participant web survey. In chapter eight I concentrate on the reactions and experiences of the pervasivity, the blur of the ordinary and the fabricated. In the first part of the chapter I give voice to participants that were unaware of, or aware but reluctant to accept the gameness of the production. It shows that most of them were negative towards the implicitly communicated blur. The perspective of more seasoned gamers and engaged participants is given in the second part of the chapter , where the accounts from post-game interviews form the basis for interpretation and analysis. These participants' reactions and experiences are, on the other hand, very positive. Their qualitative testimonials show their deep immersion in the game, where they at times had to remind themselves of the gameness of the production.

Conclusions

Finally, in *Convergence culture*: Concluding the analysis I bring the different parts of the analysis to a close and discuss my findings from a media perspective and address the different aspects or types of media convergence that are my main findings in *Sanningen om Marika*.

Some of the planned amalgamations took place under unforeseen stress and friction. The frictions were partly a result of the differing corporate cultures (broadcast and games industries) but the cultures of production also differed: production processes, the differing views of the audience and the kind of cultural

commodity that was actually going to be crafted. In other words, in their collaboration the two companies were dependent on their quite differing media logics. Other elements that would converge, and that would be a crucial part of the novelty of the hybrid production, also created friction. One issue is the opposing storytelling logics of television, games and internet. TV and games (especially the two types of game designs that were implemented) use controlled narratives. Internet media logics, on the other hand, are open and invite audience interaction of different types. Even if a multi-platform approach was used to merge broadcast, games and internet, the proposed audience participation was not carried out due to the need to control the narrative. The audience activity also differs in TV drama and games; TV viewing is an interpretive activity whilst playing a game demands the user configure content, the process of selecting content and putting it together is essential to experience the game. To merge these two activities was therefore difficult as well, partly as a result of the differing audience activities but partly also because the medium specific quality demands differed. The crafting of the debate program is one example.

I also discuss the strong design ideal of merging fiction with fact in the production and not clearly stating this to the audience, and that the games activities, which are commonly accepted as something outside the ordinary, were merged with audience activities aiming for more serious political societal engagement. Not everyone taking part understood the playfulness or gameness, nor could they make reflections like one player group did. They were aware participants and their critique can be compressed into one quote: 'Think for yourself but think as us!'. This issue is tied to the blur of production and consumption. To create what was called participatory culture and offer different types of layered, tiered, participation was the companies' main goal, and in many respects the production offered many such possibilities, the participants were co-producers. However, the described quality demands were tied to a need for control and so the production did not manage to offer the degree of participation and (personal and political) agency that SVT and P wished to craft. The *Conspirate* chat is an example of how difficult it was to unify the different goals. It was rather hostile and newcomers had difficulties understanding the implicit game rules and could not participate.

Three things can be concluded regarding the producers' design strategies for *Sanningen om Marika*. Firstly, the two design strategies were not fully consistent. In the vision to create an engaging game the pervasive aim in the single game rule, or tagline, 'Pretend that it is real', overruled the aspirations to craft participatory culture. Secondly, in designing the reality-fiction blur I argue that two different strategies used had their roots in two different gaming cultures. Although these strategies have similar design goals they did not blend well. The largest difference concerns the roles of the participants, where they were either supposed to role-play, or just act as themselves. In many ways, the production communicated that the desirable mode of participation was one in which any meta-discussion of the game as a game was prohibited. For many participants, this made it unclear how to participate and the route into participation was fussy and obscure. Lastly, I argue that the political aspirations in the game caused the game masters at P to retain a level of control over the production, which hampered participants' own decisions and actions. Thus, par-

ticipatory culture could not emerge in the way the producers had initially expressed a desire for , a desire that carried political aspirations⁵.

Notes

1 For full credits see last footnote in this chapter. Games, TV and radio programs and webpages are italicized.

2 This is how the company spelt its name at the time.

3 The Beast counts as one of the first and most influential ARGs. It was created by a team at Microsoft to promote the Steven Spielberg movie A.I: Artificial Intelligence. It ran for twelve weeks during 2001.

4 I Love Bees served both as a real-world experience and a viral promotion for the video game Halo 2. It tasked players worldwide to collectively solve problems, and a major component in the game was answering pay phones located in various countries and completing tasks at specific times and places. The happenings culminated by inviting the players to one of four cinemas to play Halo 2 before its release.

5 Full Credits

Game production, *Conspirare*, *Ordo Serpentis*, and *Spektaklet*:

Creative director: Martin Ericsson, The company P

Producer and technical lead: Andie Nordgren, The company P

Executive producer: Christopher Sandberg, The company P

Designer and lead interactive actor: Adriana Skarped, The company P

Run-time interactive actor and game master: Martin Brodén, The company P

Avatar interactive actor, project *Entropia*: Åke Lindén, The company P

Writer, artist and interactive actor for *Spektaklet*: Elge Larsson, The company P

Run-time interactive actor: Emil Boss, The company P

Run-time interactive actor; Jonas Söderberg, SICS

Art and design lead: Alexander Graff, The company P

Artist: Victoria Henriksson, The company P

Scenography Vattnadal: Anders Muammar

Comic art: Ludvig Moritz, The company P

Game design and writer: Karim Muammar, The company P

Game design and writer: Jesper Berglund, The company P

Technical lead: Staffan Jonsson, The company P

Mobile tech developer: Johan Persson, The company P

Developers: Daniel Sundström and Henrik Berggren, Interactive Institute, Jonas Henriksson, The company P

Technical advisor: Andreas Dahlström, The company P
Kindergarten, strike team Stockholm: Tom Olsson Liljeholm, Ki Henriksson, Johan Nilsson, Joakim Sandström and
Torbjörn Öberg,
Strike team Göteborg: Petter Karlsson, Marcus Brissman, Jon Back
Web site moderators: Tomb Svalborg & Herman Ferner
Online ambassadors and Conspirare crew (the online list of ambassadors and crew is no longer accessible)
Actors: Jonas Sjöqvist, Sasha Becker, Mirja Thurestedt, Lennart Jäkel, Niklas Fransson, and Moa Millgård
Screenplay: Anders Weidemann
Drama director: Martin Schmidt
Photo: Niclas Karpenty, Kurt Bergren, Per Norberg
Sound: Peter Bergström, Christian Gyllensten
Host debate: John Carlsson
Web editor in chief: Eva Rados
Editing: Martin Brundin, Marcus Purens, Marianne Lindekrantz
Scenography: Krister Lindell
Music: Tobias Marberger
Graphical form: Christina Åberg
Web producer: Hans G Andersson
Web construction: Magnus Johansson
Press: Sanna Verner-Carlsson
Script continuity: Jenny Rådelöv Harrysson
Image producer: Sussi Johnsson
Debate director: Richard Jarnhed
Script editors: Susanna Boonyai, Richard Jarnhed, Helena Stjärnström
Casting: Pär Brundin
Project manager SVT: Daniel Lägersten
Publisher SVT: Christian Wikander

THEORY

1. INTRODUCTION

Convergence is an elusive term that is used in multiple contexts, and is often ambiguous in its definition. For decades it has gone through periods of hype and stages of interpretations and debates, both within industry and among scholars. On one side, convergence has been viewed as an opportunity for traditional media to align itself with technologies of the 21st century (Lawson-Borders 2003) in order to create a prosperous future of economic profits. On the other side advocates have viewed convergence as an over hyped illusion and the media industries' attempts and enterprises towards convergence as 'yet another illusionary quest' (Noll 2002). My thesis depicts and analyses a clear example of this kind of amalgamation where multiple processes, or types of convergences, take place on various levels and places in the design, production, implementation and reception within the same media production. This is what makes *Sanningen om Marika* such an interesting and extraordinary object of study.

Numerous research studies have had the phenomenon of convergence as their focus using theoretical stances from a variety of perspectives: technological, cultural, economic, strategic and legal. The great disparity of what is meant by convergence is apparent in the literature. This is partly depending on the current state of development, but of course is also due to the fact that different researchers use the concept for different reasons. Aspects and observations that lately have been included in the notion and findings that better analyse the appearances in today's changing media landscape will form important grounds for my own empirically grounded observations of SOM. I particularly base my ideas on the work of Henry Jenkins (2004; 2006a; 2006b; Jenkins and Deuze 2008) who has developed the concept of media convergence to embrace not only the common technological and/or industrial perspective but also social and cultural processes. It is a perspective that makes clear that convergence is a multi-layered and complex phenomenon. In this chapter I will widen the perception and include not only what has been achieved with convergence (the results) but to point at it as an ongoing process and discuss occurrences that I argue can be identified, defined and explained as processes of convergence. Jenkins furthermore points out that convergence is not only the commonly perceived top-down process. The bottom-up perspective of convergence, where the consumers, users, individuals are the central characters in a course of events, is equally important; a process that Jenkins acknowledges and makes us aware of (Cf. Jenkins 2001). Convergence embraces a multitude of processes that describe what is happening between the media industry and its consumers, and between consumers. Tying into Jenkins' view of convergence I will develop the perceptions and understandings of convergence from

Media convergence

Today it is slowly becoming accepted that the social and the economic are inseparable woven together as a single fabric, that economies are becoming more culturally driven or culturally embedded (Amin and Thrift 2004). The cultural industries¹ (Hesmondhalgh 2002) are important key drivers and accelerators in this process. More than any other type of production, the making and circulating of products that these industries produce, have an impact on our perception and understanding of the world (Du Gay 1997). Informational texts and entertainment like films, music, video games, websites, books, newspapers, comics, TV shows and radio programs supply us with representations of the

world. They refer to and help us establish our inner, private lives, our identities, emotions and fantasies. Global businesses like entertainment corporations are powerful actors, handling production and distribution of a wide array of cultural commodities. Toys, music, amusement park rides, books, comics and computer games may be produced by one single company. Channel proliferation, portability of computers and telecommunications technology make media present everywhere, and we may use all kinds of media in relation to each other. Our cell phones may be used not only for telecommunication but for playing games, downloading information from the internet, and receiving and sending photographs or text messages. All this impacts the way we consume media and adds to our changing media habits. The amount of time we spend engaging with these products makes them a mighty agent in our lives. In front of the computer we may shift rapidly between tasks; scanning the web, listening to and downloading MP3 files, creating and distributing music lists to friends, responding to emails, chatting with friends and writing blogs.

Media convergence has mainly been defined and explained as a technological and industrial phenomenon (Cf. Pool 1983; Hesmondhalgh 2007; Dwyer 2010). It was originally viewed as an endpoint where technology would converge into one, or at least few, devices and expressions. But history shows that convergence has been an ongoing process for several decades. Jenkins (2006a) mentions Pool (1983) to be among the first scholars to use the concept. Pool described it as a (technological) process where modes converge thus blurring the lines between media such as post, telephone and telegraph, defined as point-to-point communications, and mass communications like press, radio and television (1983: 23 in Jenkins 2006a: 10). Pool includes the fact that one single physical device, like cable or airwaves, could carry services previously provided separately, as well as the contrary, that a service previously tied to a medium like broadcasting or the press, now could be provided in different physical ways. Thirty years later Dwyer (2010: 2) defined media convergence similarly, as the process where new technologies are accommodated by existing media and communication industries and cultures. Dwyer describes this adaptation and transitioning process as a complex and multilayered confrontation between old and new technologies where the old ones were thought of as distinct and self-contained.

Since the inception of digital technologies, a growing trend of convergence has taken place, and over the last decade it has become a core industrial paradigm (Ip 2008). The creative industries have relied on convergence for their market growth to create economies of scale, synergy effects and to manage the production and consumption of cultural commodities (Jenkins 2004; Jin 2009). The integration between old and new media happens both vertically and horizontally, creating and integrating

digital hardware and software content (Noll 2003). This has resulted in huge media conglomerates controlling cultural commodities across the entire entertainment industry. Some scholars view media convergence from three perspectives: consolidation through industry alliances and mergers, the combination of technology and network platforms and the integration between markets and services (Baldwin, McVoy et al. 1996). Regardless of definition, we can see that the close relationship between media structure and content, and the integration of production between old and new media as a form of consolidation of firms within the industry, is commonly included in the understandings of media convergence (Jin 2009).

Dwyer (2010) acknowledges cultures as an important aspect of convergence, both on the production side like work practices, editorial processes and publishing strategies, and what he terms as innovative media consumption. Pool (1983) and Dwyer share a concern for convergence as a rhetorical construct. Dwyer calls for a critical assessment of the influence of discourse of convergence that impacts the developments in media industries, audiences, and policy and regulatory contexts. He describes convergence in terms of a new media ideology, a way of thinking that facilitates the operation of neoliberal global markets. This has practical effects on how people think about the unfolding media and communications industries.

Although convergence is still a dominant global paradigm, a recent trend of de-convergence has been observed (Jin 2009). Several large media and telecommunications companies have utilised de-convergence as an answer to a variety of problems that they have faced, like the failing maximisation of profits and failure to assess the market (Owen 1999; Rolland 2002) However, it is too early to call this the emergence of an era of de-convergence (Jin 2009).

To sum up, media convergence has mainly been described from a technical, economical, industrial and policy-making perspective. The audience, the users, have mainly been discussed from a top-down perspective; predicting customer habits, prospective new markets, et cetera.

Jenkins (2001; 2004; 2006a, 2006b) was among the first to expand and problematise the common idea of media convergence to also include a bottom-up consumer driven process. According to Jenkins, media convergence happens at three levels; content migrates across multiple media platforms, media industries begin to collaborate, and media audiences move almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want. Thus, Jenkins includes not only the common idea of convergence as a technological process bringing together the many media functions within the

same device, or the industrial process where some of the circulation depends on corporate strategies and collaboration. It is also a cultural and a social process. It is a social process in that some of the circulation depends on grassroots incorporation tactics. And it is a cultural process since it relies on consumers' active participation; consumers are encouraged to search for new information and make connections among dispersed media content (Jenkins 2006a: 3).

2. CONVERGENCE OF INDUSTRIES

In this section the broadcast and games industries and how they have managed the shifts regarding organisation and production are described. The section briefly starts with addressing the current state in today's media landscape regarding industrial convergence and depicts the environmental changes.

The current state of industrial convergence is a result of the last forty years of technological, economic, cultural and political shifts that in different ways have affected the broadcast and games industry. Technological advances such as the digital revolution with the internet and the World Wide Web, cheap computers and increases in bandwidth have radically changed the cultural industries. Boundaries between the media, telecommunications and information technology industries have grown less distinct. The particular problems for cultural industries, risk and unpredictability tied to problems surrounding its key features of immateriality and novelty, have forced the industry to restructure. The drive towards ever increasing consumer popularity pressures companies to further expand their market segments (Hesmondhalgh 2002). Vertical integration, buying companies in the same sector, has been a way to deal with re-usability and scarcity. Horizontal integration, buying companies in the supply chain, has been a strategy to reduce competition over audiences, as have multi-sector and multimedia integration (ibid.). Other responses are advertising, copyrights and limiting access to the means of reproduction. A common response is to 'format' commodities; a focusing on distinct genres for example.

Broadcasting

Historically each branch of the mass media industry was organised and managed around its own particular cultural production, such as the press, books, radio and television (Hesmondhalgh 2002). The broadcast industry was traditionally characterised by stable, nationally bounded spheres of activity. Since its inception in the beginning of the 20th century, the industry has been made up of both commercial players and governmental/parastatal public service broadcasters (PSB). Attributes of the industry were and are now to some extent regulation, markets that tended towards oligopolistic

processes based in well-established technologies, strong organisational cultures shaped by a variety of professional, national and individual influences. Television broadcast had a large control over the content that the (national) audience watched, and the viewers knew their roles in the broadcasting process. At the turn of the century broadcasting industries around the world started to undergo a period of tumultuous and unparalleled change and some of them enabled the industry's development, while others destabilised it (Küng-Shankleman 2000).

Broadcast production and organisation

The cultural industries have some shared distinctive features and recurring strategies in terms of how they manage and organise production. They are medium-specific and organise production according to its particular media logic (Altheide and Snow 1979; Dahlgren 1996; Du Gay 1997; McQuail 2005; Deuze 2007). However, operational and corporate strategies of media and broadcasting organisations have been impacted by the adoption of shared digital technologies and changed media users' consumption habits and practices (Küng-Shankelman 2000). Changes for broadcast organisations' traditional core areas production, scheduling and distribution should be interpreted with this in mind. Organisations operating in the broadcasting sector are diverse, partly as a consequence of the new diversity of funding and transmission. There is a wide array of networks, satellite, cable and niche cable broadcasters as well as local and community financed channels. Streamed broadcast/video is supplied from broadcasting companies operating on the internet, and a number of applications and social media such as *YouTube* and *MySpace*. Streamed broadcast sent via mobile phones may also be viewed online.

As with other cultural industries broadcasting is an uncertain business activity. Markets are unpredictable and fast-moving and production processes are characterised by a high skill division and task complexity (Deuze 2007). Since all entertainment firms compete on product differentiation rather than price they have to continuously come up with new ideas and original products (Hesmondhalgh 2002; Lorenzen and Frederiksen 2005). Product innovation has to be organised in projects to facilitate experimentation. In this way the institutional context in television must be seen as a combination of a growing number of people coming into an industry that is increasingly fragmented and networked in the way it runs its operations. Even if changes towards new and smaller television companies are seen the industry still relies on a few large corporate groups that own multiple media properties. Reasons for the lack of synergy among different media properties within the same corporation are infighting, slow decision-making, and a general lack of cooperation (Jenkins 2004; Deuze 2007: 176).

Old broadcasters may suffer from bureaucracy, a highly complex government mandate and broadcasting remit, stretched financial resources and an inability to 'shake itself free from the shackles of their heritage', as has been the case with British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) (Küng-Shankelman 2000: 209). However companies are becoming more interconnected in terms of combinations of content.

Technological development and product innovation are essential elements in broadcasting industries (ibid.) as well as part of the broadcast workers' everyday work style but it only slightly affects work processes (Deuze 2007). Computer technology has facilitated some processes but simultaneously brings about a demand of more specialised and highly skilled freelancers. Digital technology creates new ways of delivering content and the development of more interactive forms of television. Van Dijk and de Vos (2001) argue that new technologies open up and disrupt the business processes of media organisations, also in cases where a radical shift does not happen and technologies get appropriated largely to fit existing patterns of production. The changes in television due to new technology and new formats, genres and channels lead to a growing role for individuals in the process of producing television. This, together with the growing participatory online media culture, indicates that television production per se does not satisfy the audience. Television production is increasingly about developing multi-platform strategies, adjusting formats to audience interactions (Ytreberg 2007; Enli 2008), and providing sponsors with a wide variety of options to connect with the content (Deuze 2007). In recent decades PSB has been forced to reorient and change its activities, in order to manage and survive (Syvertsen 1997; Syvertsen 2005).

Television production processes are complex and chaotic, and simultaneously hierarchical and bureaucratic. They are dependent on a complex mix of financial, speculative, technological and artistic variables and involve multiple departments like production assistance, camera, sound, technical, hair and make-up (Tunstall 2001). The creative labour process is complex and grounded in distinctive geographic conditions that commonly leave strong cultural traces in the end result (Scott 2000). This implies that the organisation of production has a direct impact on what the program will eventually look like. Deuze (2007: 191) concludes that television, like other mass media, faces increasingly unforeseeable changes in audience preferences and is confronted by the consumers-producer shift which leads to a balance between being flexible and innovative in production on the one hand, and keeping steady routine within parts of the more or less reliable structure of the creative process, on the other.

Although production processes are (still) fixed, they are more commonly organised in temporary projects, loose-fitting structures of people, teams and companies. The otherwise complex process is simp-

lified and tends to be capable of flexible, experimental, and customised production, and can also adapt to changing circumstances (Deuze 2007). The required resources like financing, materials, talents and marketing are set up for each project. European PSB still traditionally employs its staff permanently and develops content in-house (Scott 2000). The trend in recent years has been to cut full-time staff and rely more on contract and freelance labour.

Broadcast culture of production

Economic processes and practices can be viewed as cultural phenomena. Processes of production and systems of organisation are more than concrete structures applied to a certain work group. They consist of meaningful practices that create particular ways for workers to consider themselves and their work. The fact that there are fewer positions than media workers in broadcast production, and that the nature of employment and projects is dynamic, ingrains a culture where informal and personal social networks and relationships are important (Deuze 2007). The informality of the labour market is privileged and favoured as a necessary component to the creative process and blurs the line between the professional and personal. Deuze connects this to at least three levels on which television practitioners give meaning to their work. The creative work is experienced as very personal and an expression of self. A kind of job security is shaped by the deregulation and vertical disintegration of television industry and the social networks and personal connections that follow are important. Thirdly, the fragmentation of the formal relationship employer -employed craves a need for other , more informal forms of cohesiveness and consistency This last point has technological grounds which implicates the use of specialists and experts in outsourced services and projects. Nevertheless, the producer is central in television production, with direct responsibility for a program's quality and viability (Christopherson 2011). There is a constant struggle between the producer's drive for artistic and creative freedom and the management's pressure to produce commercially viable and therefore market-oriented products (Deuze 2010: x).

Individual creativity is connected to the environment. Creativity, the production of novel and useful ideas by an individual or small group, is intimately coupled with innovation, which is the successful implementation of creative ideas within an organisation as a whole (Amabile 1988; Amabile 1990; Amabile 1993 in Küng-Schankleman 2000: 208-9). A critical component of creativity is 'intrinsic task motivation', since no other amount of skill (factual, technical or creative) can compensate for lack of task motivation. This motivation is also dependent on (work) environment. Freedom to decide how a task or goal is to be accomplished, good project management (in the case protection from unnecessary

management distraction or interference) and sufficient resources are factors that enhance or promote motivation and therefore creativity. Encouragement and enthusiasm for new ideas, and various organisational characteristics, including a corporate climate marked by co-operation and collaboration across all levels and divisions also count (Küng-Shankleman 2000). Inhibiting factors are those that work counter to those ideals, like a lack of co-operation and freedom et cetera. As Küng-Schankleman concludes in her research, a broadcaster may enable the organisation to maintain programme creativity because it is the product of a small team. However, if the broadcaster does not promote the environmental factors that enhance creativity at a higher level in the organisation, then the small group creativity cannot be turned into organisational innovation. To do this the organisation must restructure, reduce or eliminate these elements that inhibit creativity.

Broadcasting industries are more or less gender balanced although a young workforce is overrepresented in the creative industries of the Western countries (Baumann 2002). Other general characteristics are long working hours, job uncertainty, unstable income, high level of stress and intense teamwork. This affects the work-life balance and singles are overrepresented. Conflicts in the creative process do appear and through the chain of production there are three areas that stand out (Lorenzen and Fredriksen 2005): time, governance and communication. Time issues are connected to the difficulty to allocate and complete the different tasks in the process at the right time. Governance issues follow with the involvement of several departments. Tunstall (2001) argues that individuals tend to think horizontally with their speciality. Accordingly their skills, sources of information, motivations and interests differ. Then freelancers may have differing agendas, work practices, ideas and ideals. The communication problems can be traced to the complex, chaotic, hierarchical and bureaucratic production process, and that many beliefs, expectations, languages, norms and practices have to be lodged in one single project.

The games industry

In its forty years of commercial existence the digital games industry has grown to become global with cultural production varying from video platforms to online games, and from single to multi-player games. Digital games are based on the commodification of play and the development of new technologies to mediate how players interact (Kerr 2011). They are a widely accepted and popular part of contemporary society (Stenros, Montola et al. 2007). With games, people have moved from being passive spectator-consumers of cultural commodities like television shows and movies to becoming interactive-participant-co-producers. Digital games are played on consoles, handheld portables, mo-

mobile phones or other handheld game devices, on desktop computers and in game arcades using coin-operated machines. Digital games are produced for one-off, persistent and serialised forms of content. Game activities are applied in a variety of areas; from learning, training and simulation to advertising and viral marketing. A recent trend is 'gamification', the idea to apply game mechanics and rewards in non-game contexts to supercharge engagement, loyalty, social relations and fun in areas that include but are not limited to health, work, marketing and social good².

Within a few decades the games industry has turned into a global multibillion dollar industry with huge turnovers, and has challenged and impacted all major cultural industries (Deuze 2007). It shares many similarities with more traditional media industries in terms of relations of production, the role of publishers and the importance of distribution (Kerr 2011) and is today considered one of the cultural industries. It has increasingly been marketised and professionalised (ibid.). Considering the fast-paced growth and youth of the industry, digital games have become powerful drivers of a new global economy pushed by information and communication technology, cultural production and media convergence. In many countries the (national) games industry has become part of deliberate government policies to strengthen international competitiveness (De Prato, Feijóo et al. 2010). The industry operates on a global scale but ownership and revenue are increasingly concentrated to a small number of multinational companies headquartered in a small number of countries like England, USA, Canada, Japan, France, Germany and the Nordic countries (Kerr 2011). Development has diversified to include Eastern Europe, South Korea and China (ibid.: 228).

Games industry production and organisation

The game industry develops fast and it increasingly amalgamates with other cultural industries like film, television and advertising (Johns 2006; Deuze 2007). The basic organisational structure is made up of development studios and publishing companies. It has moved quickly from small firms like individual modders that program software for a niche market, to an industry dominated by multinational hardware producers (Johns 2006). The contemporary games industry is still characterised by a rather independent, dispersed and idiosyncratic structure, although with a few console manufacturers and a few global game publishers dominating the field. This hour-glass structure is still prevalent with a few conglomerations on one side and small game development studios on the other. Several characteristics are shared across regions although the industry has features particular for each country (Deuze 2007). Another similarity it shares with many traditional media sectors is that it embraces digital technologies and networks to develop new transnational networks of production, new types of games, new

types of distribution channels and new and more productive relationships with their users/players (Kerr 2011: 226). Key actors in the production network include developers (amateur or professional), publishers, distributors, service companies, retailers, and players.

The small studios and 'dev firms' tend to be described with specific reference to their particular identities and ways of doing things. Firms/studios often have an anti-authoritarian attitude typical for the way they operate, a kind of rebelliousness in studio culture (Kline, Dyer-Witthof et al. 2003). Kline, Dyer-Witthof et al. state that the organisation and structure of the individual game worker's work resembles a contemporary 'post-Fordist weightless economy' at work. It is typified by a metalogic of instantaneous, experimental, fluid, flexible, heterogenous, customised, portable and yet also fashionable and stylish products and productivity (ibid.: 74).

The idea for a new game commonly comes from an internal group within an independent development company, or from a publisher (Kerr 2011). The publisher finances the development of a game in advance and controls the entire game-making process; financing, marketing and publishing. At each stage milestones are to be met. Artisanal productions occur where small companies or individuals develop their own ideas and self-publish, however corporate relations with a publisher is still more prevalent.

Some developers specialise in creating games for a particular platform others for multiple platforms. Different markets like console, casual or massively multiplayer online, require different internal skill sets and competences and different external networks and relationships which implicates that each subsector is structured differently (Kerr 2006). However, compared to developing a retail PC game much smaller teams are needed for developing mobile, social or casual games for the web. Games production is a costly business. The industry is rife with stories of publishers that pull out halfway or put a project on hold due to various reasons (Deuze 2007). It could be internal restructuring, a merger with another company or an unwillingness or inability to see the development of a game through to the end (Kerr 2006). The opposite may also happen: key employees may leave during the production process. The business is notorious for having problems retaining talent and it suffers from a high attrition rate and of mismanaging temporal and financial budgets (Deuze 2007). Prevailing management structures and poor project planning often lead to poor working conditions too (Kerr 2011). Next to publishers and developers other significant players in the games industry include universities and research laboratories. They, among other related industries, both craft tools for games as well as games in themselves.

The market for digital games has grown exponentially. Today the direction goes towards crafting an entire game world where players can roam around for days leaving the previously more restricted games where players simply moved from point A to B. This results in larger teams, development of specialisations and enormous budgets. But simultaneously a counter development appears, as there are fewer and larger games produced, the trend goes towards more small-scale casual game production and games taken directly to the consumers through online distribution by its developers (Deuze 2007).

Games culture of production

A striking feature, compared to broadcast, is the emphasis on collaborative authorship of game developers, a kind of democratic character of the industry. This includes not only the team workers but involves also those who play the games, fans and consumers, in constantly evolving and shifting roles (Jeppesen and Molin 2003) also in elements of (online) team play . This participatory authorship is a crucial element of the production process of games. Viral marketing and user control in product development has been an important feature in game development since the 90s and gives good opportunities to tapping customer communities on input (ibid.).

The main jobs in development include design, production, art, programming, audio and quality assurance - all lead by a team lead/producer (Deuze 2007). Designers establish the basic game concept, characters and play mechanics; the infrastructure of the game. Programmers develop the game engine or modify existing ones. Prototypes are programmed to create the tools that build the game and rendering tools which iterate animation or special effects. Artists can then design, review and edit their creations. At the end of a game project, or at different times of the development cycle, test-players evaluate the game (parts). During this time, called 'crunchtime', the teams are supposed to work very long hours and often for seven days a week. In the production of large games the work is hierarchically structured although tasks and responsibilities tend to overlap. The creative cycle involves the production of numerous assets; milestones/deliverables that all are particular elements in the game and that each gets evaluated and tested. The entire process creates an atmosphere of constant pressure to deliver. The matter of 'feature creep' can also put a strain on the completion of a game. It refers to the tendency of development teams to add all kinds of fun or cool features to the game during the production phase that were not planned from the start nor outlined in the original design document. The creative process tends to give rise to existing tensions within different groups of professionals in a team, firm or networked enterprise as with other areas of media work and management. In this sense the games industry is not different. Most game developers work in the industry because they love



3. CONVERGENCE OF TECHNOLOGIES

The media industry tends to define itself in terms of content but is in fact just as intimately involved with technology - it is a technology industry as much as it is a cultural one (Küng 2011: 43). Küng calls the relationship between media and technology ‘symbiotic’, its very existence depends on technological inventions. The industry oscillates between adjusting to the emergence of new technologies and the erosion of already existing products, a mix that sometimes creates success and sometimes the opposite.

One such technology, that has established itself as an integral part of everyday life for many people all over the world with a striking speed, is the internet. Fundamentally it is ‘a system architecture that has revolutionised communications and methods of commerce by allowing various computer networks around the world to interconnect’³ and can be defined as a set of open standards that allow computers to communicate information with each other (Conner -Sax and Krol 1999: 4). Analysing the change in content, how people respond and how firms have changed their business models, management and strategies, informs us about how the media industry has responded to the internet. Current exploitations include but are not limited to commerce, education, entertainment, public and private information systems and games.

Digital technology and the internet are part of the endlessly shifting ‘technological carpet’ (Küng 2011) that has led the traditional media industry to core strategic challenges and adaptation. In this section we will take a closer look at what the adaptation to the internet has meant for the television and games industries and the conditions of the internet that helps to interweave the two.

Convergence of television and the internet

Globally television is still the strongest mass medium. Although the internet is partially modifying it and is doing so at increasing speed, it will continue to be an essential element of contemporary society for a long time (Küng, Picard et al. 2008: 158). Apart from loss of television advertising revenues, the internet has had effects on the digitalisation process of the entire television process, from content production to distribution and reception (Küng, Picard et al. 2008; Doyle 2010). The internet opens up for both new (digitalised) content to be distributed and to other new distribution channels. Another effect deals with how the internet is changing the concept of television, from being perceived as consuming content in a linear pre-packed way to be accessed through several different devices (Küng, Picard et al. 2008). Using the Bauman (2000) concept of ‘liquid television’ that views television as a fluid

entity that changes its shape in order to survive, and therefore will adapt to market conditions, Küng, Picard et al. suggest that the internet will continue to strongly influence the development of television. A third shift deals with the adaptation to new audience habits and needs. The internet, an online interactive media environment with an almost infinite information-providing capacity, enables interaction between producers and consumers and between consumers; it enables enhanced audience communication, relations and services. This last shift is interlinked with the development of television's one-way-directed and 'controlled' narrative logics and the interactive network logics of the internet.

Multimedia platforming

Scholars have considered the economic, technological, and social aspects of how television and the internet continue to converge. Enquiries have focussed on how organisations have developed strategies to manage convergence in the business world and of the increasing importance of the internet (Chan-Olmsted and Chang 2003; Lawson-Borders 2003; Dennis, Warley et al. 2006; García Avilés and Carvajal 2008; Küng, Picard et al. 2008; Aris 2009; Doyle 2010). Some studies have focussed particularly on the convergence of television and internet (Chan-Olmsted and Ha 2003; Caldwell 2006). One dominant strategy (adaptation) for many traditional broadcast companies has been to migrate towards a diversified (digital) multi-platform approach. Digital technologies create opportunities to consider new ideas for content through multiple forms of expression in order to generate consumer value and returns. Internet technology has enabled and spurred new forms of content, like combining video and text, and has introduced greater interactivity and multiple layers (Roscoe 2004). Digital platforms support the circulation of all kinds of content and broadcasters have had to consider the internet and mobile telephones as modes of distribution to audiences (Caldwell 2006; Creeber and Hills 2007). Although traditional television dissemination is still important, developed strategies include a wide range of distributive outlets like online, mobile, and interactive games.

Most television broadcasters have moved fast to embrace the multi-platform strategy (Dwyer 2010), also called the '360 degree', although opinions diverge about what it actually implicates (Doyle 2010). It may include the re-use of existing content across additional digital platforms like supplying linear TV content online or via mobile devices, or the modification of existing output, like re-editing, or adding additional layers or content. A third approach is to create additional original content (web content), or any other subsidiary material, to support existing linear material. Often the multi-platform content forms involve a mix or combination of conventional alongside digital delivery.

The process of change on all levels of the television industry is characterised by the much greater emphasis on multi-platform audience involvement. Changes include content production, product assembly and distribution that in turn also affect media forms and the consumption patterns and enjoyment (Roscoe 2004; Ytreberg 2007). Acquisition decisions and production activities at earlier stages will be influenced, regardless of whether production activities are conducted in-house or not (Doyle 2010).

The distribution of content through multi-platform approaches opens up numerous possibilities for (public service) broadcasters to offer new sorts of audience services and output (Born 2003; Bennett 2008; Enli 2008; Trappel 2008). A variety of television concepts, like entertainment television and popular factual formats that draw on interactive technologies, have proven examples of the potential for multi-platform content to engage audiences across the internet, mobile phones and television platforms (Roscoe 2004). Levels of ambition, experimentation and innovation vary among broadcasters' vision and approaches to commissioning and producing multi-platform concepts. The quality of 'public good' with television products creates economic advantages of disseminating content via a variety of digital channels and fuller commercial exploitation (Küng, Picard et al. 2008). A good example of this, and to make better use of resources, is the BBC iPlayer that since its launch December 2007 has become quickly accepted and heavily used (Doyle 2010).

Another drive for multi-platform approaches is the massive changes in media consumption by especially the younger audiences that threaten to leave traditional media behind unless they too change. Convergence enables new forms of participation and collaboration (Jenkins 2006a). Jenkins argues that the media organisational strategies towards multi-platform concepts are driven by economic calculations and not by some broad mission to empower the public (ibid.: 243). Doyle (2010) questions this, arguing that the pressures from audiences cannot be separated from the media organisations' needs to keep, or even attract new, audience segments and thus they try to fulfil these demands. Doyle concludes that the motive and primary concern for multi-platform approaches for PBS is public value and audience welfare rather than profits, as is the case for commercial broadcasters. It is also a way to keep in step with evolving and much more demanding perceptions of the key purposes PBS ought to fulfil in a digital era. Enli's (2008) analysis of the Swedish, Norwegian, British and American PBS channels in the mid-00s, shows that audience participation⁴ is a strategy for institutional legitimacy and platform expansion. A key argument is that this strategy reflects the need to attract large audiences while simultaneously being seen to represent an alternative to the commercial channels. It also shows how this new policy develops new sources of revenue and provides a technological rhetoric to legitimate fiscal strategies (Ytreberg 2007; Enli 2008). Motives may also be more complex

like engaging with target audiences, or to move beyond broadcasting. In a world of fragmented and dispersed audiences the 360 degree approach multiplies the number of distribution outlets, and the time period during which content is accessible to audiences. Closer relationships with target communities is another advantage; interests may be cultivated and new opportunities for the management of audiences flow from this. That new forms of engagement with audiences are essential for survival is a conviction held both by PSB and commercial players. We already witness that alongside the mass media content model reaching a large audience, and niche content models for specific market segments (the long tail Anderson), comes a third content category involving social network and participatory content. It spans a broad spectrum of content including blogs, tweets, wikis, forums, photos, videos and podcasts. *Facebook* and *YouTube* offer a combination of professional and user-generated content and have become central to the lives of many contemporary media consumers.

Convergence of (digital) games and the internet

Games are different from the cultural commodities of the traditional mass media industry in that they are based on the commodification of play (Kerr 2011). As with other media industries (Küng 2011) the digital games industry is closely related to technology for its development, but it is directly dependent on technology for the innovation of new games, new transnational networks of production and new distribution channels (Kerr 2011). New technologies are increasingly employed. The intimate and productive relationship with its gamers is another unusual feature compared to other media industries. With the game industry's technology saturated environment and technology focussed culture in rear-view, it is no surprise that offline games would go online, or that innovative game concepts would be developed for online gameplay. The internet medium, with its network features, lends itself particularly well to socially collaborative international and cross-cultural games that require rich information resources to be available on demand (Martin 2003: 36). Since the games industry began utilising the internet for new game concepts, new marketing and new collaboration platforms, the types and numbers of digital games have exploded. The computer games industry is clearly growing in the direction of multiplayer, online games and increasingly relied on online business models (Küng, Picard et al. 2008: 89). The growth of online gaming has close ties with the use of broadband, as a good online gaming experience requires a broadband connection (Curran, Canning et al. 2005).

Online gaming

Online gaming is a new industry derived from the PC and console game through disruptive innovation and business models (Jong 2009). In the past all types of video games were played offline. Users played games on ROM cartridges or CD-ROMs via game consoles, TV sets or PCs. This meant playing alone, or together with a few other people in the same physical space, using the same single piece of equipment. Games were developed by software developers and sold by retailers, a business model prevalent for around twenty years (ibid.). Playstation 3 and the Nintendo Wii produced by Japanese console game system developers are examples.

The emergence of online graphic multiuser game worlds started in the mid-90s (Taylor 2006). The popularity of the early online graphic environments for multiple users signalled a turn in which multiuser spaces were to become one of the more innovative developments within the internet technologies (Taylor 2006: 23). Users were now connected to servers via game consoles, PCs and communication networks. As time went on, users could play with more and more people using their own machines and connecting from remote places around the world, logging in to the same game at the same time. The first major online game was American in origin, *Ultima Online* (1997) although commercialised and marketed by Koreans (Jong 2009). It is often seen as the breakthrough game of its genre because its popularity and world focus and lively player culture. Today users interact with hundreds or thousands of other users within online worlds such as *Everquest* and *World of Warcraft*. The early multiuser game worlds piggybacked on MUDing and tabletop gaming and drew on technological advances in graphics and multiuser virtual worlds (Taylor 2006).

The online gaming development and business models were very different from the offline games development. Many corporations had difficulties to adapt (Jong 2009: 8) due to the technology and structure of the product that changed entirely in a short period of time (Kerr 2011). Korea is today the market leading online game developing country; both regarding production and distribution and maintains around two years lead in technological development over its Chinese, Japanese and American competitors (Jong 2009).

There are different types, or genres, of online games. However, massively multiplayer online games (MMOGs), highly graphical 2- or 3-D video games played online, are very popular and gather a majority of the internationally spread online gamer communities as well as the bulk of the online gaming market and the games industry's turnaround. Individuals, through their self-created digital characters

or ‘avatars’, are allowed to interact not only with the gaming software (the designed environment of the game and the computer-controlled characters within it) but with other players’ avatars as well.

Other types of games played both online and in the physical world and with technological support like mobiles and PCs exist too. Alternate reality games (ARG) is one such online game genre that took off around the turn of the century (McGonigal 2003a; McGonigal 2003b; McGonigal 2004). An ARG is an interactive narrative that uses the real (physical) world as a platform, involving multiple media and game elements to tell a story that evolves according to participants’ responses and actions. The internet is its central binding medium but ARG uses common communication tools/applications like email and phones too. It does not require any software or interfaces, and characters or avatars are not required to play. Instead gameplay is controlled real-time by game masters (GM), not computer AI (artificial intelligence). ARGs started off as promotion activities, viral marketing, for products like cars, films and television shows. Today they are designed and developed for pure entertainment too. ARGs are developed for massive multiplayer engagement by professional game developers and with large budgets, often supported by a product stakeholder, but grassroots and amateur developers producing low-budget games are highly prevalent.

Around the same time another type of game took off, pervasive live action role-playing games (pervasive larps). They are mainly played in the physical world although they rely on and are supported by mobile and electronic technology and the internet (Montola, Stenros et al. 2009). They share important features with live action role-playing games like physical enactment together with character-based make-believe and pretend play (Fine 1983). The participants take on characters, where you pretend and perform being someone else through speech, and a game master decides the setting, manages the game, and facilitates play. Counter to larps that are enacted in a prepared and closed-off area with props at a certain decided timespan, pervasive larps takes place in the cityscape and is often played 24/7. This is how they ‘pervade’ the players’ lives (Montola, Stenros et al. 2009) (See further down in section on convergence of game, play and ordinary life). Unlike ARG players (pervasive) larpers are prepared in advance by the organisers’ instructions or ‘sourcebook’, and they rig their own clothes and props. Organisers often have a low profile and do not market the games externally. Participation fees only cover the organisation of the game, so commercialisation has been sparse, if any at all. Individual games are commonly singly run and hardly documented.

4. CONVERGENCE OF TELEVISION, DRAMA AND GAMES

The traditional mass media industry's commodities were easily identified and interpreted according to their common features and content - types/forms, formats and genres - connected to its particular medium; books, newspapers, news programs and television dramas. This is no longer so. For decades interoperating technological, economic, social and cultural processes have imposed on the expressions of cultural commodities and practices connected to them. Within television programming this is a significant phenomenon. The genre features common for drama production and storytelling, are today also prevalent in the making of news, of how news items are constructed and presented. The opposite also applies, factual programming like news or documentaries have inspired dramatisations, for example, and given birth to new genres (Altheide and Snow 1979; Burton 2000; Neale 2001; Hill 2007) like the docudrama genre. An example from the print media is the previously text-based novel that may appear as a comics book. Another is that while watching the television news viewers may be directed to the broadcaster's online source and there be offered to watch the 'entire interview' instead of the short piece exhibited on the news (see section on multi-platform approach). Easily identified and distinct borders between games and other types of entertainment existed like the identification of a family board game, a football game or chess. However, with technological advances games have entered the new electronic era, not only in that new forms of games are produced and played via different media - online MMOGS or console games on television sets - but activities of play and games have entered the television genres and formats as with event/entertainment television like *Robinson* (Eng. *Survivor*), *Pop Idol* and the *Eurovision Song Contest*. Factual and informational programming have also become 'gamified' like the Swedish consumer program *Plus* that uses contests to conduct and exhibit market surveys. Broadcasters' multi-platform approaches offer viewing online, and activities and interaction in community forums and chats, and co-authorship in programming. With technological advances, types, formats and genres amalgamate and form new types of engagement and entertainment, both in the world of games and television.

In this section I will elaborate on what a 'typical' television drama is and what could be agreed on to define a 'typical' game and address two types of emerging games in particular.

Television drama

As mentioned, the broadcast industry commonly views itself as content creators (Küng 2011). The content, or programs, have commonly been separated into fiction and factual programming. Drama is one of the genres of television fiction alongside soaps, event entertainment, comedies and wes-

terns. The factual genres consist of news, documentary and other similar informational programming. Drama is commonly defined as a literary composition that tells a story, usually of human conflict, by means of dialogue, action and performed by actors. The classic drama is parted into comedy and tragedy, but commonly today any play that is not a comedy may count as drama. Contemporary modes of 'drama' adopted by the film and television industry use a narrower definition in that it does not distinguish between the two. The genre of television drama refers to content that is scripted and normally fictional. By convention, the term is not generally used for situation comedies or soap operas.

Television fiction, and particularly drama productions, may be a low-budget form of feature-film making, but is expensive for two reasons (Tunstall 1993). It often involves many people over long spans of time and it seeks high 'production values' because it is competing with international productions. To appeal to its domestic audience it often seeks to achieve higher artistic levels and to be of higher quality (ibid.: 106). Different aspects of quality affect the costs. The more carefully made the greater the entertainment impact which in turn demands long preparation and generous filming. The selection of well experienced and famous writers, directors, producers and actors is deemed to guarantee high quality but it also affects costs. Even if single dramas are higher in prestige, most drama serials (3-8 episodes) attract somewhat higher audiences which make the serial more economical for prestige drama investment. During the history of television the format of televised drama has undergone extensive changes, for example from single studio-recorded televised theatre play performances to longer run series.

Dramas originally enact familiar social situations and common social life depicting realistic characters. The story/narrative is commonly understood to deal with an emotional theme where the audience follows the development of, or between the characters. Docudrama is a particular subgenre of drama, a situation or event from the past is being recreated and critical questions concerning these subjects ought to be reexamined. The viewer is being set up for a vicarious identification with the main character(s) in order to experience conflict, tension, persecution, and so on. Docudrama is a clear example of how media logics operate (Altheide and Snow 1979). Viewers think they are getting a behind-the-scenes look at factual accounts of the past, in viewing these new fictional accounts.

The format of television is primarily an entertainment medium. Even news, documentary and informative programmings are presented with a subtle entertainment perspective. TV entertainment, of which fictional drama is one format, has adopted its own media logic and specific media formats as its own institutional strategy (Altheide and Snow 1979: 16). The media grammar is the set of rules

governing the use, arrangement and inflection of words. In entertainment there is a particular way of communicating that professional actors follow like timing, organisation, rhythm and tempo. The emphasis is on nonverbal communication and with a low degree of ambiguity. Time in television is compacted, and in drama that fairly natural settings are used that the viewers can identify themselves with. Drama has the usage of real-time characteristics although they are exaggerated. The tempo and rhythm are also time factors of a program and significant defining characteristics. Television events follow an organisation where dialogue is strategically dispersed with action, although there is more action than is typical for human interaction. It is often comprised as linearly-told content, or if not, at least viewers are forced to follow what is designed by the director, and spared the problems of figuring out what is going on. The viewer is in a privileged position; the appearance of interaction flows smoothly. Another part of the grammar is that television entertainment is built of nonverbal communication, on facial expressions and nonverbal gestures. There is the close-up potential of the television camera, and a lot of interaction between talking heads. Lighting, makeup, camera angles, background and sound are utilised to accent nonverbal features. Most important is the low ambiguity factor, viewers should be able to follow the events even if parts of the programme are missed.

Entertainment, like television drama, has features of extraordinary behaviour, an illusion, a fantasy, or an escape; something outside the boundaries of the 'normal'. It commonly involves highly skilful behaviour and allows the audience a vicarious involvement. This involvement is connected to an emotional outlet; it is legitimate to display and let a variety of feelings out. But it is entertainment and accordingly meant to entertain; it should be enjoyable in a fun or playful sense. Television entertainment often uses ideal norms, norms that most people share like honesty, modesty, fidelity and hard work. The reason is to present material that viewers will not object to, to keep viewers from turning off their sets. Entertainment features are a set of criteria for evaluation, a set of expected norms (Altheide and Snow 1979). The constructing of entertainment such as drama makes it more insidious than news. By using realistic plots, characters and settings and a solving of the characters' featured issues within social/ideal norms, applying a low ambiguity factor and using techniques such as close up all imply 'reality' support. These norms are one part of the media format of entertainment that is used to define its content. The words of Altheide and Snow concluding their analysis of television as a medium in the 70s still have bearing in decades later: 'we are cooperatives in a media communication system in which we have come to accept a media culture as the real world. And to a large extent that media world is entertainment' (1979: 60).

Games

Games also have entertainment as their central element. They are played for the fun of it. They may, but do not have to, tell stories⁶. Interactivity is an essential part of any game's structure and will always be an important factor of how they are experienced. This is also what distinguishes games from other cultural forms like puzzles, stories and toys (Crawford 1982/1997). To play a game demands an effort from the player, whether it involves pushing buttons or in other ways requiring the player to take action to experience the game.

Games have their own conventions (Mäyrä 2008). For digital games film conventions are a common genre tool (Wolf 2001), for example iconography has been transformed into visual style such as the screen layout and player perspective (Ye 2004). The unique visual style supports the player to quickly recognise the genre, and is a common marketing tool for games producers. Since games are designed enacted activities it is important for users to be familiar with the game genre since without prior knowledge of the genre it will be difficult to play it. Conventions involving interaction and user experience like pace and control schemes, are thus important to recognise (Ye 2004). In the same way, Wolf (2001) argues that interactivity supersedes both visual conventions and narratives in importance. There does not seem to exist any commonly accepted generic classification of games, neither among game producers nor academics (Björk and Holopainen 2006; Mäyrä 2008). The range of classification can vary from content, interactivity, theme, task and tools, like board and card games, simulation, first person shooter, role-playing, platform, puzzle games and so forth. The list can be very long, and Wolf (2001) in his examination concludes forty-two different genres. Accordingly some games will fit into more than one genre of which online multi-player role-playing game is an example.

Storytelling as activity

A (digital) game contains emergent storytelling and most often it also includes embedded storytelling; it may even be its primary objective. Embedded storytelling means that a story element, such as a cut scene or a dialogue, has been embedded into the game. More subtle ways of introducing story include enriching the game world by adding all sorts of elusive details to the story in a non-obtrusive way . They are blended into the environment and help add to the bigger story. Emergent storytelling is, on the other hand, created by the player . It is in fact what the player experiences and retells as his/her game experience. But what is storytelling?

All stories, in essence, contain the same basic components (Miller 2008). A story depicts characters

involved in a dramatic situation, and events are depicted from inception to conclusion. It may mean fiction, something that is make-believe, but descriptions of events in real life can be stories as well, like nonfiction stories in newspapers and television news and documentaries, then narrated in a dramatic manner and containing characters. Different media have been used through the centuries to tell stories and the advent of a new medium has given rise to new forms of storytelling. Early forms of storytelling are thought to be oral; told or sung together with the use of gestures, expressions and instruments. The industrialisation and the mass production of printed media gave rise to mass production and mass audiences. Much later, stories have been recorded on film or for television, and stored electronically in digital form. During the twentieth and twenty-first centuries emerging digital media changed the ways of telling stories. Today an endless amount of virtual stories flourish on the World Wide Web, ranging from gossip and urban legends to stories constructed for professional educational or organisational purposes. Emerging types of games that use the internet can be viewed as examples.

According to Miller (2008) digital storytelling is narrative entertainment that uses digital technology and media to reach its audience. 'Digital' implicates the unique feature of interactivity; the enabling of a back and forth communication between audience and the narrative material. Interactivity is a term grossly misunderstood and misused in association with computers. Crawford (2005: 29) defines interactivity as 'a cyclic process between two or more active agents in which each agent alternately listens, thinks, and speaks' and in which listen, think and speak is metaphorically interpreted. An interactive work is not instantly accessible but demands the user to perform physical actions (Walker 2003) that have to be 'non-trivial' (Aarseth 1997) to experience it. Thus, a computer game or a hypertext cannot just be watched the same way as you watch a televised drama. In digital storytelling the audience members become active players in the narrative and can even have direct impact on it.

Interpretation versus configuration

Often games are seen as interactive narratives, procedural stories or remediated cinema. However, as Eskelinen (2001) argues this is too crude an explanation that does not go deeply into what games actually are. Eskelinen locates the most crucial and elementary qualities that set it apart from dramatic and narrative situations (2001: 1). One difference between (television) dramas and games is the way the content is organised and consumed; how readers/users are supposed to engage with it - the mode or type of activity. The dominant user function in literature, theatre, film as well as television is interpretive (Aarseth 1997: 62-65). When watching a film the viewer becomes engaged in an interpretative process. The viewer builds up the construction of the story in his/her mind, the 'fabula', and fleshes

out the plot to form the full story on the basis of cues in the ‘sujet’, the input on the screen (Bordwell and Thompson 1997). Cues are sound, light, editing and camera angles that, organised in knowledge clusters guide the viewer’s hypothesis making in film viewing (Bordwell 1985). The total fable is constructed through the basis of different schemata or cognitive maps, where the film’s sujet and style interact in the course of cueing and channelling the viewer’s construction of the fabula.

In games, whether digital or physical, the main user activity is configuration, the process of selecting content and putting together what is going to be experienced, a configurative practice (Eskelinen 2001). The gaming situation is a combination of ends, means, rules, equipment and manipulative action. Playing games includes player engagement and decisions; without a player there is no game. From the perspective of the early computerised games Aarseth (1997) explained the difference between text and story. With the term ‘ergodic literature’ Aarseth denotes a text that demands some effort by its reader to ‘read’ it⁷. To put it simply, a computer/adventure game, one of the four genres of ergodic literature that Aarseth addresses, consists of a network comprised of a large number of choices, and every choice has a number of outcomes. Each choice made by the player will affect the particular story (outcome) experienced by the player. The particular route, or way, through the network is the story that the player experiences. The need to read (more or less) all of the text, that everything matters, is a characteristic of interpretive practices in general, as for literature, film and television. In computer games, on the other hand, you either can’t or don’t have to come across every possible combinatory event and existent embraced by the game, as these differ in their ergodic importance (Eskelinen 2001). The text is in this context the entire network of choices and outcomes, but a player does not see the (entire) text whilst playing, or have not seen/experienced the entire text after having completed the game. Aarseth’s explanation presupposes that there is a fixed text from start, as is the case with computer games that consists of a complete designed game world. Consequently, games that are not settled, but open-ended, do not take the player’s activity and game contribution into consideration. However, in live action role-playing where collective story building is the goal and main activity, the player’s agency and actions are emphasised as crucial parts of gameplay and thus a crucial contribution to the game. The player part is essential in ARG too, although here a mystery is crafted that demands collective intelligence, ‘a hivemind’ (McGonigal 2008), to be solved. Hivemind creates a drive towards a particular game design structure that can be implicitly understood from ARG game design; a conundrum that players solve together and that cannot be found in larps.

Larp, and partly also ARG, share some features with particular role-playing games played in massively multiplayer online worlds. Tychsen et al. (2006: 253) in their survey of the classification of

larp address features like physical action, highest number of players possible in the game, low game master-to-player ratio, lack of a tight, narrative control, focus on player -player interaction and an aim to provide an environment for emergent storytelling. All but physical (real-world) action has shared similarities with online and 'offline' role-playing. The relative importance they have for the development of emergent storytelling to take place can vary. The nature of player-player interaction has consequences for the plot development and narrative. Games are designed so that only a subset of the players are required to support a given plot line and players evolve perceived plots from a unified understanding of the game environment and the fictional world setting. Therefore the games are developed with several pre-planned plot lines, often decentralised in order not to need a GM to control/develop it. Larp can also be focussed on producing an environment where plots emerge via the player (character) interactions. Another feature larp share with MMORPGs is that it requires an agreement on the conditions of the game (social contract) that has to be achieved prior to the start to avoid conflicts later. This can be compared with Huizinga's (1955) magic circle. ARG do not have any prior agreement, instead there may be an online space (like www.unfiction.com) where players can deal with similar issues. ARG share the mentioned similarities but in role-playing, you do not take on a persona or character in ARG. We can conclude that the game types at play share features of building an open narrative with subplots that is not necessarily game master controlled at all times, that is built on the interaction and active participation of the players and that has the objective of creating the story together with players.

5. 'CONVERGENCE' OF FICTION AND FACTS

Genres of printed media like books have since long formed a kind of common agreement between authors and readers, and texts can be understood as being either factual prose or fiction, where the first one refers to the reality outside the text; to something that has occurred, and the other is based on fabrication⁸, fictive events and people. The concept of genre is similarly used in other media, like television and films, to divide and group texts into fiction and nonfiction based on their linkage to reality. The general meaning of fiction is that of an imaginary creation, or an invented pretence, that does not represent actuality. It refers to works where the story is made-up, invented or feigned. Non-fiction refers to something that exists that is not fantasy, but 'real'. This common genre knowledge makes readers/viewers/users adapt their reading/interpretation irrespective of the kind of cultural product presented. Television production is no exception and is commonly parted into fiction and factual programming, as mentioned.

However, reality is a problematic concept and responds to the philosophical question - what is real? which dates back millennia. To give a practical answer: reality is either what exists, or what we can agree on and that seems to exist, commonly referred to as consensus reality. Partly this means that we have to examine and determine for ourselves what we think is real, or the truth. However, a producer, author or artist, may have another agenda, a purpose, whether aesthetic or political, to create a deliberate blur of these implicitly agreed on borders. This blur has become a common feature in current cultural production (Lenemark 2009) and a phenomenon that began to develop during the latter part of the twentieth century. Innumerable expressions illustrate this, ranging from art and media, to politics and religion. Producers may not explicitly communicate this openly. Even if the border seems to be very fine or subtle, people seem to accept the explicitly expressed intended blur better than the implicitly hidden fictive and fabricated 'facts' in cultural production that is communicated as authentic and realistic.

Realism in media

The turn towards communicating and expressing reality has grown significantly in cultural production such as in art, film and various mass media in recent decades. Today the innovative variations of realism are endless. Knudsen and Thomsen (2002) argue that during the 90s we could witness an expanding 'cultural reality hunger' built on the notion that the construction of reality is the only reality there is, or that can be accessed. The notion of reality as unobtainable in artistic expressions imbued in the 80s, everything was then seen as representation. During the 90s this shifted and the expression was considered as real, in spite of being a representation. This led to a need for a new notion of realism where reality was no longer regarded as the opposite of something constructed and fictive (Lenemark 2009). The changes in the media landscape with its growing number of new genres during the 90s like talkshows, docusoaps and reality television reflects this yearning for realism (Sandbye 2001). What we have witnessed is a growing 'performative realism' (Knudsen and Thomsen 2002) where reality and the authentic are staged, created and constructed. The understanding of reality as something produced and mediated in various contexts is widely spread. This changing notion of a performative depiction of reality, based on a staging of reality, rather than a simple reproduction of it, has even got an important role in the growing research area of docusoaps and realityshows (Lenemark 2009). Concepts like 'performative authenticity' (Fetveit 2002) and 'performing the real' (Corner 2002) are examples communicating this notion. A first person storytelling perspective (Dovey 2000) is one of the many ways used to stage it. However, the pretence to picture reality per se still exists and is even considered a strong marketing argument (Friedman 2002).

Mediated reality: television and realism

Factual television pockets a variety of genres, sub-genres and hybrid genres (Hill 2007). 'Factual' is shorthand for non-fiction content, but is rarely used to define non-fiction. Instead it tends to be used by viewers to signify non-fiction programs that make truth claims and that are based on facts. But in television media fact and fiction are elusive concepts. Many scholars have pointed out television's ability to create an 'illusion of reality' (Fiske 1987; Burton 2000; White 2006). This illusion can be seen as depending both on the construction of television texts through various conventions and by the deconstruction carried out by the viewers, convinced by medial conventions as well as by the practice of television and its role in society. It can also be viewed as reminiscence from the heydays of television when many programs were transmitted live (White 2006) and the fact that broadcast may be aired live (Bourdon 2000). Television has realism, but that does not mean it is real. It contributes to definitions of reality. Even if we know the difference of physically patting somebody on the cheek and watching a person patting another on the screen, our sense of what patting means can be fed by television viewing, by how it is 'told' within narratives in differing media.

Documentaries are case in point. In our minds we incorporate their imagery and narrative as a kind of 'real' world, made possible through conventions of realism in the genre that cues us to interpret those images differently from images in a drama (Burton 2000). We give this 'reality experience' a specific value. Since we understand the genre as documentary we therefore largely accept and incorporate its content into our conception of the real/true world. This last presumption can fool us, because the cues that make us switch to documentary mode may be manufactured. Television by its use of 'real' sound and moving pictures already through its basic technology at least simulates reality. The intimacies of the cultural viewing environment (the home), television's mode of address (the close up) and the possibility to intrude on others' lives and places create believability, acceptance, physical closeness and a kind of social proximity (Burton 2000). Immediacy also creates realness (White 2006). Television's reality formation – to combine real time and real place – both in reporting 'events as they happen' and the very act of reporting, authenticates television itself as a reality medium. Authenticity as realism is a product of program genres, which collectively form a large part of television products: news, reality soaps, current affairs, documentaries and sports. These programs take us to real places and sometimes present viewers aka 'real people' - not performers - on screen (Burton 2000).

Programming shows overlaps in the modes of realism such as the assumed differences between drama and educational programs (Burton 2000). Drama operates on a common cultural understanding of

being fabricated, despite the inclusion of realism (Altheide and Snow 1989). This is then perceived within the context. The output of educational programs is approached differently, on common cultural grounds of the truth of our world (Burton 2000). They overlap in critical categories too, such as conventions of and differences between drama documentary and docusoaps, where the material is categorised in terms of their relationship to the physical world, by producers and viewers alike. These categories range from the authenticated to the invented, from documentary to fantasy. Within documentary Burton (2000) argues that real-time or live broadcast might stand for the strongest kind of realism. Nuances of document and fiction in documentary have emerged recently with the appearance of different categories such as docudrama, docusoap and dramadoc°. The desirable qualities are described by terms that in themselves emphasise realism. One term is naturalism, an unforced sense of being there with real people and places. Here the use of real places, non-actors and improvised dialogue subvert their fictional roots, to convince the audience of the 'truth' of the narrative. Actuality – live, real-time footage from events actually happening or having happened – gives an aspect of outside broadcast. Authenticity refers to that which is accurate and convincing, but not necessarily actual or true. This could be reconstructions, both in documentaries and dramas, where for example locations are re-dressed to copy a period accurately. Burton mentions other terms, which qualify our sense of realism without being comprehensive enough to constitute a discrete mode of realism. Probability means how likely it is that actions and events would occur. Plausibility is connected to the realities of the world of our social experience and believability may be qualified by the other two words. What is important here is what the individual believes would happen, what seems credible to any particular viewer.

This categorisation in programming, genres and descriptive terms is an agreement between producers and viewers, about creating an understanding, and raising expectations and meeting them. Producers can use it to describe the modes of realism. Viewers can use it to adjust their expectations and decode/read the show in relation to life experience, what is believed to be others' life experience, what is not known but believed plausible life experience and/or what is known already about the program. The process of expectation and adjustment in terms of realism is influenced by program trailers, listing information, titles of program and social gossip. As a viewer you may think: Is this true or not? Did it really happen? Do I believe it or not? The challenge and pleasure lies partly in finding this out, working out one's reality orientation, in the tension between recognition and puzzlement.

The various modes of realism in television are getting more and more difficult to distinguish. Television content uses much and varied material, and new content develop very fast. For some it is an ethical problem with television apparently playing games with the truth. Producers have been caught

manufacturing material, and their companies fined. Burton means that the intention of the producer is of importance and that the lie should be measured against the factuality of the information and the way it is presented and how the viewer was intended to take on the facts and value the message.

Fabricated reality: blurring the real and the fictive

Examples are manifold in cultural production where the useful author-reader contract in genres fails, and where the text suddenly appears to be fabricated, or where readers find out that the implied fiction is grounded on real events. In his examination of current Danish literature Poul Behrendt (2006) concludes that the textual work has to be read in its contemporary cultural context to enable detection of its double nature of fiction and reality. A new contract, the double contract, has to be reassessed, Behrendt claims, a neither-nor construction that bursts both the frames of fiction and of factual prose. His point is that the reader's illusion and the following process of unveiling it, is part of the work's superior aesthetics, where a satisfied reading requires contextual considerations. This way the credo to view the text as an autonomous entity is broken. A recent example in Sweden that popped up and grew into an almost unreasonable size in different media in fall 2008, is the author Lisa Marklund's very much discussed novel *Gömda: en sann historia* (Eng. Hidden: a true story) (2004). The extensive discussion carried out by critics, bloggers and ordinary readers circled around the story's authenticity claims - Marklund claimed and promoted the book to be based on 'a true story', the fate of the protagonist. Another author, Monica Antonsson (2008), criticised Marklund for her description of *Gömda* as the 'true story', in her book *Mia: sanningen om Gömda* (Eng. Mia: The Truth About The Hidden). Marklund had to place a retraction in the media, now describing the novel as a documentary novel based on 'true stories', told from a first person perspective of the victim (protagonist).

Examples from broadcast media such as radio production trace back as far as to the 30s, where the USA radio program *The War of The Worlds*¹¹ displays a classical example. The recent Dutch television show

as the tools for creating a good fictive work) like docusoaps, documentaries and news, make it harder and harder for television viewers to read the texts in this dichotomic manner (Burton 2000). Depending on our preferences we either enjoy and feel challenged and entertained by the blur, or dislike it and feel misled or hoaxed. Parallels may be drawn to Behrenth's (2006) double contract: while viewing the viewer has to unveil the program's overlaying aesthetics contextual considerations, because it is neither nor (fiction or factual).

This contemporary cultural phenomenon may seem controversial and could be questioned ethically, but it becomes even more problematic when the audience is expected to engage, and interact, in the production. A recent example from the art field in Sweden, also heavily discussed in media, is the art piece by Anna Odell, a student at the University College of Arts, Craft and Design, Stockholm. She staged and filmed a psychosis in January 2009, a psychosis she herself had experienced in 1995 on The Liljeholm Bridge (Stockholm). Her aim was to expose psychiatric healthcare and the experience of deprivation of liberty that may be the consequence of this state of illness. Passers-by, the police as well as the hospital staff were deceived, and the ethical implications of using common healthcare for artistic means, hoaxing the public and professionals were questioned.

6. 'CONVERGENCE' OF GAMES, PLAY AND ORDINARY LIFE

Another type of cultural production where the dichotomy of reality and fiction also traditionally has been well-defined is the world of play and games. Like the rapidly blurring television genres in terms of fact and fiction, information and entertainment and more general issues regarding the relationship between the private and the public, surveillance and visibility, authenticity and performativity, it can be claimed that we have moved into a culture of gamers, a kind of 'ludic society' (Stenros, Montola et al. 2007). The technological development and the rapidly growing market of digital games have played a central role in this shift. Both digital and role-playing games gained mainstream success during the late 70s and 80s. The new generations that grow up surrounded by digital games do not stop playing when they grow up. The culture of gaming affects how these generations view life, relationships and work (Kline, Dyer-Witthford et al. 2003; Carstens and Beck 2005).

The dichotomic differentiation between leisure and work, and ideas about time and progress that emerged with industrialisation is no longer as strong as it used to be. Game and play activities are emerging in many key social domains ranging from work and leisure to education and human relationships. Gamification is a buzzword and an argument for business development used to motivate

and engage new consumer groups. This development has made the border between leisure activities, as game and play, converge with activities commonly viewed as work; at least it is difficult to part one from the other at times. A child's educational gameplay may be counted as an educational activity (a kind of work) and a professional football player may likewise be able to earn a living on playing football (work as well).

Furthermore, games and play have traditionally been defined as an activity out of the ordinary (Huizinga 1955). You consciously step into a game environment, where the rules of conduct of everyday life are temporarily replaced by the rules of the game. In this way there is a conscious wall between the game and the rest of the (serious) world around and it is obvious who is playing and who is a spectator. However, this differentiation is also in flux. The film *The Game* clearly indicates our reactions, when the taken for granted rules of play, as explicitly expressed, have to be questioned. The film not only illustrates the ambiguity of real and fictive in media culture, but the growth of the ludic in society, a kind of maturation of the gamer generations in contemporary society (Stenros, Montola et al. 2007). Stenros, Montola et al. point out that a particular type of games, pervasive games, grows as a result of not only this media trend and the matured gamer generations, but also as a result of the cultural awareness and struggle over public space.

A definition of games

Due to their economic and rapidly increasing cultural importance in society digital games have strongly influenced how games in general are viewed and defined (Stenros and Waern 2010). Some of these definitions rest on the ideas of games as structured activities with explicit rules (Salen and Zimmerman 2004; Juul 2005). This way games are viewed as systems, not activities, events, or physical objects. Another existing definition connects to the definition used in this work. Before the digital era, researchers defined gameplay first and foremost as an activity (Huizinga 1955; Avedon and Sutton-Smith 1971; Abt 1987; Suits 1990; Caillois 2001). Huizinga considers play a ritual activity voluntary and non-serious. Several contemporary games researchers stay on Huizinga's concept of a magic circle to define games - a temporary world with its own space, time frames and with (social) rules - to close it off from the ordinary. These definitions are not the only existing ones, but they are fairly well established. In other words, games can be several different things, depending on how the researcher approaches them (Mäyrä 2008). The magic circle of play defines what we, as individuals in a society, most commonly (albeit not consciously) perceive as a game activity.

The magic circle of play

According to Huizinga (1955) *play* is an activity that happens outside ordinary life, is voluntary non-serious and where there is no material interest or profit to be gained. Most importantly it is a consequence of a conscious decision of free will. The magic circle is included in many game definitions since Huizinga (1955: 10) first used it. It works as a metaphor for an (often implicit) agreement between players of a game:

All play moves and has its being within a play-ground marked off beforehand either materially or ideally, deliberately or as a matter of course. Just as there is no formal difference between play and ritual, so the 'consecrated spot' cannot be formally distinguished from the play-ground. The arena, the card-table, etc., are all in form and function play-grounds, i.e., forbidden spots, isolated, hedged around, hallowed, within which special rules obtain. All are temporary worlds within the ordinary world, dedicated to the performance of an act apart.

The magic circle creates spatial, temporal and social boundaries. To put it simply: to play chess you need a chess board and chess pieces, it is played within a certain time frame, till one of the two players are checkmate. There are rules of who of the players can move what piece(s) and when, following certain movement styles of each type of piece. Inside the game rules apply that may not be accepted in ordinary life. Players in an ice hockey game may treat each other in a rather rough manner, a behaviour that would not be allowed without (legal) consequences outside the hockey rink, or on a schoolyard. To distinguish playful activities from ordinary actions we use what Bateson (1955/1972) calls meta-communication. In a (hockey) game, where one player punches another player, the fight is viewed differently from a street fight where an individual punches another. It expresses: 'This is a (hockey) game' and means more or less that the actions that the players are engaged in right now do not denote the actions for which they stand for would denote - a real punch. Goffman (1961) denotes a similar thought 'interaction membrane'. Events, actions and properties outside the game are selected, filtered and transformed by the membrane. Lately, the magic circle has been criticised. Hardcore players may spend days playing an online game while simultaneously conducting other everyday activities (Pargman and Jacobsson 2006). So it can be argued that playing a game may be an everyday activity. However, the borders of a game's magic circle are not always absolute, (Salen and Zimmerman 2004), or not even desirable, as with games that purposely blur, expand or bend these borders (Montola, Stenros et al. 2009) as within recently appearing hybrid games.

Pervasive games

Pervasive games form a broad category of games¹³ that blur the boundaries of game and ordinary life (Montola, Stenros et al. 2009). The word pervasive ‘having the quality or tendency to pervade or permeate’¹⁴, denotes the features of the game to expand ‘outside’ of the contractual limits of playing a game. They are carried out in public spaces and urban environments. Montola, Stenros et al. (2009: 7) describes pervasive games as a curious form of culture:

They exist in the intersection of phenomena such as city culture, mobile technology, network communication, reality fiction, and performing arts, combining bits and pieces from various contexts to produce new play experiences. The family of pervasive games is diverse, including individual games ranging from simple single-player mobile phones to artistically and politically ambitious mixed reality events. Some of these games seek to pass time for a few minutes while waiting for a bus, whereas others create persistent worlds that go on for months and where players can adopt alternate identities and engage in intricate gameplay. Some games use high-end technology, while others can be realised with no technology at all.

They involve outsiders and intertwine with participants’ everyday living and ordinary routines. As they are played in the physical surroundings of the participant they give extra flavour to a participant’s ordinary life. Since pervasive games break the boundaries of gaming in terms of space, time and social relations, the actions in the game can be difficult to separate from non-game actions (Montola 2005). This shapes ambiguous and unique ‘brink’ experiences (Poremba 2007) that are neither just game experiences nor normal everyday experiences. A good simile of this can be found in the movie *The Game*, which has inspired many pervasive game designers. Salen and Zimmerman (2004) talk about ‘invasive games’ when the magic circle is blurred. Taylor and Kolko (2003: 1) state that ‘authentic and staged information together with technologically mediated roles highlights what are often seen as phenomena endemic to the internet itself; the destabilization of categories of knowing, relation and being’. These types of emerging games always work at the borders of gaming conventions in terms of both the nature of play as the cultural context it is set in. McGonigal (2003a; 2003b) addresses ‘pervasive and immersive play’ that created huge media buzz in the USA when it emerged. McGonigal compares the negative reactions of not being able to part the (supposedly) ‘real’ from the fictive in early cinema history beginning of the 19th century (2003a: 4) with contemporary media reactions of this new type of gaming as ‘frightening real’ and ‘hyper-immersive’. McGonigal proposes that players are not mistaking the game world activities for real, on the contrary. Instead it is a conscious decision to ‘prolong the pleasures of the play experience and apply the skills acquired in gaming in real life’

(2003a: 22). This kind of play is one of the early forms of applications that can support collective and political action through the converging and pervading network technologies (2003b).

Spatial, temporal and social expansion

Spatial expansion means that the game world is brought into the individual's ordinary life; to the workplace, school building or the home. 'Ordinary' physical objects and properties can be earmarked for the game. The game may grow online too, into chatrooms and message boards. Thus, game-related activities can take place with bystanders participating both in their ordinary life as well as in online spaces. But not all games combining virtual and physical gameplay are pervasive, only those that take the game to unpredictable, uncertain and undedicated areas (Montola, Stenros et al. 2009).

Temporal expansion takes place when playing the game and everyday life activities such as sleeping, eating, working and socialising are merged. They may be part of the game although or count as an 'in-between state trying to fit together the ordinary world and the game objective' (ibid.), like lunching with a workmate. The player may receive an SMS with an urge to take further game actions. The exact times of play remain uncertain, ambiguous, and hard-defined, so players may lose agency to decide when to play intensively and when not to.

Social expansion may be viewed as a consequence of the two first ones because outsiders tend to get involved with pervasive games and create complicated implications. Outsiders (nonparticipants) may be enticed by the game and enter the magic circle by mere spectating or fully participating, or judge the player as a moron and lose interest. 'Invisible theatre' (Boal 1979), pre-scripted political dramatisations performed in public places, and 'dark play' (Schechner 2002) that emphasises risk, luck, deception, and thrill both omit meta-communication. People take part unaware that the event is 'set up'. Pervasive games can be designed similarly. Outsiders are supplied with different bits of information and different roles or positions thus challenging optional participation (Huizinga 1955). Pulling in (non-aware) bystanders may create attractive and powerful experiences for players (Montola, Stenros et al. 2009). However, bystanders are not shielded by the protective frame of playfulness (Apter 1991), the confident feeling of being inside the semiotic frames of a game, meaning this is out of the ordinary. Instead the events may be interpreted as being part of everyday life (Montola and Wärn 2006a). Bystanders may also lack the lusory attitude, the awareness of the playfulness of it all (Suits 1990) and may act in ways that infract game rules and call the police for example, when witnessing players breaking traffic rules. Commonly pervasive games are designed not to involve passers-by in a

way that is ethically infringing, dangerous and risky, although some games include ‘outside’ interaction to create immersive game experiences.

Two sub-genres

Pervasive larps

Several types of pervasive game genres have emerged in recent decades. Two already mentioned genres apparent in SOM are pervasive larp and ARG. Pervasive live action role-playing (pervasive larp) uses typical larp techniques: physical enactment together with character-based make-believe and pretend play. Pervasive larps are played out in urban areas usually supported by common technology like mobile phones and the internet that have made game mastering easier. Sourcebooks are nowadays put online and easily accessed by players/members. Themes from other sub cultures and settings influence such as cyber punk, crime, new weird and secret agent. Nordic pervasive larps, developed from the Nordic larp scene over the last decade, gravely blur the magic circle and have similar themes, such as the influences of urban exploration. They also contain political protest and reality hacking combined with an ambitious artistic agenda.

Larps, especially Nordic larps, contain few rules (Hopeametsä 2008). The ‘rules’ are often implicit and commonly not thought of as rules since they are internalised by organisers and players (Fatland 2006) and provide the framework for the players’ actions in the game. Every player helps to create the fictional game world by acting it out. The game masters count as players and also take part in the game. The particular larp’s fictional world consists of the physical surroundings, the imaginations of the players and the framework that helps support the imaginative world, when it differs from the ordinary world.

The common way for participants to ‘stop the game’ whilst role-playing is to step into an ‘off-game’ area. This space allows players to step out of the game to ask questions or solve problems with other players and/or game masters; to meta-discuss the game as a game. The term ‘in-game’ defines that a participant’s actions are part of the diegesis (what is true within the game). A larp generally ends with a post-game debrief session, where all participants share their experiences in an oral discussion or written-down reflections (Hopeametsä 2008).

‘The 360° illusion’ is one of the traditions of creating a game world for a Nordic larp that emerged as a design ideal during the 90s (Koljonen 2007). A complete illusion is aimed for in the game world with

a situational, emotional and physical realism in character immersion, and ‘a what-you-see-is-what-you-get attitude to the physical environment of the game’ (ibid.: 176). The vision is very strong among both players and designers to sustain this illusion. The whole environment should make sense. Players help each other to ignore or incorporate any element that could break a perfect illusion and the game space and rules are implicit (Hopeametsä 2008). It creates tangible challenges (Montola, Stenros et al. 2009). To craft a 360° illusion calls for special design features like an indexical environment, indexical activity and immersive role-play. Everything needs to be authentic and all actions are part of the game. Commonly no off-game space is allowed, although some games may require the possibility to come off-game, or out of game (OOG) for security and health reasons. Players might sign an agreement on the rules and requirements of play (Jonsson, Montola et al. 2007).

Alternate reality games

Another sub-genre is alternate reality games (ARG). Jane McGonigal (2004), games researcher, designer and producer describes an ARG as

an interactive drama played out in online and real spaces, taking place over several weeks or months, in which dozens, hundreds or thousands of players come together online, form collaborative social networks, and work together to solve a mystery or problem [...] that would be absolutely impossible to solve alone.

The crafting of an illusionary game world also concerns this genre. By using the framework of everyday life it has no closed-off game area. ARG pretend to be real, paradoxically declaring ‘this is not a game’, often abbreviated TING/TINAG. ‘To ”TING” a game [...] means to explicitly deny and purposely obscure its nature as a game’ (McGonigal 2003a). Fake websites, phone calls from game characters and staged events in the physical world are used that create a fictitious (game) story looking and feeling authentic. Participants are invited to take an active part in the story causing them to feel more capable, confident, expressive, engaged and connected in their real lives (McGonigal 2004; Martin, Thompson et al. 2006). It uses real-world historic facts, rumours, and events within the game story and can become an immensely rich experience even with limited resources. It is an alternate - meaning layered - reality and less of a virtual (simulated) or augmented (enhanced) reality (McGonigal 2003a).

ARG appeared in the beginning of the 20th century. Common features are collaboration rather than competition and large self-organised player communities. Play may take part in forums like www.unfiction.com and www.argn.com or player constructed forums that then offer meta-discussions about the game (Martin, Thompson et al. 2006). The forum may also be part of the game design but is then more likely to be kept within the fiction (in-game) as players are more careful not to break the suspen-

sion of disbelief¹⁵. Unlike larp, players do not take on roles or characters. Like larp it is managed by game masters, ‘puppet masters’ (McGonigal 2006b) who use a secretive production management style and stay constantly hidden from players. This creates a coherent game world, ‘the magician’s curtain’. ARGs are commonly very well concealed and only detected by alert individuals that discover the odd entrances - ‘rabbit holes’ (McGonigal 2003a). The participants set out to solve the sophisticated and extremely difficult puzzles and tasks that need to be solved collectively, ‘the wisdom of crowds’ (McGonigal 2003b). Jenkins (2006a) denotes a similar idea by using the term ‘collective intelligence’. A game character with whom players may interact, officiates the forum in an interaction that demands more work by the organisers, as does the maintenance of the forum. The position that larp holds a potential for human development and political change, that can be found within the Nordic larp movement, ARG, according to McGonigal, with its collaboration features and players acting themselves, has potentials to change the world for the better (McGonigal 2006a). McGonigal seriously proposes that games can fix real-world problems (2011).

The ARG design strategy differs from the previously dealt with 360° illusion in that the game world does not have to be authentic in the extreme. The participants choose to act as if the game world is real, requiring a kind of double awareness from the players’ side. Players must believe it is not a game to be able to enjoy the ‘pleasures of its realistic mind-set’ and simultaneously disbelieve the TINAG in order to uphold the ludic mind-set (McGonigal 2006a). Perceived cracks in the alternate reality are ignored by the players and pretence is upheld so as not to spoil it for themselves or other co-players.

An extreme design strategy is to craft a seamless game world where the fabricated and the ordinary are indistinguishable. Not being able to distinguish may force players to undertake challenging and enjoyable actions in the ordinary. The techniques are endless, from using ordinary life and facts as a sourcebook, interaction with outsiders, to careful use of ludic markers or not letting players leave the game (Montola, Stenros et al. 2009). All is conducted to make players explore and find information and clues needed to solve game challenges. An ad, authentic or fabricated, can be put in a paper, TV program or webpage and can be carefully merged into a game. Together with other socially expansive techniques the inclusion of outsiders is extremely effective. Carefully instructed actors, temporary employed people, or random encounters can create interesting gameplay where anyone and everyone could make players feel part of the game. If the game continues for a longer period of time, players do not really leave the game (Jonsson, Montola et al. 2007; Stenros, Montola et al. 2007). This creates a sense of anything and everything being part at any time. Ludic markers may have to be omitted so as not to ruin the game experience, but are at the same time problematic from an ethical and moral

standpoint (Harvey 2006; Montola and Waern 2006a). This seamless game could be called ‘reality fiction’ and is more of a producer’s term, a way for the game designers to strive for a seamless game where both TINAG and seamlessness techniques are included.

7. CONVERGENCE OF PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

The culturalisation of the new economy and everyday life aesthetisation produces consumers prepared and capable of modifying, designing and innovating products themselves to fit their needs. In turn, companies in several fields, like the cultural industries, have begun to embed the productive activities of consumers into their business strategies.

The growing access of personal computers, the internet and the proliferation of digital tools and technology have enabled new avenues for consumers to generate and disseminate their own ideas, news and content, to fit their own needs. Blogs, podcasting, video-sharing, websites and other media distributed via the internet are examples. Social media like *Flickr*, *Wikipedia* and *Facebook* offer increased access and stimulation to the creation and uploading of the works that in turn are accessed by a wide audience. People who share similar goals and interests get connected. During the decades of electronic media where individuals, groups and networked communities interact and co-produce a variety of cultural works, the dichotomy between producers and consumers has changed.

Many scholars have examined this changing relationship. Already in the beginning of the 70s, media theorists McLuhan & Nevitt (1972) claimed that with electronic technology the consumer would become a producer. The futurist Toffler (1980), that amongst other predictions like demassification, diversity, knowledge-based production, and the acceleration of change, anticipated a blur between producer and consumer and coined the term ‘prosumer’. Lawrence Lessig (2008) depicts a ‘remix culture’ where changes, integrations or improvements of a copyright holder’s work would be permitted, and Axel Bruns (2008) describes user-led content production with the term ‘produsage’ pointing out, among other things, the blur between production, distribution and consumption in an industrialised world. But also the producer’s role has changed.

The relationship between the media industry and its audience was traditionally built on a power relation where a few media companies dominated the means and the chain of production and distribution of media content, and where the audience was identified through their individual roles as consumers. This prevailed for many decades. In the 90s development towards large corporate conglomerations

took place, as has been described in the section on industrial convergence. And for some years a parallel development of media deconcentration and corporate dysfunctionality has occurred. Outsourcing, sub-contracting, and offshoring continued to further decentralise the media industry. An enormous expansion of new actors emerged. Whether commercial, nonprofit or amateur, governmental or activist, actors interact and collaborate with each other in new ways and almost any individual or group has the ability and the power to produce and distribute content. Today media production can be described as a complex web of mostly temporary connections, links, joint ventures and diffuse relationships between media companies and public stakeholders, media converge and form a 'hybrid media ecology' (Benkler 2006).

The development is paradoxical. Industries seem to gain and lose power at the same time as media control seems to be concentrated and dispersed in the same transitional moment (Jenkins and Deuze 2008: 7). Audiences also gain and lose control in the same way. Jenkins argues for an understanding of media convergence as a process taking place both as a top-down corporate driven process and as a bottom-up consumer-driven process (2006a). These processes sometimes reinforce each other and sometimes work opposite where forces conflict. By merging, co-opting and converging brands and intellectual properties the media industry aims at extending revenue opportunities, broadening markets and reinforcing consumer loyalties while accelerating the flow of media content across delivery channels. The users develop skills and knowledge to master the growing number of media technologies and devices. They collaborate, interact and co-create with each other, striving to control and make meaning of the flow of content.

On the other hand, there is an often-made (implicit) assumption that participation is beneficial and will be welcomed by all involved (Carpentier 2009). Users will (do nothing but) gain from it. Media professionals even view 'activity' and 'being active' as key attributes and innate dispositions of their audiences (Schanke Sundet and Ytreberg 2009). With this as an argument the (traditional) media industry strives towards activating their audiences. To design participatory (and interactive) features in their products via multi-platform products is an approach to legitimise future expansion, revenues and loyalty (Jenkins 2006a; Ytreberg 2007; Enli 2008), a development that has been initiated and led by the broadcast industry due to its size and organisational structure (Ytreberg 2007). It can be argued that people are in a way harnessed for institutional purposes (Schanke Sundet and Ytreberg 2009), and as co-creators they can be seen as free labour for the media industry (Terranova 2000; Ytreberg 2007). The media industry's drive towards 'user-generated content' can be viewed as emblematic of the contradictory relations between consumers and their growing participation and power,

and on the other hand producers who, in their fear of having lost power over the audience, express it as enabling audience participation, or viewing it as outsourcing (Jenkins and Deuze 2008).

In contemporary media productions multiple forms of media formats and technical platforms are utilized, where each element and technology carries a distinctive contribution, or function, to a consumer's understanding and sense-making of the product. According to Jenkins (2006a), this 'aesthetic' - trans-media storytelling - emerges as an effect of media convergence. In this 'art of world making' the consumer has to become an actively collaborating participant in a collective of consumers, in order to fully experience the fictional world. The individual has to hunt, gather, and chase down bits of the story across several media channels. They have to share and compare notes and clues with each other online, using community/social media tools, to make sure that the people in the collective get richer entertainment as payback for all their invested time and effort (2006a: 21). The use of different media formats allows for different ways or 'entry points' to be created, through which the consumer can be immersed into the story world.

This immersion creates a kind of decentralised authorship that Jenkins develops with the term participatory culture. Just as Jenkins describes, the consumer's new behaviour is different from the traditional view of a passively receiving or spectating consumer (2006: 3), separated from the producers. More accurately, they can be described as participants who interact with each other and the content. Convergence occurs not in the media appliances, but 'within the brain of the individual and through their social interactions with others' Jenkins proposes. This is a sense-making process in which the individual makes some of the media flow in our media-saturated and information-superfluous everyday life more comprehensible. By using cybertheorist Pierre Lévy's term collective intelligence; Jenkins explains this collective consumption process. Since no one can know everything, but each of us knows something, our dispersed knowledge and skills can be gathered.

Christy Dena (2008a) introduces an emerging form of participatory culture where artefacts constructed to 'play' a primary producer's content, have become the primary work for massive global audiences. With tiers, alternate reality games producers in particular, design and provide separate content to different audience segments to facilitate and differentiate the experience of a produced work or a world. This way different participants (segments) are targeted with different content. In that it does not rewrite, modify or revise the content of a primary producer Dena's theory shows how this practice is different from the fan cultures documented by Jenkins (1992). Instead, audiences fill in gaps that the primary producer intentionally and unintentionally has left, thus co-creating and developing new con-

tent. This emerging phenomenon shows how a smaller number of consumers, or participants, create content that becomes the main product of consumption for a large ‘non-playing’ audience. Tiers can be separated from other methods. Dena parts tiers from ‘polysemous’ (Jenkins 1992: 125) television programs that combine genres to address different audiences, or like in children’s literature that addresses both parent and child, as in narratological theories of ‘dual audiences’, ‘crosswriting’ or ‘crossover literature’ (Beckett 1999); ‘dual implied addressee’ (Sell 2002) or ‘double narratee’ (Krogh Hansen 2005). Other features of tiers include the addressing of needs and preferences of different audiences - i.e television audiences or game audiences. They can focus on specific skills, or knowledge, or address a particular genre. Types of interaction such as puzzles, story or real-world preferences can be highlighted.

Jenkins has examined participation (participatory culture) both in entertainment (2006a) and as a potential for civic engagement (Jenkins, Puroshotma et al. 2009). Jenkins proposes new media to be connected to new and more active forms of media consumption as well as the emergence of an alternative source of media power that hold a potential for political and more serious purposes. This collective meaning-making process is starting to change how we look upon religion, education, law advertising, and even military operations (Jenkins 2006a: 4). As civil engagement, participatory culture is described from a social standpoint marking the inclusion of individuals. There are low barriers to participate, strong support for creating and sharing one’s creations, informal mentorship and a personal feeling of making a difference, and also social connection to others. The way groups exploit new uses of mobile phone technology to engage smart mobs for political change worldwide is one such example (Rheingold 2002). This way participatory culture features mobility and dynamic modes of decision-making. Rheingold (2008) claims that this development will push deep social change. ‘Participatory media’ is already possible through the tools for media production and dissemination, and challenges the control of newspapers, television, magazines, books, encyclopaedias and the like that today are controlled by a small number of companies. They share three common distinct characteristics: many-to-many media, the active participation of many people, and social networking such as blogs, wikis, digital storytelling, video blogs, virtual communities.

However, the attention given to the participatory potential of ‘new’ media introduces a bias into the theories and analyses of participatory media, a bias that assumes that specific media technologies are by definition more participatory than others (Carpentier 2009), a kind of ‘rhetoric of newness’ (Ekström, Jülich et al. 2011: 1). In this approach the tendency is to view participation as a media-specific characteristic, that different media support participation in qualitatively different ways. The two posi-

8. SUMMARY

This theory chapter depicts the fact that media convergence is a multi-layered and complex phenomenon. The analysis of *SOM* that follows builds on a number of conditions and assumptions. Firstly, media play an important part in contemporary society, in people's daily lives and work, and are important economically, culturally, socially, and financially. Secondly, media convergence takes place between traditional mass media and new media; there is a close relationship between media structure and content, and there is an on-going integration of production between old and new media, leading to a form of integration of firms within the industry. It is a two-way directed process; a top-down industrially driven process as well as a user-driven bottom up process. The top-down driven industrial process features both vertical and horizontal processes. Medium specific production processes and expressions are tied to a particular medium. To extend markets and customer shares, digital technologies and the internet are utilised in a particular industry's production and production processes. One way is for the broadcast industry to go online embracing digital and internet technologies to form

multi-platform concepts. Another industry strategy is to collaborate with new actors, forming new hybrid products. Transmedia storytelling production is one such example, merging television broadcast production with game concepts. This is not only a top-down driven process. Transmedia production is driven by large consumer groups, media users, that live with - and in - the media in a daily meaning-making process. They play and work. Reality is mediated and mediated. The distinctions between fiction and facts, between the real and the fictive, are blurred. This blurring is mirrored in the growing number of hybrid commodities and genres. The ubiquity of media assists in creating blurred borders between the physical and the virtual, and between work and leisure. The emerging 'gamer culture' and the growing ludic content in daily life - with social, cultural, and economic aspects - support in blurring these distinctions.

The different types of media convergence sometimes overlap. Industrial and technological convergence is one such example where variant logics of differing media industries affect production processes and the media products. In other cases the merge may be difficult to achieve, if intended, because the medium specific expressions are tied to each particular medium's characteristics. This is the case with broadcasting, which is built on a uni-directional communication model, and games, which are built on interaction and configuration. Convergence of production and consumption is an example where the process may start from either position. Media industries construct media products with designed gaps or other 'open spaces' that offer the audience participation and interaction. Media users develop new habits and behaviours overwriting, modifying or revising a primary producer's product in their processes of sense-making.

Many of the above described processes of media convergence took place in *Sanningen om Marika*. The production and its birth process is therefore an interesting and significant case to study. In this chapter I have addressed types of media convergence that, in one way or the other, were apparent in *SOM*. Some of them were defined as goals. This was for instance the case with the explicit focus on audience participation where the users were supposed to become producers, and where the producers saw themselves also as users (participants in the game). The amalgamation of production processes in games and broadcasting was also partly a goal in itself, a kind of convergence of industries where the collaboration was hoped to bring about a development of how to craft (in particular) television in new ways. Other goals were expected to be easy to attain. The conscious merging of television drama and games activities was one such goal, but that did not prove to be the case; the audience activities differed extensively. I have also addressed other types of media convergence taking place in *SOM* that the producers were more or less unconscious about, or that they believed would not to

be difficult to attain. In designing pervasive games the magic circle of games is expanded and a blurring with the ordinary occurs. Sometimes the design ideals do not work well together and clash. This happened in *SOM* with the two different design ideals of ARG and pervasive larp. Another example is the anticipating fiction-fact blur, crafted in hybrid television productions, that may create success and enjoyment among viewers. In *SOM* it instead created confusion and aversion. All these different occurrences, these different kinds of convergence, make *SOM* fascinating and important to study and problematise.

Notes

1 The term cultural industries are often used interchangeably with media industries. I prefer to use the term 'cultural industries' because it relates to a type of industrial activity as well as a thinking of this activity - the relationship between culture and economics in a wider context. Hesmondhalgh's choice is the same where he reckons the relationship between culture and economy, texts and industry, and meaning and function, important.

2 See <http://gamification.org/wiki/Gamification>, accessed 14th February 2011.

3 See Encyclopaedia Britannica, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/291494/Internet>, accessed 8th March 2011.

4 In media studies, audience participation as a concept has many meanings and connotations. For the purpose of the discussion here I stick to a definition of audience participation as new feedback possibilities provided by digital technology. These opportunities are incorporated in various combinations of traditional broadcasting and new media - multi-platform formats. It is a generic term, used in recent media studies, describing the convergence between mass media and personal media (Colombo 2004, Roscoe 2004).

5 The term drama comes from a Greek word meaning 'action'. The original meaning of drama is an enacted performance played out in front of an audience and staged by actors. It presupposes collaborative modes of production and collaborative forms of reception. The structure of dramatic texts is directly influenced by this production and consumption, <http://www.yourdictionary.com/drama>, accessed 8th March 2011.

6 There is an extensive discussion of the nature of games, and game theorists are parted between ludologists - claiming games are systems and do not contain/tell stories, and narratologists - holding the view of games telling stories, cf. Mäyrä (2008).

7 The notion of ergodic literature uses a term from physics derived from the Greek words ergos (work) and hodos (way). According to Aarseth ergodic literature exist independent on computers or digital media although the four most important cybertext genres are digital; hypertexts, adventure games, computer generated text and MUDs.

8 The term fabrication is defined by Erling Goffman (1974) as an intentional effort to cause others to get a false

belief of what is going on. The term implicates that something fabricated is false compared to a more 'true' view of things. The fabricator's view deviates from the fabricated perspective.

9 <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/fiction>; <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/fiction>, 17th March 2010.

10 Distinct definitions do not exist. Allen & Hill (2004) define docu(mentary)-drama as a movie dramatisation of events based on facts. Drama-doc(umentary) is a documentary-style genre featuring dramatised re-enactments of actual historical event. Docudrama/dramadoc are often used interchangeably. Faction uses real-world template of events and characters to craft a basic-structured fiction. According to MediaDictionary.com docusoap is a serial that follows the lives of real people, e.g. in a place of work or a family home, creating a 'real-life' soap opera, MediaDictionary.com, accessed 7th August 2010.

11 The War of the Worlds was aired on October 30, 1938, directed and narrated by Orson Welles. Its first part consisted of a series of simulated news bulletins, which suggested to some listeners that an actual Martian invasion was in progress. The show was bracketed by multiple explicit disclaimers, both before and during the actual airing. See Heyer (2005) for an historical study of Orson Welles.

12 The Dutch reality TV show The Big Donor Show, aired in May 2007 was created by the producers of Big Brother, Endemol. See BBC article from 29th May 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/6699847.stm>, accessed 8th November 2010.

13 As Montola, Stenros et al. state this new family of games has been called many names like 'adaptronic games, alternate reality games, ambient games, appropriative games, augmented reality games, brink games, context aware games, crossmedia games, geogames, hybrid games, immersive games, invasive games, location-based games, locative games, massive games, mixed reality games, mobile games, pervasive games, reality games, supergames, total games, transreality games, ubiquitous games, urban games, and so on' (2009:xix-xx).

14 <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/pervasive>, accessed on 27th September 2010.

15 'The willing of suspension of disbelief' was used in literature by the poet and aesthetic philosopher Samuel Taylor Coleridge to defend the use of non-realistic premises in stories. It is a semi-conscious decision where the individual put aside his/her disbelief and accepts the premises in the story as being real.

METHODOLOGY

This book is about culture in black and white. It is about how one culture is portrayed in terms of another in an ethnography. It rests on the peculiar practice of representing the social reality of others through the analysis of one's own experience in the world of these others. Ethnography is therefore highly particular and hauntingly personal, yet it serves as the basis for gran comparison and understanding within and across a society.

Van Maanen 1988:ix

This research is a case study investigating a phenomenon within its real-life context - the transmedial game *Sanningen om Marika* and its birth process. I conducted research during nine months, from March to November 2007, when the participatory and interactive parts of the production were designed, implemented and produced in collaboration by the two companies. This chapter addresses the research methodologies.

The research was conducted with double aims. I was contracted for twelve months to carry out a participant-oriented evaluation. This assignment produced an opportunity to intertwine the evaluation with my PhD research objectives, creating a synergy effect where both the evaluation and my research were enriched by their different scopes and the data collection methods used. The rich and diverse empirical data collected improved the analysis from various perspectives.

The IPerG¹ project evaluation aimed at gaining knowledge for the two collaborating companies. The evaluation focus was on the play entry routes to the game; how the (prospective) participants could access the game, how the audience interaction was designed and produced and how/if it worked during runtime. The goal was to provide the companies with useful feedback, especially if it could aid in decision-making for future media and game productions.

In comparison, my own research inquiry had a broader and deeper scope. I followed the companies' everyday work - the design and production process - with more loosely identified goals. I sought to undertake a qualitative study of the participatory culture phenomenon with a critical approach rather than the more administrative approach applied for the evaluation. This puts my research in the Lazarsfeld versus Adorno controversy between administrative and critical theory ². However, theoretically and empirically sound studies of the 'production of culture' can be conducted without sticking to a linear causality method (Tuchman 1978). As a researcher belonging to the critical theory field I share a rejection to the linear causal communication model.

The research was conducted primarily at the two companies' offices in Stockholm and Gothenburg and focus was put, first and foremost, on the production's team members. The production/game was implemented both online and in physical places nationwide, so I conducted research in some of these locations too.

I used a variety of ethnographic fieldwork methods, primarily participant observation and interviews. I collected written documents, sketches, photos, and DVDs of broadcast material as well as a wide array of digital material such as logs, posts and screen dumps of internet blogs, forums and chats; video snippets and digital diaries. I constructed a web survey, followed by an email study and participant in-depth interviews post-game. Moreover, I collected quantitative data, such as hit statistics on the productions' various websites and the broadcast production's viewer statistics. I created my own statistical summaries, took photos, made lists, drew sketches and much more. Some methods had the purpose of obtaining knowledge to design and undertake the evaluation, and other methods aimed more at the PhD research inquiry. The methods overlapped in function and form as well as the usage of the empirical data gained for the different research purposes. These methods will be introduced here to give an overview and will then be elaborated on in depth in the sections below.

Inductive research

The broad scope implied the use of an iterative-inductive approach (O'Reilly 2005) where the researcher starts early on to analyse data and may turn back to search new data while writing up (see section Analysis). From the initial phase throughout the entire design and production process I had recurring analytic discussions with Annika Waern, the IPerG project manager (a games researcher who would later become my associate supervisor) about my observations and interpretations; intellectual notes, flashes of insight and analytical ideas. Hypotheses were raised, and together with the growing analysis, shaped the construction of the evaluation's web survey. The analytical meetings continued on an average of every tenth day, from September throughout the production runtime. Mela Kocher, a visiting Swiss games researcher was an active member of the analytic meetings part of this time, while conducting fieldwork with her own research agenda. Slowly, the knowledge increased and the analysis developed. The evaluation was formed and drafts communicated to the companies iteratively early 2008. The final report was completed in April 2008. Thereafter, my PhD analysis/research continued.

A classical evaluation study

For the IPerG project I was to develop knowledge of the entry points to the game; on how (prospec-

tive) participants could access the game and how audience interaction was designed and produced. During production runtime, the focus lay on how the design and interaction with participants actually worked in relation to how it was designed. In the early phases of my research this included building an understanding of what the production was about, what parts it consisted of and which and why various design decisions had been taken to form a participatory culture production. The evaluation particularly aimed at gaining knowledge for the two collaborating companies and their future production development. The evaluation was undertaken towards a set of qualitative and quantitative evaluation goals. It consisted of three parts; a number of success criteria (quantitative and qualitative goals set up by the companies), a few hypotheses and knowledge acquisition goals.

A classical evaluation methodology using a participant-oriented model was applied, where the two companies were actors, emphasising their central importance. According to the Research Methods Knowledge Base³, evaluation is a methodological area closely related to more traditional social research: 'Evaluation is the systematic acquisition and assessment of information to provide useful feedback about some object'. This definition emphasises acquiring and assessing information rather than assessing worth or merit. This is because all evaluation work involves collecting and sifting through data, making judgements about the validity of the information and of inferences derived, whether or not an assessment will merit results. The generic goal was to provide useful feedback, especially if it could aid in decision-making for future media productions and games.

1. ABOUT ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethnography is the first distinct tradition of qualitative inquiry (Patton 2002). Its history can be traced back to the traditional study of 'the other' in remote non-literate cultures. Today ethnographic methods are fundamental tools for understanding ourselves and the diversity of contemporary multicultural phenomena in modern society (Spradley 1980) such as in the study of cultures appearing in the emergence of new media and popular culture (Patton 2002).

The central aim of ethnography is to learn about people's lives from their own perspectives and within the context of their own lived experience (O'Reilly 2005; 2009). Malinowski, by many considered to be the founder of contemporary ethnographic fieldwork methods, argued that the central aim is 'to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realise *his* vision of *his* world' (1922: 25). Thus, '[r]ather than studying people, ethnography means learning from people' (Spradley 1980: 3).

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) summarise significant characteristics of ethnography as a methodology. Featuring an epistemological depth, it includes research being carried out 'in the field' within the unmediated and unstructured immediate context of the researched; extensive demands on data collection from a variety of sources, but with an emphasis on participant observation and interviews as main sources. These forms of interaction and interview should be highly fluid and unstructured to allow for the development of interpretation of categories and evaluation, rather than premeditating them by incorporating them in the data collection process. This everyday practice of observing and categorising (Certeau 1984) allows development of a consolidated, systematic study of structures, cultures, people and phenomena. O'Reilly (2005) summarises a critical minimum definition of ethnography, drawing on a number of ethnographers' definitions (cf. Hey 1997; Taylor 2002). To the above, O'Reilly adds an iterative-inductive research process that evolves in design through the study. O'Reilly includes the production of a richly written account during fieldwork that respects human experience and the view of humans as part object/part subject. The role of theory as well as the researcher's own role is to be acknowledged. Ethnography should focus on in-depth studies rather than on large-scale numbers, and the interpretation of these insights should be made within local rather than broader contexts (Willis 2000). Today's ethnographers acknowledge the interrelations of individuals and institutions within and beyond the given setting or group (O'Reilly 2009), resulting in for example multi-sited and transnational studies. Individuals/groups cannot only be understood in their own local context but also in regional and global contexts. Additionally, political, economic, social, and cultural relations have to be taken into consideration.

Ethnography as a field does not only take the ethnographer's text per se into consideration; the reader also has a role. As Paul Atkinson (1992: 9) puts it:

[t]he field, is produced (not discovered) through the social transactions engaged in by the ethnographer . . . The boundaries of the field are not "given". They are the outcome of what the ethnographer may encompass in his or her gaze; what he or she may negotiate with hosts and informants; and what the ethnographer omits and overlooks as much as what he or she observes. Secondly, "the field" is constructed by what the ethnographer writes. In other words, our senses of "the field" resides in what may be written and what may be read. There is, therefore, a triple constitution of the field. First, it is constructed through the ethnographer's gaze. Secondly, it is reconstituted through his or her ability to construct a text-of-the-field. Thirdly, it is constructed and recontextualized through the reader's work of interpretation and contextualization.



Using an ethnographic approach on *Sanningen om Marika* meant studying both the occurrences in the physical world and what happened online, using a wide array of ethnographic methods applicable both online and/or in the physical world where clues were traced travelling spatially, temporally, virtually and bodily. This kind of postmodern multi-sited ethnography examines the circulation of cultural meanings, objects and identities in diffuse time-space, moving out from the single sites and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs (Marcus 1995). Marcus suggests a range of strategies to construct fields in the absence of bounded sites, including the following of people, things, metaphors, narratives, biographies and conflicts. Hine argues that those who follow Marcus' advice will have to accept the feeling of never quite knowing when one is in the field, although instead gaining an ethnographic sensitivity focussing on the ways in which particular places were made meaningful and visible. The *Sanningen om Marika* production itself and its creation process advocated a holistic and exploratory approach. One of the arguments was the need to grasp and understand what the producers aimed at and intended with creating this new 'thing'. It comprised the idea to merge and intertwine, not only media and technology, but also different genres of broadcast products and of games. It was necessary to apply a methodology that allowed for sense making of the occurrences, phases, phenomena et cetera in the production itself, in the design and production process, and in the perceptions and experiences of the audience.

2. MY BACKGROUND

Before commencing my research studies, my previous position within The Interactive Institute was as manager of a small research group. I initiated and managed research upstart activities focussing on youth culture and new media where participatory culture, with its aspects of democracy and empowerment, were important perspectives.

My initial PhD research idea was to conduct inquiry into Swedish Television's youth oriented programs and concepts, like *Hundparken*⁵ and *P.S.*⁶, where interactive approaches were created to meet the young audience on an arena familiar to them. For some time the SVT Syd department in Southern Sweden had nationally been at the forefront in this area. Before commencing I was offered to study another SVT production, this time at another branch, SVT Väst in Gothenburg. This production would be based on participation, co-creation and much more that I hardly understood, but the approach seemed novel. I met some of the people involved in *Sanningen om Marika* and a month later I moved home to Stockholm, to facilitate following the production at a closer distance. This decision was taken on a gut feeling and would later show to have been a necessary one, if I was to apply an ethnographic research methodology

When I started researching *Sanningen om Marika*, my personal game experience was rather narrow. It was comprised by card games like *Canasta*, board games like *Chess*, family games like *Trivial Pursuit* and ball sports like golf. I had at that stage never experienced live action role-playing first hand. Regarding my digital game experiences, I had played a bit of console games like *Super Mario* and car race games, but my knowledge of digital role-playing games was from an outsider's perspective. One of my two sons had since a young age been immersed into the world of games and had great experience of a large amount of digital games when I started my PhD research. As a parent I was positive and curious of these activities although having only skin-deep knowledge. I had also met and interviewed young people playing various types of (digital) games during my time as a studio manager. Alternate reality games was a phenomenon I had not heard of, neither had I watched the movie *The Game*⁷, featuring the phenomena. Therefore, beginning to research a cross medial production incorporating game activities was a challenge in many respects. My strategy to inquiry was to ask questions as soon as I ran across something I did not understand or was unfamiliar with. My game research colleagues were a good source of knowledge. Vernacular concepts like 'immersion', 'suspension of disbelief', 'diegesis' got explained this way. I attended the Nordic role-playing community's annual four-day conference, Knutpunkt⁸ in 2008, 2009 and 2010 and another Swedish role-playing convention, Prolog⁹ in 2009. This gave me role-playing experience first hand as well good opportunities to conduct participant observation of activities, people and phenomena; attend interesting workshops and talk and socialise with people. In this way my understanding slowly grew, which helped me in making new discoveries in my own empirical material.

3. MY RESEARCH SCOPE

My initial PhD interest lay in participatory culture as defined by Henry Jenkins (2006a). Jenkins has investigated participatory culture from a civil engagement perspective and as an expression of creativity. This lay close to my former research group's focus (Gislén and Denward 2004). Hence, the production's aim to implement participatory culture was a strong motive to accept the evaluation mission. This would give me an opportunity to form my own inquiry in the field. Rather quickly I detected that The company P held strong ideological production aims that took a slightly different perspective on participatory culture. This perspective was more of a more philosophical and political-ideological standpoint, still keeping focus on the public/participants. It can be traced back to the Nordic role-playing community and its inherent beliefs in role-playing activities promoting role-players' notions and practices of democracy. This meant a slight change of my research focus, but a researcher has to make some background assumptions that can be open to subsequent revision

(Hammersley 2008) and I decided to continue to explore this interest without a distinct research plan or trajectory, as Fetterman (2010) and Spradley (1980) advocate. I kept my questions open. At that early stage I simply did not know what were good questions to ask (Hammersley 2008). Since the production teams' main goal was to create (audience) interaction and participation I anticipated my involvement in the production process to guide it forward (Spradley 1979; Spradley 1980; Jorgensen 1989; Hammersley 1990; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Hence, I followed the production as closely as I could, conducting ethnographic fieldwork both at the two companies and of the game as it was played in the physical world and online.

After a few months' research and familiarising with the setting, I put up hypothesis-like questions on requirements for a successful design and implementation of participatory culture, questions that could guide me further (O'Reilly 2005; Fetterman 2010). In the end the questions could not really be pursued since the production went in other and unexpected directions. During the post survey phase I identified significant themes, problems and gaps in the basic understanding (Fetterman 2010). What made my original focus of participatory culture difficult, was the teams' design choice to create a blur between fiction and real facts and interweave the production's background information into the production. Instead of redirecting my interest, I sustained my practice of ethnography and stayed open to the occurrences and events in the process between the teams. Thus I continued my focus on cultural interpretation (Fetterman 1989:28) to expand the knowledge of system, place and culture, but now less directed only on participatory culture per se.

4. ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS

In this section I describe the ethnographic methods applied researching SOM in detail.

Fieldwork

My fieldwork began the first days of March 2007, when The company P started taking form as a company and moved into their office. This was also when the game design work started. I conducted fieldwork throughout the production process and runtime with a few weeks break in June and July, altogether nine months.

Since it was my aim to follow both the design and the production processes, I followed the daily work at the P office at daytime - from 1 p.m. to 10/12 p.m. during the most intense runtime period from late September and onwards, and occasionally much later. More common than not, I spent at least three

days per week at P. Although I focussed on fieldwork at P, I also monitored the activities online. At times this was extremely intense and time consuming, but the same work load applied to the production team at P.

The fieldwork was originally planned to be conducted both at The company P in Stockholm and at the SVT team in Gothenburg. During the most intense runtime period, there was a plan for the teams to share the same office area, either in Stockholm or in Gothenburg. This would have meant that I would have had a chance to follow both teams closer. Unfortunately this fusion never happened. Hence, I mainly followed the daily work pace and routines of the production team at P in Stockholm. At a number of occasions I conducted participatory observation at SVT in Gothenburg: over a weekend during the recordings of one of the debate programs, and at several joint team meetings and presentations for management. I was also present during two game events that took place at SVT; at the 15th September player event and at the last evening of the game ‘the demonstration outside the SVT building’.

An ordinary day at P, I spent working on my computer at the desk I had been given. This way I could overhear what was going to take place that day chat with team members, listen to what had happened since yesterday, or what a particular member had experienced at an external business meeting. I was a participant observer at all kinds of meetings; internal game design, up-date meetings and meetings held with external visitors. When visitors arrived at P, e.g. (prospective) collaborators, a friend of P or a new coworker, I was always introduced as a researcher from The Interactive Institute whom P collaborated with. The CEO viewed my presence positively; I was to ‘write the story about P’ and there was never any problem for me to observe, to talk or ask questions.

Hence, I could study the ‘imponderabilia’ of actual life as ‘a series of phenomena of great importance which cannot possibly be recorded by questioning or computing documents, but have to be observed in their full actuality’ (Malinowski 1922: 18). Some of the team members had the role of cultural translators (O’Reilly 2009), especially the CEO and the producer at P, to whom I continuously posed questions and requested explanations of occurrences, of reasons for decisions and of other matters that had to be grasped in the course of events. Apart from heading the company, the CEO kept track of and followed up decisions with SVT. He also held a minor character in the game, ‘Argos’, who updated some information at the Conspirare webpage. Compared to P, I had to struggle to get access to and to conduct fieldwork at SVT. After much discussion I got access, assuring SVT the use of my results being academical and not commercial.

I conducted observations at various physical world game activities as an ‘observing participant/player’ - I was a *Conspirare*; a participant in the game. This was usually unproblematic, I was just one of the many (observing) participants.

Digital Fieldwork

As previously mentioned I also participated as an observer in the online game. These observations were conducted almost daily during the intense period from mid October throughout to the runtime end on 25th November. I participated wherever I could; at P, at SVT, from home, or other places where I could access the internet.

The online research was conducted with a threefold purpose. The first purpose was to follow the production process. I had access to the team members’ project portal where information, news, time line/reporting and deadlines, early drafts of drama episodes, promotion snippets and so forth were uploaded. I also had access to design drafts of the various production webpages. The second purpose was to observe the game. This was conducted as a ‘lurking player’; observing the participants’ and the game masters’ interaction at the production’s interactive webpages at *conspirare.se* and at *svt.se/marika*. I was a *Conspirare* forum member; my character was ‘bloodstone’. As such, my actions were similar to other participants. As a member I had access to the *Conspirare* forum and chat with all records saved in the system. At the *SVT.se/marika* production webpage I had access to the ‘chat’ and the video blog entries like any other visitor. I watched the drama and debate streamed online and followed the updating and changes of the page. I obtained game information on my work email account as a ‘player/participant’ through the ‘player subscriptions’/news feeds from the SVT web office and from the *Conspirare* team on email as well as through a Twitter feed. Other activities were watching the production’s content on *YouTube*, *GoogleMaps*, and the production’s static webpages. I was not a member of the secret *Ordo Serpentis* organisation,, but had access to the *Ordo Serpentis* webpage through an administrator login obtained from the production team at P.

Participant observation

In a previous section I have touched upon the ethical implications innate in the participant observer role (O’Reilly 2005). It involves studying an environment and the people in it through being in it; making notes, asking questions, doing interviews, collecting a variety of data, drawing up lists. However, this is never simply a matter of participating and observing. The central problem, according to Middleton, is trying to ‘live as a human being among other human beings yet also having to act as

an objective observer' (1970), and as such is a contradiction in terms, an oxymoron. To participate includes getting involved, joining in, being subjective, immersing yourself. To observe includes being objective, keeping your emotional and physical distance, being scientific, clear-eyed, unbiased and critical. O'Reilly (2005: 102) claims that this contradiction is what gives participant observation its strengths and that it does not have to be resolved. As a researcher you become part of the local world and its traditions and value systems that you seek to understand, through interacting in the environment. You participate in the activities that are central for getting insights from an insider's perspective, much in the same way as those who would normally experience it (Van Maanen 1995). (Hine 2000) states that ethnography is strengthened by the lack of recipes of how it should be conducted. It is a lived craft rather than a protocol which can be separated from the particular study or the person carrying it out. Furthermore, 'The methodology of an ethnography is inseparable from the context in which it is employed and it is an adaptive approach which thrives on reflexivity about method (Hine 2000: 13). For me, while conducting participant observation, I tried to be reflexive both on the method and on my role as a researcher. I could not fully observe the production process and the team members' activities, and simultaneously take part in the game as a hardcore player. But what I could do, and also did, was to take part from a low intense player mode, according to the producers' design of tiered participation (see chapter 2). Consequently, I can report those experiences as a 'player'. The approach enabled me later to ask adequate questions and problematise occurrences and activities when interviewing participants post-game.

Interviews

What people think, feel or understand is not easily detected merely from observation. Therefore I conducted interviews throughout the entire fieldwork period. In-depth interviews were repeatedly conducted with key production team members. The initial interviews were informal, semi-structured and with open-ended questions, on topics raised from within the research setting and in places and at times that suited the interviewee (see appendix). The following ones had a more unstructured interview style (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). These varied from long one-to-one in-depth interviews with a particular focus, to opportunistic chats over a cup of coffee, to group interviews. Questions that arose on the spur of the moment initiated an interview as well as all other sorts of learning about the phenomenon (O'Reilly 2005).

I conducted at least one semi-structured in-depth interview with the majority of core team members of both production teams. Thereafter I conducted different unstructured interviews at a wide array of

occasions, as described above. The in-depth semi-structured interviews were taped and later transcribed. Many unstructured talks were taped and transcribed.

I also conducted post-game in-depth interviews with thirteen participants and one post-game participant group interview with a ‘player cell’ consisting of four young men. The aim was to find out about participant experiences from a qualitative point of view. How did they perceive the production, what had they enjoyed, disliked, or become engaged in, how did they participate and so on?

They were selected to cover a broad spectrum of participants according to their level and types of activities done, to their geographical location, age and gender (see next section). They were recruited in different ways. Some were survey respondents that had agreed to be contacted later, and had offered their contact details. Others were recruited directly from the *Conspirare* chat and live/street game events. I searched blog entries and used my personal contact networks to recruit less active respondents more representative of an ordinary TV viewer. I contacted them by email, forum email, directly in the *Conspirare* chat (during the last two days) or at the final game event in Gothenburg.

All interviews were semi-structured with a list of themes and topics to be covered. The interview forms varied. Most were carried out as phone interviews, but some were done face to face. All interviews were taped and later transcribed. Interview themes and topics can be found in appendix.

Interview respondents’ profiles (game participants)

I tried to cover a broad spectrum of profiles. My thirteen respondents were geographically spread out countrywide. Some lived in the Stockholm and Gothenburg areas, others in smaller towns or villages, north of Stockholm and in southern Sweden. Four respondents were women and nine men. They were between ages 18 to 60. One post-game participant group interview was also conducted, a ‘player cell’ consisting of four young men. They all lived in Stockholm and were seasoned pervasive gamers.

- 1) Two traditional television viewers, who had watched the drama and debate but with low or no activity online, or in the street game.
- 2) Seven highly active participants with a high rate of forum posts and/or activity in the chat¹⁰.
- 3) Two highly active participants with some involvement in the production¹¹.
- 4) Drop-out participants, that had been active to begin with but that had dropped out, or that only followed the game ‘lurking’ towards the end (I contacted several participants, but nobody was willing to be interviewed).

- 5) Low-active players with low participation on *Conspirare* and in *Ordo Serpentis*. (I was not able to identify anybody with this profile).
- 6) Two journalists and one blogger that followed the production. The journalists reviewed the production at an early stage. One was specialised in culture and society, the other on TV and entertainment. The blogger had a personal blog about entertainment.
- 7) *Entropia Universe* member (I got contact with one international member from the *Entropia Universe*, but this person refused in the end).

My biggest problem was to recruit participants with less positive or negative experiences. Although I was able to capture such reactions through the survey, these respondents choose to remain anonymous. I also tried to get contact with *Conspirare* members who had been expressing a negative experience in chat or forum entries. But all refused to be interviewed. The same happened with unaware participants that had believed to take part in an authentic search for an existing disappeared person. During the post-game *Conspirare* chat I spotted a few chatters and later contacted them only to get my question refused.

Web survey

The web survey was conducted primarily for the evaluation. However, the data collected was very useful for the overall analysis of the production and for getting insight into the participant reception. It was targeted at getting a broader (quantitative) picture of the participants and their experiences, perceptions and interpretations. Who were they, how did they enter the game, how much did they participate and how?

The survey consisted mainly of multiple-choice questions with optional fields for comments. It was posted on both production websites, at *conspirare.se* on the very last runtime day and at *svt.se/marika* four days in advance. It closed on December 13th 2007; in total it was open online for 2,5 weeks. In total, 385 participants responded, 229 at *svt.se* and 156 at *conspirare.se*. 149 were women and 97 men (the missing 139 chose not to answer the gender question or ticked the option 'neither'). 74% of the respondents (259 persons) were between 17 to 36 years old. See appendix for a full account.

Email survey

The early analysis of the web survey and the participant observation in the *Conspirare* chat post-game on the 25th November showed that many participants had believed the search for Maria to be a

true search for a real person. Some of them still believed when chatting post-game. Therefore a small (qualitative) follow-up email survey was conducted in January 2008. Three questions focussing on the implicit game rule ‘Pretend that it is real’ were asked and sent out to 155 web survey respondents that had agreed to being contacted further. 41 respondents answered this follow-up survey, see appendix.

In-game diary

With permission from the game masters I contacted a few very active players by sending them *Conspire* forum emails. I asked them to write down reflections and experiences in a in-game diary¹². Two participants sent me notes.

Other empirical material

An ethnographer may gather and make use of other material than the data gathered by the prevailing anticipated participant observation and interview methods (O’Reilly 2005). I collected artefacts like pamphlets, game badges, drawings and sketches as well as letters, DVDs of the drama and the debate, promotion films and photos. They were powerful tools for understanding and interpreting the social experience. The collection of many internal documents: design documents, press releases and the almost 150 pages long treatment document were also of great importance. I made my own statistical summaries, took photos, made lists, drew maps et cetera. There is no reason why ethnographers should not count things; they can still be grounded in observation and understood in the context of the phenomena (Seale 1999; Silverman 2001). TV audience statistics and webpage statistics and other forms of statistics were gathered and included in the analysis.

Textual analysis

Any form content analysis is concerned with the meaning of textual elements: structural analysis is concerned with how these elements are combined (Bertrand and Hughes 2005). In literature studies the main textual features have been tied to and defined by the content.

Some of the production parts were crucial parts in the participatory culture aimed for. However, my observations showed that some of them were problematic in regards to creating participation. I chose content analysis to break down their design and implementation and to analyse what they consisted of to understand how and why the producers designed and implemented in this manner. One form of combination is ‘genre’ – the elements of style that link particular examples of representation, demonstrating family likeness, see next section. This type of analysis was undertaken with the debate

programs where I used the elements of style and genre, for analysing how the content corresponded to the programming genre of the Swedish current affairs debate program.

I conducted textual analysis of the different documents too, in particular the treatment and design documents. The same analysis method was conducted for the online texts; the *Conspirare* webpage, the SVT webpage, and the different more or less static webpages. This analysis was not a distinct one, but relied more on a process of extracting codes in a more implicit process. Altheide (1987) has coined the term ethnographic content analysis, a more reflexive and iterative analysis, compared to the traditional. Altheide states that products of social interaction can be studied reflexively. One feature can be studied in the context of what is understood about other features. This allows for a constant comparison (Glaser and Strauss 1967). This is how the *Conspirare* chat was analysed. I read and interpreted chat logs, and cumulatively built an understanding of the communication. The *Conspirare* website was compared with the svt.se/marika webpage in a similar way as one of the methods that supported unveiling the differing cultures of production. Concerning the different types of games, or game genres, I conducted textual (genre) analysis to unveil the design ideals and their features. This was needed in order to understand if and how they worked together, or were actually not possible to combine.

Genre analysis

Concerning the different types of games, or game genres, I conducted textual (genre) analysis to unveil the design ideals and their features. This was needed in order to understand if and how they worked together, or were actually not possible to combine.

A threefold model to study genre with a linear understanding of communication, focuses on sender, message/content or reader. This is commonly accepted in media and communication studies (Feuer 1992; Tolson 1996; McQuail 2005). Defining genres through content within film and television is one way. Another is tied to the production of content in the way it works as a predictable on the market, through using genres and forms that the audience is familiar with (Fiske 1987). The expectations of and understanding by the audience also count, and are important in the creation of genres in television and film (Höijer 1995).

Simply speaking, a genre analysis is a way to map differences between different cultural artefacts like art, film, literature, games and media content, and similarities within different types or genres. The

basic genre theoretical approach is the similarities and affinity within different texts, where texts are read in relation and context to other texts (intertextuality). This means that we read, understand and identify similarities that originate in production processes and/or in the expectations of the audience rather than in the content itself. In this sense genre is more of an agreement between producers and audience. The content is created in this meeting. Generally a genre analysis starts in identifying genre elements and conventions in some selected areas. According to film and television theorists there are some distinct key textual features of genres in the context of film and television narrative (Chandler 1997: 13).

Reflexivity: researcher as a tool

As a researcher, your ability to gain access is affected by background, age, gender, class, personality and nationality (O'Reilly 2005). Thus, my described background and other facts that position me as a researcher were of crucial importance in shaping my research design, my fieldwork methods, my foreshadowed problems and my representation of the ethnographic data (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). The ethnographer is the 'research instrument' par excellence (Atkinson 1992).

The researcher's position impacts the dialogic experience between the ethnographer and the researched (LeCompte 1982). The researcher is thus a valid and necessary subject of study or reflection. As a researcher, I am interpreting, analysing, seeking, sifting, sorting, and even affecting outcomes by my presence. Apart from my described background, my age differed notably from the majority of the researched; producers as well as participants. As a woman, I belonged to the gender in minority of the researched producer teams. In the section Ethical Implications I reveal reflexivity around my age and social class, compared to the researched (at P). There have also been occasions when the researched, without me even commenting on it, have defended or felt obliged to comment on areas that could be thought of as for example politically incorrect, such as the one-sided number of men and women at the workplace.

5. ANALYSIS

In ethnography, analysis is not a distinct and separated process in time. On the contrary, it is tangled up with every stage of the research process. Analysis can be viewed as an ongoing process that starts early on (O'Reilly 2005; O'Reilly 2009). Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe iterative research design where the researcher swing back and forth between research, data collection and analysis. Data collection, analysis and writing up, and also the role of the research design and theory, are much more inse-

parably linked in ethnographic research (Ezzy 2002). O'Reilly (2005) calls this an iterative-inductive approach. She advocates a model where analysing and writing up can lead back to more data collection and writing down. Partly, ethnographic research mirrors how we learn about things in our daily life, what Becker (1970) calls sequential analysis, important parts of the analysis is being made while the researcher is still gathering data. Informal analyses, observations and hypotheses were taken back to research participants for their feedback (Ezzy 2002). Research design, data collection and feedback during the writing up phase were communicated with the team managements at different stages. Post production, I continued to analyse and write about my findings and collect new data when needed.

6. ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS: REVELATIONS AND PLEASURES

I faced an ethical dilemma during one occasion when I was to conduct participatory observation. The P management agreed to me observing one of the game's protagonists (Adrijanna) early July in Gothenburg. I wanted to take part in her meetings with prospective core players. In order to do so I had to take on a small role/character for a day, not to disclose my role as a researcher. My character, one of her supporting friends, was carefully designed, after I had assured them of my role-playing competence retelling a prank I had conducted at a restaurant a few months earlier. Under any circumstances I was not allowed to uncover my research mission, not ruin the game's blur of fiction and reality. I remember the occasion very well. We, me and Adrijanna, had talked it through several times before the young man came to the decided meeting place, a café. Our almost 30 years' of apparent age difference, easily revealed by a sheer glance, might have been questionable. Apart from this fact, our differing fashion styles outed us as not belonging to the same sub culture or social class. As I was not introduced when we sat down with our coffees, he asked Adrijanna who I was when I went to the counter to buy another coffee. Adrijanna answered that we had met at a psychiatric hospital some time ago, where she had been admitted as a patient. I worked there and we had become good friends. He seemed content with this answer and did not question me when I came back. Although the experience was thrilling, I had worries about the ethical framing of this participant observation. Was it defensible to not uncover my factual professional role?

To a very minor extent this research event could be compared with one of Laud Humphrey's (1970) unorthodox research methods. This episcopal priest and sociologist pioneered the study of men-having-sex-with-men in public places. He conducted participant observation in the erotic activities he was trying to explore, through direct involvement as a 'watch queen', so that other men could enjoy their erotic interludes without fear of sudden interruption. This was done without disclosing

his mission or getting informed consent. At a later stage, when accused of unethical research methods Humphreys admitted to this (1975). He motivated the employed methods with three ethical assumptions. He argued that a social scientist should never ignore nor avoid an area of research simply because it was difficult or socially sensitive and should approach any aspect of human behaviour with means that least distorted the observed phenomena. The third argument was that he had to protect respondents from harm, regardless of what such protection may cost the researcher. The implications of following the 'acting-of-a-friend' in my case cannot be compared to the grave ethical implications here mentioned, but there are similarities. I admit the thrill of acting this role, following so closely in the protagonist's footsteps, sensing the seriousness in the moment of the meeting, the uncertainty and doubt of the young man and how excellently and convincingly Adrijanna acted her role. I was on the verge of 'going native' very much enjoying my game experience. But the other side of the coin is that I got experience of the feeling of how immersive the game could become, something that I would later observe on several occasions while observing the team at P, during game mastering. I had deep-going talks too, with both team members acting Adrijanna and Eva Rados, about how they had experienced acting in these roles and the ambiguous feelings it created.

7. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Reliability and validity of findings are important in all fields that engage in scientific inquiry (LeCompte 1982). The value of the research hinges on the individual researcher's ability to demonstrate the credibility of the findings. The general critique towards qualitative research is that it is subjective, difficult to replicate and generalise and that craving for transparency prevails. However, the criteria by which research could be judged are very much debate and little agreement exists (Hammersley 2008). LeCompte thoroughly examines how ethnographic research can be judged and uses comparison with its counterparts in experimental research. When LeCompte relies on the researcher to cater for validity and reliability throughout the investigative process Hammersley discusses the need for quality criteria that can be used not only within the research community but also by lay 'users' of research like policymakers and practitioners (Hammersley 2008: 163). Instead of a set of strict rules to follow, Hammersley suggests the formulation of criteria built on the process of judgement as guiding principles and lists of relevant considerations. Both Hammersley and LeCompte mention transparency as important; for judgement to be made the researcher has to thoroughly describe the entire research process, analysis model and findings.

Reliability refers to the extent to which a study can be replicated. External reliability deals with the

fact of ethnographic research occurring in natural settings and is often undertaken to record process of change. By recognising and handling five major problems ethnographers may enhance external reliability of their data: the researcher's status position, informant choices, social situations and conditions, analytic constructs and premises and methods for data collection and analysis. Internal reliability questions whether multiple observers will agree within the single study.

I have taken the five major problems into account to enhance external reliability. I have reported on my status position (see earlier section). I have thoroughly reported on my methods for data collection and analysis. I have given an account for how I arrive at different theoretical constructs, connected the results to various types of data collected. The developed analytic constructs have been discussed with other (participating) researchers, and with the team management concurrently. The management have been given a chance to react on the texts in this thesis. In this way I have currently worked on solving the internal reliability of my results.

Validity concerns the accuracy of scientific findings; to what extent the findings represent empirical reality. It includes assessing whether constructs represent or measure the categories of human experience that occur. Internal validity refers to the extent to which scientific observations and measurements are authentic representations of some reality. It can be gained if congruence between empirical material and theoretical ideas that are developed, is shown. External validity in turn, addresses to what degree such representations may be compared legitimately across groups. It is about how results can be generalised to other environments.

I have thoroughly reported my empirical findings, from the wide and rich array of data I have collected. I have connected these findings to existing theories and theoretical constructs. In parts, these findings and theoretical constructs only refer to this particular social group and setting, which the construction of reality fiction shows (see chapter 2). In this thesis I have been able to generalise my results and show how *SOM*, for example, is a clear example of convergence culture (Jenkins 2006a).

8. WRITING UP

When the ethnographer comes back from 'the field', she has 'something to tell about' (Benjamin and Arendt 1969). My early plans did not include writing my research up with an ethnographic perspective. During the latter parts of my writing up I reflected on my research process, my empirical material, my methods, my analysis and finally on how to communicate my results to the readers. How could

I do this unusual and unlikely collaboration enterprise justice and tell the story about *Sanningen om Marika* and its birth process making use of the lavish data collected? I found the ethnographic perspective suitable. It gives the reader a possibility to grasp how multi-faceted the object of research was as a transmedia storytelling production, as a design and production process, as a company cooperation and joint (ad)venture and as a viewer/participant/player experience.

Notes

1 See chapter 1.

2 See for example The encyclopedic article Administrative versus critical research, <http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/articles/pages/6488/Administrative-Versus-Critical-Theory.html>, accessed 27th February 2011.

3 <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/intreval.htm>, retrieved 5th February 2010.

4 A MUD (Multi User Dungeon) is a multiplayer real-time virtual world. Muds combine elements such as role-playing games, interactive fiction and online chat.

5 Hundparken (Eng. The Dog Park) was a virtual world created by Danish Radio 2002 and further developed together with the Norwegian and Swedish public service providers for Norwegian and Swedish audiences as well. Here young people could create a puppy avatar, socialise and chat in an online park for dogs. The dog avatar could buy hats, dig down bones, swim and a lot more.

6 P.S. was a program produced by SVT during 1999-2004. During its five years long lifetime it was a popular youth oriented program where the audience got their video diaries aired. The weekly program was developed to include, at that time, interactivity such as webpages and direct contact with the program makers. Viewers could apply to get instructions and lend video cameras for two weeks.

7 *The Game* is a thriller from 1997, directed by David Fincher and with Michael Douglas as protagonist, who takes part in an ARG, although without knowing it to begin with. It gives a good reference to what an ARG is.

8 See theory chapter.

9 Prolog is one of many Swedish role-players' conventions. It started 2009 by the organisation Lajvverket and aims at improving and developing Swedish larp. Participants socialise, role play, attend workshops and much more. <http://lajvkonvent.se/>, accessed 10th May 2010.

10 High rate of forum posts = at least 7 forum posts, activity in the chat = active a few days a week during 3 weeks.

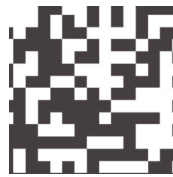
11 One participant belonged to the Kindergarten team. The other was recruited during the later stages of pre-game period.

12 The writing of in-game diaries was used in the Momentum game too, as a method to collect player experiences. See Jonsson S. et al (2007) and Stenros, J. et al. (2007).

ANALYSIS PART ONE:

THE BACKGROUND AND THE PARTICIPATION DRAMA

The following two chapters address the background of the production, the teams' initial objectives and imaginations of *SOM* and its audience. It gives a depiction of the final production and its parts and also covers how the story world was constructed and the game activities synchronised and managed by the producers.



CHAPTER ONE

IN CONCORDANCE: THE EARLY IMAGE

By working with web and television with the same gravitas, an integrated format is created where the viewer literally becomes part of the drama and its resolution.

The Treatment: 2

In this chapter the collaborators, SVT and P are introduced. I give a short review of the two first years of cooperation when I had not yet started to conduct ethnographic fieldwork. The written treatment and the recordings of the drama series stem from this initial period. My interpretation of the happenings is built on empirical data collected during the first few months of fieldwork; project documents, interviews and participant observation¹. In March, when I started conducting research the actors were just about to sign the contract commissioning the participatory and interactive parts to P. The chapter concludes with a summary of the production that was to take form, and that would start slow paced with viral marketing activities during summer 2007. I describe the design as it was keyed out in March with some alterations made during April, May and June 2007. Although the design of the production parts changed during the process this interpretation gives a fair image of what the companies had agreed on and began implementing.

1. PREHISTORY

It all started during spring 2005. A former SVT employee, Daniel Lägersten, from the entertainment department was recontracted at SVT, but this time at the drama department (SVT Väst, Gothenburg area branch). His former experiences and skills regarding audience interaction were needed for the purpose of creating a new type of interactive drama. He contacted a senior game researcher at Stockholm University, Annika Waern. At that time she was the project manager of the European Community funded IPerG Project² that focussed on fringe games utilising new technology and the physical world as a playground. By then the Swedish IPerG research group had undertaken design, production and research of several game concepts. The SVT producer had heard of these games. A workshop aiming at early game concepts was set up in Gothenburg. The former IPerG Project co-workers Christopher Sandberg and Martin Ericsson, and some other co-workers from the Swedish Institute of Computer Science (SICS) and the Interactive Institute (II)³ took part. Sandberg⁴ and Ericsson⁵ were both experienced larpers and larp producers with a track record of quite a number of Swedish larps. Both were past employees and games designers/researchers at the II Game Studio in Gotland⁶.

came from both IKEA – modern office chairs and tables - and a cheap purchase from the Royal Theatre’s ‘sell out’ of disused theatrical props - nineteenth century wooden furniture with velvet and leather imitation cover for ‘round table’ meetings and visitors, as being pleasing the eye. The first thing that you noticed in the small entrance was a big brown leather suitcase. It was filled with props from previous *Prosopopeia* larps: handwritten pieces of papers, small watercolour paintings, ripped out pages from old books, electric cords, dice, dolls and feathers (see picture 1:1).



Picture 1:1.

The leather suitcase filled with props from the previous *Prosopopeia* larps

This week I met some more people. The CEO is there, of course. He, a man in his early 30s, seems very entrepreneurial, always dressed in tight jeans, shirt and V-necked pullover. Sometimes he wears a jacket, dressed for meetings? Today he is preparing for the evening. The team will watch the first ‘rough-cut’ drama episode. He arranges chairs, fixes some snacks and prepares candles. He has borrowed a big flat screen TV set for the show. Today I will observe a design meeting. Four people have gathered: The artistic director who seems to be of the same age as the CEO. He is a tall slim man, always dressed in black, big black boots and black dyed hair; very goth. A somewhat younger woman, who I find out will enact the female protagonist, is styled the same way with her long black dyed hair, often put in a loose bun, pale make up with marked black eyebrows and dressed in black. The third person is a man in his early 20s, very short hair and wearing black clothes too. Apparently he is the ARG expert. The fourth person is a thin man in his early 30s. With his brownish woollen checked suit with a handkerchief in the breast pocket, shirt and tie, and his straight brown neatly ponytailed hair, he stands out from the other three. He is the graphic designer.

Fieldwork note, late March

The first few weeks I met most of the P people that were involved in the production, or that would become involved at a later stage. Apart from the people mentioned in the field note above, the team consisted of a few part-time employees with technical/programming skills. Artists and other people were involved too, carrying out tasks when requested. They crafted dolls, paintings, drawings, letters and books belonging to characters in the production. The P producer, a woman in her late 20s, was employed during later parts of spring. She was a skilled project manager and had, among other things, technical competence in designing and building social communities online. She was to manage the entire production. At this time people, who I later found out belonged to prospective collaborators, came to have meetings with the P team, mostly with the CEO and the creative director.

At this time, the company P was a small, newly founded pervasive entertainment company staffed by individuals experienced in organising larps and other entertainment productions built on participation¹¹. A small flexible organisation, it had less than twenty people project-employed, in overlapping design and production teams. The company tried to commercialise various kinds of experimental pervasive entertainment products and productions¹². However, I found out that this interest included not only the commercialisation of the entertainment that larps could breed. It also held strong ideological political features: the P workers believed pervasive entertainment could be used as a personal transformative power for individuals, and in society at large. These beliefs had a bearing on that most of the P people belonged to the Nordic role-playing community, or had contacts through their personal networks. The community's members share many ideas on role-playing as an educational activity, be it personal, emotional or political. Several P people were also members of the Stockholm-based avant-garde artist collective Interacting Arts¹³ (IA), for which the Nordic role-playing movement had been an important seedbed¹⁴. IA's core practise consists of role-playing and activism. Participatory culture (or participatory arts as IA calls it in English) is viewed as an umbrella term for cultural¹⁵ expressions and media that require active participation of all individuals involved. IA compares it with what they call 'spectator-targeted cultural expressions' where media production and consumption are separated such as mass media and one-way-directed cultural expressions like books, film, radio and television (Haggren, Larsson et al. 2008). I found out that these ideas and beliefs were important for the P people's aspirations with SOM and what they wished it to become. On many occasions I had talks with the management and the team workers about what they called the 'method' (see further chapter 4).



Picture 1:2.

Ingela Klingbohm, Maria's mother wrote a lot of religious and philosophical texts and poems. They were richly illustrated and gathered in a small book. Adrijanna found it among Maria's things. The contents of the book appeared in the game.

Swedish Television

The corporation

SVT is the oldest national television broadcaster, with a history reaching back to the 50s. It is responsible for the national production of public service television programming and broadcast activities; one of the mother corporation Sveriges Radio's three program companies. Via television, web and other ways of publication, a broad spectrum of programs and other services are supplied. They are characterised by 'democratic and humanistic values, educational ambitions, diversity, quality and accessibility for all'. This 'independent media company in the service of the public' should stay neutral and unbiased¹⁶.

With a licence fee as its dominant source of revenue, SVT is unusual amongst PSBs (British BBC is a business model). In 2009 the budget reached around 4,000 million Swedish kronor; 60% of the total fees. To compare, the PBS has a larger annual budget than all the Swedish private television and radio channels have altogether. Until the mid-90s broadcasting was still, by American or continental European standards, a protected market. However, SVT's monopoly broke in 1987. Today Swedish households can choose between a high number of digital channels transmitted via digital satellite, digital cable or digital terrestrial transmission systems.

SVT faced a few reorganisations externally and internally during the 90s and early 00s due to financial constraints and channel competition, similar to other European broadcasters. SVT's strategy to face economic challenges has been to reduce costs by rationalising the organisation and its productions (Enli 2008). Several reorganisations and changes in the channel and content supply took place, e.g. the closing down of regional channels¹⁷. Today all television production, apart from news production, is centralised to Sweden's biggest cities Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. Since 2008 SVT consists of three main divisions: a news division, a common television division and a division focussing the interactive/online activities. SVT has twenty-eight smaller (news) production/editorial sites throughout Sweden and employs 2,100 people.

SVT produces a high percentage of its own programming, 50% is in-house (news and sports excluded), 25% is for external collaborations and 25% is offered for in-house or external producers¹⁸. Today the corporation has eight channels. The web channel SVT Play is an 'on demand' service that supplies streamed programs. At www.svt.se additional service can be accessed, apart from the ordinary program supply. In 2009 the total program supply was around 68 hours daily. The viewer rates were around 21% in 2009¹⁹.

SVT has always been a popular drama producer with many successes in its track record. Drama series, like family and crime, are among the most common. The SVT Väst division has come to stand for many drama productions depicting contemporary society with a high degree of realism (Forslund 2006: 110). During the last decade SVT have featured more experimentally staged youth series using ethos and have been advanced technologically. A new generation television people today split the responsibilities for script writing and multi-hand directing.

The complex and hierarchical structure of a television production process also shapes SVT's productions, with changes towards a project-based production process, and a semi-employed staff, mixed with specialists consulting and freelancing. Accordingly, most of the SOM production team were professionals in their own specialised field, in the broadcasting process. They worked as consultants, or on contracts, for a certain period of the production. Examples were the producer, web editor, and the directors of the drama series and the debate. They had all formerly worked for SVT for extensive time periods. However, many of the technical and basic professionals, on the other hand, were SVT employees. Unlike the people at The company P, most SVT workers were connected to the trade union, and had regulated working hours and salaries.

The team

The *SOM* team was part of the SVT Väst division, one of the seven national program production departments in 2007. Each division served both the regional audience and the national scene. In 2007 the SVT Play web channel was newly implemented. The usage of new media (games, chats, program websites) had increased on SVT's webpage.

During winter 2006/2007 SVT Väst moved into a large four -story glass covered building with top modern working areas, located in the old harbour of Gothenburg, on the west coast of Sweden. The entrance at the ground floor, a big open room, contained a staffed reception that announced your arrival, and let you into the building through electronic locks. A visitor's area contained modern steel and leather armchairs overlooking the old harbour. The drama department's office area consisted of a big open room on the third floor, connecting a variety of meeting rooms and coffee areas. A long rectangular set of office desks at one end of this big room served as the office space for the *SOM* production management, the technical staff, and the web editorial staff. Around ten people worked full or part time. Apart from the production manager, the web editor and her web office crew - a few other people working with the web applications, both technically and with the content - had their desks here. This staff also took the calls from viewers and participants. The debate was recorded in an adjacent studio. The small meeting cubicles were used by the director of the debate to direct the actors in between the recordings. On the top floor a company restaurant served lunch and coffee.

3. INSPIRATION

A range of games and game types inspired the creators of *Sanningen om Marika*²⁰. The most influential were alternate reality games and the Nordic style of live action role-playing games. In this section I address and compare the games that inspired the teams.

In early interviews and talks the artistic/creative director at P mentioned Dave Szulborski, one of the first professional independent alternate reality game developers, as his greatest inspiration for *SOM*. He had learned from Szulborski's *This Is Not A Game* (2005), and from reading about the ARG *The Beast*²¹.

The main inspiration for SVT²² was also an ARG; *ReGenesis*²³, a Canadian ARG combined with a television production. This production centred on the scientists of a fictional bio-technical scientific organisation. The game was primarily an online clue hunt, in which the fictional characters sometimes

contacted the players through email and phone, but players were also sent on missions in the real world. Originally broadcast in Canada, it has since also been produced for European and American television audiences.

Although the main inspiration for SVT was alternate reality games, Sandberg and Ericsson had been contacted on account of their skills in larp production. Several of their recent larp productions had been designed and produced with the design aesthetic of the total 360° illusion. *Prosopopeia Bardo I: Där vi föll* (Jonsson 2006; Montola and Jonsson 2006) and the scheduled *Prosopopeia Bardo II: Momentum* (Jonsson 2007; Stenros 2007) belong to this group. They were staged in Stockholm as part of the IPerG project. In contrast to *ReGenesis*, these pervasive larps were primarily staged in the real/physical world and required intense participant involvement. In *Momentum* the participants took on roles as ghosts that re-entered the world of the living by possessing the participants. This model of role-taking required participants to role-play on multiple levels; they had to both role-play versions of themselves that believed that it was possible to be possessed, as well as role-playing the ghost. A common thread between *Momentum* and *ReGenesis* was that both had a serious theme and a certain ideological and political depth. *ReGenesis* often addressed social, political and ethical topics related to the science at hand. In *Momentum*, the central theme dealt with the meaning of activism in a conformist society and its motivations and cost. The ghost characters of the participants were all dead revolutionaries. Their motivations and goals varied, but they all shared a strong desire for change. Consequently, the narrative and the gameplay were in both cases complex and multi-faceted, and as such demanded much from the spectators and participants alike.

But apart from this, the differences between the games were vast. Where *ReGenesis* was largely based on fictional content, fabricated by the game designers and sought out by the participants, the *Prosopopeia* productions relied to a very large extent on real-world history and events. In fact, this ‘reality sampling’ was a central method. Here the game designer had access to a wealth of material without cost by appropriating various phenomena like Enochian magic²⁴ or communication with dead spirits. This contributed to blurring the boundaries between the game and the reality outside, since it was hard for players to judge if something was purposely fabricated, or existed outside the game. Furthermore, where *ReGenesis* was largely played online, the *Prosopopeia* larps were primarily physical real-world events. Where *ReGenesis* primarily relied on the puppet masters staging the game in secrecy for the participants, the *Prosopopeia* games were larp experiences where both game masters and participants took part and could influence the storyline development. Finally, where *ReGenesis* was a massive game tailored to support millions of participants, the *Prosopopeia* games had only 12

and 30 participants respectively.

4. THE EARLY DESIGN PHASE

A few days after I had started conducting fieldwork, on the 5th of March, there was a note on the project intranet. It announced that the ‘production of the reality game (Swe. verklighetsspelet⁵) could start’, since the formal agreement to commission the design, implementation and production of the game parts and runtime game mastering had been signed. At a joint SVT-P meeting in Gothenburg at the end of March, P presented a design document²⁶ of the planned production parts that was constructed to work as a base for further decisions and steering. It was in alignment with the treatment but as a consequence of SVT’s (delayed) internal financial processing which resulted in less financing, P had had to redesign their parts to be able to cut down costs by 40% (i.e. was paid less²⁷). This heavy economical downsizing was due to several factors. One was the internal inability of the SVT management to understand that these novel participatory parts were entirely different from the commonly commissioned interactive webpages usually added to a broadcast production²⁸. Another was that the drama had taken a good deal of the budget; it had actually overdrawn its budget. The overdraft was mainly due to a rise in salaries (the result of trade union negotiations) without a rise in the total budget. A third explanation might be that a large, old, economically and technically powerful broadcaster can afford to treat a much smaller and less powerful consultant this way. There is always a long tail of obedient and eager media actors to take an empty place. In any case, the money was not there to create fully the aspired vision, and thus P saw their commissioned parts diminishing.

Objectives and goals

In my view we are now going to plan a new project in the Prosopopeia series, this time focussing on mass participation and in close collaboration with SVT. Some things are given; the world, the earlier projects’ narratives (and I also count the TV series as part of it) and the rich collection of characters. These are the limited resources we continue to administer. In addition, we were working with the mission of SVT, a goal we are obliged to obtain, regardless of our own artistic goals.

Invitation to friends and allies

The mutual treatment drew up a story world and narrative filled with lavish details of characters, events and scenes; a rich source for the teams. The treatment also elaborated on the motives, goals, visions and images of the production. They were all crucial to grasp the meaning and inter linkage between the production parts, the tiered participation, the usage of multiple platforms, the very complex story world and the objectives of the fiction-fact blur. Thus the treatment formed an important

base for this last part of the production process, when the drama series had to be sequenced and cut to be interwoven into the design and implementation of the game activities and the participatory debate program. It looked as if SVT and P had unanimous qualitative goals. But during my interviews slightly contrasting pictures surfaced. The qualitative goals of SVT did not contradict the goals agreed on as such. They were to 1) create a production format that fitted into novel patterns of media production, built on well-known production processes and concepts, but combined in novel ways. It was a pilot production aimed at exploring new production methods for this type of (interactive) formats. 2) SVT aimed at creating a production format for novel media consumption and erasing the borders between drama and entertainment. The third goal was to 3) reach an audience that did not watch SVT's productions and/or did not watch television at all, generally speaking the 17-32 year old age group, that enjoyed online games and activities²⁹.

P, on the other hand, expressed themselves a bit differently concerning what to achieve qualitatively. They had a twofold main goal with the production; 1) to create a cross media narrative production covered with a layer of game structure and game components that invite to active participation and 2) to create a reality game where the reality outside the game would start to effect and intervene the game³⁰. Thus already at this stage the partners used different terms to identify their goals. In retrospect, the differing cultures of production were evident already at this early stage.

What also surfaced during my fieldwork was the P team members' strong political agenda, being strongly anarchistic. This was not masked or concealed in any way. On the contrary; they openly talked about it when asked. This did not seem to be a problem for the SVT management. When I asked if P's outspoken anarchistic vision was a problem I got the answer that 'This is what one could expect when choosing themes that engage updated viewers, and we can deal with it'. Besides, an SVT production 'has to deal with up-to-date and current societal issues to be interesting and engaging'³¹.

Motives

Why then would SVT search this collaboration? The background sketched in the treatment talked about a PSB that loses viewers due to 'competition, channel proliferation, digitalisation, digital media and technology'. The suggested solution was to add interaction and include user-generated material. Another problem outlined was that television viewing had diminished in favour of computer gaming, social networking, and other interactive entertainment offered online and by mobile platforms.

Furthermore, SVT was taken by surprise when the audience showed a high appreciation of *De Drabbade*. The sub stories of the series presented on the production webpages got an overwhelming response³². This success opened up a potential solution of how to reach new viewer groups/segments. The ‘audience relation’ was strengthened and the viewers generated material; photos, video snippets and texts which were turned into new input, by using the internet’s interactive capacity. ‘This type of service strengthens the credibility of the public service provider and creates opportunities for people to influence society in future’³³. SVT identified the ability to compete with the game market as a key success for the SOM production, thereby satisfying an audience which it had difficulties reaching. P’s motives were a bit different and more politically minded. This was communicated in the treatment, as discussed, and as I have mentioned, became very obvious in the many interviews and talks with the team members. When the contract was signed P courted their ‘friends and allies’ in a series of design meetings to collectively work for the concretisation of their common vision of a better world. A range of NGOs (nongovernmental organisations), smaller companies and entrepreneurs that all were part of, or shared ideological standpoints within the live action role-playing sub culture, visited P during spring. SVEROK, the national youth association for role-playing and conflict games, small games companies like Green Hut People and avant-garde art collectives like Interacting Arts (IA) were within this group of friends and allies. The following letter clearly communicated the P management’s vision. According to the writers, this was a vision they obviously shared with the addressees who were invited to a short intense series of design meetings.

During 2007 P will create a hybrid between games, street action, consecration association and TV entertainment in a serious attempt to open up Smith’s heart for another world... The challenge from a political and artistic point of view is the meeting with a new audience. This time we do not preach for the already redeemed, or immerse ourselves in the theoretical ordeals of radical game concepts. We are now in an acute state. In this project we are coordinators and conspirators not only of a game but for the front end of participatory culture, towards conformism. This is a battle we have to throw ourselves into with lust and without fear. Its form, content and spirit is about ‘The Truth About Marika’, about the dreams we have kept for years, and that finally may bloom in front of open curtains. If we play our cards correctly nothing will be the same again.

The message was clear: together they could ‘make a difference’, rub out the subcultural larp nerd label, and make a serious attempt to convey the ‘strong and potent political hunger for something else’ that could cement their dreams. In the long run SOM would pioneer future missions, establish P as a leading commercial operator in participatory entertainment and thus ‘challenge one-way communicators and media and those monopolising as truth-tellers’. Participatory culture was the method.

5. THE IMAGINED AUDIENCE: TIERED PARTICIPATION

The producers knew about tiered participation (Dena 2008a) from studying earlier ARGs. The treatment described how a smaller group of participants would create content for the main audience. But there was uncertainty of how many segments (or tiers) the audience could be divided into, and how these segments should be identified according to what type of activity a specific group would prefer. The imagined audience segments were changed slightly a few times during the first months' design. The last version came a few weeks before the airing of the drama. It was a consequence of the refinement and redesign of the content due to the financial changes. But, most of all, it was a consequence of the SVT producers' negotiation internally. Not only was it the first time SVT created this kind of tiered participation, it was a novel strategy for the P producers too.

The treatment audience

The treatment describes the vision behind the *SOM* production. It was to reach both the ordinary television viewer (passive users) and those demanding more interactivity in their media interplay³⁴ (active users). These two target groups were divided into two subgroups each. Passive users (A and B) were either leaning backwards or forwards, and active users (C and D) were either restricted/limited or co-creative. The first passive group, assumed to be the largest part, i.e. television viewers (A) with a more 'common' media behaviour, not so willing to put time and effort in the 'technical refinements' of the experience. The ones leaning forward (B) would go online to read and follow the production there too. The active group (C and D) would consist of a younger 'game-saturated', much smaller segment, who would catch advanced media concepts more easily, which was important for the 'deeper parts' of the production. This group was described as highly familiar with video games, e-sports, larp and ARG. They could thus be split into two segments, the more observing participants (C), inclined to online reading and video game playing, and that were more interested in competitive activities. The second group (D) were the co-creative and collaborative larpers and ARGers that, on the other hand, would like to immerse themselves in the fiction instead. Television viewers (A and B) were also supposed to be immersed in the fiction, but would not like to compete.

These profiles would form the dynamics at the various levels of engagement; co-creation, collaboration and competition. The feedback between the niche levels, where a few would create what the mass would consume, was thought to be the key. It was equally important to satisfy the various groups' needs. In order to create the fiction the active would have the opportunity to co-create content administered by the web editor group. Thus, the last, very small group of players would become important for the very much larger sized, and less active audience, in that they would generate material impro-

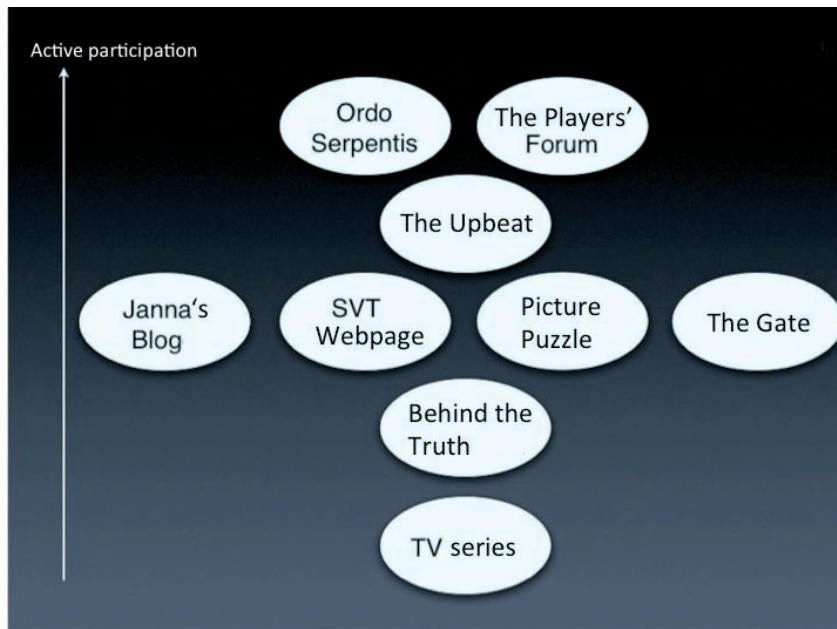
ving the experience at a magnitude not possible for the producers themselves. This was the motive for a very narrow production although the demand was to create entertainment for a mass audience.

The late March audience

During March the P team worked intensely with the conceptualisation, framed by the much lower budget. At the end of March it was presented to the SVT production management. The target groups were a bit changed compared to the treatment picture. The ARGers were moved into the group of forward leaning viewers. A new group - 'wizards' - was picked out from the 'street participants'. Wizards were experienced role-players that would create experiences for themselves and others. This group would be recruited from the friends and allies. Street participants were people that would like to act in public spaces, participate in the TV debate, and go from single to group play. But the teams were unsure of what kind of participants would be attracted. The design document communicated four participant groups that were quantitatively estimated per episode:

- Viewers, who watch and possibly follow the drama series (600,000 persons)
- Engaged, who visit SVT.se and follow the debate (60,000 persons)
- Participants, who take on missions in the game and that may report (6,000 persons)
- Co-creators, who propel and report back (600 persons)

600,000 viewers is a common internal estimation for a drama production³⁵. According to P, 'research and earlier productions have identified a distribution between co-creative participants and normal viewers following a 1:10 ratio at the establishment of a new market of participation', thus the estimation of the three other segments. The design would enable participants to gradually move 'up' towards deeper engagement and activity, independent of entrance level. This engagement was depicted graphically, and presented in June at a SVT-P meeting³⁶ in Stockholm:



Picture 1:3.

Graphical representation of the production parts and how participants would move up-wards in engagement. The arrow, from bottom to top, indicates engagement level of activities.

Pre-launch control issues

The internal SVT negotiations continued up to a few weeks before the airing of the drama and debate. One of the crucial questions was how viewers could (be allowed to) interact and participate without being moderated at all times. After briefing and discussing the planned production at a meeting with the top SVT management where the international media guru Brian Seth Hurst also took part, the SVT producer, in an interview in August³⁷, said he had managed to get approval to reduce the control of the audience. The production would offer three layers of participation. They would 1) serve 'ordinary television viewers'; 2) an audience that would take part in 'lighter' forms of interaction such as finding information, forming questions/answers through SVT's production homepage and 3) a more active and reactive group that would take part in online and live action role-playing. SVT intended to lessen the control of this third group and of the moderation of content, so that the user-created content could influence the other two levels. In this way SVT wanted to offer its audience possibilities to 'activate themselves' in 'the reality that a drama series creates'³⁸ and 'step into the fiction and take part in it in new ways'³⁹. The tools to execute this aim were to craft a 'feeling of realism and participation, the online story and the tasks, to make the television and online stories interconnected and additional, through the fiction's imprint on reality and in the community and web forum activities'⁴⁰.

6. THE IMAGINED PRODUCTION

As mentioned, the teams planned to gear up the production, from the first viral marketing activities during pre-summer that would engage the first devoted group of players, to a full-blown ARG-like game with mass participation towards the end of the summer. The imagined production was summarised as follows.

On the 6th of March the following formal project division was discussed at an SVT meeting and was announced on the project intranet:

- Television drama series "Sanningen om Marika". Inspires and promotes the kernel story about Janna, Andreas and Marika, and Leif, Evy, Dom and Dom Andra (Eng. They and The Others)¹¹.
- Live television debate "Bakom Sanningen" (Eng. Behind the Truth). Investigates the drama series and the truth of the anticipatory story.
- svt.se/bakom_sanningen (Eng. svt.se/behind_the_truth). Completes the live television debate with an interactive webpage where Janna actively participates.
- conspirare.se. Static webpage showing Janna's [previous] work until [the time] when Janna goes over to svt.se/bakom_sanningen.
- Det Osynliga Templet. (Eng. The Invisible Temple.) Portal webpage and the name of the reality game [taking place] in the streets and that leads the participants to Dom Andra.

Additional production parts of equal importance to the early design discussions and meetings were Spelarnas Forum (Eng. The Forum of the Players), Upptakten (Eng. The Upbeat) and Porten (Eng. The Gate). These were also developed during the spring.

Crafting an entire universe

The basic story of SOM was as follows:

...One day a few years ago a young woman disappears from her wedding without a trace. The case gets attention when a drama series based on the event is promoted. A group of people claim that the woman became a victim of a conspiracy, and when the husband tries to prove them wrong there are no traces of her having existed at all. What is the truth? Is it a game or is it a true story? The mystery is a fact! What is the truth about Marika? SVT opens up a web office with the mission to find out the truth, engages the audience in the quest. The editorial team calls itself Nimrod, the same name that Marika used to call herself online. Traces and evidence of Marika's existence begin to pop up, when the team starts to investigate the matter. The question the team tries to answer is: Who lies behind her disappearance and why does someone try to hide her traces?...

The treatment: 11

The treatment drew up an entire story universe, narratives and plot lines filled with lavishly detailed characters, events and scenes; a rich source for the teams. It elaborated on the background of similar productions, on the motives and goals, painted visions and images of the production, all crucial to grasp the meaning and interlinkage between the production parts, the tiered participation, the usage of multiple platforms, the complex story world and the objectives of the fiction-fact blur. The treatment declared the thoughts behind the methods of how to craft

Most important was to design a collective experience for the mass audience that, regardless of the individual's own engagement level and participation mode, would strengthen the experience for one another and make them 'move upwards' in engagement mode to make as many drama viewers as possible become as active as possible (see picture 1:3).

A political message

The intended obfuscation of actuality and fiction was an important design choice to communicate the political agenda. The drama and the game would 'deal with our different ways to view actuality, about the subjective nature of the truth'⁴⁴. The viewers would identify themselves with the main protagonists' opposing views, to take a stance themselves. The hope was that they would come to the conclusion that 'the truth' is something we create ourselves, using our 'world-views'. But the protagonists' conflicts would also mirror the philosophical and political question: 'Is it sensible to give up your freedom for comfort and safety?'

This political stance imbued the treatment, giving rich examples of how to fulfil this goal; actual media events being one way. The use of coincidences, whether planned or not, another. Real people and events it was planned, were to be interwoven with the fiction.

Notes

1 The treatment Nimrod - Sanningen om Marika dated 30th November 2005; Designspecifikation. Deltagardramat Sanningen om Marika dated 29th March 2007; FAS1PRES.ppt dated 14th April 2007; participant observation and small talk during March to June; meeting minutes from SVT- P meeting 13th June; interviews with the P CEO, the P Creative Director and the P Producer in May 2007 and the SVT Producer in August. An invitation letter to 'friends and allies' to take part in a design meeting on 9-11th March 2007.

2 IPerG was an European Union-funded project (FP6 - 004457) which lasted from 1st September 2004 to 29th February 2008. The aim of IPerG was to create entirely new game experiences, which would be tightly interwoven with everyday lives through objects, devices and people that surround people and places. Through an exploratory approach several showcase games were created which came under the description of "pervasive games" - a radically new game form that extended gaming experiences out into the physical world. To achieve a high quality of interactive experience for these games, new technologies and methods were explored for the creation of novel and compelling forms of content. <http://www.pervasive-gaming.org>, accessed 29th April 2010.

3 SICS, Swedish Institute of Computer Science, www.sics.se, and the Interactive Institute, www.tii.se, are two Swedish experimental research institutes that operate in the field of information and media technologies.

4 According to www.thecompanyp.com Christopher Sandberg has been active in new media and participative research and enterprises for over two decades.

5 Over the past fifteen years Martin Ericsson has instigated, written and designed more than twenty pieces of participative art ranging from reality games and Shakespeare adaptations to massive Sci-Fi and Fantasy larps.

6 This group made similar productions there like *Visby Under* (Eng. Visby Wonder) and *Vem Gråter?* (Eng. Who cries?). *Vem gråter?* was a production that got reported to the police due to reality/fiction ambiguity and 'faulty' audience reception, see the news notice at <http://sverigesradio.se/cgi-bin/isidorpub/PrinterFriendlyArticle.asp?artikel=569219&programID=205>, accessed 1st May 2010. The company P was later formed as a spinoff from this research studio.

7 It may be argued that similar productions had not been produced internationally either. Even if it may be compared with both the ARG *Push*, Nevada where TV and online activities were developed parallel, and the *Matrix* trilogy where short films, series and lavish online material were developed concurrently, and where the film referred to this material, it can still be argued that SOM would come to represent something entirely new and novel.

8 *Prosopopeia Bardo II: Momentum* was a game staged in, around, and under the city of Stockholm. It was played during 36 days, fall 2006. The game was designed and played around the central idea of 'play as if it is real'. This was reflected in the game world, characters, playing style, character selection, game areas, runtime game mastering, and the general mood of the game. Everything was to be as realistic and seemingly unmediated as possible: if you wanted to dance, climb, drink, or punch in this game, you had to do it for real (Montola, Stenros et al 2009). Martin Ericsson was employed by the IPerG project to create the game design for *Momentum* and wrote this at the same time as he wrote the SOM treatment.

9 As part of the IPerG project the game researchers at the Interactive Institute planned to develop a game mastering tool for SOM. This would allow for both automation and manual game mastering in the *Ordo Serpentis* game. It was later called *Game Creator*.

10 *De Drabbade* was a SVT television thriller series with supernatural features and a fight between the good and the evil. It contained twelve episodes and was aired 2003. It was set in contemporary Nordic countries and in Scotland 400 years ago. It contained new interactive audience interaction and online services. Directors Björn Stein, Dean Tomkins & Måns Mårdlind.

11 See www.thecompanyp.se.

12 A full account on earlier productions can be found on the company's webpage.

13 www.interactingarts.org. In the international issue of their magazine they write: Interacting arts is one or all of the following: a group of cross-disciplinary artists, media critics, and activist network, a conspiracy a brand, a think-tank and a magazine which is circulated both on the web and in print. We claim to inspire and activate people into becoming our fellow creators of fully lived and experienced lives. Our theories are nothing other than the theories of our

real life and of the possibilities experienced or perceived in it. We strive to coordinate our refusal of existential poverty through affirmation of creativity, co-operation, solidarity, play and our blistering desire for freedom, Haggren, K., L. Larsson, et al. (2005). "Spectator or participant? Are you given a choice?" Interacting Arts International Issue 2005.

14 The P producer was a member of IA at the time and several of the members had taken part in previous P productions.

15 The Swedish word kultur (culture) is derived from the Germanic languages, können, to know/knowledge. Thus, in IA's context it signifies aesthetic and artistic expressions like theatre, dance, painting, sculpture, music and poetry.

16 Swedish Television: Facts about SVT and public service remit, <http://svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=60232&a=698388>, accessed on 21st January 2008. <http://svt.se/2.60170/start> and http://svt.se/2.60232/1.698388/public_service, accessed 8th February 2011.

17 <http://svt.se/2.60170/start> and http://svt.se/2.60232/1.698388/public_service, accessed 8th February 2011.

18 MMS 2010/2011. http://www.svd.se/naringsliv/nyheter/eva-hamiltons-tittarsucce_5941005.svd, accessed 15th February 2011.

19 MMS 2010/2011. http://www.svd.se/naringsliv/nyheter/eva-hamiltons-tittarsucce_5941005.svd, accessed 15th February 2011.

20 Nordgren, A (unpublished work) Tools for Runtime Game Mastering of Large-Scale Pervasive Games. Stories and Lessons from The Truth of Marika.

21 The Beast counts as one of the first and most influential ARGs. It was created by a team at Microsoft to promote the Steven Spielberg movie A.I: Artificial Intelligence. It ran for twelve weeks during 2001.

22 Interview SVT producer, 21st August.

23 The ReGenesis ARG was produced by The Movie Network.

24 The Enochian alphabet first appeared during the 16th century. The Court Astrologer and Magician, Dr. John Dee (1527-1608) and his associate, Sir Edward Kelly (1555-1597) claimed that the alphabet and the Enochian language were transmitted to them by angels. The alphabet is used in the practice of Enochian Magic on Enochian Calls or Keys, which are used to call angels. <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/enochian.htm>, accessed on 10th November 2010.

25 It should be noted that the term 'verklighetsspel' is a direct translation of 'reality game' as in ARG (alternate reality game), but is considered to have a wider and slightly different meaning in that it is not claiming to create an alternate reality rather the opposite. The avant-garde art collective Interacting Arts has experimented with this type of game in order to question 'the social reality as an agreement possible to change'. The common play style is 'to act as if the game's reality is true'. <http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verklighetsspel>, accessed 1st May 2010.

26 Designspecification. Deltagardramat Sanningen om Marika.

27 Interview with P CEO, spring.

28 Interview SVTi manager, 13th November.

- 29 Interview SVT Producer, 21st August.
- 30 Interviews P Producer, CEO and Creative Director, May.
- 31 Interview SVT management, 26th October.
- 32 The Treatment, pages 130-136.
- 33 *ibid*, page 135.
- 34 The treatment, page 130.
- 35 Interview SVT producer, 21st August, 2007. Interview former SVT producer, SVT Syd, May 2008.
- 36 Meeting minutes from SVT- P meeting 13th June, in Stockholm.
- 37 Interview SVT Producer, 21st August.
- 38 The treatment, page 130.
- 39 Interview SVT Producer, 21st August.
- 40 The treatment, page 130.
- 41 Characters in SOM. For an explanation see the SOM glossary.
- 42 The treatment, page 6.
- 43 The Treatment, page 5.
- 44 The treatment, page 8.

CHAPTER 2

NEGOTIATED COACTION¹: THE FINAL CREATION

It is important that you believe. Not for me, not for Marika. But for you.

I want you to understand what is happening. To get insight into how this country operates.

I want you to wake up.

I want you to understand that you are Andreas. His story is yours. And you are him.

Every civilisation contains individuals that don't fit in. Because they want something else.

Something more, an alternative.

I told him everything. Andreas would just have to listen. But he couldn't. Not then.

Janna's voiceover during the first 5 minutes in 1st episode of drama

This chapter is devoted to the final production, as it appeared on the TV screen, on the internet, and in the physical world. The aim is to provide an understanding of the entire production, the main storyline that traversed the platforms, as well as to go into some detail on the individual parts of the production.

A metaphor of 'a bag of dice' can be used to illustrate how I perceive the design process. All (desirable) design elements were put in the 'bag', shaken and then thrown out on the table. The designers then meticulously puzzled them together in order to craft a game full of rich engagement, entertainment, and problem solving opportunities. In this chapter, I will bring up the most salient design strategies that are important for the interpretation and perception of *SOM*. But the main designer in *SOM* employed many more ideas - his strategy seemed to have been to apply as many design strategies as possible and inflate the narrative with a tremendously high number of details, sub stories/plots, events, props and characters. Anyone who reads the treatment would experience this, notwithstanding the first few drafts of the treatment, which were rinsed from the extreme wealth of details. Several co-workers also commented on it.

In order to grasp the entire production and its parts, this chapter starts with a description of how the story universe was constructed. First, it elaborates on the design of the storyline and how it traversed the platforms. I detail how the blur between fact and fiction was fabricated, and what roles the producers took as characters in the story. The overarching theme of the story universe and the main story elements developed by participants conclude this section. The following section covers each production part in more detail; its content, producer, original aims and goals, type of activity/tier, platform

appeared as employees at *Kerberos Security*, a surveillance company. One of them, Leif, seemed to be obsessed with Ingela and her visions. He did all he could to hide Marika's disappearance. Step by step Janna and Andreas uncovered clues about The Others, that actually existed, and about Marika's whereabouts.

As part of the introduction of the drama series, it was said that the first four episodes were based on posters that had been put up all over Gothenburg some years earlier (in 2005) by a woman looking for her friend. The last episode that presented a conclusive ending, was by contrast presented as purely fictional - the script writer's own imagination of what could have happened. This episode disclosed that Leif and Ingela were the parents of Marika, and that Andreas and Janna at last found Marika as well as the community of The Others.

The True Story: a pervasive game set in the present

So, what was the reason for the claim that the story was based on publicly exhibited posters? The idea was to communicate that the story universe was based on true people and events, and that Marika, Janna and Andreas were real people. In the 'real' world behind the drama, they had slightly different names and were called Maria, Adrijanna and Jonathan.

According to The True Story, Adrijanna had not found Maria, but had had a nervous breakdown and stopped searching for Maria after an encounter with *Kerberos Security*. The company had stolen her computer (with all her research) and threatened to kill her if she continued. Scared and depressed, she had still had the nerve to put up small posters with her story all over Gothenburg. These were the notes that had been found by SVT, more precisely the SVT script writer Anders Weidemann who had found the story compelling enough to turn it into a drama series. When Adrijanna found out about this, she started her search again, encouraged by the possibility of getting help by her story being aired nationally. In July 2007² Adrijanna started touring Sweden with the message that the upcoming TV series was based on her true life story and that Maria really had disappeared. People signed up on the website conspirare.se to help Adrijanna. At first SVT did not acknowledge this version of the story, and claimed that Adrijanna was making everything up and that there was no relationship between her story and the drama series.

The allegations against SVT about exploiting a personal tragedy at last instigated SVT to act. After a month or so, they publicly announced that a debate program would accompany the TV series, in

which the serious issues touched upon would be explored. By now Adrijanna had received some contact with people claiming to be The Others, a kind of secret society. One week before the TV series started, the *Conspirare* members uncovered the secret society's website, *Ordo Serpentis*. Now Adrijanna and her *Conspirare* friends joined the organisation in order to find out if Maria was a member. The *Conspirare* crew was finally able to gather enough evidence for SVT to switch views and acknowledge that there might be a grain of truth to Adrijanna's story. The drama series and Adrijanna's search were concluded when Maria turned up outside the SVT building in Gothenburg and met with Andreas and the *Conspirare* followers that had gathered outside the SVT building in Gothenburg there on the second last evening of the game³.

Before we go on to look at how the production was run, it serves to notice that *both* of these story layers were fictional, although the The True Story had elements of facts woven into the narrative.

Managing the game

SOM was a game-mastered (Fine 1983; Mackay 2001) game. This means that the game was not entirely run by the players (which would require that they adhered to pre-written instructions), but neither was it controlled by an automatic game engine (as is the case in a computer game). The production team members were 'puppet masters' (McGonigal 2006b) in the sense that the producers desired game mastering to remain hidden from the members of *Conspirare* (i.e. participants). This way the team members could be given roles in The True Story. The P people were the main game masters, but some SVT team members also acted as characters in The True Story. Jonsson and Waern (2008) conclude that pervasive games, that are not automated, are experienced as less predictable and feel more realistic. They can dynamically adapt to unexpected participants initiatives and it also allows for the on-the-fly addition of content during runtime (McGonigal 2008). To give game masters characters in the game world sustains a responsive game world (Montola, Stenros et al. 2009). Not only did it give possibilities for the organisers to fix bugs and other game technology, it also made the game extremely realistic (in chapter 8 I discuss a situation where a player 'informed' about an *Ordo Serpentis* webpage bug, to enable game masters to fix it).

The game masters' characters were typically closely based on the real people playing them. The creative director at P played Agent Orange, the boyfriend and helper of Adrijanna. The P producer played Anty, a friend of Adrijanna's who helped in managing her website. This was very close to what was actually going on outside the game. The P producer ran the management of Adrijanna's website as

one of her work tasks. The actress playing Adrijanna was in a relationship with the creative director. The web editor at SVT, Eva Rados, played herself in her role as the web editor of the svt.se/marika webpage and the SVT production manager, Daniel Lägersten, had a minor character also as himself and registered himself as the persona Campstone (a direct translation of his surname) on the *Conspire* forum. The debate program host also used his real name, John Carlsson and his, for the Swedish television audience, familiar role as a debate program host. This blurred the border between the fictional True Story and the non-fictionalised/real world. Not only could participants email or chat with the characters, like Adrijanna or Eva Rados, participants could also meet them during game events performed at a café, at a music festival and public places. The P producer put it⁴:

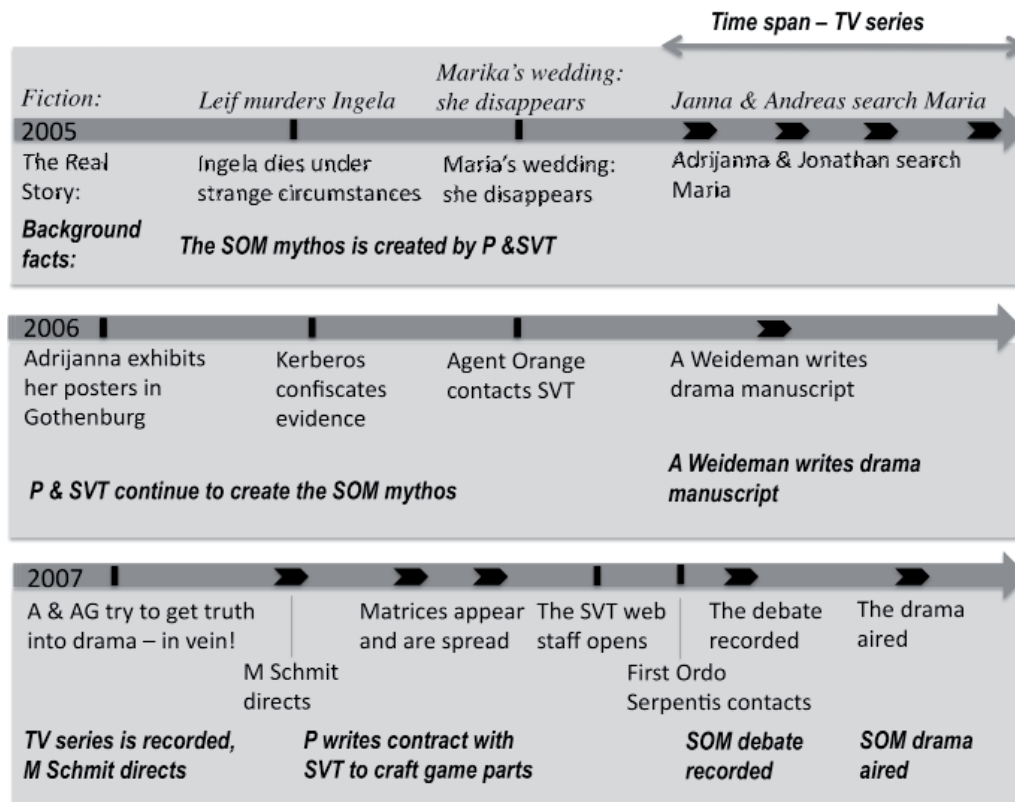
The True Story was built on many facts from the real lives of the people playing characters in it, and during the game runtime their actions were both adapted for the story and the story adapted to explain their actions. Every piece of truth that somehow fitted the game narrative and was not too personal to be brought into The True Story was generally used in it, to strengthen the illusion that The True Story was real.

The production team went to great length to uphold the illusion of The True Story, starting long before the actual production was launched. Even the actors in the drama series were deceived. The protagonist Adrijanna visited the recordings of the drama series (in the fall of 2006), discussing the production, in character, with the actors and the TV crew. A few of them understood her to be telling the truth, and that the drama series was based on her true story. This misunderstanding was revealed at the press conference in September when one of the drama actors talked about that the drama was based on an existing woman's disappearance. The marketing campaign/pre-game activities conducted pre-airing of the TV series, were deliberate attempts to confuse fiction and fact, and the obfuscation continued throughout the production, until the very end.

Picture 2.1. Game masters taken by surprise: Adrijanna, Agent Orange and Anty watching participant B1's video, an Ordo Serpentis 1st mission report. The video featured in the debate program of the same week. When asked if he knew which occurrences were true or not, the creative director answered that he did not know, and did not want to know. It was not important to know, he said, but rather the opposite. The event is addressed in chapter 8. See also: En skugga på väggen..., http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLzXY_8CcZA&feature=related, from 5th November 2007, accessed 11th January 2010.



The True Story was created because the producers wanted to create a reality game with an indistinguishable borderline between fiction and fact. The production team welcomed all occurrences of coincidental connections⁵ between fiction and fact (see chapter 8). Conversely when a participant was able to surprise the team at P, they felt this was a great achievement. One occasion was when a video mission report was sent to *Ordo Serpentis* featuring a participant in his car stalking a ‘suspicious individual’ to the international airport, on to the aircraft, and all the way to the goal of the journey in another European country (see picture 2:1). These deliberate design aesthetics were employed in all media channels, but were primarily communicated through the *Conspirare* website and the TV debate. Rather than explicitly being true or untrue, the message was confusing and ambiguous. Many production parts were posing as fictional and factual at the same time. The storyline layers depicted in picture 2:2 were originally published on *Conspirare* as The Real Story behind the TV series.



Picture 2:2: Time line for the SOM production, The Drama and The True Story. These timelines were presented as ‘fiction’ and ‘reality’ at *Conspirare* in October. The Background facts timeline is added by the author and represents the true world facts, as far as the author has been able to delineate them.

The main conflict: two parallel websites

In order to make the story universe an integrated unity, the parts had to be spliced together and run simultaneously on different platforms. The conflict between the SVT organisation and Adrijanna materialised as two parallel websites, at *conspirare.se* and *svt.se*, each with a chat system. The two sites communicated opposing views of the ‘truth’. SVT pretended to perform an unbiased investigation into disappearances in general, and the disappearance of Marika in particular. *Conspirare*, as already discussed, was a call to action, to help Adrijanna solve the mystery of Maria’s disappearance.

Sub stories: chunky bites to grab

A substantial number of the story elements were scripted in advance. They were ready to be slotted into the main narrative of the game, if participants hooked onto any of them, as the story unfolded and characters were presented. These prewritten story elements would be implemented in an on-the-fly production manner by the production teams.

One such element that participants did hook on to was the side plot of *Kerberos*, the surveillance company formed by ex-cops. It was claimed that this company investigated voluntary disappearances and pursued those who tried to find out more about *Ordo Serpentis*. *Kerberos* opposed the investigations done by Adrijanna and the *Conspirare* team and was very realistically set up, in particular because the company had been used in previous productions. The company had a company logo and a fake website which had been up and running for several years (as it was originally created for the *Prosopopeia* productions; see picture 2:3). Specially instructed players impersonated company guardsmen. They would sometimes appear driving a company van, spotted by participants at different places around Sweden. This same van also featured in the drama series. The *Kerberos* CEO, Patric Leijon, was interviewed by Eva Rados as part of the SVT online investigation, and Leijon also took part in the debate program, to refute the accusations of having kidnapped Adrijanna.



Picture 2:3. The Kerberos webpage says: Kerberos Surveillance Stockholm. Cementing security in the 2nd millennium. A new kind of security is needed for new times. Kerberos Surveillance is Sweden's most ambitious smaller surveillance company. We specialise in more vigilant surveillance and patrol in socially disadvantaged areas all over Sweden. Our trained security consultants offer you optimised security profiles according to the latest American methods. Protecting your borders is our mission.

The accusations were grounded in the fact that Adrijanna disappeared for around seven days during runtime. Evidence had been put forward; someone had uploaded a video snippet exhibiting black hooded men hijacking a screaming woman and then speeding off after throwing her in the boot of a white Dodge van (The *Kerberos* van). During the production runtime the company website was extended with a small intranet, as participants had created a storyline where they infiltrated the company. Participants got into email contact with several *Kerberos* staff members, and on at least two occasions⁶ met guardsmen.

Another side plot was the organisation *Cityinitiativet* (Eng. The City Initiative) that featured in the TV series. This was an NGO that worked on commission for the Gothenburg municipality, offering homeless people shelter, food and support. Their masked agenda was to get rid of individuals trying to live outside the norms of society. Rumours said that the NGO had abused, or removed, several homeless people in Gothenburg. This organisation also had a website (picture 2:4) and two representatives that would respond to email. At one stage in the game, the participants were encouraged to break into one of the storehouses of *Cityinitiativet*, a shipping container in the Gothenburg harbour. They revealed that the organisation lay behind the kidnapping of Adrijannā. But the NGO was not as philanthropic as it appeared: behind it was a highly controversial mandate. Contrary to their official

appearance, they tried to eradicate the homeless. Since the grandmother of Andreas opposed Andreas' and Maria's marriage, the suspicions were that *Cityinitiativet* had made sure to 'take care' of Maria. A representative of the organisation and a Gothenburg politician were invited by SVT and participated in the debate program.

Material from the previous *Prosopopeia* games was used in the story universe too. This included ghost stories with the idea that individuals could be possessed by spirits of the dead. A lot of props like art, texts, and physical objects were used. Some of the props were even handed out to participants. This theme was part of the mystery that was not solved until the very end, when the ghost of Maria's mother Ingela was put to rest with the help of the participants.



Picture 2:4. The home page of Cityinitiativet. The translation of the main text says:

Welcome to the new homepage of Cityinitiativet! Cityinitiativet views humans from a holistic perspective. We create conditions to help step by step, all the way. The aim is to turn homeless people to functioning citizens. Our goal is that every homeless individual will get a home of his/her own and a working social support structure. Our methods are to offer various types of activities such as cafés where people can make new contacts and create encounters in the streets and further integration through different types of housing. With a staircase model we operate all along the track of a social democratic spirit. Our keywords are equity, justice and welfare.

A serious theme: a political message

The production's serious theme dealt with the fact that people actually do disappear without a trace - even in 'safe Sweden' - and with the potential explanations why. The possibility that people actually may choose to disappear, to live a secret life outside a society that they have begun to experience as oppressive was one of the thoughts put forward.

These implicit aspects of ideology, politics and information were communicated in different ways: do not believe everything seen or heard - be critical! Question current society politicians and authorities! Reflect! Do you want to lead this life, or do you want to take part in a new and better society? A consistent theme was connected to each of the five drama episodes like digital surveillance of society, homeless people, and power abuse by authorities. The ambiguity also reflected the protagonists' views in the TV drama: Maria's husband Andreas and his well-mannered life, versus Janna's overt protests towards conventions expressed in her clothing, thoughts and opinions. Several times in my interviews, the P team members stated that they held anarchistic values, that one important aim with the SOM production was to make more people reflect on a malfunctioning society, and that the production could offer a way out of it. The ambiguity would help individuals act 'as if real', as if changes were already there, and hence turn the fiction into actuality. Although P had to keep this ideology to a minimum of manifestations, they never kept it a secret.

2. PRODUCTION PARTS

The multifaceted production contained many components. The most important were the TV drama, the *Conspirare* webpage and the debate programs. The SVT webpage had some importance too, but it was rather static and offered much less interaction than *Conspirare*. The interaction was asynchronous, user-generated material could be uploaded, and some participant contribution was exhibited by the web team.

The TV drama

The TV drama series was called *Sanningen om Marika*. It contained five episodes. Apart from telling the backstory of the game its function in the game was to work as a (main) game entrance, a rabbit hole (McGonigal 2003b). People could accidentally find the game entrance via the URL *conspirare.se* appearing in the first episode. This was only one of many planted game clues. The theme of an upcoming episode was followed up in the game, where each week would offer connected experiences. Each

episode contained hidden, subliminal pictures too, that were clues for the mini-game *Spektaklet*. They could be traced by using a frame-by-frame tool, Klippmaskinen, on the SVT webpage (see below). As agreed, P took part in the editing of each episode during spring 2007. SVT also wished it to work as a standalone TV drama production.

The TV drama was aired on five consecutive Sunday evenings on the public television channel SVT2 at 9:20 PM, starting from October 28th 2007. Each 45-minutes-long sequence was followed by a 15-minute debate show (see below and chapter 5). According to the trailer ⁸, the drama was based on the fact that 6,000 Swedes disappear annually. This contextualisation was confirming its fictional status, and none of the formal aspects such as genre features (a typical conspiracy thriller/mystery series), or the way it was marketed, contradicted this set up.

The drama was watched by 350,000 viewers the first week, but dropped to 210,000 the second week, and decreased to 200,000, 165,000, 170,000 viewers over the last three successive weeks (SVT ratings). SVT aimed to engage 600,000 viewers/episode. According to the SVT production manager the allocated airing time, 9.20 PM on Sundays was a bit ‘difficult’ (the manager had been refused another time slot). Internally it was called ‘the challenge slot’ used for productions that were ‘more experimental’, or where fewer viewers were expected. The *SOM* drama followed the national and regional news that had around 600,000 viewers these five Sundays. The manager hoped to be able to keep or even raise the viewer rate due to the fact that nationally produced drama productions commonly get higher viewer rates compared to international ones as a result of the usage of the mother tongue and cultural focus/content (Küng 2000). At this time the viewer rate of the SVT Play streamed programs was not incorporated in SVT’s viewer statistics⁹. However, *SOM* was rated. In total, the drama, debate and the SVT web editor Eva Rados’ video blogs were watched by around 8,400 people weekly, and in total through out the fall 92,200 people watched streamed *SOM* material. It had a peak during the third episode week; 31,000 viewers. My research shows that 21.6% of the web survey respondents who answered this question watched the drama and debate online twice a week or more¹⁰.

SOM can be compared with another simultaneously produced SVT Väst drama, *Andra Avenyn*¹¹. This was also a low-budget production and addressed a much broader audience¹². The plot dealt with families in the outskirts of a big city and focussed on blackmailing and other crimes, pregnancy, infidelity and illicit relationships, themes that would concern a young audience. Like *SOM*, *Andra Avenyn* was also extraordinary in its audience interactive/multi-platform enterprise; it offered rich built-in audience interaction and functions. During its three seasons some of the 185 episodes were broadcast

online as a web TV series. People could contribute and display individually written stories, watch background material, chat with each other and the characters on the program's website forum, vote for the inclusion of new characteristics, and much much more. It was aired an hour earlier (compared with *SOM*), at 8.00 PM, and had an approximate viewer rate of 600,000 viewers/episode during its first season; fall 2007. 650,000 people weekly viewed it online¹³.

The Conspirare website

The original plan was that the website www.conspirare.se would be a more or less static webpage. It would contain background material about the drama and the game - a source book for old and new participants. Moreover, Adrijanna's older video reports, old threads and theories about Swedish conspiracies would also be placed here. The only interactive feature would be the opportunity to write in Adrijanna's guestbook. This would be Janna's old page and thereafter visitors would be directed to the svt.se page where Adrijanna would collect and put her material. However, all this changed: *Conspirare* became the hub of the game activities and communication platform.

In parallel with the clear -cut TV drama fiction, a second story, the described Real Story with its present-day setting, was played out in public spaces and online. It encouraged the participants to imagine and 'pretend that it was real', and wilfully immerse into the fiction as if it was part of reality rather than engagement in a game. Adrijanna's website *Conspirare* provided the centre for this type of participation. It adhered to the contemporary format of community websites, and comprised a forum, a chat, and a text and video blog. Here Adrijanna reported from her activities, such as when she and Agent Orange talked at the Stockholm Game Convention on 21st September. Adrijanna's personal thoughts about concurrent political events were also interwoven into the in-game information. *Twitter*, at this time not yet widely used in Sweden, was tried out as communication channel. It had around 40-50 users, and was consequently not important for the gameplay. Adrijanna and her crew also sent out 45 emails during the game¹⁴ to participants that had registered on *Conspirare*.

The forum and video blog: a game mastering tool

Several motives lay behind the strategy to craft a forum. First and foremost it constituted a direct tool to steer the game, and participants could be monitored in the chat and in the forum posts and the internal email system. Secondly, it made the game world responsive and dynamic which was important for its authenticity.

The front page (picture 2:5) was dominated by the most recent blog entries, and provided direct reading access to parts of the forum. Participants had to register in order to read the entire forum, to contribute or to participate in the chat.

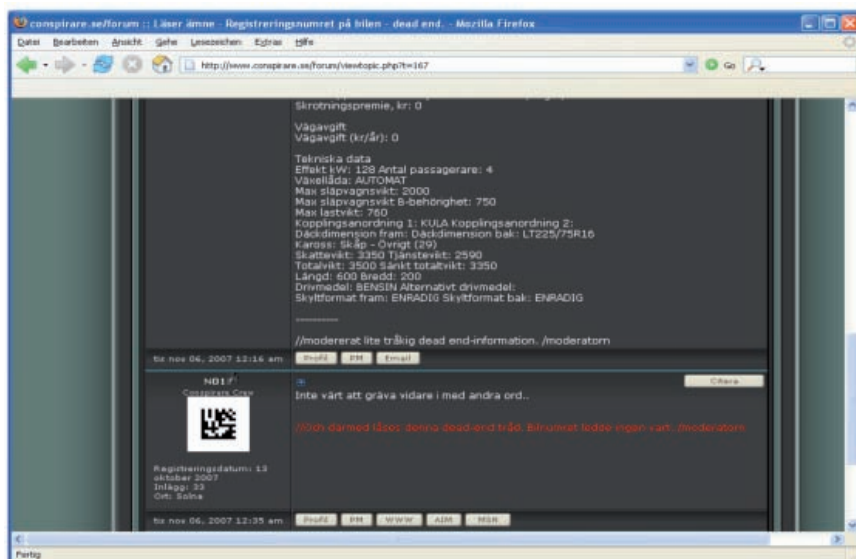
Conspirare was rather different from the genre-typical ARG web presence (Martin, Thompson et al. 2006). ARG community websites are typically maintained by players, rather than by organisers. Produced ARG sites tend to be fake company sites, or pure game sites, rather than real community sites. The international ARG community maintains a set of permanent community websites where they discuss ongoing campaigns and help each other out⁵. On *Conspirare* everything was kept strictly in-game. The serious tone kept on the site, frequent references to real-world historic events, links to participant-created videos and photos on *YouTube* and *Flickr*, links to external authentic websites, all contributed to the impression of authenticity. In classic ARG organisers stay hidden during the game and only pull the strings from behind the scene (McGonigal 2006b). If organisers assume roles, these are non-player characters guiding players and player teams, or providing information. Most of the SOM organisers assumed roles as *Conspirare* members, people who had long known Adrijanna. They were registered members and were entitled *Conspirare* crew, a title any registered community member would automatically obtain, after a certain number of forum postings. Their roles as crew members explained why the organisers had higher privileges, could write blog posts and act as forum editors. Some participants were offered minor function in the game, minimalist role-play (Montola, Stenros et al. 2009). The participant holding the function as a forum administrator (participant B6, see chapter 8) is one example.



Picture 2:5. Screenshot from the *Conspirare* website published on 5th November. Adrijanna appears in the video blog reporting her findings so far. Underneath is a three-lined text saying: *Conspirare.se* has searched for my friend Maria since 2005. She seems to have landed in an organisation called Ordo Serpentis. In the blog you will get my latest thoughts./ Adrijanna.

Organising *Conspirare* as a community website made it the hub of activity . Organisers could easily post important information and keep track of what participants were up to. And participants could keep themselves updated. Being the organisers' instrument of control was an even more function of the site. Accordingly, the site could be kept consistent with the fabricated reality , despite the fact that participants contributed much of the material. The organisers composed all blog entries. The background material was updated almost daily during the most intense game runtime. The video blog featured the protagonists and sometimes other relevant characters. It was shot with simple means; Adrijanna in a street corner in the dim street lamp light at night, Adrijanna together with some *Conspirites* (forum members) searching clues in the forest, and, for example, Agent Orange dreadfully upset when Adrijanna had disappeared.

The forums were heavily moderated. Threads would be closed or deleted if they risked spoiling the game. Singular forum entries were edited if they discussed the game as a game, or provided spoiler information. One such example occurred when a forum participant noted the registration number of the *Kerberos* van, and looked it up in the car registry. He put the data record in a forum post, including the fact that P owned it, the production company where Adrijanna also worked. This information was removed with the comment: 'Moderated some boring dead-end information/The moderator' (picture 2:6). The next discussion entry (from another participant) emphasised that this discussion had gone outside the boundary of the game: 'In other words, not worth digging further into'. After this the moderator locked the thread.



Picture 2:6. The forum post about the van displaying the technical data of the van collected from the national car registry and the dead-end marker in the Conspirare forum.

Argos: an organiser and facilitator

Sometime during the first few weeks of September, a character named Argos started to blog on *Conspirare*. In the beginning Argos, a student librarian, tried to sort out all excess information flooding the website and organise it into threads, as shown in the *Conspirare* front page (picture 2:5 and 2:7). The CEO at P was behind this on-the-fly-invented character that was not part of the original design. Since no one else took on the much needed organiser's role, he created Argos. This was easily done, since the CEO did not play any other character, and was not involved in the implementation per se. With Argos his aim was to structure information, making the site more accessible. Instead of being overwhelmed, newcomers and less involved participants got a chance to track information and grasp what it was all about. Argos's role was modest and more of an anchor to reality/to anchor the fiction to reality (also addressed in chapter 4):

This means that Argos has not been a doubted, only [a] very objective [person]. Gradually he has found evidence for this strong and fantastic reality and then he has reported it objectively, to enhance it. That is why I chose a journalist and student librarian as Argos's persona.

P's CEO, 21 November 2007



Vad kan jag göra?

Tillsammans med Anty och Agent Orange driver jag, Adrijanna, bloggen Conspirare. Jag har också hjälp av Tomb, The Herminator och en ständigt växande skara [anhängare](#) som deltar i sökandet efter Maria. Conspirare har undersökt sanningen sedan 2005. Vi tänker avslöja vad som hänt några av de 20 000 människor som försvunnit spårlost i Sverige sedan 60-talet.

Hur kan jag hjälpa till?

Genom att själv undersöka vad som hänt! Gräv i Conspirares arkiv och se filmklipp för att bilda dig din egen uppfattning om vad som pågår. En bra början är "[Bakgrunden](#)", om sökandet efter Maria. Se filmerna och läs om tidigare undersökningar. Klicka vidare till de [blogginlägg](#) i arkivet som intresserar dig. Gå sedan gärna in på [registrera dig på forumet](#).

Dramaserien Sanningen om Marika är skapad av företaget P och Sveriges television. Adrijannas försvunna kompis heter [Maria](#), men i teveserien kallas hon Marika. Namnet byttes för att skydda hennes identitet. Adrijanna, som startade den här bloggen, har valt att lyfta fram fakta i hopp om att hitta Maria. I tevedramat blandas verklighet och fiktion. På Conspirare undersöker vi sanningen bakom.

Redo att sätta igång? [Hjälp oss undersöka Ordo Serpentis inifrån](#) eller [att bena ut de mysterier vi ännu inte löst!](#)

Picture 2:7 is an example of how Argos organised the information. In the link: 'Vad kan jag göra?' (Eng. What can I do?) Adrijanna instructs visitors about how they can help in the search for Maria. The headline 'Hur kan jag hjälpa till?' (Eng. How can I help?) gives examples of how participants could investigate, dig in archives, educate themselves. They got instructions to start with background, watch the movies, go to blog entries and to register at the forum. The grey square is an example of how *conspirare.se* at all times brought the message to tell the truth. It says: 'The drama series *Sanningen om Marika* is created by The company P and Swedish Television. Adrijanna's disappeared friend is Maria, but in the TV series she is called Marika. Her name has been changed to protect her identity. Adrijanna, who started this blog has chosen to provide facts in hopes of finding Maria. The TV drama mixes reality and fiction. On *Conspirare* we investigate the truth behind the drama'.

According to hit statistics¹⁶ conspirare.se had around in total 47,000 unique viewers. 31.5% read 3 pages or more, 2.69% read 15 pages or more. The average time on site was 5 minutes, 24 seconds. The *Conspirare* forum had 490 members and 2,999 entries. The average time on site was 12 minutes, 51 seconds. The number of unique visitors on the forum was 5,763. The targets for conspirare.se were 60,000 viewers (together with the svt.se page and the debate), and 600 forum members. *YouTube* had 13,188 views of the 37 videos that were part of the production. The number of views ranged between 200 and 2,000 per video. There was no goal set for *YouTube* in advance.

The Conspirare chat: live communication

The real-time online chat carried a significant social and practical function. It is mentioned briefly here and analysed in-depth in chapter 6. Here participants (and game masters) socialised, chatted and ‘hung out’. They planned real-world actions to be performed and discussed how to deal with unconnected clues. They negotiated further steps to be taken in the quest to solve the mystery. Its significant role was also enhanced by the fact that all communication took part in character with no chance to meta-discuss. In this sense the chat had a significant implication of fact-fiction blur. According to the P statistics¹⁷ the chat had 10,000 posts, around 1 million characters (i.e. graphic symbols).

The *Conspirare* chat was not part of the original design; SVT planned to manage the communication with participants online. But as will be explained in detail in chapter 6, P put it up in order to be able to control the players in the street game, instead of letting the players themselves take this responsibility, as is common in ARG.

However, it was not easily controlled, as it required real-time moderation. The organisers worked hard to uphold the 360° illusion in the chat but this did not always work. The problem was particularly great in conjunction with the airing of the first episode of the drama series, where spectators wanted to know what this was all about, and asked a lot of meta-questions. Later the organisers made the chat login details available for registered *Conspirare* members only. On occasions members were banned from the chat discussions.

The fictional nature of *Conspirare* was explicit. A pop up warning message would appear the first time a person visited the site from a particular web browser, and the same warning was issued when a participant registered (see picture 2:8). There was also a persistent link on the website to the Wikipedia explanation on reality games (see also picture 2:12).



Picture 2:8. The pop-up warning message at www.conspirare.se. The full text reads in translation:

Warning: Conspirare is part of a fictional creation.

The opinions expressed here do not always reflect the opinions of P or SVT. Random similarities with real people are sometimes purely coincidental. You participate at your own risk and under your own responsibility. Conspirare has only one rule – pretend that it is real. You participate by following the blog, watching the movie clips, and participating in the forum. The search will lead you out on the Internet and out on the streets of your own city. Click on OK to show that you have understood this.

In all, *Conspirare* created a very ambiguous message. The message in the pop-up, the sign-up contract, and the Wikipedia link, were contradicted by the site content, which was kept strictly in-game. On some occasions, the blog and forum discussions would even explicitly contradict the warning messages. One example of this was when a forum participant asked about the pop-up and what it meant. The forum moderator replied as follows:

In conjunction with the airing of the SVT series we moved Conspirare to the web server at SVT to be able to handle all traffic that was expected to come our way. We were then forced to put in a disclaimer. Disregard it. It has nothing to do with our cause.

Accordingly, compared to the original design, *Conspirare* was changed from a static page to an interactive page that significantly changed its position the game. The (static) blog was planned, but not the forum or the chat. In May the P team had a meeting where they discussed the matter and came to the conclusion that it would be better from a participatory view if P ran the forum (see chapter 6). The question about the chat did not come up until much later. Although the chat was created by P, SVT was the responsible publisher for the entire production and hence the ‘owner’ of the forum. After all, it was a SVT production and P was commissioned to design, implement and manage the street game parts.

The SVT.se/marika website: asynchronous interaction

The original production webpage www.svt.se/bakom_sanningen (Eng. svt.se/behind_the_truth) was to be SVT's interactive production webpage. The name later changed to www.svt.se/marika. By applying the official SVT graphic design the page would overtly communicate the gameness and that SVT was the liable publisher. The original content plan - a 'Player Forum' and a web archive where Janna would update video blogs - changed. It was here that participants would register as users and hold discussions with each other, Adrijanna, the editing staff members, and characters claiming they were the individuals that the series was based on. In their shared search for the truth, the editing staff would follow Adrijanna's actions. Instead this Player Forum was placed at *Conspirare* and became Adrijanna's community forum (*Conspirare* forum). This was the main change at the SVT production webpage. The other original ideas like enabling participants to submit video snippets, photos and sound tracks from the street game using an online tool were implemented. The tool was later called SVT inboxen (Eng. The SVT inbox). The media player function/service, Klippmaskinen (Eng. The Cutting Machine), that would be used to find subliminal pictures hidden in the drama series was implemented too, see text and picture 2:10 below.

The production webpage at svt.se opened in October , around two weeks before the airing of the broadcast parts. During this time promotional clips for the drama and debate were displayed on the webpage and aired in channel SVT2. The website presented the television drama, debate, and actors. The then recently implemented online service, SVT Play , offered on-demand streaming of the TV series. Other features included a video blog, a 'chat', an archive, a forum, an application for uploading user-generated material and a picture quiz tool. The video blog, hosted by the web editor Eva Rados, presented a genuine and serious investigation of the game events carried out by SVT (Picture 2:11 depicts the svt.se/marika frontpage featuring Eva's videoblogs). These video blog entries pursued a storyline complementing that of the *Conspirare* game – where SVT pretended to at first doubt Adrijanna's story, only to become more and more convinced that the story was true, and that Maria really had disappeared. Rados blogged approximately twice a week during runtime. Example entries featured her visits to a police station, explaining about how the police treated relatives' reports about their disappeared family members, or discussed reasons why individuals disappear. Or, when Eva Rados visiting the national registration authority, became informed about how data about deceased or disappeared individuals was treated.

The SVT site offered a ‘chat’ with the editorial staff, ‘Redaktionschatten’ (Eng. Editorial chat). This ‘chat’ feature was moderated, and the communication with participants was selective and asynchronous. Some participants’ sent-in questions were picked out by the web editorial team to appear in the ‘chat’. It resembled frequently asked questions, FAQ (see chapter 3 for a detailed analysis). At night the chat was closed. There was a link to the ordinary SVT forum ¹⁸ were a thread had been created. Here participants were offered to meta-discuss, to allow for meta-discussion while maintaining the sv.se/marika webpage in-game. *Conspirites* could also monitor the SVT team through a live-webcam directed at the team’s office area. This feature was called Redaktionen live (Eng. Editorial office live; picture 2:9).



Picture 2:9 shows the introduction of the video cam: Editorial team live. (Updated every 10th second)

The editorial staff has decided to become guinea pigs of a social psychological experiment. Since surveillance pervades society we let ourselves be monitored and give you access to the material. Do we act differently if we are watched, and how does this affect us?

Subliminala bilder

Subliminala bilder

Från råmaterialet till slutlig klippning har någon manipulerat teveseriens band. Dessutom verkar rekvisita placerats i scenerna utanför SVT:s kontroll. Se [filmen](#) från besöket och bloggposten [Märkliga bilder](#).

SVT har lagt upp en "klippmaskin" på sin sajt, där man kan stega sig igenom varje bildruta i avsnitten. Med den kan vi gå igenom ruta för ruta och söka efter ledtrådar i scenerna och efter de subliminala bilderna som någon planterat i serien. Lite fakta från wikipedia om [subliminal perception](#):

Picture 2:10 overviewing the Cutting Machine and the information about the 'Subliminal pictures' that were hidden in the drama series. The text implies that someone has manipulated the drama and that SVT has created a tool to examine this. This information was presented at Conspirare.

The tracking tool, Klippmaskinen (Eng. The cutting machine) enabled participants to slowly go through the drama episodes, to find the hidden pictures used to solve the picture quiz (addressed further on). The tool for uploading user-generated material, ‘SVT inbox’, was also placed here. Eva Rados urged participants, both in the debate program and in her web blogs, to report clues, findings, and suspicions (see chapter 3). The archive consisted of the uploaded pictures and clues from participants, and the tool for uploading user-generated material. Participants could also phone or email the editorial office. This information was displayed in the debate program (see chapter 5). If a participant registered on the webpage, an SMS or email would turn up when a drama episode was due to start.



Figure 2:11: Screenshot from the SVT website published on 2nd November. The menus at the top direct visitors to the drama series, SVT Play, the blog, archive, forum and to hidden information. Big photo: Eva Rados, the web editor, appears in the video blog. Right of blog picture the visitors are urged to watch the programs on SVT Play using a clickable link. Underneath is a clickable link to the Editorial chat. The small-print top text tells how many months, days, hours, minutes and seconds that are left ...before the truth is uncovered.

The SVT website questioned the trustworthiness of its own content with the main headline: ‘Over 20,000 Swedes have disappeared without a trace since the 60s. Conspiracy theory or alarming truth?’ The gameness of the site was clearly communicated with the sub headline immediately below: ‘There is only one rule: pretend that it is real!’ When visiting the website for the first time, a disclaimer would pop up, explicitly stating that the site was part of a fictional work, and that visitors should only enter the site if they were able to discern facts from fiction. (A similar pop-up window would pop up at the *Conspirare* website, picture 2:8.) The fictional nature of *SOM* was also made clear through a sideline paragraph titled ‘Vad är detta?’ (Eng. What is this? see picture 2:12), explaining that this new form, participation drama, was created together with The company P, and that the entire site was part of a fiction production. Again, there was a link to the Wikipedia entry about reality games⁹. The webpage was continuously updated.



Picture 2:12. The SVT Website: What is this?

Apart from the popup warnings and the header, all of these services were consistent with The True Story and used reality markers that confirmed their authenticity. The webcam displayed the actual authentic office area of the editorial staff.

So, the SVT website function in the game changed drastically in favour of the *Conspirare* site's more interactive/participatory design. The asynchronous svt.se chat and the prototypical design of the svt.se inbox - only smaller files could be uploaded due to legal matters influenced the participants' experiences negatively. The content was not instantly published, but selected, which possibly had an effect on participants' willingness to contribute material to svt.se. Another likely reason was the construction of the story. The SVT web editor and staff were in conflict with Adrijanna and her crew, which made participants more likely to send material to *Conspirare* instead, as well as getting direct feedback on their achievements from other participants and Adrijanna.

The SVT SOM webpage had a rate of 8,300 unique visits weekly and a total of around 46,000 visits during the entire production period. A few weeks in advance of the series it had around 400 visits and climbed up to around 9,000 the first weeks of the episodes. To compare, the program website of *Andra Avenyn* had weekly 140,000 visits of which 80,000 were unique visitors. It must be remembered that the scope and challenges were more extreme for SOM; the production parts were intertwined to form a united entity. The multi-platform approach demanded much of its participants; the story was complicated with many details and clues that had to be solved collectively. As mentioned, the target was 60,000 viewers/visitors for the SVT webpage and the debate, a number the production easily exceeded. The debate alone surpassed 60,000 viewers/week, see next section. The unique visitors at svt.se/marika and *Conspirare* together sum up to 47,000 + 46,000 unique visitors spread over the entire production period. To this can be added the 10,000 posts at the *Conspirare* chat, made by an unknown number of unique chatters.

The current affairs debate program

The current affairs debate program was perhaps the most confusing and intriguing part of the SOM production. It followed from the drama episode, serving as a means to connect it to the game and thus anchor the whole production in reality²⁰. It too contained rabbit holes. As with several other parts of the production it changed names, from *Bakom Sanningen* (Eng. Behind the Truth) to *Debatten om Sanningen om Marika* (Eng. The Debate about the Truth about Marika). This section is a summary of the detailed analysis of the debate which is in chapter 5.

The late March design document described the progression of the narrative and the actors. A serious editorial staff, led by a credible host would examine the truth-value of the drama's claims about the missing people and the alleged official representatives' intrigues. A collective search by the editorial staff, Janna and the participants aimed at deepening the drama. Janna would urge participants to document missions and theories, and SVT would transmit the most spectacular missions in the debate as a way to follow and comment on the adventure. The original idea, to connect drama and game activities through a number of methods supporting audience interaction and participation in the debate program was thoroughly changed. As I will show in chapter 4, these changes created tensions, challenges and negotiation between the two teams. The SVT director used his artistic creativity and individual influence and decision on the form of the program, to craft a 'quality' product according to common broadcast production demands (Küng-Shankleman 2000). The result was a novel product, merging a fiction story into a factual programming format, however it was without any chance for viewers to interact live in the program or be displayed on the screen.

The debate was recorded a day ahead of transmission, although advertised as a live debate ²¹. It was pre-scripted and carefully fabricated: the guests were meticulously instructed hours before the recording. It was authentically staged: some real life officials were recruited to play themselves in their official and professional roles. The host, John Carlsson, also acting as himself², was a well-known television personality. Some of the invited studio guests, who discussed the issue at hand were professional actors hired by SVT. Others were P crew members. The debate program was kept entirely within the *The True Story*: everybody talked about Maria as if she existed. The result was a fairly realistic current affairs debate program. Each show addressed a realistic theme, which centred on – supposedly for real – Maria and covered societal issues like social exclusion, surveillance in public spaces, police work, and conspiracy theories and much more.

According to SVT's ratings, the debate was watched by 240,000 viewers the first week, dropped down to 210,000 the second week, and decreased to 135,000, 120,000, 105,000 viewers over the last three weeks easily exceeding the target of 60,000 viewers per episode.

The game activities

The SOM production contained a collection of more or less game-structured experiences. This section develops these activities: the street game *Ordo Serpentis*, the picture game *Spektaklet*, the *Entropia Universe* parts, and all the pre-game activities that promoted it.

The (street) game activities started in July of 2007, far ahead of airing of the drama series. They engaged a group of participants that slowly grew with the initial viral marketing activities. The more intense parts ran in parallel with the TV series, and directly influenced the content of the debate. The game ended simultaneously as the TV series, at the end of November. The game involved the participants in a dramatic story with experiences such as treasure hunts, meet-ups with other participants, being chased by an evil guard company, and receiving strange missions from a mysterious secret society. Participants could find an email from Adrijanna in their inboxes, a handwritten note on their entrance doors, or a text message from Agent Orange on their mobile phones.

The participants' tasks were to gather information on Maria and her past, trace her whereabouts, and find out the reason for her disappearance. Traces of Maria were spread on all the different platforms, the wide range of media contributing in itself to infuse realism. Although the drama itself could not change, participants were able to affect the outcome of the story as a whole. If you accepted the (undistinguishable) blur between what was real and what was not, you would be offered immersive play in the ordinary, with real/physical people and in real/physical locations.

For the producers it was a major design challenge to encourage players to take part in game activities in the physical world. *Conspirare* was used to invite to and organise larger events gathering many participants. They were advertised on the blog, and visible for any webpage visitor. Examples include a gathering at Café Hångmattan in Stockholm, where participants spotted the *Kerberos* van passing in the street, and the demonstration outside the SVT building in Gothenburg, which was filmed by the debate program crew. On this (final game event) evening, that was aired, Andreas visited the debate show where spectators/participants witnessed his reunion with Maria. These events were well attended, and thoroughly documented at *Conspirare*. On two occasions, SVT also sent a film team to document participant activities to later air them in the debate programs (see chapter 4).

Ordo Serpentis the street game

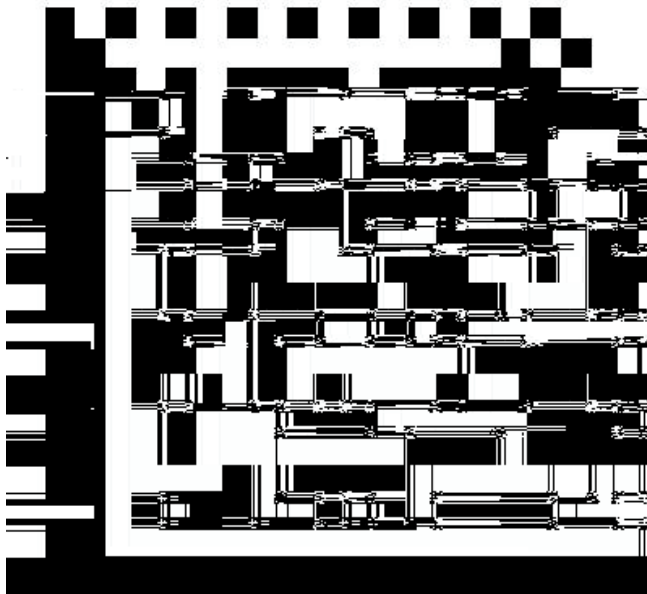
However, most of the physical world activities were organised through a separate website *Ordo Serpentis*, a secret organisation that only manifested online. *Ordo Serpentis'* original name was *Det Osynliga Templet* (Eng. The Invisible Temple). The organisation communicated with the surrounding world via matrices, Semacon codes²³ (see picture 2:13). The participants were encouraged to enlist in the society with the purpose to track Maria (who was believed to have joined the organisation) and were invited to carry out various missions in the physical world.

There was one mission each week during the airing of the drama. Gradually the missions would become more serious, and urge the involvement of passers-by. In order to rise in rank within the society participants had to perform corporeally enacted missions in public spaces, in streets, abandoned places in the outskirts of towns or forest areas throughout Sweden. The ranking system would create a feeling of succession, or levelling, in the game. It would become a method to make experienced players undertake challenging missions, and a reward system that would foster engagement and participation. The easiest and most simple mission would be to put up a matrix on either a peaceful, positive, chaotic, sterile, good or evil place, and then keep an eye on it every week, in case it would be ripped down. And if so, the participants would be urged to report this and put up a new one. Originally rituals would be performed at the matrix place; simple symbolic acts, like holding a rose, or lily, in front of the matrix, or reciting a poem. There were more time-consuming and difficult tasks, like finding and marking out a physical hiding place and hide a survival kit for that individual participant's future disappearance. This particular quest was part of the BortAB mission (see chapter 8).

The gameplay was designed to be carried out in cells of 2-4 people but a cell could consist of only one player too. The producers' reason for this was to enable the game to be played even if you could not find other players. This enabled cells outside cities and in the countryside. In addition, a cell only needed one mobile phone to conduct the missions. Nonetheless, it was easier to perform them in groups of two or more. Participants would understand that they were gaming, but the mysterious mode would create an expression of realism; being a member of a real secret society. 'De Hemliga Mästarna' (Eng. The secret wizards) was planned to become the deepest dimension of game participation (see chapter 1). The goal was to create content and a large number of game experiences, for the larger player crowd. These wizards would, as mentioned already, initially be recruited from the former participants of the *Prosopopeia* games and other active ARGers and larpers, but any player showing exceptional engagement could be taken up in the wizard crew. The presence of these role-playing wizards would unburden the P game masters both at the forum and through their creation of new missions. Moreover, for the participants only participating lightly, an engaged and immersed team of wizards would make a big difference.

Ordo Serpentis was an attempt to create automatic, and self-organised, play²⁴. This part - to move participants into the streets - was also technology-supported. The participants were encouraged to download and install a mobile phone application called *Urim*. It enabled them to read and decode two-dimensional bar codes, the previously mentioned 'matrices' (picture 2:13), with their mobile phone cameras. These barcodes were used to mark locations in public spaces, that other participants

could be instructed to find and use in their missions. All instructions were placed at the *Ordo Serpentis* webpage, *Thummin*, where cell members could keep track on their missions.



Picture 2:13. A matrix.

You got instructions at *Conspirare* on how to download the mobile application *Urim*. When a matrix was read (shot) with the mobile camera, the photo, now holding the phone's geographical position and looks of the matrix, was sent to *Thummin*, one of *Ordo Serpentis*'s webpages. Instantly a new instruction or a clue would automatically be sent back as an SMS.

A matrix consisted of a number of 18 x 18 squares holding a ciphered message, that the game masters programmed using the Enochian alphabet's mathematical system. According to P's creative director it worked excellently as a base for games structures.

Participants would upload documentation of completed missions (video and photos) to *Flickr* and *YouTube*. After reporting their mission, the cell would get feedback from *Ordo Serpentis*. Each new level was unlocked to match the pacing and content of the drama. Game masters re-used some of the material in the *Conspirare* blog. Participants could also submit their documentation to svt.se/marika, which published some of it on their website (the archive), and some in the debate program. This way the matrices were spread geographically all over Sweden, where engaged participants lived and played. Some critical matrices that had to be 'found' at a particular 'place' were planted by the game masters or by specially instructed players.

The *Ordo Serpentis* web application included a log of messages and missions from the masters of the organisation. There was a cell overview page with data matrix nodes from completed missions marked on a map, a list of current and completed missions, a settings page with group invitation features, and a geographical map of Sweden where the matrix nodes of other cells could be found²⁵.

However, the game faced severe problems. After two weeks of gameplay it had not reached the expected number of participants designed for²⁶ and it was the participants (and their activities) were not in sync with each other. Some were far ahead of others. These slower players suddenly got information from other channels ‘outside’ the *Ordo Serpentis* game; information was accessible on *Conspirare*. They still had to perform tasks that they already knew the significance of, just to catch up. The whole player collective was upgraded the third week. Thereafter the game masters upgraded each group weekly, more or less regardless of whether they had performed their missions and reports or not. This caused some frustration among players, as a general degradation of the importance of the game was exhibited by the game management.

Ordo Serpentis was not designed to be ambiguous. As its purpose was to inspire real-world activity, it was important that the participants understood that they were, in fact, gaming. Where *Conspirare* appeared as an authentic community site, the *Ordo Serpentis* site followed no established website genre. The site used very similar pop-up windows as *Conspirare* to declare its fictional mode. The real-world activities were semi-automatic, and the invisibility of the secret organisation was (at least for seasoned ARG players) easily attributed to the traditional invisibility of the ARG puppet masters. In theory, all of these were strong fictional markers, with little to contradict the sense of fabrication. In reality, this seemed to have been obvious to only a few participants, perhaps primarily due to the fact that only a small number of cells actually carried out more than a few *Ordo Serpentis* missions. Still, *Ordo Serpentis* managed to contribute to the sense of reality through its missions. These encouraged the participants to go slightly out of their ordinary lives, to do things they would not normally do, or go to places that they would not normally visit²⁷. Players documented these activities through video clips²⁸ and photos that sometimes would be published in the *Conspirare* blog. The missions contributed to the richness and realism of the entire production. The plot and storylines were to a certain extent held open, so that participants could initiate and influence the story through online (and offline) larping. Player groups created online meeting places/wikis where the particular cell collected material and clues and ran their own chat²⁹.

According to the statistics³⁰ *Ordo Serpentis* had 751 participants, which can be compared with the goal of 600. The number of cells was 335. The *Ordo Serpentis* page had 9,186 unique viewers with a daily number of 57 visitors. The goal was 6,000 visitors. The number of sent-in reports, only 50, indicates the low number of players, or at least reported missions. Thus, the game was viewed as a failure and the producers were disappointed at the fact. There was no targeted number of expected missions, but since much effort had been put on crafting the game the designers expected the cells to complete

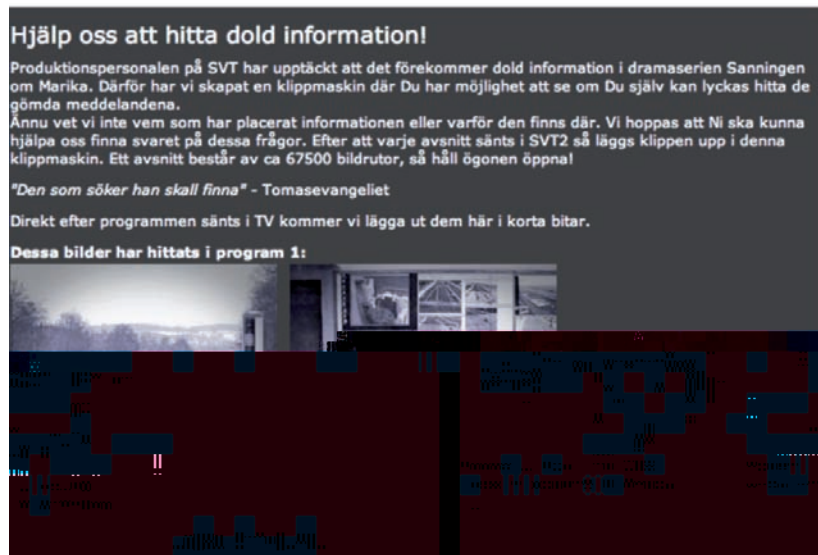
their missions and level up. Had the game worked the number of missions could possibly have reached circa 1,000 missions, counted on an estimated 300 cells with around 3-5 completed missions per cell. However, this is only a speculation.

Spektaklet and Klippmaskinen

The treatment mentioned a puzzle-solving quest, that was later named *Spektaklet* (Eng. The Spectacle). Subliminal pictures would be embedded in the TV drama, which in turn would form puzzles. When solved the riddles would work as keys, directing players to another webpage, *Spektaklet*, that exhibited a cryptic message which would turn out to be an invitation to *Ordo Serpentis*. *Spektaklet* and the subliminal messages had a side story based on the fact that an old friend of the missing Maria's mother Ingela worked as an editor at SVT . He put in hidden 'subliminal messages' in the drama episodes. The reward for completing the puzzle was access to historical material from Ingela's life, which gave participants further insight into the possible reasons for Maria's disappearance, and further enriched her background story. As mentioned, SVT had constructed a special tool available on their website, Klippmaskinen, that allowed audiences to watch of the entire TV series, step by step, and discover the concealed messages. The riddles could be solved by a single player, or collectively on the forum. The purpose was to offer television viewers a light-weight form of involvement through online puzzle-solving, as an option to the more demanding *Ordo Serpentis* physical play and the engagement in *Conspirare*. However, in reality the active participants were the ones that solved the riddles. The picture puzzles were connected to historical political events. Examples of the historical material from Ingela's life which were received when solving a riddle included pdf files of fabricated police questioning protocols from the 70s, diary notes and art.



Picture 2:14 features one of the images in the picture quiz. This one features Olof Palme's head. Palme, former prime minister of Sweden, was murdered under peculiar circumstances 1986. The murder is still unsolved and has since been the focus of many conspiracy theories.



Picture 2:15 features the instructions from the editorial staff at svt.se: 'Help us find hidden information!' including a quote from the Bible: 'The one that searches will find - The Thomas Evangeliet'. Two of the found images from the 1st drama episode are displayed here.

Entropia Universe

Early on there was an idea to use SVT's contacts with MindArk, the owners of the virtual world *Entropia Universe*, to integrate parts of SOM into *Entropia*. The purpose was to attract online gamers and offer an alternative for participants less interested in larping and physical play in the streets. Mindark agreed on P crafting and implementing a number of specially-built activities/quests in the world³¹ and players would be able to download *Entropia* for free. An apartment for Adrijanna was built and a campsite with tents and campfires for Dom Andra, where participants were gathered to meet Adrijanna. As such it was an unusual design strategy, since few pervasive game employ any persistent three-dimensional virtual world (Montola, Stenros et al. 2009).

In the first episode of the drama, viewers could watch Janna play in *Entropia Universe*, represented by the avatar Adrijanna. The story behind Adrijanna's appearance in *Entropia* was that she knew that Maria used to spend a lot of time there. Adrijanna had now found traces (matrices) of *Ordo Serpentis* in *Entropia*. Therefore she started hunting down the organisation in *Entropia*, urging both *Conspirites* and *Entropians* to help her. Soon they found out that Adrijanna was chased by some *Kerberos* ex-cops and participants had to take action to save and hide her. P quickly had some *Conspirare* information translated into English, the language used in *Entropia*, to be able to gather players internationally. The reactions from *Entropia* players, when finding out more about SOM, were that they did not want to follow the hunt into the streets, their interest were in the online world³².



Picture 2:16. A matrix in Entropia Universe.

The post event discussion in Entropia dealt with language difficulties, the unwillingness to follow the events outside Entropia, and that the SOM activities in Entropia in many respects were fun: Here a chat between two players:

Player A: I think MA [Mind Ark] forgot that their customer base is international. While a tie-in to some TV show is an interesting concept the sad fact is that unless it's some kind of world-wide blockbuster nobody will know what the fuck is going on!

Player B: And yeah. Since most of you seem to have got it wrong. The ARG was not a part of the TV drama, it was the drama that was part of the Arg.(:

Marketing activities: the pre-game launch

Viral marketing is commonly used to start off an ARG and this was also the model to kick off n(



YouTube link). A press conference was held in Stockholm 25th September. This occasion needs to be commented on, since the presentations, and the team members' answers to journalists' questions after the presentation, were ambiguous. SVT stuck to what they and P had agreed on - to meta-talk about *SOM* as fiction - but the P CEO changed his mind. He talked as if everything was based on a true disappearance³⁷. This befuddled at least one of the journalists. She came forward and asked, among other things, about Maria's parents' opinions. She later wrote a critical article on the tabloid's website, after viewing the first episode³⁸. She, as well as many other journalists that more or less copied the press announcement sent out from TT³⁹, did not perceive the twist on reality that an ARG offers. Most of the articles did not view the production positively, some were even very critical. A common criticism was that they could not figure fact from fiction. They found this disturbing, especially considering that SVT was involved. A few journalists were positive. They understood that it was an ARG, presumably because they had previous knowledge about the genre. One journalist, bringing up traditions like live action role-playing and Augusto Boal's Theatre for the Oppressed⁴⁰, wrote:

Sanningen om Marika is an SVT drama production. But not only that. For some reasons, Swedish cultural news departments have missed that after airing of the last program tomorrow television history may have been created. [...] It is close to professional misconduct that they have almost not written a single line [about the production].

Smålandsposten 24th November

'Journalists do not write about things they do not understand'⁴¹, the SVT media officer explained the poor media coverage⁴². It was a disappointment for the teams. Media buzz was expected to become an important viral machine to get the required snowball effect for the game. Several meetings and small talks focussed on possible methods to communicate and influence the media agencies to cover the enterprise.

Another disappointment was the anticipated cooperation with friends and allies. It never happened, due to different kinds of difficulties (with SVT). Financing was one issue that could not be solved and the other was that SVT did not agree on mentioning these collaborators in the credits of the drama. The SVT production manager even had to work hard internally to get to mention The company P as a coproducer/collaborator in the credits of the drama and the debate programs.

3. SUMMARY

In many respects *SOM* was a novel production, even compared to many other game/ARG productions, where a television part has been combined with game activities, and even without including the larp activities. In *SOM*, the parts were integrated from the start: not only would online and street game activities expand the TV story, but the TV part had been created as a backdrop of the game story world. With respect to the somewhat narrow audience/user segment SVT and P aimed at, their quantitative goals added together were partly reached, especially regarding the online production parts and the debate viewer statistics. The lower television drama viewer rates were probably the result of the drama being originally written by a professional games developer and larp writer. He was including the design specifications of the games design too. A game universe has to give room for different kinds of participant experiences and differs from a television production in that a television drama normally uses realistic plots, low ambiguity factors and usage of ideal norms that people do not object to (Altheide and Snow 1979). This is not necessary for games that on the contrary are crafted to become a rich story world in which the players may have different experiences related to the game's ergodic features (Aarseth 1997). We will come back to this in the following chapters. The producer-consumer agreement that generally rules television producers and help viewers select shows of their interest was unclear, as is unavoidable with novel and hybrid productions. Both the TV drama and the game activities suffered from lack of this contract because it is important for games too that the players are familiar with the games genre, which was not really the case here. Some of the thematics in the drama might have been a bit too unrealistic, like the supernatural content and going outside the norms of society. The SVT production manager had cut out many of the details and sub stories, but it might not have been enough. The ambiguities and spaces to be filled in by viewers might have been too excessive.

In this chapter I have shown two features or design ideals that became central. One was the ideal to create a complete and authentic (game) story universe. The other was the political agenda behind the staging of the game rule 'pretend that it is real' that led to the absence of a meta-discussion of the game, within the game. The implications of these design ideals will be dealt with in more detail in the following chapters.

An illusionary reality: the joy and magic of an authentic game world

As the previous chapter described, the company P drew on the ideals from the Nordic larp community and its strong desire to create a complete and authentic story world. Larp in a staged but authentic

world is usually far from the larpers' ordinary lives. Entering a fantasy village, or a society of vampires, that is so authentic that the amount of pretence needed is minimised, creates joy and magic. An ARG on the contrary, emanates from the use of reality as a playground. In contrast, it requires the creation of a fictional world, which is merged into people's everyday lives with as little change as possible, but still with content or information that 'winks' at the participants revealing its gameness.

As a consequence, for the P producers, *SOM* carried the idea of a fictional but authentic version of Sweden. This included the fabricated but fully authentic accounts of why disappearances occur and where individuals who disappear go. This was not new for the P team as such. The new thing was that now they had a PSB as a collaborating games designer. P had managed to convince SVT that people would experience magic, and be willing to engage heavily with the story universe. In all manner of participatory activities, a True Story could be created in a world that felt almost real, so authentic that participants were not always sure where the story ended or had begun⁴³. The practical implication of applying the Nordic larp design ideal was to integrate a game world as seamlessly as possible with the real world. If this failed, the illusion of the world would be disrupted, as with the forum post about the *Kerberos* van case discussed above. To talk about the game as a game/on a meta level would ruin the believability of a game master's character. This design ideal created a number of requirements for the design of the game management, like the fact that the game masters' activities should be hidden, that their tools should not be visible either, and that no off-game parts of the game design should be visible to players.

A lesson to be learned: reality is not always reality

Apart from creating an extremely believable and immersive game world for participants there was another aim, as important as the first one, and also interlinked with it - the political ideological aims of particularly P, but also for SVT, although with a lesser intensity. The creation of a believable game world was built on the notion of communicating that it was a game, but to craft or stage it so authentically as to make the participant (wonder of how little s/he has to pretend to) feel as if it is real. Thus, the reason for this was not to fool participants that the game world was the same as reality. If the game world was experienced as realistic to participants, and make them unsure of where the game started or ended, then this would make them more aware of the authenticity of so called 'real events' and that these could actually have been constructed by someone in control that perhaps had a questionable agenda'⁴⁴. At least this was what the producers hoped for. This was the conspiracy thematic in the game; by merging facts into the story, it would make participants query everything and anything,

especially if parts they thought were created for the game turned out to be true. These two underlying agendas or design ideals had large influence on the design of the game.

Notes

1 The definition of coaction is the act of working jointly i.e. ' they worked either in collaboration or independently' (Visual Thesaurus).

2 This was part of the viral marketing of the game, called Upptakten (Eng. The Upbeat).

3 Maria brought a DVD, a recording of why she had disappeared. It was aired in the end of the debate program.

4 Nordgren, A (unpublished work) Tools for Runtime Game Mastering of Large-Scale Persistent Games. Stories and Lessons from The Truth of Marika.

5 According to Montola, Stenros et al. (2009:122) players may have difficulties discerning the deliberate planned game content from coincidental events in the real world when games are taken to the real world and blurring the line between life and game.

6 One was the meeting with participant B8 in Southern Sweden, a player that aimed at infiltrating the organisation by trying to utilise the surveillance services or another player, B5, that tried to become employed, see chapter 8.

7 After some time it appeared that the grandmother of Andreas (Maria's husband) was among the top management in Cityinitiativet. She was also a top administrator in the social democratic party organisation.

8 Sanningen om Marika - trailer: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0lXSJAalw8c>, accessed 6th December 2010.

9 Regular measuring of streamed viewing begun 1st January 2009. At that time SVT viewed that it had become an established activity. Interview M Sterner, SVT Analyst, 6th February 2011.

10 Today, beginning of 2011, a streamed viewing rate of 10% is considered very high. Interview M Sterner, SVT Analyst, 6th February 2011.

11 Andra Avenyn was a drama series that started concurrently with the airing of SOM, during fall 2007. Peter Emanuel Falck and Christian Wikander (the SVT Väst Drama Manager and also the SOM Responsible Publisher) wrote the series.

12 Interview with SVT Production manager, December.

13 Email conversation, Hans G. Andersson, Concept manager SVTi, 8th February 2011.

14 The first email was dated 24th September 2007 and the last on 27th November. They were all in-game communication. Another three emails in December concerned props and the web survey; they were off-game communication. The second last one was posted on 15th April 2008 concerning the Conspirare webpage; a kind of goodbye message signed by Adrijanna and Maria. It contained a link to a YouTube snippet about the matrices at the Arvika festival; that Adrijanna visited on her Sweden tour 2007: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jj8THnxcHus>, accessed 5th May

2010. The last one was dated 12th February 2009 and was a (viral) promotion letter about a new ARG production.
- 15 Examples can be found at <http://www.argn.com/>.
- 16 Sandberg, C. (unpublished work) Truly a lot of lies.
- 17 Sandberg, C. (unpublished work) Truly a lot of lies.
- 18 This forum was part of the main SVT forum site where television viewers could discuss SVT programs and content. This construction would supply participants with a place to meta-discuss the game. The forum had very few visitors/discussants, to the SVT production managers' disappointment.
- 19 <http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verklighetsspel>, accessed 5th August 2008. This link and the What-is-this? Text (picture 2:12) was posted after a few weeks due to the many questions posted by viewers.
- 20 Phone interview P CEO, 13th November.
- 21 John Carlsson promotes the debate, SVT: Sanningen om Marika - spelet har börjat: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AmTl16qXukM&feature=related>, accessed 6th December 2010.
- 22 Interview SVT program host, 17th October.
- 23 P had permission to use the matrices from the owner of the mobile technology behind the matrices, Semacon.
- 24 The treatment, page 118.
- 25 Nordgren, A (unpublished work) Tools for Runtime Game Mastering of Large-Scale Pervasive Games. Stories and Lessons from The Truth of Marika.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Participant in post-game interviews, December. See chapter 8.
- 28 See for example: Rädda Adrijanna/Save Adrijanna, by TombConspirare, accessed 17th November 2007 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NEDGV5gUuk&feature=related>, accessed 5th November 2008.
- 29 Participant in-depth interviews, December.
- 30 Sandberg, C. (unpublished work) Truly a lot of lies.
- 31 From Entropia design document, dated 28th August.
- 32 According to Entropia discussion forum threads.
- 33 Document called Syfte med PR-kampanjen, dated 21st March.
- 34 Designspecification. Deltagardramat Sanningen om Marika.
- 35 Marketing document: marknadsföring.rtf, dated 6th June.
- 36 Interview television journalist, 17th December and interview SVT Media Manager, 16th November.
- 37 Participant observation.
- 38 News article, Aftonbladet (2007): V erklighet eller fiktion? <http://www.aftonbladet.se/nojesbladet/tv/article1219485.ab>, published 11th November.
- 39 Tidningarnas Telegrambyrå AB, abbreviated TT, is a Swedish news agency covering news from Sweden and the whole world. News is sold to media companies. TT is owned by the main Swedish newspapers and biggest media

companies, <http://www.tt.se>.

40 Theatre of the Oppressed is a term coined by the theatre practitioner Augusto Boal. With these theatre techniques the spectators would become active and explore, analyse and transform the reality in which they were living.

41 It is interesting to note that a cultural/television journalist that was very critical of the enterprise in November 2007, and did not at all grasp the gameness, had an opposite reaction to SVT and P's planned production. 4th February 2008 the same journalist writes about the second participation drama as a 'reality game', and that a previous production gave SVT an iEmmy Award for best interactive television production and a reputation as 'driving in experimental formats'.

42 Interview SVT employee responsible for press, 16th November.

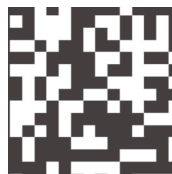
43 Nordgren, A (unpublished work) Tools for Runtime Game Mastering of Large-Scale Pervasive Games. Stories and Lessons from The Truth of Marika.

44 Nordgren, A (unpublished work) Tools for Runtime Game Mastering of Large-Scale Pervasive Games. Stories and Lessons from The Truth of Marika.

ANALYSIS PART TWO:

THE PRODUCTION PROCESS

The two following chapters deal with the two companies' differing cultures of production. Their work and production processes are described and the medium specific differences that lie in television and games products exhibited. The many tensions and frictions that emerged from being so completely opposed in cultures and production processes are depicted.



CHAPTER 3

JOINING FORCES: THE IMPACT OF CULTURES OF PRODUCTION

Prerequisites for a strong production enriched by participants therefore require that the parts interoperate. The television series shall inspire and entertain, with the goal to raise engagement. SVTse shall respond to the engagement and instruct visitors of how to participate. Online gaming and street gaming shall support participants and create a pervasive experience, which in turn creates content for the rest of the production (in the shape of the video reports to the SVT inbox).

Design Specification. Sanningen om Marika: 05

During my fieldwork I became aware of a number of differences between the teams concerning their work/professional practices. I decided to take a closer look and analyse these work processes/practices and their results (the implemented production parts). I found that the supposedly unanimous production outcome for these co-workers differed. The view of the audience and the way it was treated, how participation was designed and conducted also differed. The first section deals with the teams' internal delegation and organisation of work and the division between the teams. My observations of the teams' differences follow. Their opposing approaches to the tasks are illustrated with screen dumps from the production websites. Other empirical material includes interviews, photos and field notes.

My accounts and findings are built on my first-hand participatory observation of daily work, meetings, small-talk, discussions and interviews. During the last stage of the production process, when the TV series and debates were aired and the game activities were running, I also followed the participatory parts: the unfolding of the story in the online spaces and participatory observations of the street game events.

1. PRODUCTION PROCESS

Division of labour

In chapter 1 I addressed the two companies and their history. P emanated from a group of very engaged individuals, members of the Nordic larp subculture. A few were well-known larp producers. SVT plays an important role as the oldest and largest Swedish PSB and has annually been rated as one of the top five trustworthy institutions in Sweden¹ in the last few years. The teams initial workshops had

resulted in a division of labour where each company's particular speciality, skills and ideas would be utilised and merged. There was a rough plan formulating this work division: SVT would produce the broadcast parts - the drama and the debate - and P the game activities - the street game, the picture puzzle and the *Entropia* activities. SVT would set up the web editorial team and craft the necessary web applications and manage the interaction with participants. However, this would change several times.

SVT was the legally responsible publisher, and the main producer. SVT produced the drama series, studio debates, trailers and other marketing activities. The team was staffed to produce the SOM program webpage and a web editorial team that worked with and implemented the interactive components. P was subcontracted to design and produce the game parts. This included managing the game (game mastering) and managing of interactive actors (ractors²). P prepared and staged the real life installations, crafted and implemented the online puzzles. P also produced props, sounds, choreography and subliminal images for the key scenes of the drama series. The contract included editing the scripts for the series and the debate. In a joint research venture with the Swedish Institute of Computer Science and The Interactive Institute, P developed the technology platform that enabled participation on all available media - websites, forum, chat, mobile application, game - and the orchestration of the larp parts³. Two groups of participants also served as volunteer game masters, one in the Stockholm area, and the other in Gothenburg. The groups were called Kindergarten strike team and Göteborg strike team⁴. During game mastering they planted clues and props and drove the *Kerberos* van (pictures 3:3 and 3:4). They consisted of seasoned larpers and were specially instructed players, 'SISad spelare'. Some of them had taken part in the *Prosopopeia* games, and had a strong background knowledge of the (*Prosopopeia*) story universe that the SOM production was part of (see picture 3:1 for the P producers' political aspirations). Some of these players came to the work meetings at P collected props or just popped in after their ordinary jobs to have a chat. They followed the game partly from 'behind the curtain'.



Picture 3:1. Each of the Ordo Serpentis missions carried a political message. This one communicates the need to rethink social conventions; why work, why earn money etc. The text says:

It is back to front thinking.

It is upside down thinking.

It is CRIMETHINK.

And that is exactly what our time needs.

Their daily work

The two teams cooperated primarily through weekly phone meetings, and with online forum dialogues on a project web portal that was set up initially. The SVT production manager and the SVT web editor, the P producer, the P CEO and the P artistic/creative director held the meetings. Sometimes other staff members were present. Due to the geographical distance between the teams (circa 400 kms), only a small number of physical meetings were held in Stockholm and Gothenburg. The same team members attended these meetings, and other staff members were included when needed⁵. The original aim to merge the teams on one spot, during the intense phase of the production, was never realised. The online web portal was used in the early phase of the project (during spring) but due to technical problems the teams gradually stopped using it and relied on phone calls and emails.

The teams differed not only in their physical environment, size and history, but in their societal, institutional and organisational contexts as well. According to the contextual differences - a national PSB and a newly started games company with roots in non-profit productions - their goals differed. This was acknowledged by both parties, and created a strong motivation to understand each other's cultures and languages⁶. These were the focus for many meetings, especially in the beginning of the design and production process. At P the features of non-profit production culture were strong (Svahn, Kullgard et al. 2006), as was the culture of a games developer; a democratic and anti-bureaucratic way of doing things (Kline, Dyer-Witthford et al. 2003). Everybody was expected to be engaged and able to work long hours constructively and creatively, whenever needed, especially at 'crunchtime'. This clashed with the more hierarchical and bureaucratic production culture of a broadcaster like SVT, where many departments are involved in the same production and where the staff have regulated working hours. The game culture of larping, where there are expectations that your own engagement and work will result in getting game experiences back from fellow participants, was evident in the way *SOM* was managed; especially concerning the game mastering. The head game master/creative director conducted his game mastering tasks to gain experience and immersion in it, both for him, and for the rest of the game mastering crew.

Some of the reasons why the teams could work together, despite coming from such different production cultures, probably lay in their similar personal engagement in their work. Studies among media workers show that creative work is experienced as an expression of self (Deuze 2007). Due to the dynamic and informal nature of employment and projects in broadcasting, and the limited life of most businesses in the field, the defining characteristics of a culture of work are even harder to arti-

culate than elsewhere in the media. There was also a similarity in the dynamic and informal nature of their project-based employment. A very personal and informal work jargon was built up between the teams, where disagreements and misunderstandings were taken up quickly, fairly, and openly, although there were tensions (chapter 4 will go into detail and describe the collaboration). According to Deuze (ibid.) the crucial point towards understanding the way television industries work is through informal, personal, and social networks and relationships, blurring the lines between the private and the professional. The informality of the labour market is not only a prerequisite in order to succeed; it is in fact privileged and favoured by people in the industry, to succeed in the creative process.

Opposing cultures

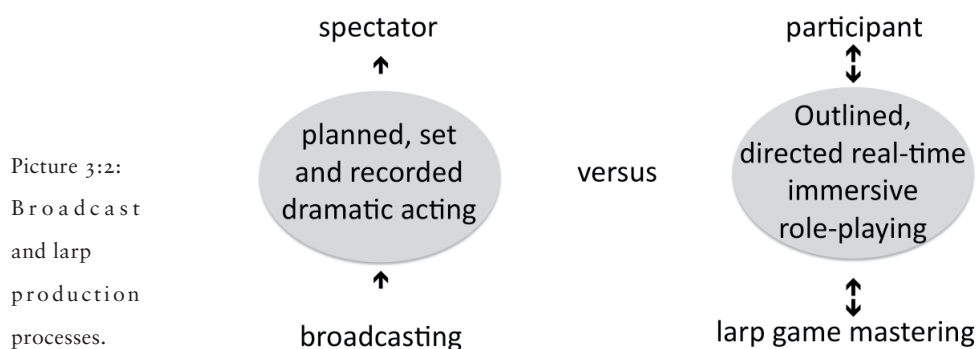
In many respects the production was uncontroversial for SVT and followed ordinary broadcast production processes. The (SVT) production was divided into several parts and teams, depending on the type of content to be produced. However, in some respects it was very unusual and unique⁷. Professionals from different departments worked tightly together, and high-level managers took part in the spontaneous decision-making usually carried out at lower levels⁸.

Compared with SVT, the production process at P looked very different. The team modified a software development method⁹ promoting (work load) iterations throughout the life cycle of the production to conduct the design and implementation process of the game. This worked satisfactorily throughout the entire process, although during ‘crunchtime’ some game features had to be cut out to manage crafting the most crucial ones. Every week the team had follow-up planning meetings, and during the intense runtime period from mid-October to end of November, the meetings were almost daily. There was internal consensus of the design document as a dynamic piece, and numerous iterations and game test were made along the design process.

The cultures of media workers have been frequently investigated (Küng-Shankelman 2000; McQuail 2005; Deuze 2007; Deuze 2011). It is widely assumed that the social background and outlook of those responsible for media production will influence the content of their media products. The SVT key team members were experienced broadcast professionals, but with little or no knowledge of role-playing games¹⁰. For the P team the opposite applied; they had very little knowledge of television production. It is also a common concept that amongst audiences, the personality and values of the author will give the work its primary meaning, despite being processed in a media industry (McQuail 2005). This explains the production’s strong traces of Nordic larp design principles since the creative

director at P was employed to write the treatment (chapter 1).

The production processes of television programming and role-playing games differ extensively, both technically and practically. Picture 3:2 illustrates the differences in the main work processes. A broadcaster operates in terms of a one-way communication process and creates a show that is then transmitted to an audience (Lowe and Bardoel 2007). The (mass) audience is typically seen as a ‘target’, spectators with limited influence and interaction. Success is measured quantitatively in terms of viewer ratings. The program is a kind of performance, with a set narrative and plot. A director uses a written manuscript, to direct and stage employed actors to implement the show. The performance is recorded and aired. The result is a controlled, one-directional and easily broadcast product.



In role-playing production processes, the individuals taking part are seen as players/participants and co-creators. Participants and game masters have equal positions (Montola 2005) and participants are expected to contribute to the game masters’ experiences as well. The multi-directional production process of (role-playing) games, like other forms of interactive narratives (Rilstone 2000), or ergodic literature (Aarseth 1997), represents a blur of the distinction between producer and consumer/creator and audience, and storyteller and viewer. Within the rules, the participants may improvise freely, and their choices shape the direction and outcome of the games (Rilstone 2000) and thus also their experiences differ according to their individual gameplay.

A flexible game design with open-ended game elements and open-minded game masters are crucial to succeed with a role-playing game. The larp producer stages the scene, crafts the rules, and plans the

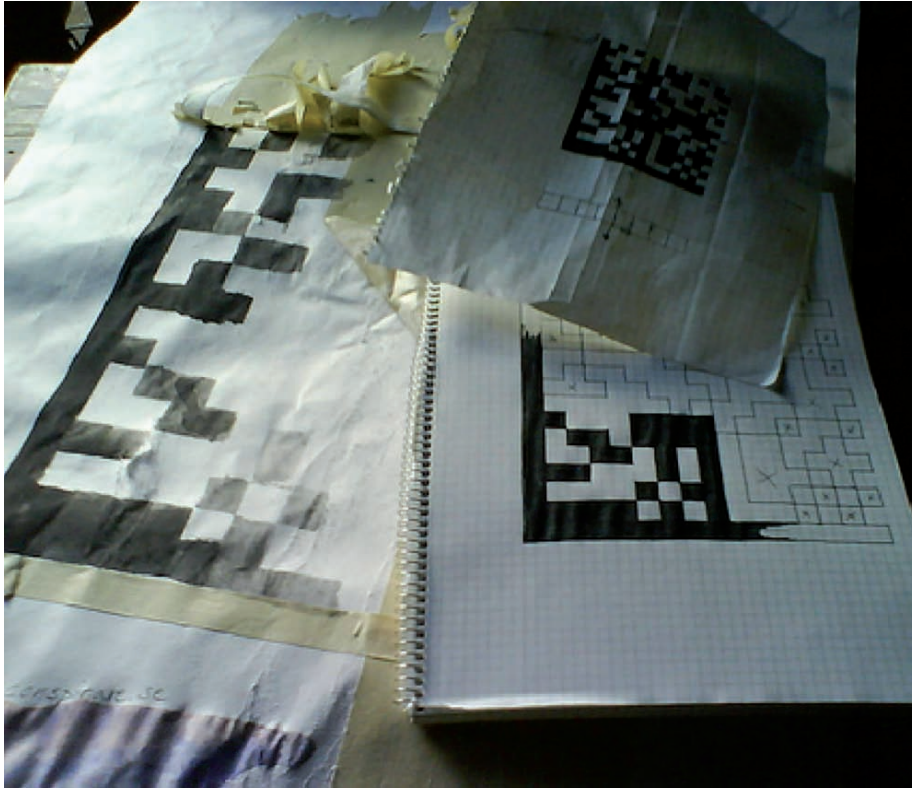
core narratives, plots and characters (Montola, Stenros et al. 2009). The producer must be prepared for anything and everything to happen in the game. Participants often respond in surprising ways that can interfere with plans for later scenes, causing a demand for narratives, plots or characters to be changed, developed and carried out in unforeseen directions. With this in mind, P aimed for the creation of a planned but open-ended, interactive and multi-directional experience, played out online in chats, forums and in the physical world by larping (and ARGing) like in streets and parks. This results in an over-production of game elements and details to allow for possible participant routes to develop throughout the game; all the designed game content will, most likely, not be utilised.

When applying a multi-platform approach for SOM, SVT as a PSB was predicated to invite the audience to exchange dialogue and participate on different levels in their activities (Enli 2008), by publishing content on other platforms. Interactivity was a clear goal for SOM was pushed internally¹¹. The audience members were seen as users and consumers who could produce a source of material such as film snippets, photos, pictures, text and audio; it was intended to supply SVT with what they called ‘user generated’ content. However, the active selection, editing and transformation process of this material (still) enabled the broadcaster to maintain full control of the overall quality and narrative, as it was broadcast back to the audience.

By contrast, P aimed to foster (their type of) participatory culture. Although the game part of SOM had an obvious producer, the participants were expected to co-create the game and storyline with the game masters/designers. They created a joint role-playing experience in which both the participants and organisers took part, and in which the roles by no means were fixed on a superficial level (chapter 6 scrutinises the *Conspirare* chat that shows that the organiser versus participant roles were evident). As the participants got more involved in the game, some of them could also gradually take on an organiser’s role like with the participant who became a forum moderator (chapter 8). The differences in attitudes and approaches were observed in the wordings in blogs, the choice of pictures and photos, and the selection of communication tools such as in the chatting tools and the usage of *Flickr*, *YouTube* and *GoogleMaps* (at *Conspirare*).



Picture 3:3. The Kerberos van, here spotted in the Stockholm city centre, had been used in the two previous Prosopopeia larps, 2005 and 2006, too. In the Conspirare chat, and elsewhere, the surveillance company was nick-named 'Hunden', The Dog, to obstruct the guards to trace participants' conversation. The Dog referred to the big sign on the sides, illustrating a three-headed dog. Bestial dogs occur in Indo European mythologies, guarding the gates to the underworld. Kerberos is the Greek version, with three heads and a snake's tail.



Picture 3:4.

Matrices under construction.

Apart from preparing matrices, the Kindergarten and Göteborg strike teams planted them, and later helped other participants to 'find' them. These experienced larpers used a variety of 'forgotten' places in the outskirts of towns, abandoned buildings, old water towers, or simply a forest clearing as perfect game spots. Here participants could find a matrix, one of Ingela Klingbohm's dolls, or any other game prop with meaning in the game.

These opposing production practices made cooperation complicated, as there was not a corresponding perception of what the production was. Was it a recorded performance with SVT's quality requirements and deeply conditioned understandings of broadcast practitioners of what to produce and for whom? Or, as in P's view, an open-ended role-playing game, in which immersive and thrilling player experiences, 'creating magic' for both participant players and game masters, featured a qualitative game? The medium specific features of the two types of media products, a TV product and a game, that were going to be amalgamated with their differing quality demands, seemed to be treated implicitly by the two teams in their collaboration. P valued their methods as 'better' than SVT's regarding interaction and participation, and might not have acknowledged, or understood, that SVT's (medium specific) expertise lay in broadcast programming. The SVT team, on the other hand, had to consider the legal framework of television production and craft the TV shows and audience interaction for the online parts of the production accordingly. Swedish Television has to follow the Radio and Television Act¹² and the conditions set up by the transmission permission issued by the Swedish government. The regulations for SVT transmissions contain rules about impartiality, objectivity, privacy, medium

impact, violence and pornography, unfair commercial promotion, the batch identifier, advertising, sponsorship and product placement¹³. Webpages have to be moderated within twelve hours by trained SVT moderators that judge if the content lies within the frames of the regulations¹⁴. Sticking to, and obeying rules of impartiality and objectivity means that controversial themes or events must not be treated with prejudice, that SVT representatives must not take a biased stance in controversial issues. The ‘medium impact’ regulation deals with the concerns SVT has to take to the ‘penetrating power’ of the medium connected to the themes, framing and scheduling of content. In other words, SVT has to stay cautious when dealing with program content that includes violence, sex and drugs and content that may be interpreted as ‘provocation of criminal acts’. This includes content that may be interpreted as insulting and/or discriminating towards individuals regarding their gender, nationality, religion, ethnicity or sexual preferences. In the case of *SOM*, the SVT Väst drama department manager was the legally responsible publisher for the entire production, including the television programs and the *Conspirare* and svt.se/marika webpages. However, P was contracted to moderate *Conspirare*, thereby agreeing to follow the same regulations and the SVT policies. To contract external moderators for an SVT production was an exception made for the first time in SVT’s history; today it is more common. The SVT management had to deal with several virgin areas: not only the external moderation coupled with the rather controversial themes and content of *SOM*, but the subcontract with a content producer, P, that implemented and managed (SVT) production parts during transmission (which had never been done before, see chapter 4), and the implicit game nature and the production’s blur of facts and fiction. Compared with the simultaneously produced drama production with its significant multi-platform approach, *Andra Avenyn*, the *SOM* production stands out as much more challenging.

2. IMPACTS ON DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

The consequences of the differences in production cultures and methods slowly surfaced during my fieldwork observations. In this section I give a number of examples from the debate, the two production websites and the two different chats that additionally also exhibit the consequences of the medium specific differences. The detailed analysis of the debate in chapter 5 addresses it from a genre specific/reality fictional viewpoint.

The debate

One of the most obvious examples of the cultural differences, where the medium specific differences played a significant role, was the televised debate, where the aim was to link the broadcast drama and the online and real-world game activities. The debate programs were part of the (televised) fiction

Online interaction

Similar observations of cultural differences and medium specific solutions were also made in the use of the internet as one of the platforms. In spite of this digital medium's participatory and networking potential, it was apparent that SVT continued their (medium specific) linear production methods. On svt.se/marika the web editor Eva Rados' blog was produced as film snippets, where Eva updated visitors on the search for Maria. It served as a way to both update and inform participants, with small news items and documentary reports. These instantly and quickly produced snippets were streamed and served the means of keeping the liveness and realism of the production on the site (White 2006). Either Eva appeared in the blogs, or at some occasions she exhibited her interviews with policemen, or other members of the authorities. Neither participants nor their contributed material were displayed in these snippets.

The P crew, on the other hand, worked very actively to include participants, following the planned goals. However, this was partly a measure to cover up for the debate's low ambitions on audience par-

ticipation. Apart from the main narrative, P as larp designers had created several parallel sub stories and open-ended plots, ‘baits’ that could be ‘thrown out’ (see chapter 8). As a consequence the size of the sub story about the *Kerberos* surveillance company grew very big, with larp activities around two of the participants that fed the storytelling online. One participant made an attempt to infiltrate the surveillance company through contracting the company. *Kerberos* guards took the company van and drove the 500 kms south of Stockholm, to meet up (role-play) with this participant (see chapter 8 for an account on the event). The other participant tried to infiltrate *Kerberos* by sending in her authentic curriculum vitae, thereby trying to become employed (also in chapter 8). This created huge interest and activities among participants, not only for a few but also for the bigger group of participants that followed and took part in various ways through ‘tiered participation’ (Dena 2008a). A lot of discussions took place at *Conspirare*. Participants were urged to upload their contributions on *YouTube*, *Flickr*, and other common media applications. And the game masters responded quickly. Contributions were speedily published on *Conspirare*: video clips, pictures, photos and other material that could help in the search. The shaky and documentary-styled film snippets and photos differed a lot in (photographic) quality, but had high gameplay relevance; it was a very conscious (game) design strategy. This was a recurring discussion issue between the teams, where the opposing production cultures, and quality demands, obviously clashed (I address this in chapter 4).

The two examples above are also good examples of the importance of making the game intervene with the participants’ own daily lives (Montola, Stenros et al. 2009). Game masters’ personal communication with participants, through chat messages, SMSes or phone calls, made the participant experiences very strong and immersive. At the same time they were highly participatory. It was even possible to meet the characters in physical person. To some extent SVT used the possibilities to interact personally with participants in-game the same way. Eva Rados role-played in the *Conspirare* chat more or less every weekday, and her participation was greatly appreciated by the active participants. The SVT producer had email contact with participants, both in-game and off-game, and role-played a few times in the *Conspirare* chat and forum. A player meeting was set up on 15th September at SVT, with the aim to introduce the subliminal messages and present the theory that this was a conspiracy by an SVT employee. (The event was also part of the pre-game activities. Seasoned players were approached in personal emails and invited to the event.) At this occasion the SVT producer ‘role-played’ himself, acting a puzzled SVT producer, worryingly leaning forward over the table, whispering to the participants about the subliminal messages that they had found in the drama episodes¹⁵. Although officially he could not confirm that he had role-played in-game¹⁶. Nevertheless, by taking part in the P produced online game parts the SVT crew extended their audience interaction.

Blogs

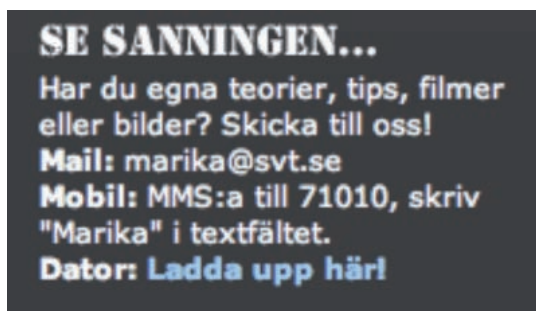
Both companies used text and video blogs to encourage interaction and participation. But a deeper examination shows large differences in how these blogs were used. At the SVT site, participants were asked to participate by ‘sending material to the inbox’ and ‘mailing to marika@svt.se’ (pictures 3:5 and 3:6).



Picture 3:5.

Encouragements at SVT.se (www.svt.se/marika)

The text says: EDITORIAL DIRECTOR RADOS I am the editorial director on this site and I am actively searching the truth about what happened to Maria Klingbohm. The editing staff conduct investigations in cooperation with conspirare.se. My blog will keep you updated. Through mailing to marika@svt.se, or putting your own material in the inbox, you will give us access of your traces and information that could help us in our search.



Picture 3:6. Encouragement at svt.se/marika, the text says:

SEE THE TRUTH...

Do you have theories of your own, tips, films or photos?

Send them to us!

Email: marika@svt.se

Mobile phone: MMS to 71010, mark them with "Marika".

Computer: Upload here!

Hur kan jag hjälpa till?
November 24th, 2007



I morgon når vi slutet på vår resa. Vare sig du är erfaren *conspirare*-råv eller nykomling kan du hjälpa oss med detta:

- 0) Gå in på chatten och häng med i svängarna.
- 1) Kom till TV-huset vid Pumpgatan 19.00 i göteborg och visa att vi är de andra.
- 2) Logga in på Ordo Serpentis ([läs här hur du gör](#)) och försök få kontakt med Marias mamma Ingela.
- 3) Om du redan är medlem, avläs Matriser med Urim för att stärka vårt anti-system.
- 4) Tänk på, be för eller gör en ritual för De andra, de som vi inte tar på allvar och avfärdar i "normalitetens" namn.

Slutet är nära. Framtiden börjar nu.

Picture 3:7. Encouragements at *Conspirare*. The text says:

How can I help? Tomorrow we reach the end of our journey. You can help us whether you are a *Conspirite* or a rookie:

- 0) Go to the chat and keep track of all the twists and turns.

- 1) Come to the television building at 7 PM, Pump Street, Gothenburg and show everybody that WE are The Others.

- 2) Log in to Ordo Serpentis (read here how to do¹⁷) and try to get in contact with Maria's mother Ingela.

- 3) If already a member, read Matrices using Urim to strengthen our anti system.

- 4) Think of, pray or perform a ritual for the ones that we do not take seriously and dismiss in the name of "normality".

The end is close. The future starts now

At *Conspirare* (picture 3:7), participants could follow and take active part in online discussions in the chat and forum, collectively solve clues and mysteries, and plan and prepare larp events. Participants were encouraged to perform personal actions like 'go to the chat and keep track of all the turns', 'come to... the television building and see for yourselves', 'read matrices using Urim' and 'imagine, pray or perform a ritual'. Participants could subscribe to the *Conspirare* emails thereby getting updated as soon as something of importance happened in the game. As with the email in picture 3:8, they were urged to take action, to perform various rituals. This email is a good example of how participants could help out (just) by 'concentrating on Adrijanna's photo' at a certain time, and to visualise, to keep their minds open. They could light a candle, burn an incense, and 'have faith'.

A comparison of the methods to address and interact with the participants obviously show that the P game masters invited to another type of activities, enacted and performed and suggested participants to do it collectively. SVT, on the other hand, wanted participants to contribute (individually) to the web editor team. Participants did not know if their material would be used. The P game masters created a type of responsiveness with their urges, and a kind of collective feeling that everybody could help out, in their own way. And that the participants enacted, performed actions and thoughts would make a difference in finding Maria or freeing Adrijanna during her captivation. The *Conspirare* emails subscription in itself created a kind of responsiveness, at least two a week were sent out during the most active time in the game (October - November).



Picture 3:8. This is an extract from an email posted to all subscribers of *Conspirare* emails. It was entitled 'Ljudet av Vingar' (Eng. The sound of wings) and was posted 10th November, a few days after the kidnapping of Adrijanna. It urges everybody to take action, in order to collectively 'free' Adrijanna from her kidnappers:

To everybody reading this. Concentrate on this picture of Adrijanna, at 3 am tonight. Visualise a tunnel leading between you and her. Keep your mind open for five minutes. Allow all signals to go through, but block external interference. Light an incense. Invoke angels. Drum. Listen to your favourite music. Walk the dog and spot the stars. [Do] anything that works for you. Keep the channel open. Have faith. Do it.

[Picture, missing]

Endure my beloved. We are on your wavelength.

/Agent Orange'

Chats

The two chat applications, Redaktionschatten at svt.se/marika and the *Conspirare* chat, exhibited similar differences in their choice of audience interaction methods. Redaktionschatten, in fact resembled an FAQ¹⁸ more than a chat (see excerpt below). No dates or times were shown, and it did not offer chatting. Instead participants had to send in their questions and wait for an answer. Only a few questions were selected, answered and exhibited in Redaktionschatten. During game runtime the SVT producer reflected on the low interactivity this ‘chat’ allowed, but the application could not be changed at that stage, the application was an externally obtained software/application.

The *Conspirare* chat (picture 3:9, see chapter 6 for a detailed analysis) was a freeware chat system¹⁹ designed to display real-time communication. Participants could choose to use their game characters like ‘mattlo’, ‘Tomb’ or ‘markzpot’, or choose a different character/name for this purpose, or lurk (i.e. a person who only observes and would appear as ‘lurker’). The application showed the dates and times of contributions (e.g. messages, photos), allowed secret personal messages between participants, called ‘PMs’, while chatting, and so forth. It was an immediate and easy-to-use real-time chat. Participants could easily include URLs and photos, appearing on screen a split second later. However, this chat required instant moderation, since SVT demanded it to hinder any illegal communication or abuse, according to SVT’s legislation and Swedish publishing laws. Accordingly P spent approximately 20 hours a day game mastering it.

Even if the P game designers had chosen a functional and easy-to-use chat application, its interactivity can be questioned. There were difficulties for the (active) participants that managed to uphold the 360° illusion to stay in character/in-game while chatting. For the others - the continuous stream of newcomers, not understanding the implicit rule to ‘pretend that it is real’ - it was very problematic to (try to) chat, not to say that it was almost impossible. So even if the application per se had excellent functionalities for the objectives to create participation, the 360° illusion design principle created implications that made the game masters tightly control the chat conversation to make sure everybody taking part stayed in character (see chapter 6 for an in-depth analysis of the chat interplay.)

’Question: So you do not know if Ingela Klingbohm is alive or not?

Answer: She has never existed, as far as we know.

Question: But she [Maria] is a character in your TV series...? (I mean, it IS ‘based on a true story’)... (btw I did not write the question “Why does Eva look so angry all the time”)

Answer: The drama is not "based on a true story". The drama is based on the notes that the writer found in town. If Adrijanna claims that it is true, she has to stand up for it.

Question: Is Eva always answering the questions here?

Answer: Most often. You can address a question to anybody here at the office, just address the person'.

Excerpt from the SVT chat, Redaktionschatten



Picture 3:9.

The chat conversation allowed a lot of socialising and live communication with game characters. Chatters could browse the archive, see a list of all chatters. The dates and times were displayed.

3. SUMMARY

In this chapter I have described and analysed the teams' different cultures of production. I have addressed the production processes and the modes of and methods of crafting participation and interaction. Simultaneously, I have exhibited how specific features were expressed. To a large extent the svt.se/marika content consisted of the television medium specific one-way directed communication relying to a lesser extent on features of asynchronous interaction. The web editor team would answer viewers' and participants' phone calls and emails, and answer and exhibit some of the questions in their chat, Redaktionschatten. However, Klippmaskinen, the tracking tool at svt.se (see chapter 2) was an exception and a good example of the opposite type of interaction. This application offered an activity that demanded more than mere browsing and reading, or the posting of a question to the editor. A deeper engagement was needed to solve the weekly picture quiz and, if participants wished, they could collaborate, discuss and exchange ideas and solutions with others by logging on to *Conspirare*.

This game feature/application embraced both svt.se/marika and *Conspirare*. At *Conspirare*, on the other hand, the game's responsiveness was a design issue for the P team that they put time and effort into solving. As experts in pervasive games design they were aware of the fact that a game feels more real and the game world authentic/realistic the more it responds to participants' actions (Jonsson and Waern 2008). These were the grounds for using several methods to create participation.

Consequently, interaction and contributions from participants were low on anything that looked as part of SVT, and high at conspirare.se. SVT's expectations had been high²⁰, and there was considerable disappointment at the apparent lack of participant contributions and the low activity at Redaktionschatten and the SVT discussion forum²¹. *Conspirare* experienced the exact opposite – the forum grew quickly, constant discussions took place, and participant material streamed in. The narrative implied that the SVT editor and her team were antagonists to Adrijanna and her *Conspirare* crew. It is interesting to note that this issue was mentioned by a few of the participants in the post-game interviews to be a disadvantage for SVT, when discussing the participant activities at svt.se/marika. Other more seasoned gamers answered that they did not visit SVT's web because they did not want to break the 360° illusion, and lose the immersive effect of it (see chapter 8). Even if this argument is correct, this number of players was in a minority, and cannot be compared with the larger mass audience (and its absence at svt.se/marika). Furthermore, it can be argued that with the idea to design tiered participation, different modes of participation would be offered, and the modes at SVT were 'lighter' and demanded less engagement to be consumed by, for example, the 'ordinary' TV viewers, which is an argument in favour of SVT's designed interaction.

Albeit, there may be more explanations to the differences in the cultures of production and the specific media utilised. Other impacting subject matters, previously mentioned, were the technical problems with the SVT inbox application, that at that stage was in a prototypical state (and thus not well-working), and the legal restrictions that only allowed participant contributions smaller than 15 MB. This was not the only restriction the SVT had to take into consideration as being the legally responsible publisher and a PSB. There were a number of rules and company policies that had to be kept too, that P also had to stick to, but that they managed differently even if the game mastering and monitoring took extensive time for the P workers. The P workers' long working hours can be explained with regards to the game industry's culture of production to work excessively during 'crunchtime' and at other times too, if needed and to the fact that the work culture is fluid with indistinct borders between work and play (Kerr 2011). They were also used to working very long hours during larp productions²².

In the following chapter I address the collaboration process and the frictions and tensions that, among other issues, the differences the teams' cultures of production created.

Notes

1 The SOM Institute is a research and conference centre that studies society, opinion and media (S.O.M.). It carries out a nationwide survey every year, in which people are asked questions about politics, society, their use of media, public service, the environment, risks, new media technology and leisure-time activities. It is situated at University of Gothenburg. See www.som.gu.se.

2 P used the word 'ractor' to refer to people playing one or several of the game characters, either in person or mediated through email, or other remote means of communication. The persons playing Agent Orange, Adrijanna and Anty were called ractors, as well as the people playing the characters 'Leif' or 'J.', that only appeared in electronic communication (emails, SMSs or chatting). Adrijanna was the most visible ractor and most game masters worked as ractors for several characters and at different times in the game. The word is derived from science fiction and was used in SOM because it signified closeness to the role of an actor, and at the same time emphasised the role-playing aspect of the task.

3 This game mastering tool was called Games Creator and was part of the mentioned IPERG research project, see chapter 1.

4 All involved are mentioned in the credits, see footnote in introduction.

5 From the SVTi department, managing the online activities and technical applications, a few people were present at a few occasions. The legally responsible publisher was present on, more or less, all meetings in Gothenburg.

6 This was expressed in several interviews by different team members.

7 Several SVT team workers confirmed this during interviews.

8 Interviews with SVT management.

9 An agile software development method called SCRUM.

10 Interviews of team members. The only one of the SVT key team members with personal experiences was the director of the debate program. Another team worker had experience of improvisation theatre.

11 Interviews SVT team members and management.

12 <http://www.radioochtv.se/Documents/Styrdokument/Radio%20and%20Television%20Act.pdf?epslanguage=sv>, accessed 14th March 2011.

13 <http://www.radioochtv.se/Tillsyn/Granskning-av-program/Reglerna/SVT-SR-och-UR/>, accessed 14th March 2011.

- 14 Interviews with SVT production manager fall 2007 and spring 2011.
- 15 Participant observation/field diary notes.
- 16 Eva Rados was officially employed as an actor, but that was not the case with the producer. Interviews SVT team workers.
- 17 The text was a clickable link to instructions of how to log into Ordo Serpentis.
- 18 Frequently Asked Questions
- 19 www.lingr.com
- 20 Interviews, SVT management.
- 21 After airing of the first drama piece the discussion on the SVT SOM web was moved to SVT's ordinary web discussion forum, but a discussion never took off there though, to the disappointment of the producer.
- 22 Interviews with P workers.

CHAPTER 4

FRICION, FRACTION...FRATERNITY?: SPLITS AND NEGOTIATIONS

Researcher (R): The teams were split at two different locations. How did it work?

Well, unfortunately this created for misunderstandings. Many times information was lost, or did not get through. Communication is really an art, and you take it for granted. The biggest loss of information occurred when, for example, we at SVT, say we have a morning meeting. We discuss certain things, and we conclude that we must report it to P. And then you call P [the office]. At that moment only one or two people are there, and you inform them. Then we take for granted that, what we say to that person will reach the others as well. But it does not work that way. Things get lost. That person may not understand that this is something that everyone needs to know, believing that it is perhaps not so important. You prioritise; everybody makes his or her own priorities. A lot of information has been lost that way. And it works the other way around too, of course. P have things they tell a person at SVT, who in turn prioritises whether or not to pass it on. He might not think it is important, because that person was not really the right target for it. And, it's very easy to misunderstand someone on the phone, compared to when you are face to face. Or email. It's even worse, because then you cannot read the emotions. So, in my opinion that's the worst way to communicate. The second worst is by phone. It's best to meet face to face. It's the contact we have had the least. So it is obvious that we would have gained if we had worked from one spot. Only the fact is that you would not have to communicate everything twice.

SVT team member, 19th December

The collaboration mainly consisted of the design and production of the game activities and the debate programs (see chapter 2). So, when it started there were still many issues not yet settled, due to the unusual work partition and the novelty of the production. Slowly the teams found collaboration methods like sharing information on a common project intranet and the weekly phone calls (see chapter 3). During my fieldwork I observed various frictions and tensions surfacing between the teams that challenged the collaborators. The geographical distance in the quote above metaphorically depicts these splits that were cultural, ideological/political and economic. The distance - 450 kms - was understood by the managements from the start, as were some of the differences in their cultures and goals (the teams had had several workshops to bridge and improve their understanding of the other). In addition, the planned merge of the teams was never realised, see chapter 3. Many comments about how a shared common office space would have simplified the collaboration, and how it probably would

have affected the production positively were expressed between team members, and in my interviews.

The cultural, ideological/political and economic splits were equally difficult to bridge or solve. Some of them were negotiated, and ended up in agreements, more often than not in some compromises. Others resulted in plain, indisputable and non-negotiable decisions taken by the SVT management. Some tensions and challenges lingered unsolved, as with the geographical distance. In significant ways they all influenced both the process and the outcome. They were the result of the differing cultures of production described in chapter 3, where questions of for whom the production was made, the type of interaction, and how to produce it and split the teams. The media specific features of TV production and games also imposed. Frictions were also dependent on the implied imbalance in the contractor-contracted roles. SVT had the last word in all decisions and P was left with little agency to act. But the split was also a consequence of the game design aesthetic, the 360° illusion design ideal where the ideological-political differences surfaced: differences that were partly in company cultures.

In this chapter I analyse the frictions and tensions, the challenges and negotiations that surfaced. My aim is to depict clear examples of each type of split and the tension, challenge and/or negotiation they created, and how they affected the outcome. Questions that are answered are: What kind of issues arose and how were they dealt with? What were the consequences and the effects? The following chapter will address these changes in the detailed analyses of the debate program and the *Conspirare* chat. I use rather long interview quotes in order to create a sense of the process.

1. PRODUCTION-CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Political-ideological split

If you view the media as an apple, then... today you have the peel. The apple is participation. The general participation is watching the apple; watching TV series, listening to a pop star. And you are part of the apple peel, but only in an extremely superficial way, through voting, writing a post or an opinion. Then there is the apple core, people who at least seek to be involved. For example, those thousands [of people] who are applying to [take part in] Idol¹. Then there is the hardcore, the kernel. These people are creating a proper experience, creating stimuli for others. When entering the stage they pass the limit, and become monkeys for the others. They are the ones who sing in Idol.

The apple is an incredibly empty apple, because there is no fruit pulp. This area is not huge. What would become the big mass, the long tail, does not exist. The huge surface of mainstream or general participation. This is not watching, it is not as shallow as the peel, the viewing and voting, and it is not as demanding as the apple core or the apple pips. It is something in between, and the degrees can vary. Traditional broadcasting is very bad at this. The reason is the quality demand on what is shown on the TV screen. This is what you [SVT] want because you work towards [creating] hits, blockbusters. Having only a few channels, and a number of hours, the biggest public attractors [have to] lie in primetime. Compared to YouTube for example, that has the fruit pulp, and where there are no hits, everything is created by the people. People do three-minute-things. Nothing has production polish, it's just crap, but it's my crap. I love it! Perhaps P can contribute to change mediaSweden. It will be difficult for Sanningen om Marika to contribute to this, I think. Maybe, maybe, maybe. If the riddle game works fully. This is not what we have been paid for, we are paid to do the street game, and this is by necessity automatically hardcore [activity]. Not the apple pips but the apple core, because it requires getting up from the couch and go outdoors. Already there we have lost 97% of the hit audience. However, on the other hand, people are prone to do it sometime.

P's CEO, 28th May

R: How do you view the constant conflicts with SVT concerning the choice of TV content, the choice of refusing to include participant material, or participants as discussants, in the debate programs? And not doing it to the extent agreed?

[I think] many of the participant-created films were funny but they did not reach the requirements of SVT. They were seen as bad television. But according to P, they were useful and interesting for the involved and engaged [participants]. They had high quality and high relevance, but we viewed quality differently. For SVT they had no relevance; it was not feasible that SVT would believe in these stories. I reckon that SVT should have created the illusion for the participants, or else the participants would not believe it. The sender needs to support his own imagination. But one must remember that SVT's credibility was at stake. What material to be included, or not, was a policy matter that did not only deal with the law of freedom of speech, but also that it could not contain racial agitation, for example. It had to do with SVT's impartiality and objectivity too, that is part of their broadcasting license.

P's CEO, 30th January 2008 (six weeks after the production ended)

An [SVT] partner is typically another production company. So P is a unique co-producer. But in terms of skills, we would never have got this up and running, not without them. We could not do without their skills. This is a unique process and it is difficult to overlook. It is a difficult project in terms of being the legally responsible

publisher. I depend on being surrounded by people with good common sense.

R: How do you follow the production? Because that is what you're trying to do as tightly as possible, isn't it?

Yes, to tune it in on a daily basis. That's important. And we made a distinction, we have said that P is responsible for the *Conspirare* site up to Sunday [28th October]. Then we will put it into our moderator system, where we run *Opinion* staffed with constant moderators and coverage, so that we comply with ethical rules. That is important to surveil. And it [my job] is very much to be at hand for the team.

SVT management, 26th October

The quotes above show an awareness of the different skills. The P CEO talks about the quality demands of the two collaborators, how they differ between the two companies/products, and that he, in one way understands and accepts the regulations that limits SVT. But he is frustrated. The SVT manager is aware of the freedom and acting space he has given the P team in order to be able to create this new type of production. SVT planned to do as they commonly do with external teams that they commission - to take over the production parts when it was time to produce, in this case to take over the running of the interactive part during runtime.

However, SVT never took over the management of the *Conspirare* forum; it stayed in the hands of the P team. There were several reasons for this. It fitted into the narrative as it gathered Adrianna's crew and it was probably cheaper for SVT to let P manage it. And P were the experts in participatory culture, so they were also content to take it on. The mentioned SVT *Opinion* was an SVT online forum at the time, where you could discuss the content of current factual programs. The plan was to filter visitors at the svt.se/marika webpage to this forum, if they started to meta-talk about the production. To the disappointment of the SVT producer not many viewers went there to participate.

The differing cultures of production were an significant source of tension, as was the fact that the media products depended on differing media specific features and quality requirements. The companies' objectives and goals differed, although assuming they shared the most important feature of the production - creating participation - was sufficient. The cultures of production were significant for how they affected the delivery of both the design and the production/runtime process (chapter 3). Furthermore, within these cultures lay opposite notions of the audience and partly the ways the audience was imagined and expected to interact. The team-building workshops mentioned were not enough.

Internal frictions

Although the broadcaster had been moving towards developing project-oriented production processes and at that time had some years' experience including web applications, the core product was still broadcast programming. Commonly other SVT departments, or subcontractors, craft the material surrounding the show like marketing, online applications and information. With *Sanningen om Marika* it was different.

The novel production pulled organisational changes

We had to convince the SVT management that the money was not enough to realise this sub-production. As a consequence of these issues, they've now changed the entire organisation. First, we had to pitch and apply for money for the idea of the drama production at one department, and then we had to apply for money at another department for the website part, and then we had to go to a third group to be able to implement the participatory game. And, in reality it is the very same project. Now this has changed. We're all working towards [SVT] Stockholm. We [at the SVT branch] in Gothenburg, pitch the idea to them. Tomorrow we travel to Stockholm to pitch something. Then we will meet an [internal] group composed of people from different departments, who will consider our idea from different angles.

SVT production manager, 21st August

Much of his [SVT's production manager] time is spent sitting [at meetings] with the decision makers. Sitting with [the] Stockholm [management] and horn his head bloody to get the funding we have been promised, for example. A lot of things that you wish would work more smoothly.

R: Has he been using an unusually large amount of time on such stuff?

Yes, I think so, really. Just the issue of not repeating our program, not only once.

R: Why?

Some sort of fumble from Stockholm. Schedule facilities. It is just an example of such a thing that Daniel finally had to let go, when we started broadcasting. It's completely insane that the program was not rerun. It's a pity not to put up a schedule for replay, cos' the program is there.

SVT team worker, 19th December

It [the production] is incredibly converged, and it's important that it is. We have not worked with an external producer like this before. Former external producers have delivered sites which we then take over . Actually, there is no other [external producer] who has been doing something during broadcasting, SVT usually carry it out. The [different] units make sites, but for drama they tend to be very simple.

SVTi manager, 13th November

The broadcaster's complex and hierarchical production process complicated both the collaboration between the teams, and the internal SVT work. As has been mentioned earlier, for SVT the novelty of the production - both in terms of platforms used, the content, formats, audience interaction and, not least, the production process itself - covered responsibilities and competencies of different departments. It demanded managerial involvement at higher levels than usual, and pitching and processing of production parts within other SVT departments. The SVT production manager negotiated internally, he was in many cases the link. Thus, even if the teams had agreed, decisions had to be (re) negotiated and consolidated internally. Sometimes decisions were taken by the responsible producer either as a spontaneous decision, by the team or drama management, or within other departments (managements) involved, without checking with P. Other times the SVT production manager did not succeed in negotiating internally, as with the wish to rerun the drama and debate. These frictions were signs of that there existed more than one culture of production within the SVT organisation, as may be the case within large (media) organisations (Küng-Shankleman 2000) and that this may result in that small project-based teams may be held back (Jenkins 2004; Deuze 2007; Deuze 2011). This made the SVT team's work difficult at times.

A successful mistake: the bolo² of Maria at svt.se

On Friday afternoon the P CEO calls me. He has just received a call from the SVT production manager . The SVTi manager has contacted him to tell him about a bolo of the 'real' Maria that svt.se will post on Sunday, linking it to conspirare.se. He is surprised, but listens and then calls the P CEO. Does she [the SVTi manager] not know about the antagonism between the program board and the producers, on the issue of SVT not being able to play along in-game but having to act off-game? If they don't, SVT's credibility as a public service company may be questioned. SVT cannot/must not 'fool' anybody.

According to the P CEO and the SVT production manager , the bolo can be interpreted in two ways: Either , SVT does not know if Adrijanna is lying or telling the truth, and wants to find out if it's true. They are playing along in the 'role' SVT has in the game - to be straddling about believing/not believing in Adrijanna. The second interpretation is that SVT advertises and drives this as if it was part of the game. They conclude that the bolo cannot hurt the game. Moreover, the P CEO argues that not much has been done to market the production., only the ordinary press conference, which was pretty small, and not so good.

Field note, 12th October

R: One difficulty, you said, was how to communicate the production?

We used all spring and summer trying to figure out how to do it. How can you get it? How do we make it understandable? Who is really the target group? Cos' it's quite a complicated game. And, we wanted as many as possible to find it appealing. It's not that it was impossible, because the design is good. P conducts the marketing in the country: Adrijanna, and possibly someone else would try to attract participants with alternative methods. And according to our measurements they succeeded fairly well. Then CP ³ tried various methods⁴ to get journalists to write about it. But the interest has not been big among journalists. I don't know why. We had an ordinary press conference but few people came. There were five, six [journalists]. We [SVT] outnumbered them. Commonly I do not attend press conferences myself, but I imagine that there are at least ten, twenty of them normally.

And we've had more competition ⁵. In addition, we have had problems, particularly with the communication; how to communicate what it actually is. In my opinion, it was obvious from some of the questions that came up at the press conference too, and what I have heard afterwards. Furthermore, it has been difficult to be able to talk about it openly⁶. And this has been a bit tough.

R: But wasn't the bolo at svt.se rather successful?

Yes, a colleague and me wanted to do something. So we brainstormed. We knew we could not tell, we could not talk about Marika yet. We could not talk about the drama series, or say that we [SVT] are behind this game. So we came up with the idea to use the Maria photo without mentioning any names or anything. And of course it worked very well. It was very, very difficult to know how to do.

SVTi manager, 13th November

The unusual managerial involvement gave rise to information omissions between departments, as with the display of the web bolo of Maria, at the front page of SVT.se in Mid-October. In this case it was an advantage for the promotion; it resulted in a lot of visitors at *Conspirare*. At the weekly phone meeting, right after the bolo was published, both teams were content with the result. Around 9,000 hits were registered on *conspirare.se*. 64% left directly, and 20% viewed more than three pages on *conspirare.se*. 0.5% stayed on to read 20 pages or more⁷. The teams agreed on the success, and that the SVT team would try to promote more and similar promotions online, to be put on internet forums for youth.



Picture 4:1. This photo featured the *svt.se* frontpage on 14th October, 2007. Underneath the photo was a text that said: Have you seen her? Every year about 6,000 people disappear in Sweden.

An unsuccessful marketing process

The bolo was a late remedy for another (internal) tension resulting from the different cultures. As in ARG, it was planned to use viral marketing to approach prospective participants. In the PR campaign document dated 21st March, directed to the internal decision-makers, the SVT production manager established the experimental marketing activities. The goal was to create ambassadors that would market the production, pulling in new viewers/participants. He urged them not to hesitate, but to take the opportunity to be at the cutting edge, and to complete it entirely/follow through. He claimed it 'too huge a project' to be 'shuffled-off'. He compared with earlier productions that had failed⁸, name-dropping SVT managers that supported the unusual campaign. The 'guerrilla marketing' ended with 'We have to respond to the trends, we have to show off at the cutting edge to meet our younger audience'. P had proposed the campaign. They had presented the concept and costs, at the design meeting with the SVT production management at the end of March:

Recruitment Campaign: We are currently negotiating with the SVT marketing department about designing a marketing campaign, aiming at gathering a group of committed participants that will mentor newcomers during runtime creating positive press coverage. The method uses [elements] from the past fifteen years of recruitment within the live action role-playing games movement. This included building Sweden's largest youth federation (Sveriges roll- och konfliktspelsförbund⁹). The recruitment is coordinated with the press communication to maximise awareness of the participation drama.

Design specification, dated 29th March

After a series of negotiations the budget resulted in 60% of the primary cost estimations. The campaign was conducted but the planned activities had to be cut down. A media professional, formerly used by SVT, was attached to the production, but his activities did not succeed very well in creating any media coverage. It was apparent to the team members that the SVT decision-makers did not understand the costs that seemed to be part of the drama: the character Adrijanna would travel and meet prospective participants, so how could this possibly be ranked as marketing costs? Likewise, they did not really understand the work of the media professional¹⁰. When this employee quit in August a new SVT employee responsible for press/media contacts began working late September, but it took her some time to get to understand the production and then it was a bit too late to find the right ways to market it, especially since it had to be marketed without revealing the gameness of the production.

Frictions between the teams

The contractor-contracted relationship

The economic divide was in some sense a source of tension. SVT, as the contractor, took all final decisions and thus had the power to avoid controversial decisions. Due to SVT's role as a PSB, the decisions had to be in alignment with its broadcasting license, follow legal and broadcast rules, as well as SVT's policy rules. This was an obvious distance between the contractor and the contracted. It meant that SVT and P did not possess the same control of the production; SVT had the last say in every economic (as well as any other) decision, and P had to have strong arguments to make SVT change their minds.

Feeling steamrolled

I think they will run us over again, and that the debate will not be so good. But I reckon it's like a concert, or a variety show that consists of three parts; drama, debate and street game. And with the drama we've had a long lay, and from P's perspective it has become as close as we wished for. With the debate we are in an on-going war, and it will end up a few steps closer than we had wished for. Concerning the reality game, or the street game, we are in full control, and SVT have confidence in us there.

P's CEO, 13th November

During the first period of the project I was mainly doing the negotiations with SVT to make sure we got the budget and [that it was] big enough, we safeguarded the project in the early negotiations, and the project had organisation and integrity, so that our part wasn't overrun by the fact that SVT is so much bigger I had to establish good relationships between our two companies, and also make sure that there were some sort of strategy, to get inside their work [process] to be able to influence the TV series and the debates because they know very little, or nothing, about participatory culture. So, my first task was to negotiate the economical means. These negotiations have continued throughout the entire production; to get more money when they wanted more work [to be done], or to counteract when they wanted to overrun deals. And to steer [it] when they were going in a direction that wouldn't be sound for the participation; because sometimes they wanted to do stuff advantageous from a dramatic viewpoint, but from a participatory standpoint [it was] very bad for the project. Anyway in the beginning I did the negotiations, then during the long phase of the production I was doing recruiting, team building, process structuring, in-service training, and so on.

P's CEO, 28th November

At times, when making quick decisions about how to cut the drama or the debate, which parts to keep or remove, there was not time for SVT to check with P in advance. On the other hand, SVT acknowledged that they would never have managed to create the kind of participation/participatory culture the P team members were experts on. So, in some matters they had to consider P's motivations for a particular design. This was apparent in the case of the 360° illusion game design. SVT very much relied on this expertise, and P managed the street game activities, the blog, and forum and chat activities at *Conspirare* fully on their own. However, the 360° illusion game design also created frictions.

2. GAME DESIGN ISSUES

An overtly marketed fiction...

I think it will change a lot from now, cos' *Conspirare* has started to come alive. And now, people will be gathered at *Conspirare*, and then people will already know that it is a game. It is out in the open now. People have grasped the thing without us even saying it, people are referring to ARG. And that's very exciting, that people grasped it so fast.

Adriane Skarped racting Adrijanna, 9th July

At last I have found my way to the Cultural Centre, where the games convention Stockholm Spelkonvent¹¹ takes place. I look around and estimate the number of visitors/players to around 200-300 people. I spot the big black-and-white-checked flag that Adrijanna had brought to the Arvika Festival, a huge matrix made of cloth². The lecture program tells me 'what you can expect' of the seminars. They include anything from board games workshops, fanzine workshops, to 'how to make a memorable character'. The seminar 'Sanningen om Marika' is announced to begin at 11 pm.

About 25 people are gathered in the room. A few visitors sit on the front row next to the P producer and Adrijanna. The P producer points a film camera onto the creative director who manages the computer on the stage. Eva Rados is there too, rigorously dressed in pin-striped suit and glasses, sitting on her own a few rows back. The art director begins: - Hi, my name is Martin Eriksson. SVT are producing a television series based on a true story. I am known as larper and a larp organiser and [...] He continues to talk for another 50 minutes while the P producer is filming him.

Field note, 22nd September

From the start there was agreement on clearly communicating the production as a fiction production. During one of my interviews the 'ractor' playing Adrijanna reported from her promotional Sweden

tour (quote above) that the initial participants seemed aware of the gameness. The early participants had probably got into contact with the production through P's larp networks and contacts such as published articles in game magazines, web advertisements at larper's blogs and home pages, or they had had contact with the ractor/Adrijanna during her Sweden tour.

Another (promotional) event when the gameness was partly detected was at the Stockholm Spelkonvent in September (mentioned in my field note above). SOM was advertised as one of the games to be presented¹³. In these media the gameness was ambiguously communicated. A seasoned ARGer or larper could detect that it was all about a game. However, to communicate the production in such an ambiguous way was problematic for the SVT team, even if they very much would have liked to. This tension was expressed in the many meetings I had with the team.

Internal tensions

We say that it is an experimental project, because we use things we already know. We have put the [production] parts together in new ways. But, although it is a pilot project there is no one who can predict where it will end. We have our viewer goals. Simultaneously we battle with issues that we have never met before.

R: Of the type?

For example, the question: - Can SVT play with reality? Our colleagues one floor up¹⁴ and who stand up for credibility, they do not like this at all.

R: Has it been a bit tough?

Yes, it has been tough towards the management. It would be different if we had had a [contracted] production company from which you would buy the entire service. But now SVT is the responsible publisher. We are furthermore dealing with the current topic: - Where do the limits of our responsibility go? We've talked with Coffe [P's CEO] and P about all the sites that are tied to the production¹⁵. The SVT management has said that whatever we create we will have to take responsibility for. There has to be a responsible publisher for all of your pages, they say, because they are all a part of [the] SVT [production]. We can't [purposely] fool [people]. And then there is the question: - Where does the fiction end? We had that discussion last week with Coffe and Christian Wikander [the SVT Drama Department Manager]. In [a] television [show], we can kill and call people niggers, and we can stretch the limits. But as soon as we put our feet on the internet, then ... Well,

we see it as a fiction that uses multiple platforms. We argue that we must be able to do it online too. But it does not work that way. The internet is the internet, and totally different publication rules apply.

So you cannot play with the fiction [there] in that way. You can buy a computer game and install it on your computer, using the game's DVDs. You may have fiction this way, and then [you] go online. Just imagine the big online games like World of Warcraft. However, they have overcome these issues. We want to do our stuff, and we have characters who appear in the forum. We have a goal, a background and an aim of what they say [act out]. The characters will not be able to say what they [we want them to] want to say, but must adhere to the usual publishing stuff.

SVT production manager, 21st August

The debate is fictional. The [program] guests are not real cops, even if we want the experience to be as authentic as possible. That is why we borrow a [genre] form that is easy for viewers to identify, the [current affairs] debate. When you watch a debate we [would like people] to think that it is now, currently, it's real. It is aired live, and you can often text the program simultaneously. That is why we have borrowed that feeling from the format. But it is fiction. We don't prevaricate, we talk about it as fiction. However, because we package it the way we do, we hope that it will be perceived as authentic.

R: What is fabricated?

The content - the broadcast schedule will communicate that, it is packaged as 60 minutes of drama. We split it into drama and debate, but the package is drama. We will put 'fiction' both before and after [the debate].

R: So it is up to the viewers themselves how they will interpret it?

Yes it is up to the viewers whether they believe in it or not ...

R: How many [people] in the production team know this?

Everyone working with the production knows, a handful of people are informed ... We may talk about it internally, in the [SVT] house; it's not really a secret. And we will hold a press conference next week. Then we will communicate that this is a participation drama, and that we play with reality. The reason not to talk too much about it is that it destroys the gaming experience for those involved. We must do it at the press conference, otherwise they could get the information from another source, and then they may write that SVT is lying.

We will answer [straight] on a direct question, because we do not want to lie. It may come back on us.

We will say what we need to say. This is what you need to know, the rest is to get involved ... The public service [framing] is what creates the limitations of this game. You cannot write and say whatever. And I don't think you should be able to do either, it must not turn into any kind of pie-ing, where you hang people out. However, because it is public service, and because this is the first production in this groundbreaking genre that we have managed to create, it makes everybody a little extra cautious, managers are especially cautious...

R: Because of the content or because of the reality-fiction blur?

Yes, partly it deals with this reality fabrication, that we sort of 'lie', why should you lie? You must not! It's bad and it's wrong! This probably scares many [people] in management positions. In addition, we [the production team] can get into trouble.

R: How?

With this reality fabrication thing and the topics we address - the disappearances - are sensitive things. It is controversial and they are very, very afraid that we will make infractions, that someone would be hung out, or that any illegal act will be performed. Like with the link to crimethinc.com during summer. Otherwise they would perhaps have been able to overlook it. But now everyone is extra extra extra careful, and we have been the losers of it. This created a bit stricter censorship than usually. But this generally happens with productions that attract much attention, I've noticed. Like with the very popular program På Spåret¹⁶. The censorship is harder for that program, because they know they have more viewers, compared to, for example, in shows that have only a few hundred thousand viewers.

SVT team worker, 22nd September

Handling the marketing of the production according to SVT policies while simultaneously keeping it within the 360° design principle was difficult for the SVT team. The production had to be marketed overtly as a fiction. However, the more preferable marketing, according to the 360° illusion design principle, would be to use ambiguous communication that could be interpreted both ways. The team was caught balancing between their top management on one side and the P team on the other. This issue was recurring and created tensions between the teams, sometimes also within the SVT team, as with the director of the debate. As the quote from the SVT team worker above shows, this SVT employee did not count on using professional policemen, but that is exactly what the director did (chapter 5). The reference to www.crimethinc.com and one of the pre-game activities and links on

Cjopirare 7P0€đpP@ u(OW 7P@€P u!S IBATIONS 7P`đ u! 7Pp ĐP uTHAT 7P•à@ CAUSED TENSIONS INTERNALLY AT 364c@à 4HE 3WEDISH BATIO NEWS LI`ING @•à 0đ0•P@• p•@€đP@ ĐđàPY@ @€P À•à°@€ @@@đ P@@ °Pà p EXPL IN THEMSEÂbES IN MEDI ã 4HE GAME PARTS A•MED T O`FERIN THOUWHT THIS xOUÅD CHAÂLEáGE AND ENTICT THE AEDIEáCT AT AÂĪ FOR 9SOME PARTIC•PANT9 4HE •@PP pp0 Tó USE THE COáCT T O` !% ÑCsOá•GAĪ 6 P 0 • đPà@0 à@ •à •@P @0 3@€@0)@0 \$ \$p ĐP0 POT UNAN•MOUD TE8”SIONÃ THE GAMENE5D O` THE ROOE1TION xOUÅD vERE 00P`P đà 3@€P đ @P €@PÀP @0•đà• P@•P 0@ pp0 áđT LI`ELY T LAR YĪ AND TO COMMENICATE `T AS A GAME xOUÅD CLEABLY TUÅĪ EF áđT ABT O` THE O%DIN RI LIVT /UT EBEN ĐO%E • đRTANT WS @€ ITS AEDIEáCT @€ @ @ pp0`ACTĀION` ROOE1TIONN`ódHE WICT` @ COU DIEáCT 0@IP 0@à 0đPB• ICHING LAWS `đ €•à@P SELY PÀ••àp @@ •@0 TP@•P 0@@ \$ à@ D€đP pđPLP@ U @•à à@@ Pà@ TI>•T“ Pà@P T`đP 00 p•@€đP@à@€P 0đĐ à•P@ đP@U@•àp @ •à p À DTSTROYING `T FOR óDHE

... But as the process continued ambiguity arose

The SVT top management stated that the production had to be marketed/communicated as a fiction. Accordingly, the SVT production manager had to internally negotiate every issue (tension) that arose, to check if it could be bypassed but still follow the management's decision. So in part the SVT team agreed on the idea to market SOM as a reality fiction at the biggest possible extent. Moreover, there was the P vision: if enacting everything as if real, it would in the end become real. Participants would eventually detect the gameness by themselves and whilst already 'caught' and immersed in the (game) activities stand up for them, and start to engage themselves in a broader context; and in turn change personally and engage themselves (politically) in society (see chapter 2).

Ambiguous messages

Having to negotiate every issue was a source of irritation and tension at P, and despite the agreement to market the production as fiction at the September press conference, the CEO changed his mind. After the presentation a tabloid journalist took the CEO aside, and asked if the teams had contacted the woman's family. The CEO acted as if the woman/Maria existed¹⁷. When interviewed about this a few days later he had reflected on his actions.

Well, she [the journalist] asked - Is this real? and then she smiled a bit. And right then I felt that, now I'm not going to back down. No, I will do the same as Adrijanna does all the time, stand up for this drama. I felt a bit like a coward not to do so. I sit here in a comfortable office chair, and I say to Addi: - You have to stand up for it! And, what am I doing myself when I meet someone? So I thought: - I will stand up for it too. So she [the journalist] asked: - But is this real? And I said: - Well, we have chosen to be neutral in this. Because SVT is saying that Adrijanna is probably making everything up. I told her that P has chosen not to contest Adrijanna's testimony. Then she asked if we have spoken to the family. And I thought, well, we as some kind of producer cannot ask, it's not our job. But then I thought, well yes, maybe you could talk to relatives, a thorough journalist would call anybody to ask: - Has your daughter died? However, I did not feel that P would actually do that. Anyway. I replied something like: - No, we don't want to poke in it. Then of course, the fact is that you can't get hold of Maria's parents, so it didn't matter if we had tried.

Then [at the press conference], I reckoned it to be exciting and thrilling, so I did not wrap it up to make it easily digestible for SVT. SVT don't want to fool anybody, they do not want to build this fiction. So I thought that, I'll do it, instead of being so whitewashing like SVT. I wanted to go straight on, and say that this is a drama based on true stories, and partly on fiction. And I thought that this would make it inventive and more interesting.

I was a bit annoyed with SVT, because they were flat and acted in a cowardly way. Cos' it is a drama and we shall deliver the drama without excusing ourselves. But subsequently, maybe I was a bit deceived by my own propaganda. There is a perception that ARG and reality games have to be fully in-game to be fun. As soon as they reveal themselves as games they die. All research points in that direction. People lose interest. In any case, my analysis is that ARG games are still very small, even if they are global productions with 100,000 participants. If you talk about it as a game, perhaps it becomes easier and more fun. The ludic markers make them [the participants] feel safe to enter the game and participate. But if you can't choose to enter the game, because you do not know it is a game, then you cannot participate entirely. Then quite a lot of people will not enter the game.

I might have forgotten that before the press conference. I reflected later. It might have been better if I had said: - This is a game, but it is created for those who are sufficiently committed, geeky, immature, or [those who] want to play seriously. And the same thing [...] now we have quite a lot of traffic to Conspirare, where they pretend that it is real except for a disclaimer. I'm pondering about perhaps saying: -This is not real, but we pretend it's real. I mean, still it is the approach we have decided. I am not sure, I am considering it, whether to turn [the production] in that direction.

R: We talked about these ludic markers, if it would be TINAG or TIAG¹⁸.

Well, we are constantly wavering on this. Right now we have decided that we should make a clear ludic marker on the front page of Conspirare, which says: If you do not get it, that's okay, press here. If you have already understood, absolutely do not press here. Those who press will get the explanation: - Hi, this is a game, but take it seriously.

R: And why do you do this?

We do it for those who do not play. For those who do play it's just as bad. But for those who still have not had time to start playing, I think this is the difference between thinking this is an obscure thing that only those who really understand dare to jump on, to make it a [clear marker that it is a game]. For those who do not need it, those who jump on because it seems exciting and they understand [it is a game], for them it is of course a powerful experience, and then this thing [the disclaimer] will just be in their way. It can even scare [participants] away. But they represent a small part of the audience. The great majority of the audience do not know what it is, and get discouraged, I imagine. If they could get this kind of explanation they would find it fun, and jump on. And then the relationship is [whether] to create something a bit more high-culture, which appeals to a small group who gets it [that is a game], and takes it seriously and enters it. Or you create it for the mainstream [audience],

make it accessible for those who would like to enter if they only dared to engage in it. And we've decided that P's productions will be mainstream and talented, but accessible to the public.

However, this production is obscure and strange, and perhaps it doesn't matter if we make a disclaimer, a kind of explanatory thing or not. Anyway, I dip towards doing this.

P's CEO, October 16th

What is up right now [for discussion] is if we have to put a disclaimer in the credits of the debate and say: - This was just for fun! Not to make people feel cheated later, and say that SVT made a fake debate program.

R: What is your opinion about this?

It's really boring. It's like a reality game - knowing the end, to know who the killer is from the beginning. It kills the enjoyment entirely. In the movie *The Game*, with Michael Douglas, as a viewer you do not know if he will be killed. But in the end you grasp that he is part of a big game. However, you do not know it from the start! It is a one-time movie, you only watch it once. So, at coffee break [at work] you say: - I saw a program yesterday a debate program, an amazingly fun thing. It is a drama, or maybe it is not, cos' they're so damn angry at each other. I don't know. And the person sitting next to you say: - Aha, you mean Sanningen om Marika? With the strange debate programs? So, if you then put a disclaimer that says: - This is a phoney. Who wants to watch it then [I wonder]? Who would like to watch such a debate?

R: So this is what you discussed today?

Yes. And it is up to the [project] management to decide. I just aired my opinion. I think it's a shame to do it, because then you kill the illusion.

Director of the debate, 24th October

The discussions between the teams ended with them agreeing on putting up the before mentioned popup disclaimer at svt.se/marika and at *Conspirare* (the disclaimer is displayed in chapter 2, picture 2:8). It was programmed to appear twice on every computer . Although P managed to negotiate the number of places to a minimum (e.g. drama, debate, websites) where disclaimers were to appear , irritation among P team members was apparent. The director of the debate shared their idea of creating an illusion. The credits in the debate explicitly displayed that it was a fiction, although everything else communicated the opposite (see chapter 5 and appendix).

3. FRACTION

Hence, tension and friction were built up as time went. After the airing of the first weeks' debate programs, a large clash occurred. At this stage it was obvious that the production had fallen apart, each team produced 'their' parts rather independently of the other actors, following their common production methods and not tying the narrative together. The effects were visible on the two webpages; there were less narrative cross-references between the antagonists' webpages.

The big conflict is that SVT has not published our material. They do not think it holds TV quality but it is very interesting. And if they make TV-like reportage of it, then there is limitless [participant material]. And the bad excuses that have been there at all times are based on some form of dramaturgy.

We had a vision that there would be some form of participation, that it would generate much video content. And there is strong participation; there is a lot of video material. But for the material to be cool - [then] you have to have a huge selection of generated video to dig from. There might be a small grain in the middle of a large sea of amateur content. But all the material is extremely exciting in that it is the actuality of these people. The fact that someone goes to Riga¹⁹ on a [Ordo Serpentis] mission, is enormously exciting. It is perhaps not appropriate footage nor interesting in itself, but I have explained to SVT on how to make a documentary of the material, with an exciting voice over and so on. I don't think they quite grasp it. And they have a director who had a preconceived view of what the debate programs would be like.

This is the first huge 'wake-up call' for 'Public Service', to grasp that broadcasting must be something else, it must be peer-casting and it must be citizen-media instead of 'von oben'. The journey will be long for them to learn. At this stage there is no point in beating our heads against the wall. And the project is built now , it is what it is. We may do better in the next project. We went through many of these things during the last discussion, at least the constructive stuff. At first I, Martin and Daniel [the creative director and the SVT production manager] had a phone meeting where we aired our criticisms. We told him that our agreement is for five minu-

tes of participant material [in each debate program]. And their reaction was, through Daniel [the production manager], that this [the material] is too bad. We discussed the realism too. They did not reckon it realistic for John Carlsson [the debate host] to believe in these things. I argued that this is our fiction, and inside the fiction it is real. So we have to fabricate all that is required for this to be credible, for it to have happened. We have to claim that there is a police report, that there are witnesses to Adrijanna's disappearance, and that newspapers cover up the facts. And that this is the reason why it is not written about. We cannot undermine our own fiction. However, they don't grasp this.

Rickard, Daniel, Martin [the director, the SVT production manager and the artistic director] and I had more of a conflict-like conversation about it last week. I explained how I would have liked it to be solved. The solution to make the bad participant material exciting is to turn it into reportages, and to talk about what the participants have made. The solution to the credibility issue is to simply fabricate, fake the stuff needed for this to be credible. And this has been done in the debates, they have fabricated witnesses. And of course we must do the same in our own material, it's completely surreal that they have been so reluctant to do so [...] Yesterday we had a meeting with Rickard and Eva [the director and the web editor] and another person, who is some kind of internal consultant, on how to conduct the debate. She is some kind of playwright, I reckon. And then the discussion was more oriented towards how we are to solve our issues. We applied the ideas we've talked about [...] We have decided that the director has to take part in these meetings so that he feels he's getting enough feedback. We have made a common timeline too, for what we will do this week.

P's CEO, 13th November

A solution was found after a couple of meetings between the team managements. A compromise was agreed upon regarding the debate. More user generated material was to be used, but only as a background to the discussants. The host of the debate also got instructions to act more neutrally, without showing his own standpoint or siding with any party, in order not to ruin the illusion of reality. The director was included in the weekly phone meetings between the teams, to create a common understanding and facilitate collaboration. But it was late, very late. There were only two game runtime weeks left.

4. FRATERNITY

Acknowledgement

I have realised that we need to have our own production company for future projects; for the entire project. For a similar project, P must be the production company, even for [a broadcast] drama and debate. There must be someone who understands how participation works for the entire production. It does not work to be separated geographically. Ideally, we could trim us together, and in some years it will work perfectly. That might be the best, because then you may cross fertilise. But commonly you have one single production company that takes full responsibility. Usually they [SVT] contract a web agency that makes some kind of cosmetic thing, when producing a drama, or any other production. This is what others may have thought about us, that we would create something similar. Daniel [the SVT production manager] did not believe so, Christian [the legally responsible publisher and drama department manager] did not believe so. But there were many others who perhaps thought that: - Shit, now they [SVT] have invested money on some kind of over glorified web agency. - How weird is that?

So I would like to put a team together It can consist of SVT people, but it should be controlled by a production manager, and [a person] from P. And the creative director would also be the creative director for those working with the TV material. Now other people are managers on top of them [the creative director and P producer], and that is not good. And Martin [the creative director] has no actual power/agency That's disastrous, although he has the competence and responsibility.

P's CEO, 21st November

For me the project was more of a learning production. I was more interested in what we, as a company, could learn from this project, than the project itself. Hence, I was the only one in the company that was observing it from the outside. Everybody else was employed to be mainly focused on his or her specific tasks within the project. They were fighting for the rights to do what they felt were right for the project. So my main task was to analyse the production, and see what came out of it.

P's CEO, 28th November

A learning process does not start after a production like this; it's an ongoing process during the entire production. Of course we have learned a lot from our mistakes and we have already reflected and discussed a lot. The issue of production methods was all the time the most difficult of the conditions to relate to. At least we will form only one team next time!

SVT production manager, 20th December

Although the team managements had acknowledged the cultural differences and saw the project as a pilot production and wished to learn from it (see also chapter 1), the difficulties struck them harder than they had expected. However, the clash and following discussions had cleared the air. The collaboration ran smoothly these two last runtime weeks, a plan had been agreed upon. And although the team members were tired from the hectic and intense runtime they seemed to put extra effort into managing the last work load. Everybody knew what to do. The break-in at *Cityinitiativet* was set up and implemented. The game masters at P gathered and planned the event with the participants in the chat and forum. Eva Rados was actively larping in the *Conspirare* chat the following days. The director larped with his mobile filming team shooting the entire event in the harbour; and later he included a report on the activities in the Sunday's debate show. The following weeks' team phone meetings had a calmer tone. The teams planned and carried out the intended game events in good spirit such as the closing events, a demonstration outside the SVT building on the Saturday, shot by the director's filming team.

5. SUMMARY

In this chapter I have shown how the opposing cultures of production of SVT and P created friction and tension between the producing teams and that there existed more than one culture of production within SVT. I have given a picture of the process of how the teams conducted and manifested their cultures by addressing two areas, the crafting of participatory culture and the communication of the game(ness), the game design implications. The tensions and frictions exhibited are examples of cultural, organisational, economic and ideological/political differences.

However, the frictions were also a result of the media specific requirements of television and games. The director crafted the debate according to 'good' television, instead of following the aims and goals to create novel participation in the television production and tie the street game to it. Moreover, the time constraints to plan and produce during runtime and the tensions and frictions made the teams rely on what they knew, their own (familiar) production processes, and to craft according to their (own) media logic. The production 'fell apart'. SVT produced the debate and P produced the street game using *Conspirare* forum and chat.

It was apparent that a large broadcast organisation that manages a complex production process of TV programming had difficulties fully supporting a small internal team in its enterprise to produce a novel production using new technology and methods. Slow decision processes, a somewhat precautious

management, and the bureaucratic decision-making structure regarding the economic and technical issues that had to be managed for a novel production like *SOM*, created internal tensions at SVT and tensions between the teams. On the other hand, it has to be pointed out that this was probably not the first time the a collaboration with an external player had taken place where a production had to undergo economic downsizing. The theme and design of the production - homelessness, disappearances and public surveillance, and the debated issue of the reality-fiction blur - and P's political aspirations probably also contributed to the top management following the production closely. The reaction was to make the censorship a bit tighter, which any PSB management would do if experiencing uncertainty

In the following two chapters the split of the production is obvious. In both cases one of the two producers took sole producership - SVT for the debate programs and P for the *Conspirare* chat - and designed and implemented the respective production part according to their own culture of production and to their media specific requirements. However, even if both design strategies aimed at inviting to participation and co-creation, the opposite happened. To a great extent the 360° illusion design aesthetic created negativity and instead of allowing the illusion, the production hindered/aggravated participation.

Notes

- 1 Popular television entertainment series based on the program format *Idol*. It gives non professional singers possibilities to compete and get recording contract.
- 2 A *bolo* is notification of a missing person (= *Be On The Look Out*).
- 3 She refers to the SVT employee who conducted media professional activities the first few months, see next section.
- 4 She refers to the agreement not to communicate the gameness publicly, see chapter 2.
- 5 She refers to the large number of television channels which SVT 'has to compete with'.
- 6 She refers to the agreement not to communicate the gameness fully, see chapter 2.
- 7 Participant observation/SVT-P weekly meeting and statistics from Sandberg, C. Truly a lot of lies (unpublished work).
- 8 He mentioned the earlier SVT production *De Drabbade* and *Kommissionen*, see chapter 1.
- 9 A national youth association that gather role-players and conflict gamers. See <http://www.sverok.se/>.
- 10 Participant observation at meetings between the P management and the SVT employee, summer.
- 11 YouTube clip from Stockholm Spelkonvent: Maria: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vR8cvi1IKBo&feature=relat>

ed, accessed 6th December 2010.

12 YouTube clip from the Arvika festival: Matriserna på Arvikafestivalen: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jj8THnxcHus&feature=related>, accessed 6th December 2010.

13 Parts of the presentation of Agent Orange can be viewed on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vR8cvi1IKBo&feature=related> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYLpJdLIKa4&feature=related>, accessed on 7th August 2010.

14 He refers to the department of current affairs debate and programs on social matters.

15 He refers to the media reactions in July when SVT was criticised for urging people to break the law see chapter 2.

16 På Spåret is a popular television program where famous/well known persons/artists compete in two teams.

17 Participant observation.

18 TINAG=This Is Not A Game and TIAG=This Is A Game.

19 The CEO alludes to an Ordo Serpentis participant and his mission report contribution, a video snippet later used in the debate program, see chapter 2 for a YouTube link, and 8 for an account of the event.

ANALYSIS, PART THREE:

TWO PRODUCTION PARTS

The following two chapters are detailed analyses of the television debate program and the *Conspirare* chat. They are analysed because they stood out as being problematic for the producers' collaboration. The analysis of the debate program shows the difficulties the teams had in merging the quality demands of television (drama) and games (the medium specific features). The analysis of the *Conspirare* chat shows that in spite of using a medium with excellent features and functionalities for interaction and participation the producers' intentions for the 360° illusion design overshadowed the capacity for participation.



CHAPTER 5

AN AUTHENTIC DEBATE

[My role as a director] is extremely different in this project. [Commonly] I rehearse with the actors and talk about how [I want them] to portray their parts, and everybody hears everything. In this production the actor and I sit in a separate room, so no one else hears. Other actors have no idea what this [actor] says. It is an entirely different situation and very secretive.

Researcher (R): Why is it secretive?

To create an authentic debate.

R: Have you decided this, or was it decided in advance?

No, it's entirely my decision. That is how I want to do it.

R: Only for this production? For this to work?

Yes. It is my philosophy of how to do it. When Daniel [SVT production manager] offered me the job I did not grasp it at all. But now that I understand more, I see that I am part of a much larger project. I ignore all the other parts, and view the debate as my part. I do exactly as I want, but it must still fit into the puzzle [...] I see that I am part of Martin, Daniel and Christian's [the creative director, the SVT production manager and the publisher's] big project, but I purposely estrange myself because I want my program to be a separate unit.

R: But I know that Martin has read and corrected the debate manuscript, to eliminate leaks?

Mmm, I check with Martin if it concerns the content. I have to. They have created this game [...] I've been afraid of Martin's supporters [the participants] delivering poor movies, turkey movies, which would be wrong in a serious debate program. As if it was a Funny Camera snippet. Then it would be difficult to defend that we do a debate program, it would be pie-throwing. So I have told both Martin and Daniel [the creative director and SVT production manager] that I am concerned that they will feel sappy They must be credible, so that you think they are looking for Maria for real, not acting crazy running around painting fun stuff on each other¹. There will be no such assignments, but I am nagging all the time that there must be serious stuff, so that we can justify that we have a debate program.

R: Could you say something about the interplay , you talked about drama that you picked up stuff from the drama? Say something about the interplay with the street game.

Yes, the live part was the most difficult, that they [P] wanted us to include a big part of the live events. At the same time, we had to have stuff from the drama, to expose clues to the live gamers. My dilemma was that, no matter what I did I could not do it well enough. I do not think people around me understood that I had to include certain aspects and details of the drama series. For example, when I included some relatives² I received comments about that person being totally unnecessary [to include]. But it was not unnecessary cos' it served as a link to the larpers. But it was not about the larpers, they were clues for the larpers. I directed it for the larpers, but I had a feeling that people did not reckon the live stuff being enough. But I think it was peppered with details for the larpers [...] Later they [the management] wanted me to add more things; the players' live actions during the week. But we did not receive enough material that held visual quality. And a television viewer - not being a hardcore fan - would not grasp it, when you don't get more than five minutes to explain. That's quite a long time of a fifteen-minutes debate - a five-minute explanation of a minor process of a giant live game. We were never saying that it was a live game, either [...] There are some things that we have vented afterwards, that were good. But honestly, there were complications, I do not think people understood how complicated the debate was.

R: You said something about the problems of including live players because you could not tell that it was a game.

Yes, that was a mental overturn. I make the decisions: I have a vision and then I go for the materialisation. You have to go for it 100%. If you start to compromise there will only be crap left. It would not have been so distinct had I compromised more. You can say anything you like about the debate, but it had a common thread. I lacked not being able to express certain things [in the programs]. We could not talk about the larpers as larpers, although they were still treated by our editorial staff as if they were authentic. Sure, there were complications. I was to tell a well-known journalist³ to believe in this 100%. He said: - No, I cannot believe in this. [Then I said]: - But we can pretend that your character believes in this. And so we argued around John, as if he was a fictional person.

Director of the debate, 19th December

1. INTRODUCTION

Why a debate?

The aim of the debate was to interweave the drama and the game activities (especially the street game parts) during the transmitting period of the production (see chapters 1 and 2). The TV debate would also exhibit the *Ordo Serpentis* game and give players a face. It would support the tiered participation and function as a weekly report about the development of the search for Marika. Although scripted and planned in advance, it had to be redesigned, to fit into what actually happened during the intense weeks of game events.

Changed function and role

But the director had other ideas for the debate, changing both content and function. He was employed during fall and had not taken part in the early development phase. He was thrilled by the 360° illusion design strategy and worked towards fabricating a realistic and authentic debate. He repeatedly discussed the manuscript/his work with SVT professionals (not involved in the production) familiar with the genre. He used different methods to fulfil his goals. He prohibited the actors to talk to each other in between the screenshots and directed them one-by-one in a separate room, for the others not to overhear the work and he ‘live-directed’ the program host during the filming. He gave John, the program host, continuous orders that would make the debate seem more authentic (unplanned, undirected or prepared in advance), through a set of small earphones. He challenged the teams, arguing that it would be ‘cheesy and not good television’ to have participants (ordinary people without ‘screen’ experience) acting; participants never took part as discussants. Similarly, he refused to use participants’ video snippets since they did not carry value for the television audience because ‘they wouldn’t contribute/say much’.

This had several consequences. In one sense the role of the debate was kept. It partly held the role (goal) to intertwine the drama and game activities, but on the other hand participation didn’t take place as planned. The game activities were not clearly explained to the television audience. By not using participatory methods the debate neither tied the drama and the (*Ordo Serpentis*) game activities properly together, nor did it exhibit players through direct participation or the usage of user created material. This meant that SVT did not stick to the contract of the agreed amount of minutes of participant material into the shows. For P the debate was an important part of their envisioned goal of participatory culture. Also the SVT management wished to use new interactive methods to make the

debate participatory. SVT took total producership of the debate and crafted it according to the quality demands of the television (medium). It also illustrates the clash between the two design strategies - the 360° illusion and participatory culture.

Lukewarm response

The SVT viewer statistics showed that the televised part of the production got fewer viewers than the drama and it disappointed the producers (see viewer statistics, chapter 2). When interviewed, the CEO was partly pleased with the quality and content of the debate and the viewer reactions. Many were puzzled, unsure whether it was fabricated or not. Others enjoyed it. The CEO expressed it to be a good challenge to viewers' concept of reality. My early analysis of the empirical material showed similar reactions. A significant minority of the survey respondents believed that some of the fictional material in the production was true (see chapters 7 and 8). Others were very upset when they found out about the fabrication. The questions I asked myself were: What made viewers puzzled? Even if the drama and debate were promoted as 60-minutes-of-fiction the viewer statistics showed that viewers did not continue watching the debate when the drama episode ended. How could this be explained? A possible answer was that the debate at the same time both adhered to and broke the producer - audience contract that is commonly established by broadcast producers (McQuail 2005). I decided to take a closer look at the debate programs.

In this chapter I conduct a text analysis where I try to find out some answers. Using theories of television and realism, I will if not explain, then at least try to shed light on these issues and try to open up an understanding of why the agreement of producer/reader did not work fully. The chapter starts with a section on earlier research on factual programming of current affairs debate programs in Swedish television, followed by a short discussion of the results. The debate programs and secondary material such as the drama, participant observation, interviews, the post-game online survey and viewer statistics have been used in the analysis.

2. A SWEDISH TELEVISION GENRE

A relevant theory to apply in the case of the SOM debates is Örnebring's analysis of the 'current affairs debate program genre' (2001; 2003). It is an unusually uniform genre, well established in Sweden as well as in the other Scandinavian countries and Germany whereas the English speaking countries have no obvious counterpart. 'Talk show' is what comes the closest, but this term is wider and spans programs from light late-night entertainment to those containing news interviews (Abt 1987; Carbaugh

1989; Munson 1993; Livingstone and Lunt 1994; Scott 1996). Örnebring (2003:505) summarises what a typical current affairs program commonly consists of:

... [it] starts with some kind of presentation of the subject(s) to be debated and discussed – either made by the programme host in the studio, or using material filmed outside the studio to present and frame the issue(s). Then, the programme host introduces the participants in the debate – these might be politicians, representatives of government or non-government organisations, academic experts, ordinary people and/or celebrities, all present in the studio. Sometimes there is a studio audience, whose members may or may not participate in the debate. The program host moderates the debate. At the end of the programme, the host might (or again, might not) try to briefly sum up what has been said in or achieved by the debate.

In his definition of the genre (for the purpose of his study – programs that are part of a mediated public space) Örnebring requires that current affairs debate programs claim to cover important societal issues, through strategies of subject and participant selection and presentation. They should play an important role in the public sphere as a whole. Dominant forms of communication in the public debates are debates, discussions and conversations between two or more participants, with one or several hosts in control. The definition leaves out talk shows or programs based on spectacular audience confessionals, or any programs that do not define themselves as important and/or self-evident contributions to a common public sphere. Similarly the genre definition does not cover televised parliamentary debates as these lack hosts and would take place regardless of the cameras.

Although there is a danger in using a content-based genre description, since genres change, develop and hybridise, I claim that the definition may be used here since the genre is strongly established in Swedish television, has changed slowly and been little challenged. Albeit, where it has changed, the SOM director picked up these modifications. In addition to textual features, different genres also involve different purposes, pleasures, audiences, modes of involvement, styles of interpretation and text-reader relationship (Chandler 1997:13).

Common genre conventions

The main element to divide various films or television programs into different genres is commonly the content, such as themes or settings, but features like form, including structure and style, could also be part of a genre's conventions (Chandler 1997). In television a common division goes between programs with fictional grounds like drama, comedies, westerns, cop stories, and programs which

work with authentic content like news, documentaries and current affairs programs (Burton 2000). Five common television (and film) properties that will be used are: narrative, characterisation, basic themes, setting, iconography and filmic techniques (Solomon 1995).

Genre conventions of debate programs

Örnebring (2001) argues that factual television programs like news and current debate programs demand somewhat different genre elements. Using Fairclough's (1995) analysis of media texts, three basic questions must be asked: How is reality represented? What roles and identities are shaped for the actors in the media texts journalists, program hosts, interviewees, experts and audiences? And lastly, what relations are shaped between the actors involved in the media texts? In other words, there are three levels of analysis: representation, roles and relationships (Örnebring 2001).

Representation of reality

To be able to say something about how reality is represented, one has to know what is discussed in the mediated publicity, in the socio-political sphere, at the time of airing. In news programs various kinds of events are depicted to represent reality. Issues taken up in current affairs debate programs often have parallels or emanate out of other representations of the mediated public sphere. So questions and problems taken up in the current affairs programs are representations of reality. Actors in society like politicians, representatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations can be viewed as to represent reality: possible actors in the programs. Subjects and program participants cannot be supported to be part of genre elements; earlier research has not been interested in themes discussed, or participant categories represented (ibid.). Instead Örnebring made quantitative surveys of the types of themes and categories of actors represented in the genre, during the genre's lifespan (forty years). In this way he caught a picture of the complex problem seen as interesting and relevant during a certain time span. In my case I have not made a survey over the last 7-10 years of current programs, but rely on the content being thematically credible enough. To determine the credibility reading a genre is something that ordinary television viewers manage well (Tudor 1973/1995). Therefore I only discuss this in general terms and use my own common sense as a representative (common) Swedish viewer.

Roles and relationships

The genre has already established built-in-basic-castings for the roles and identities of actors that are formed. The occurrence of a program host is central. S/he is as a representative of the producer of the programme, and as such an important carrier of the quality and aims. Participants and guests in

the program are also important, but they function as examples, experts, and representatives having responsibility, or carrying a specific opinion. The third level of analysis is the relationships between the actors. Who has the power to define and control the debate, how it should develop, what issues could and should be discussed? How are the actors treated by each other, is the debate formal, and where is it placed in the program?

Composition and communication

Apart from the *mise-en-scène* and technical (filmic) codes mentioned for fiction products, Örnebring adds another technical code element (2001:45) called composition where he analyses how the various types of content or elements - like interviews, reportages, artists' performances - in the program are related to each other, since this composition in itself can be of importance to the meaning.

The communication as such – the debates and discussions – in the programs are crucial and the language codes have to be analysed, especially to define what a debate/discussion is, and what sets it apart from other forms of communication. Örnebring's definitions of debate and discussion (2001:45) derived from discourse analytical terminology by Nylund (2000) are used. A debate is a type of discussion where participants with different views argue rather formally (*ibid.*). It differs from an ordinary and less formal dialogue. Debates are more formalised and rule/goal-oriented and focus specific issues or questions. The will and interest to 'debate a theme/question' with a common societal interest and importance are central form elements. The argumentation could be either formal or more personal, from only one participant's point of view.

Different language codes can contribute to the constitution of the genre elements. The theme of the genre element is constituted through the perspective used to picture it. Various words or phrases can work as markers (Hellspong and Ledin 1997). When a theme or subject is introduced (in the beginning of the program) a perspective may be obvious and may be discovered through the use of words to compare (less, bigger, longer), to indicate presence and distance, future or past or the use of particular words (freedom fighter versus terrorist).

Dress codes, titles used for actors and mode of address are elements where the roles and relationships of the actors and host are constituted. Mode of address is how the program host positions him/herself in relation to the guests and/or the audience (e.g. humble, respectful, disrespectful, critical, non critical) and how guests address each other or how questions are put. Roles of actors will differ depending

on why they are in the studio. The types of questions, how actors answer them and how they perform towards each other communicate the degree of formality and tone.

3. ANALYSIS

Some central aspects of the genre features are selected and examples displayed in the analysis. Implicit or explicit breaches in the conventions of the genre are pointed out. A general textual analysis of the program is then done using Fairclough's three basic questions (1995).

Common genre conventions

Basic themes, settings, iconography, characterisation, filmic techniques

Formally all five episodes followed the same pattern: Each week the title of the program ' *Debatten. Sanningen om Marika*. Episode X' appeared⁴. The credits from the drama rolled up, covering the left half of the television screen. In the other half of the screen the host introduced the program walking up close to the camera and welcoming the audience informing about the structure of 'debatten' (Eng. the debate): 'Each episode is 15 minutes long and aired live'. He introduced the subject slightly differently every time but circled around the disappeared person in the drama, Maria, and why may people disappear. Film snippets were used to introduce the week's issue. Debate participants (three to four individuals) were introduced with names and their relationship to the disappeared person mentioned - foster-mother, family member - or the person's profession/title. Name/title bars appeared on the screen simultaneously as an actor talked.

Set in a television studio the scenography was typical for a current affairs debate program (see picture 5:1). The present actors were seated on bar chairs behind a rectangular bar table, facing the camera. The host was placed at one end, also facing the camera. The visual décor consisted of colours in red, black, white, and grey. The actors and host were slightly formally dressed, spotlighted and surrounded by a darker/less lighted area. Black wallpaper, striped with thin white stripes, big program title signs, a big flat screen television and, in two programs big photos of the disappeared person(s), covered the back studio wall. The formally dressed web editor, Eva Rados, faced the camera, flung up on a bar chair behind a small circular bar table, with a laptop computer placed in front of her.

The program consisted of a combination of a studio debate and other types of program content, interviews, reportages and sent-in video snippets. The host moderated the debate and introduced the web editor and her short reportages and interviews. These featured the disappeared woman's husband,

ambulance personnel, a policeman, a witness, and organisation/institution representatives. He introduced the video film clips sent in by individuals, once an anonymous witness, other times from people searching for the disappeared person. The clips were discussed by the host and questions directed to the actors. During the program SMS tickers⁵ informed new viewers about the debate, encouraged viewers to send in their thoughts/views by mail, SMS or phone calls. These were pre-constructed, no viewer text messages could actually be used and the program was pre-recorded. However, comments from ‘viewers’ appeared as (live) SMS tickers. At the end of the program, the host walked close up to the camera and briefly summed up what had been achieved during the program, finalising with a few questions that had yet to be answered, ‘but in the following program’. He invited the audience to go to the webpages, to try to find answers for themselves. When the credits started rolling the host shook hands with all actors, one after the other.

In the credits of the first program the host, web editor and the four actors were represented by their real names (see appendix), in the following programs the real names of the actors acting themselves appeared, and casted actors appeared with their characters’ names and their real names like ‘Representative for the organisation *Ordos Serpentis* – Lisa Green’. Commonly an SVT production will end with the text ‘SVT Drama’, but this did not appear. The last line in the credits was: ‘In cooperation with the company P’.



Picture 5:1 illustrates the program host to the right and his guests, from left: Aina Teives, the forensic dentist; Bert Hansson, the chair of the board of Gothenburg Municipality and Martin Ericsson, the boyfriend of Adrijanna. Teives used her real name and profession. Hansson was a professional actor that used his real name.

SMS tickers

SMS tickers appeared at the bottom of the screen during the shows. They had different functions. Some urged the audience to take part in the search and addressed how SVT could be contacted by MMS, phone or email, and how and where to learn more about the subjects discussed, at svt.se/marika. Some SMS tickers contained live background information to the subject discussed at that moment. Others seemed to be ‘live-sent’ SMS from viewers, most of them giving a critical or negative response:

Andrijana seems totally paranoid. Nobody could believe her story , could they? They know what they have done. This is only to create attention. * Keep in touch with us. MMS 710 10 *

SMS tickers, first episode

“The chat is open. Go to svt.se/marika * Or get in contact with us * marika@svt.se* MMS 710 10 * Phone 031-837076*

SMS tickers, second episode

Psychosis and depressions are 14% of the illness burden of the world. Young women aged 15-24 are the ones most ill.

SMS tickers, third episode

The SMS ticker texts seemed to have different senders. Some appeared to come from the producers like contact information and background knowledge, others from pretended viewers. But, as mentioned, this was not possible, because the program was pre-recorded. However, this information was not given to the television viewers. The game participants discussed this thoroughly in one of the chats. They found inconsistencies in the debates. Still these SMS texts gave an impression of realism, of actuality, strengthening the message from the program hosts’ comments about the show being aired live.

The reportages and interviews

The show also contained the web editor’s video recorded reportages and interviews. The stories were fabricated to fit the story in the debate, and to connect to the game and the drama. They all carried realistic content like the web editor’s video featuring the entrance to the tax authorities/Registration Board, the scenes shot at a cemetery and the ambulance driver in front of his ambulance. Some of them, such as the interview with the upset ‘J’/Jonathan, Maria’s husband, seemed a bit stretched out



disappear: ‘Adrijanna Skarped, who had voiced the theory of people disappearing to another life and searched for her disappeared friend Maria, has disappeared too. Have you seen this woman?’ A photo of Adrijanna was shown and the text: Have you seen Adrijanna? ‘Is there any coincidence between the two disappearances, Adrijanna’s and Maria Klingbohm’s disappearances?’ The show ended with the words:

We have obtained dramatic film snippets from an anonymous witness that also seems to be the kidnapper of Adrijanna. It seems to be shot from a mobile phone camera. We will put a small piece of this track on our web where you can listen to it. We will get back with more information about this next week ... Is there any connection between the disappearance of Maria and Adrijanna? Could there be an underlying conspiracy?

Episode 4. The host commenced the show with the words:

Maria Klingbohm has disappeared and was declared dead two years ago, this we know. Now we have got new information indicating that the wrong body has been buried. Does this mean that she is still alive? During today’s 15 minutes we will try to unmask the truth, using new evidence. And the kidnapped Adrijanna has been released too.

A photo of Adrijanna was shown. At the end of the program the boyfriend of Adrijanna, looked straight into the camera and urged the audience to gather outside the SVT building on the following Saturday evening. John added: ‘Ok, there seem to be a lot of people gathering outside the SVT building on Saturday’. He continued:

But who is then buried, if not Maria? Could the wrong person be buried? The interrogation with Adrijanna, made at the mental hospital in Växjö will be aired. It is now adapted and will be aired tonight in cooperation with Swedish Radio, SR⁶.

Episode 5. The host greeted the audience with the wording: ‘You have just seen the last episode of the drama *Sanningen om Marika*. Tonight we will meet the potentates who are believed to lay behind the disappearance of people’. He ended with the words:

We will get to know who The Others are. Maria’s return creates new questions: who is buried in the graveyard? But now the series has finished. Others must search the answers, in another forum. As a closure I think we should now watch Maria’s DVD and find out what she would like to tell us⁷.

Current affairs debate conventions

Representations of reality

There were different features and elements in the programs that could be interpreted to have represented reality. Analysing it as a factual program with Fairclough's three questions revealed how the producers worked both with authentic/real facts and fabricated 'facts' to blur the distinction between the two (1995). The first question of how reality was represented can be revealed in the debate issues and how well the actors can be said to have represented reality.

Roles and relationships

As described, the program host introduced and resumed the shows in the start and end. The issues taken up were trustworthy enough to represent issues discussed in factual programs like news, documentaries or current affairs debate programs in current society⁸. Themes addressed why people disappear, homelessness, the fact of electronic surveillance in society, conspiracy theories and the existence of (secret) sects. The focus on one individual's issue – Adrijanna and her friend's disappearance – was in itself an authentic and realistic issue. But other subjects were a bit more suspect and less credible, such as Adrijanna's disappearance in episode 3, as well as her release in the following episode.

John Carlsson, the program host, was a well-known television celebrity that had represented Swedish Television in programs like *Mediemagasinet*⁹ the last five to ten years. Some of the actors represented themselves, such as the policeman Thomas Fuxborg, the forensic dentist Aina Teivens, the sociologist Magnus Karlsson and the psychologist Anders Wellsmo. They were presented as 'participants' in the credits. The disappeared woman's friend Adrijanna Skarped was credited 'participant', but with a slight slide on her name, her first name is Adriane. All actors were presented as 'participants' in the first episode. In the following shows both participants and cast actors appeared. Casted actors were for example the representatives from the organisation *Ordo Serpentis*, the CEO of *Kerberos Surveillance Company* and the representative from *Cityinitiativet*.

The program host carried an important role as a representative of the producers. Some of the actors carried roles as experts and were presented as 'themselves' with their real names. The representatives from the various organisations all carried responsibility in one or another way. Individuals, ordinary people, like Lars G Larsson, who was a representative from the collective where Maria's mother Ingela used to live, and Birgitta, Maria's foster-mother as well as Sixten Gunnar Danielsson, a dropout of

society, all carried a particular point of view - they witnessed Maria's existence. Birgitta was a casted character but the other two played themselves, and appeared with their real names in the credits.

The host was in full control all the time, managing the debate, developing the discussions. He addressed the actors in a correct and formal tone. The actors were rather formal in their communication towards each other. Adrijanna was upset a few times, but in correspondence with her given role. She was angry with SVT for not believing her and for making a profit from her situation. Martin Ericsson, her boyfriend, appearing in the fourth episode urged the audience to come to the SVT building the following Saturday evening. He was not given the floor, but chimed in. This incident was obviously 'made up' in advance. The host, John, filed in and repeated Martin's words so that the viewers would understand that something was going to happen.

A few other actors appeared, but were not mentioned in the credits: Maria's husband appeared in three reportages/interviews, 'Mattlo', a spokesperson from *Conspirare* who was interviewed by Eva Rados. Four more characters appeared, like an ambulance man and a 'witness', mentioned as such in the credits with their real names. A tax authorities representative was mentioned in the credits with his cast name, and a policeman only appeared in the show by what one could believe was his real name, but was omitted in the credits.

To conclude, the majority of the actors used their real names, this counted especially for the ones in the studio debate. Maria on the other hand, only appeared on a 'handed-over DVD' and in a 'live' reportage, shot outside the SVT building during the fifth episode. The fact that some actors were not mentioned in the credits was probably a (production) mistake, due to the fact that the debate program had a very short production cycle. The teams worked hard to make the debate content 'hook into' the current events in the game and had less than 48 hours to complete their work before broadcast.

Composition and conversation

The conversation in the debate was formal and goal oriented – actors kept their positions and point of views, answered when addressed – and as such it was trustworthy and authentic. None of the actors, except the host, interrupted speakers, but he did it a lot and made excuses for it.

The composition was authentic and followed the genre. But the different items were so varying in quality and content, that one could suspect some of it to be fabricated. But which was? The reports from

the national registration board and the interviewed ambulance men and policemen seemed authentic. The two clips with Jonathan - the videotaped interview and the taped phone call - were obvious fabrications. The same was evident with the video film contributions and photos from the people at *Conspirare*, like in one clip where participants crawled in a big tube-like tunnel, and another one where they freed Adrijanna as well as some pictures of the coded language, the matrices.

4. A 360° ILLUSION...

The director succeeded in his aims of producing a program close to an existing genre. The form and structure followed the current affairs debate program format. Themes and subjects were realistic, topics represented current societal issues. The characterisation followed the genre with actors carrying opposing points of view, as did the setting – the studio environment – and the iconography with its visual décor, costume and objects as well. The filmic techniques and conventions of camera work, lightning, use of colour, editing carried the same factual genre message. The names of the actors presented in credits were their real names. The roles and relationships of the actors aligned with the genre. There were experts, representatives of organisations and of individual point of views. The host drove the discussions and the program.

Was it realistic? Yes, partly. The conventions of realism enhanced the sense of authenticity: the close-up with the host gave a physical closeness, the combination of real time and real events as they happen authenticated television, the intimacy of intruding into others' lives, the fact that Adrijanna, the step-mother and other persons around Maria as well as a photo of her were part of the program all supported its allusion to realism. Current affairs debates are about real issues and real people, and here they were, the real people, the real issues and the real experts.

But what was not realistic? What struggled to convince people? What could make viewers unsure and doubtful? Even if the genre conventions were followed, here and there small (and sometimes bigger) markers were found that could – or maybe should - have made viewers suspicious. The program was introduced as episodes of the 'debate of the drama *Sanningen om Marika*', a fact that must have made one or two viewers react. At the same time, the Swedish word for debate (debatt) is also the name of the genre, so it may have tricked a few. Another cause of doubt were the unrealistically short shows, they lasted only 15 minutes. Actors appeared in the credits with both their real names, as expected and casted names or characters, which might have puzzled a few. The program host was a bit forced and exaggerated in his role sometimes as were some of the actors. The narrative was not entirely

consistent with the genre. Different topics are commonly discussed during a program's season but in *Debatten* the same issues reappeared show after show, the content of the series circling around one overarching issue – a disappeared person. Many issues were realistic in themselves but added together they were an exaggeration. It was also unrealistic to air a mini-series about only *one* person's issues and problems. After a few episodes it became obvious that there existed a kind of narrative. The iconographic sounds of *Debatten* broke the genre conventions, the drama music track was used and it communicated fiction rather than realism. The composition followed the genre conventions but the content in the different elements did not. The film clips from the game were unrealistic like the Riga film (see chapters 2 and 8) and the sequence from people crawling in a big tubelike tunnel looking for Maria.

A last but important observation was the obvious need of contextual knowledge to understand the current affairs debate program. The content and discussions in the shows must have been hard to understand for somebody only watching the drama. There were many wordings, names and small insinuations that could be traced to the simultaneous game activities online. Not to mention all the video films, photos and websites that were parts of the game. Some of the game events (sub plots) in other media were only mentioned briefly in the debate like with Maria's dental X-rays. The background to this, which was not retold in the program, was that in order to prove Maria's existence her dental X-rays were to be examined. Clues led to *Cityinitiativet*. The intension with the break-in at the organisation's storage was to get Maria's X-rays.

Still people were hoaxed. Why? Viewers today are used to TV presenting shows mixing genres, hybrids appear all the time at a rather quick pace, viewers catch up and enjoy new and mixed genres. They are even used to hybrids of factual and fiction genres such as reality soaps, docusoaps, dramadocs and entertainment programs mocking and taunting news programs in very authentic, but sarcastic and ironic ways. But then fiction markers might be more obvious, 'real' professionals like forensic dentists or sociologists or factual television professionals from other programs were not commonly used at the time. *Debatten* was directed with authentic aims, and the fiction markers limited it to an absolute minimum. It followed the genre conventions. It all helped to hoax even the observant viewers. And it made the programs very enjoyable for others. The fabricated content was also submerged in all the correct facts about socio economic problems and historical and political facts. It was hard for viewers to figure out what was true and what was not, and was also deliberately designed to challenge participants. Designing a TV program with a 360° illusion is rather unusual. However, the phenomenon is much more common on the internet where it may be difficult to trace and control sources.

The declining viewer rates of the current affairs program can be interpreted as an audience reaction. A possible explanation could be that viewers could not discover/perceive the reality game markers and were puzzled, angry or put off. However, for others these game markers were obvious. Another explanation could be that cutting out the televised parts to become a stand-alone television product did not work. My hypothesis is that the two televised programs were not read as a unit, as two parts of one fiction, but as one drama in the fictional genre and the other one - the fictional current affairs debate program - as a factual program. The answer, as I have argued, can be found in the way the producers designed and produced the program. As being a/the creator of the particular genre, in Swedish television, they held professional knowledge to form a very authentic product in the genre, also being a PSB. The web survey answers show how upset viewers were with the fact that, as they saw it, SVT purposely lied. "Bloody liars!" one upset respondent commented. (More viewer reactions are addressed in chapters 7 and 8).

...but no participatory culture

Debatten was meant to work as 'glue' between the televised drama and the game parts. Lots of content relied on knowledge viewers had got from participating in the street game, viewing and reading content and video snippets on the production's webpages, and by taking part in the chats and forums. If you were not a gamer of any kind and had no knowledge of ARG or (pervasive) larps, you would not easily discover the game/fictional markers, and possibly became cheated or at least confused, and then possibly angry and agitated. To understand any current affairs debate program, knowledge of the cultural and societal context is important. Commonly a current affairs program tries to explain and develop an issue from different views and perspectives, and actors from these perspectives are given room to discuss, so that the viewer may take a standpoint of her/his own. Here the context was set: if you were not in it or part of it, then you had little chance of getting into it.

5. SUMMARY

The program was crafted to become a 360° illusion of an authentic current affairs debate according to the genre conventions and to television's media logic (i.e. content, quality, presentation, production process etcetera). As such it was innovative and novel. It managed to create an illusion of actuality. However, this aim was not to be merged with the other aim, i.e. to open up for audience participation. The director did not view it as feasible to include methods of participation (like participants as discussants, participants' game reports etcetera) because it would break the credibility and quality of television. Hence, the debate did not become the innovative participatory television program that SVT

(and P) had aimed for, and in this sense it was a large drawback for the production. Furthermore, it did not tie the drama and the street game activities together as planned. In this way the game was not ‘displayed’ for prospective participants and the potential of the already carefully designed *Ordo Serpentis* game could not be utilised. On the other hand, it proves that the medium specific quality demands are strong.

Notes

1 He alludes to participants.

2 He refers to Maria’s stepmother appearing in the debate.

3 He refers to the program host and his difficulties to act himself entirely. Probably the fictive self lay too close to his own self for him to feel comfortable.

4 Watch the YouTube snippet <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AmTll6qXukM&feature=related>, featuring the host in a short promotion video that was initially put on the www.svt.se/marika webpage and 25th September on YouTube by SVT. In it he promotes the ‘live-sent’ debate. Accessed 7th August 2010.

5 Live SMS running along the bottom of the screen during a TV program.

6 SR, Swedish Radio, sent a short program from the psychiatric clinic where Adrijanna had been taken when she was kidnapped. It featured Adrijanna being ‘interrogated’ by a psychologist. This was the only co-operation between the public service companies, SVT and SR, in this production.

7 Earlier that evening, outside the SVT building, the audience saw how Maria gave Eva Rados the DVD. The DVD entitled ‘Jag har kommit för att förvirra dig’ (Eng. I have arrived to confuse you) was put on YouTube later: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CO-bGlgJ7w>, accessed 7th August 2010.

8 Current SVT Factual programs manage for example scientologists (Uppdrag granskning), trafficking (Agenda) and ‘FRA-lagen’, a legislative proposal about signals intelligence and bugging (Debatt). Accessed 2nd Oct 2008: http://svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=1411&lid=samhalle_ochamp;_dokumentar&from=menu

9 Mediemagasinet, a Swedish Television program scrutinising media’s role in Sweden and the world. John Carlsson was the program host for some years. www.svt.se/mediemagasinet

CHAPTER 6

THE CONSPIRARE CHAT: CONDITIONAL HOSPITALITY

Researcher (R): Is it really possible to run different chats? How do you reason?

Well, we refused to let SVT take care of that, so we fixed more resources from SVT for us to make our own chat. And so we did. And why did we do it? Because, if we didn't do it, then any participant would set up a similar chat. This happens in all similar contexts, in reality game contexts. And then there would exist a chat that we could not moderate, we wouldn't get statistics, and it wouldn't comply to our aesthetics. It would be something else. So, we said to SVT - You have low traffic on your chat. So, either you will lose this control, or we will build it from scratch. So we did it, and we've worked very hard to have a chat, a forum and a blog that people are involved in, instead of them doing their own thing. It is very good. I'm incredibly proud of it. It's really great.

P's CEO, 13th November

1. INTRODUCTION

Why a new production part?

The *Conspirare* chat was not included in the initial design. Originally a moderated 'chat' was planned at the SVT production webpage. But after some internal discussions at P, and negotiations with IT/web decision-makers at SVT during summer, a (synchronous) chat, the *Conspirare* chat, was set up by P who also managed and controlled it. The argument for setting it up at all was the goal to create participatory culture. With real-time communication the game would become more participatory (and responsive) compared to (only) using the SVT 'chat' that was asynchronous (see chapter 2 and 3). Accordingly the *Conspirare* chat held a significant functionality in the game, and the SVT one held only a minor role in the game. At the *Conspirare* chat participants could collaborate, participate, plan, discuss, and socialise real-time with each other, the protagonist Adrijanna and other central characters like her friends and crew. For the organisers it worked as an invaluable tool to keep track of participants and their whereabouts, as the P CEO expresses above. Apart from not being planned from the outset, its purpose as an important communication medium and a control function for the game masters attracted my attention and were grounds enough for taking a closer look at it. However, obtaining its goal for participatory culture was the stronger motive, particularly due to the other ideal, the 360° illusion principle.

Problems chatting, but why?

Through my participant observations I discovered that the social (gaming) rules aimed at upholding the 360° illusion, were set up by the organisers and the primary participant group. This took place weeks before the larger influx of participants began to log on. The chat was one of the online spaces that drama viewers came across when responding to the program announcement's urge to visit *Conspirare*. The original idea was that anybody should be able to chat, everyone was to feel invited.

However, participants did not easily get access to the *Conspirare* chat, as this chapter will show. For the chat to meet with the legal demands and policy of SVT it had to be moderated full time. It could under no circumstances contain any illegal harassment or content. The nature of the simultaneous and ambiguous open- and closedness was a significant barrier for the chatroom members to deal with. Similar problems were also experienced in the *Conspirare* blog and forum, as well as at the so-called chat on the SVT webpage. But these communication channels did not operate in real-time, they were moderated afterwards. Hence the problem was not as obvious as with the chat with its communicative features of immediate response and feedback.

The chat illustrates the conflict between the 360° illusion design ideal and the ideal to create participatory culture in the game. But it also shows that the medium specific features of new media like the internet and its materiality do not automatically imbue participation (Ekström 2011) even if its inherent interactive and participatory opportunities are there. The asymmetry that nevertheless characterises the relationship between media and audiences has to be taken into consideration. In this chapter I will shed light on the chat, its governing social rules, the social interplay and how the P game masters managed the chat. My tool for analysis is the notion of hospitality as described and developed by Jaques Derrida (Derrida and Wills 1995; Derrida 1999; Derrida and Dufourmantelle 2000; Derrida 2001). When applied, this philosophical frame-of-reference shows the challenges for the participatory culture that the producers were faced with and highlights the asymmetrical relationship between producers and participants.

As a participant observer I was able to observe what happened both as a lurker in the chat and at the P office, following the organisers'/game masters' actions and management of the chat.

The chapter begins with a section on chats as virtual meeting places, followed by the background, description and functions of the *Conspirare* chat. The theory behind Derrida's notion of hospitality and

how it can be used as an analysis tool in the textual analysis of the chat are also addressed. I use rich illustrative quotes and examples from the empirical material. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the chat's dysfunctional features and some reflections on the chosen game design.

Chats as virtual meeting places

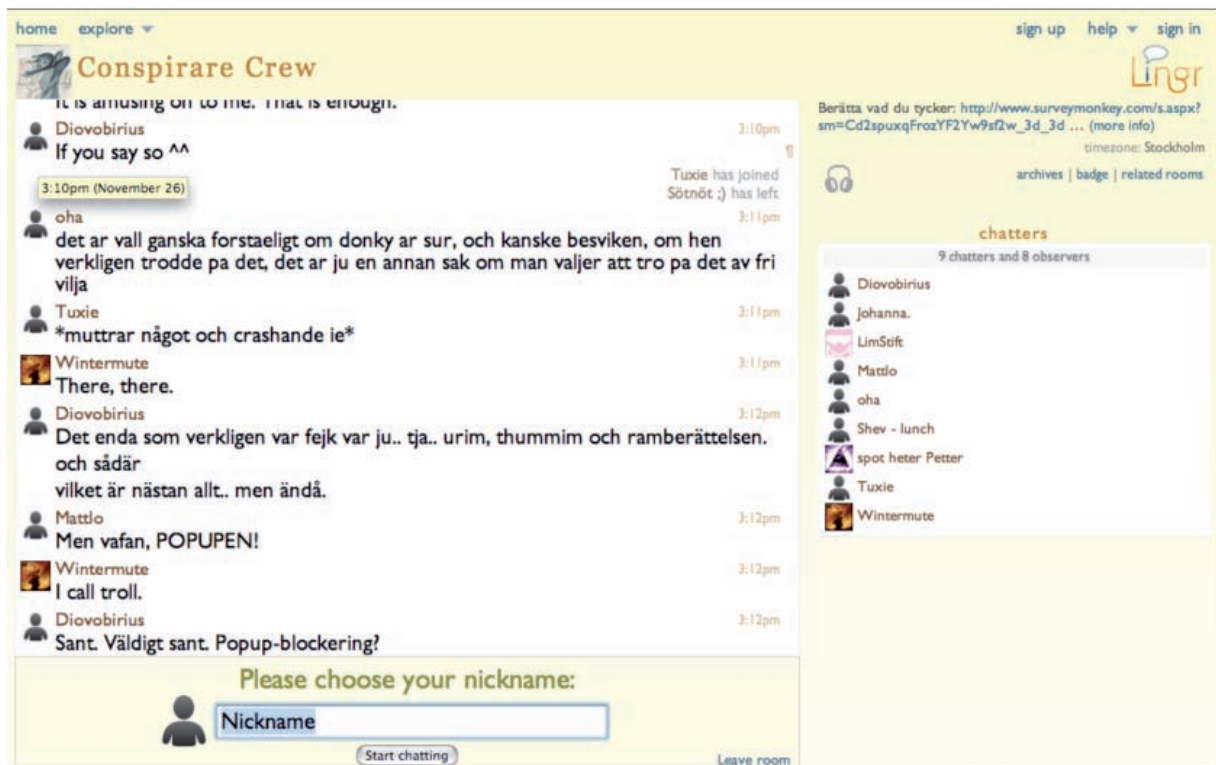
The social nature of most virtual worlds demands communication features, either text or voice based. Computerised games are often played in chatrooms, or chatrooms could be embedded into games. Multiplayer games and virtual worlds, like *World of Warcraft* and *Second Life*, commonly use a combination of in-game chat, avatar animation or 'emotes', avatar appearance, and direct action for player-to-player communication (Innocent and Haines 2007).

The original meaning of the word 'chat' is informal conversation. In the current context, it is the process of real-time communication with other internet users¹. Most commonly the term describes synchronous conferencing (text-based group chats) or one-to-one chat. Occasionally asynchronous conferencing is called chat, thus meaning any technology ranging from real-time online chat over instant messaging and online forums, to fully immersive graphical environments (Jonsson 1998). Chat has emerged as instant communication on the internet. There still exist separate applications merely for the purpose of instant communication, as in the early days of chat applications. Today they often supplement various (social) contexts and are often embedded in these contexts, like in the case of SOM.

The primary use of a chat is to share information with a group of other users, who gather around both playful and serious subjects of conversation and activities (Sveningsson Elm 2001). The discourse is dynamic and constantly shifting. Essential characteristics are those of play performance, support and presentation of self. New technology has enabled the use of file sharing and webcams to be included. Almost all online chat or messaging services allow users to display and/or exchange photos of themselves (e.g. *AOL Instant Messenger*, *Google Talk*, *ICQ*, *Skype* or *IRC*).

Chatting is ephemeral and instant, but the tools demand some important features to work efficiently for communication. Examples are the ability to identify the host, to 'see' and identify people present, to understand the purpose of the chat, and where it is situated (hosting website). As a communication medium, it has problems though (Vronay, Smith et al. 1999). A typical chat interface consists of a participant list, a text history window, and a single line for text entry. Conversations tend to be hard

2006a) use an off-game space, where meta-discussions about the game and questions and uncertainties about rules can be aired, thereby creating a feeling of safety and comfort. In contrast, the producers used one of the few rules in the Nordic form of larp: that players stay in character continuously



Picture 6:1. Screen shot of the Conspirare chat at Lingr.com, November 2007. It displays the features mentioned: chatters and observers ('Diovobirius', 'Johanna', et cetera), date and time of conversation, and times for when a participant logs on/off, icons and names of chatters and the name of the chat, here: 'Conspirare Crew'. Participants could go to archives and check earlier conversation, see the time zone and more.

Functions

The chatroom soon became a space where participants went not only to collaborate, discuss and solve clues, but to socialise and engage in small-talk about everyday problems and events. The game masters saw the potential of larping online with participants. Soon a kind of agreed set of implicit rules of how to communicate about game content developed with the initiated player kernel, inhabiting the chat. The social conventions that grew in this evenly matched and attuned group can be compared with similar conventions in MUDs (Bartle 1996). It became an important forum where actions - ARG activities and larp events - were jointly planned and organised by central characters (game masters) and participants. In this way game masters got the required and essential tool to steer the game, by which they could control and keep track of the participants' ideas, plans and actions. They could fin



associated with hospitality has to be considered. It is in fact this internal tension that keeps it alive (Derrida 2001: 22). Hospitality requires one to be the master and hence controlling and implicates claims of ownership and a desire to establish a form of self-identity. If the guests take over, then the host is no longer hospitable because (s)he is no longer in control. Thus, any attempt of behaving hospitably is always linked to the keeping of guests under control, to the closing of boundaries, and even to the exclusion of particular groups (Derrida 2000: 151-5). It seems that hospitality always places some type of limit upon where others can trespass, no matter what kind of 'fencing' you put up (e.g. border control, online login systems and the like). Hospitality has a tendency to be rather inhospitable. The fencing means that the host questions and identifies the guest: What is your name? Where are you from? What do you want? Yes, you may stay. This way the host sets restrictions on the guest that has to agree to act within the established limitations.

Dikeç (2002: 229) states that hospitality is an asymmetrical social relation emphasising the recognition on both sides, and it is not simply tolerance. The host needs the guest to be able to be hospitable, and the guest needs the host to get shelter. Derrida points out that one of the uncertainties is 'the general problematic of relationships between parasitism and hospitality' (2000: 59), and asks how a guest can be distinguished from a parasite. Derrida highlights several contradictory meanings, such as 'host' and 'guest', 'guest' and 'parasite' and 'guest' or 'enemy', using Benveniste's (1973) etymology of the term. In chatrooms 'trolls' appear at times, chatters that for some reason want to disrupt or provoke the on-topic conversation; trolls portray the enemy, the parasite⁸. Such indeterminacies give rise to anxieties surrounding hospitality, the risk that the guest may actually become a parasite, or an enemy, a risk that the host has to manage, in one way or other.

The concept of hospitality has been applied in several disciplinary areas, and across a variety of phenomena. In *Mobilizing hospitality: the ethics of social relations in a mobile world* (Molz and Gibson 2007) a number of researchers examine hospitality from different perspectives: as a way of negotiating kinship, friendship or hostility; the shifting social and cultural meanings of hospitality; commercial forms of hospitality such as those provided by the travel and tourism industry; or less explicit forms of hospitality extended by the nation to migrants, refugees, or asylum seekers. Emerging forms of online social relations and cybernetic encounters have examined technological forms of hospitality and belonging online (Aristarkhova 1999; Aristarkhova 2000), as have interdisciplinary approaches to hospitality, with the perspective of virtual and geographical mobility (Molz and Gibson 2007). Derrida (2000) urges us to note and question the notion of hospitality in today's virtual world, in our computerised meeting spaces that have emerged in the upsurge of social media and with the internet.

Bell (2007) examines the host-ness and guest-ness in our mobile and virtual spaces and concludes that 'it is a new realm to consider issues of hospitality , of hosting and guesting, as they are rewired by techno-mobilities' (:39). One can only speculate what new practices of (virtual) hospitality will look like, with the mixing-up of proximity and telepresence in new hybrid spaces (ibid). Benedikt (1991) suggests principles of cyber space design, where some key principles focus on social relations, such as shared social reality and the ability to 'see' who else is around you ('netiquette', discussed further on). However, he does not mention any principles of hospitality . So how can one talk and refl ect about hospitality in these virtual meeting spaces containing short, ephemeral moments of communication, with its flickering moments of host-ness and guest-ness?

Chat culture and hospitality

The aporia of hospitality in chatrooms and chat culture is apparent. Strangers are welcomed in various ways. Hosts market their particular chats to, for example, make new friends, fi nd a partner, or discuss a common interest. The hospitality is conditional; participants have to follow the chatroom regulations - the chatiquette. Rules are often explicitly expressed, to prevent unwelcome behaviour or communication (e.g. abuse, insults), and to make communication work smoothly between chatters. Hosts may declare the rules before login, who is welcome (ages rules), and what to communicate around (subject areas). If rules are infringed, warnings of possible blocking may be given. In this way chats/hosts welcome strangers, but condition hospitality by putting up a set of regulations. Hosts are in charge, controlling guests and claiming ownership and hence also forming a kind of self-identity. On the other hand, the hosts need the guests, the chatters, to inhabit the chatrooms. The service is marketed, so chatters might have to pay either with time or money to take part. The chat might be financed by advertisements too. Thereby hosts are indebted to advertisers that in turn expect many guests/prospective customers. The control and the presence of guests is needed for hosts to be hospitable.

However, when new guests log on to an ongoing chat conversation - who is the host then? The hosting companies commonly do not have staff employed to moderate the conversation real-time. This rises questions about who welcomes the guests, and how . Do the 'older' more seasoned guests/chatters/ participants become the hosts? If so, what does this mean for the rules and restrictions? What happens when rules are implicit as in *SOM*? The implicit rule was 'pretend that it is real', as if (the game was) part of the ordinary, without explicitly informing about the rules of play that the 360° illusion demanded. How did this affect social interplay and hospitality in the *Conspirare* chatroom?

On-the-fly-invented strategies for managing participation

Although the chat application offered good standard functionalities, there were still problems. Since the real-time communication was not designed in advance, there was no deliberate strategy for how people would enter the game through the chat, in the beginning of the game⁹. The game masters had severe problems keeping the communication in-game, welcoming as well as taking care of the newcomers in a constructive way, and making them understand how they were expected to behave. So when problems appeared, and they came quickly, they had to be taken care of constantly.

Membership required

The *Conspirare* chat was experienced as inaccessible by many newcomers. This was apparent after the airing of the first drama episode, when a multitude of television viewers tried to, and also succeeded in getting into the chatroom. The large number of people that logged in caused the server to break down temporarily. Now the organisers discovered visitors that did not understand/perceive the implicit rule, and thereby caused ‘problems’. The response was to restrict the chatroom access, by demanding participants to register for *Conspirare* membership to get a chat log in.

Opening up new chatrooms

What complicated the situation was the instant moderation that had to take place. An urgent crisis occurred one of the first days when someone posted a photo of a killed cat. The issue was discussed at the following SVT-P phone meeting. It had to be removed, but how? The application had no management tools to moderate the conversation. And even if that had been possible, ‘people could go crazy’ if the conversation had been so explicitly and openly controlled and monitored by the host. Different solutions were examined during the week, contacts with the owners of the application, exploration of other chat applications. Everyone wanted to keep the real-time communication with the participants. The solution was to close it down and open up a new chatroom, and simultaneously only informing members via the forum about the change. This strategy of opening a new chat channel, whenever one was compromised by low quality, or disruptive discussions, was used at least three times.

Talking participants back ‘onto track’

The chat frequently got visitors who did not understand the implicit rule of the 360° illusion. They tried to make the other (aware) participants understand that everything was fake. These unwelcome visitors, called ‘trolls’¹¹ by game masters and other participants, created problems in the chat, writing

or posting things that were unwelcome like meta-discussing the game. For game masters it was ‘a balancing act to make participants understand’, as one of the game masters, this time the P producer, expressed it:

Like when people do not perceive the rules, we tried to steer them up on the right track in-game. Some players told them TINAG. We [game masters] never said TINAG directly. Once I did though with someone very disturbing.

This particular participant, that chatted a lot, was very hard to get rid of, and much effort was put to make him/her understand and accept the implicit rules. So to tell this participant TINAG was the very last solution. Subtly encouraging people into in-game participation was the strategy of greater preference.

Parallel chatrooms

The strategy of changing chatrooms was soon complemented with another strategy . A parallel chatroom was created and run a few times to get rid of the cumbersome participants. The *Conspirare* crew were directed to the new one via the forum. One of the administrators posted the following forum post about a new chatroom, informing members:



Picture 6:2. Screen shot of a Conspirare forum post on 10th November. The place is at ‘Möten och planering >> Nytt chattrum’ (Eng. Meetings and planning>> New Chatroom). The two columns are Författare (Author) and Meddelande (Message). The Author field informs of name and status (here Site Admin), an individually chosen picture (here a matrix), date for registering as member, and the number of posts (here 91) the person has made. Lastly the personal hometown (here Stockholm) is presented. The Message says: ‘New chatroom. New chatroom for conspirare crew (i.e. for everyone who can read this message) <http://lingr.com/room/conspirarecrew> keyword: klinga/ anty ----- Anty - site administrator and general web geek at Conspirare. If you need help ask me, or any of the other moderators!’

Engaged, but unsure

Members who found their way to a new chat that was run parallel to the ordinary one, had questions about the swap. Questions were posed that could not be explicitly handled, this one with ‘Banarne’ and ‘Marsha’ not understanding. ‘Anty’ and the participant ‘Nemo’ tried to answer:

Banarne: what happened with the last chatroom?

Anty: a person posted things that would smoke us if they read, and I mean TOTALLY

Banarne: ok... where should these things be posted?

Nemo: banarne: Nowhere what so ever. Things like that we only talk about in private pm, if you have to talk

Banarne: ok... Marsha: so that's the reason why it was messy to log in... aha.

Chat log, 10th November

Controlling membership registrations

Another strategy to filter out the unwelcome, was to manually control aspiring forum members by scanning new membership registration before approval. Here a conversation quote in the chatroom between ‘Anty’, one of the game masters, and a participant, ‘The Cat’, about checking new members:

The Cat: so I have access to it [the log in keyword] but it was fairly easy to get hold of it... when I became a member around a week ago I was not checked up and anybody could join [it is] not safe, so I think there could be unauthorised people here anyway...is there no way to check this up[?]

Anty: the cat: we check everybody filling in the registration form and [we are] activating accounts manually.

Chat log, 10th November

Engaged, but ambivalent

Some of the participants who adhered to the (largely implicit) rules experienced the chatroom communication as unwelcome and partly hostile. And the trolls also destroyed the player experience, as participant B6 emailed me on *Conspirare* post-game:

One thing that really disturbed me was the design of the OFF information [...] There should have been a fat info site somewhere, which everybody were recommended to read from the beginning, where it would be obvious that everything was a game, and that the most important game feature was to pretend it to be real [...] With a bit of luck we would have escaped everybody that tried to unveil it to be a game, when everybody already knew That was the most disturbing, and destroyed the gaming experience, I reckon.

The problem of keeping the chatroom in-game created problems for participants being aware of the implicit game rule. In the post-game interview participant B1 expressed that the chat was too much of socialising, and ‘too little of action, too little achievements’. To be outspoken was not possible, and a private chatroom was set up by this *Ordo Serpentis* cell where they could talk openly:

One of us tried to talk openly, but was quickly told by some people that the others were not ready for it [the information] [...] Ok, then we could not talk openly, and you do not know what you can say or not.

Yes, it is a game-but what is fact and fake?

Even for experienced participants the obfuscation created an ambiguous experience:

Well, [I am uncertain of] what can be done in the game; what actually is the game and what is not [the game]. Because I got very ambiguous messages from them [game masters] that some parts were a game, [and] some parts turned like real. Someone said Kerberos is a real company. I went a bit [unsure and thought] - Wait, what have I done!? [I got] very worried because of what happened, I had played as if real.

Interview quote, Participant B 4

This participant was uncertain of what was factual and what was fabricated, until the last week of the game, and was a bit careful of what actions to take/perform.

Participants' strategies

The engaged participants adopted multiple strategies to deal with unaware or ‘trolling’ participants, who were seeking confirmation of the gameness of the game, or who rejected it. They often met them with a kind of silence - a dry politeness? Another strategy was to provide them with subtle clues for how to play the game. They hinted with the ARG acronym TINAG, but it was not always understood. Other participants were less subtle, and tried to tell fellow participants what it was about:

Morgan: b57:what is a troll?

B57: it can be an ‘inconvenient person’ in this case, that tries to tell the truth, a so called ‘whistle blower’(check Wikipedia)

Chat log, 4th November

4. SUMMARY

I have shown how the implicit rules of the reality game created tensions. The SOM producers tried to keep each and every part of the game seamless according to the 360° design, the chatroom being one part. They tried to make the chat work for experienced players as well as keeping it open (and welcoming) to newcomers and inexperienced participants. But the reality fiction created tensions and the chat developed extraordinary features, like being both open and closed, or that it consisted of parallel chats. Implicit rules were shaped colouring the treatment and management of participants. The feeling of hostility and confusion was evident. It made participants unsure and hesitant about how to participate. It also made it immensely difficult and time consuming to game master. It literally meant ‘throwing out’ valuable and potential participants.

My conclusions are similar to the ones made for the debate. In both cases the 360° illusion ideal ‘overshadowed’ the crafting of participatory culture. Like with the director leaving the fiction genre conventions for the debate program to the benefit of the 360° illusion, the P producers upheld the 360° illusion in the *Conspirare* chat rather than making it participatory for everyone. The director followed the medium specific demands to create quality television. For the P producers the decision was founded on a mix of their political aspirations and the fact that the game would be immersive for hard-core players. And, maybe more importantly, P could keep control of the development of the narrative. The CEO was interviewed in mid-October (see quote in chapter 4) before the airing of the drama and the start of the *Ordo Serpentis* game. He knew that if they did not put up some kind of game marker many people would not be able to participate. When the *Conspirare* chat started, ahead of the television airings, it worked smoothly. But the producers seemed to have misjudged what could happen. Instead of loosening it and empowering the audience the asymmetry of the relationship of the medium and its audience was increased - and the political aspiration was weakened.

The rule ‘pretend as if it is real’ with the aspiration for seamlessness, created tension - a tension to be compared with Derrida’s tension in the notion of an altruistic hospitality . Hospitality is reciprocal, and at the same time conditioned. The P producers were the masters and in control. All of the players were effectively ‘guests’. The participants had to deal with questions like: What is this? Is this real or is it only a game? How should I act to be accepted? Furthermore, the more seasoned chatters had no tools to help welcoming the newcomers. The participants’ actions and their strategies to deal with this differed. The trolls destroyed and disturbed the game for the others and became ‘enemies’, ‘parasites’. Although the majority of players agreed with the organisers that the trolls were problematic, they did

not always agree on how to deal with them. Another complication was that the implicit rules of how to behave in the chat were performed, not written down. The rules were not established from the start, they emerged in the interplay between the (first) participant group and the game masters, far in advance of the great influx of chatters. The newcomers were 'invited' into the existing social conditions - conditional hospitality - and were expected not to discuss it. So hostility arose from participants not being on speaking terms/agreeing with the conventions, and also because the conditions could not be understood, or perceived by (new) participants.

There were several reasons why P (the organisers) decided to act as 'hosts'. P had to find an approach to comply with the legal demands of SVT, which required some kind of monitoring and moderation of the chat. But this implied claims of ownership, and a desire to establish a form of self-identity for P, which was another reason why the producers wanted to set up the chat and forum at

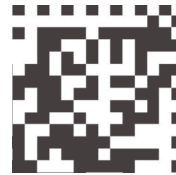
Notes

- 1 'chat' A Dictionary of the Internet. Darrel Ince. Oxford University Press, 2001. Oxford Reference Online. Oxford University Press. Malmö högskola. <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t12.e539>, accessed 16th December 2008.
- 2 Ventrilo is a Voice over Internet Protocol Program. By using a headset and microphone players can talk simultaneously as they keep hands on mouse and action keys while playing a fast paced game, particularly in team-based, tactical games. See <http://www.ventrilo.com/>
- 3 Interview with SVT production manager, 21st August.
- 4 Unlike American larp (Lancaster 1999) Lancaster, K. (1999). Warlocks and Warpdrive: Contemporary Fantasy Entertainments with Interactive and Virtual Environments. Jefferson, NC, McFarland.
- 5 According to Wikipedia a wiki is a page or collection of webpages designed to enable anyone who accesses it to contribute or modify content. Wikis are commonly used to create collaborative websites. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiki>, accessed 11th December 2008.
- 6 According to Wikipedia IRC (Internet Relay Chat) is a type of synchronous real-time Internet chat, mainly designed for group communication in discussion forums. It also allows one-to-one communication via private message as well as chat and data transfer. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_Relay_Chat, accessed 3rd December 2008.
- 7 Interview with P producer Andie Nordgren 2008; field notes 2007.
- 8 According to Wikipedia an (internet) troll is someone who posts controversial, inflammatory, irrelevant or off-topic messages in an online community (in a discussion forum or chatroom). The intention is to provoke other users into emotional response, or to generally disrupt normal on-topic discussion. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Troll_\(Internet\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Troll_(Internet)), accessed on 11th December 2008. See also Herring et al. (2002).
- 9 Interview with P producer Andie Nordgren 2008.
- 10 Interview with the P producer Andie Nordgren 2008; field notes 2007.
- 11 An interesting issue is if all of the disruptive members of Conspirare forum really were 'trolls' in the correct sense of the word, as it is not certain that they were intentionally disrupting the discussion. Some probably were, whereas others might just have sought confirmation about what was going on. The fact that most participants refused to acknowledge the fictional nature of the production might also have provoked trolling itself.

ANALYSIS, PART FOUR:

THE PARTICIPANTS

This part is devoted to how *SOM* was received by the participants. In chapter seven I report on the general participant experiences. In chapter 8 I focus my analysis on the reception of the 360° illusion design.



CHAPTER 7

THE PLAYERS

1. INTRODUCTION

The participant reception has been analysed with somewhat different empirical data compared to my analysis reported in previous chapters. I based it on research conducted post-game; I constructed a web questionnaire and conducted in-depth interviews. The chapter consists of two parts. The first gives a short summary of my methods and a discussion of who the survey respondents and interviewees were. The second part gives a picture of the general reception, perceptions and interpretations, based largely on the web survey. It should be noted that the survey was constructed not to disclose the gameness, in order to allow the survey respondents to answer questions with their own ideas and perceptions.

Who played the game?

There are no reliable statistics of the number of participants in SOM. This was partly due to the production's tiered participatory model; many participants participated through watching the television programs and/or browsing the websites. Others carried out activities on the different platforms. Some must be counted as unaware participants, due to the production's implicitly exhibited gameness and it could be discussed as to whether they can be said to have played the/a game. This will be discussed in chapter 8. Additionally, SVT and P provided television viewer statistics and statistics for the *Conspirare* forum and chat which can be found in chapter 2.

The online survey

Overall statistics

By way of a general summary, 385 respondents answered the web survey that was put online for 2.5 weeks on the production websites of both companies, starting on the last days of the game. Although the respondents' profiles differ between the two sites, they are combined here. According to the number of respondents, and the fact that they responded to the urge on the websites to answer it, I assumed that most of them had followed the production for at least one or a few weeks. This was later confirmed in the analysis of the survey answers.

The survey was quantitatively directed and contained questions with multiple-choice answers. However, many questions offered a text box where (qualitative) comments could be made. To my surprise, more often than not, these text boxes were filled with rich and informative comments. Since the producers did not offer any meta-communication, my conclusion is that the survey in a sense offered the need to discuss experiences, and worked as a kind of game debriefing for many participants.

Table 7:1 shows the respondents' activity levels. A majority of them watched the television series and the debate weekly, and 70% of the respondents were active at *Conspirare* at least once a week. Christy Dena¹ has reported similar findings for *ReGenesis*. Only 14 respondents had been active at *Conspirare* or *Ordo Serpentis* less than once a week. Given that around 400 - 500 persons were members in the *Conspirare* forum and in the *Ordo Serpentis* game (see appendix Member statistics) I assume that the respondents in my study are fairly representative of the active participants. Additionally, the web survey could only be found online from the last days of the game up to two weeks post-game, and as pointed out above, the respondents had followed the production at least a few weeks.

Survey participant profiles

The demographic and sociographic part of the questionnaire was placed later in the series of questions, and the response rate was lower for these questions than for the questions about the actual production². Due to the potential bias introduced by this lower response rate, the participant profile is a bit unclear. With this in mind, the following can be said: The production seemed to have attracted a fairly gender-balanced audience: of the participants that responded to the gender question, 147 were women and 97 men (15 persons selected the third choice, 'neither'). 74% of the respondents to this question (n=259) were between 17 to 36 years old.

The survey indicates that about two thirds of the participants lived in a city. The fact that as many as one third seem to have lived in the countryside surprised the producers, who had targeted the *Ordo Serpentis* game activities primarily towards city participants, even if they had expected a little activity outside the largest cities.

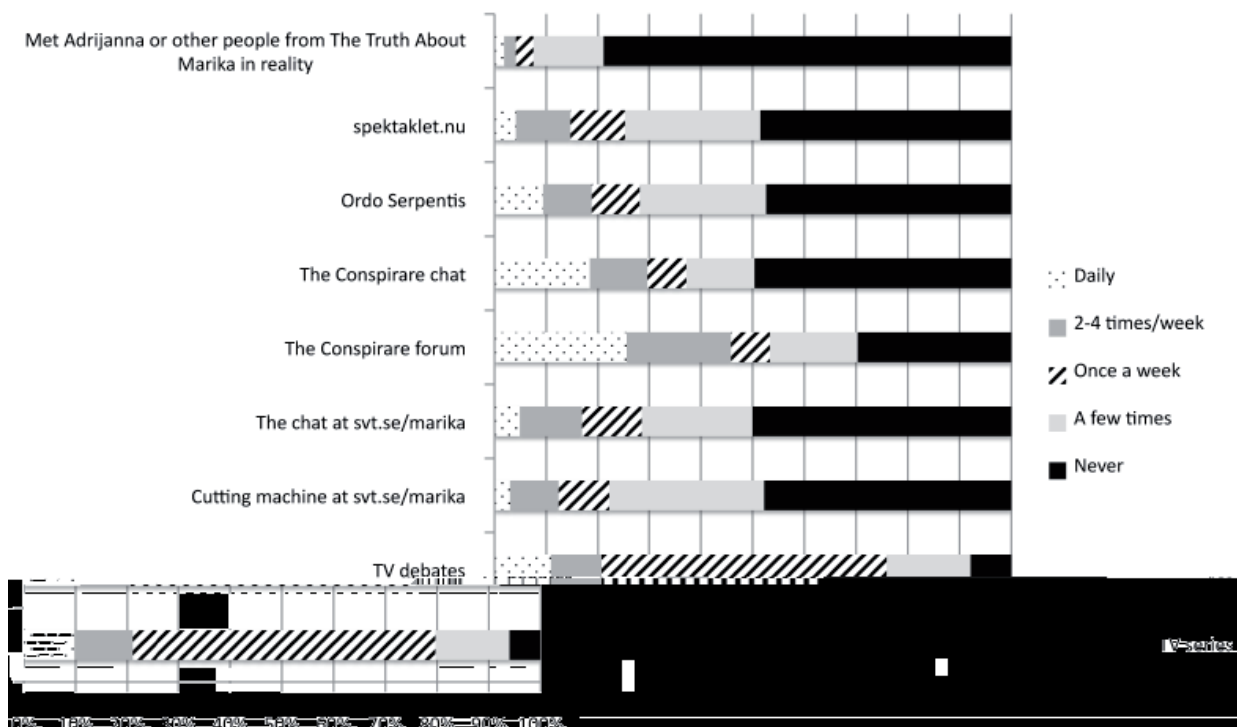


Table 7:1. Participant activity levels (n=256): How often have you been active?

Table 7:2 shows game interests of the survey respondents. The high interest in family games is probably shared with the Swedish population in general. The high interest in computer and console games is representative of the respondents' age group. We can note the relatively low interest in online role-playing games like *World of Warcraft*. With its fairly high level of role-playing activities *SOM* could potentially have enticed online role-players, but this was not the case. However, most probably larpers were overrepresented in the study because it is not likely that 20% of the Swedish youth population are larpers, as was the case with the respondents.

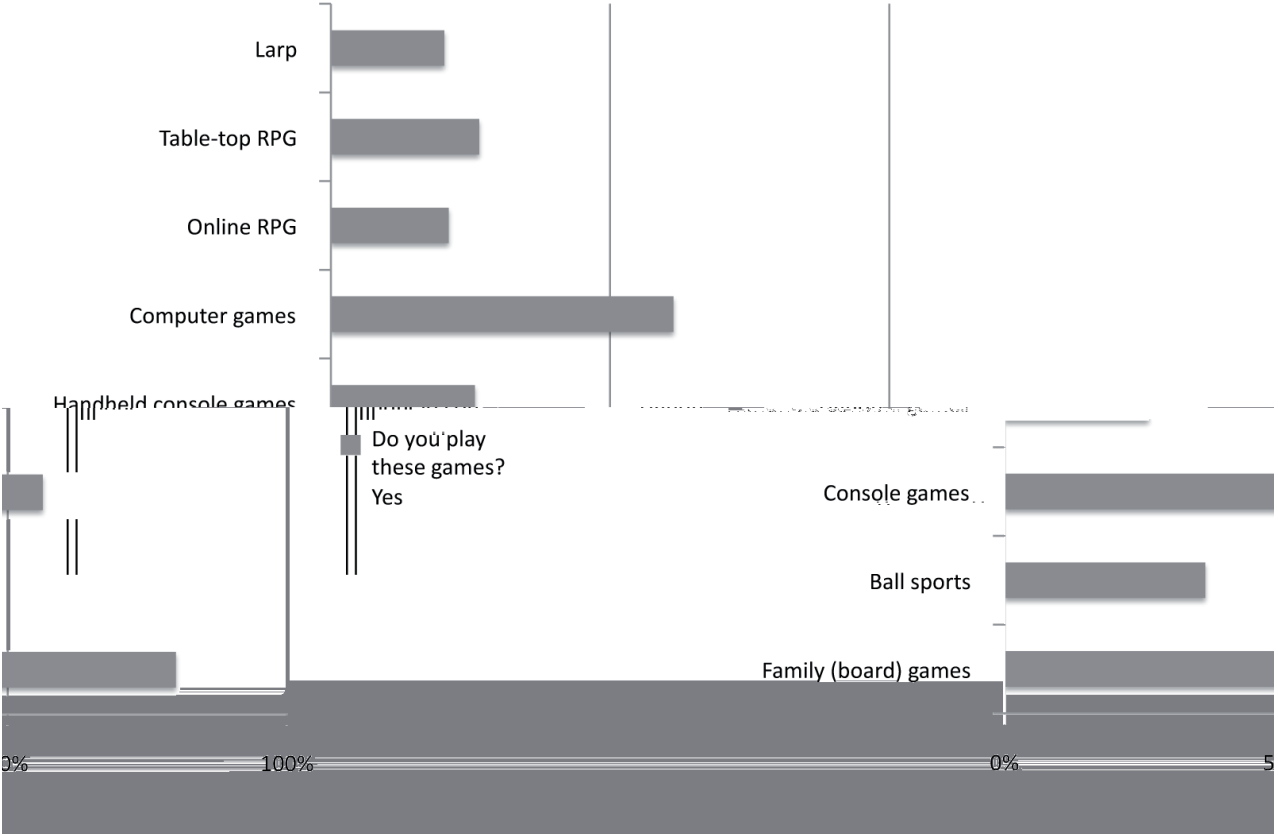


Table 7:2. Participant game interests in % (n=256): Do you play these games?

Table 7:3 shows what kind of game activities respondents liked. Although larpers were overrepresented, they were still a minority. Overall, the survey respondents were not very interested in role-playing, showing that the production reached a much broader audience than just the Swedish larp community. Another significant feature was that the survey respondents were more interested in collaborative game activities than in competition. This is fairly typical for ARG (Martin, Thompson et al. 2006). It reflects the nature of the in-game activities that were not competitive – instead, all participants collaborated in helping to solve the mystery on *Conspirare*. The respondents can be summarised as active: they watched the drama and debate, and took part in the *Conspirare* forum, blog and chat activities. They liked to cooperate but not so much to compete and role-play.

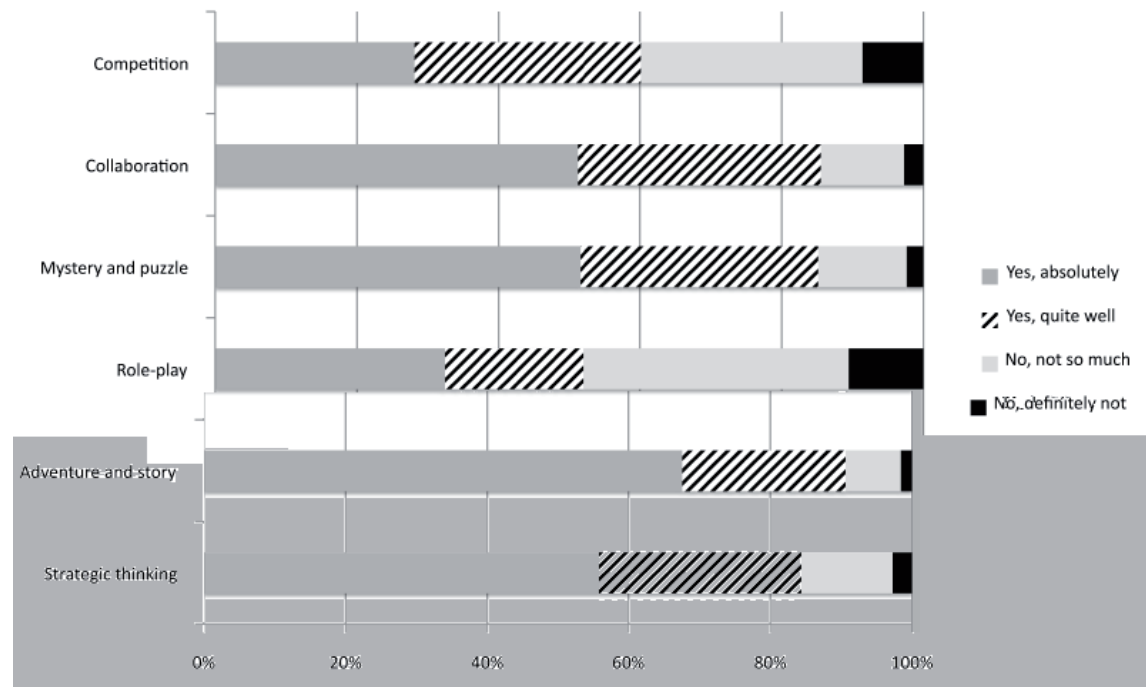


Table 7:3. Participant attitudes to different activities (n= 256): I like ___.

In-depth interview, email survey and in-game diary

The in-depth semi structured participant interviews were conducted during the three weeks post-game. Thirteen respondents were selected to cover a broad spectrum of participants according to their level and types of activities carried out, their geographical location, age and gender. They were recruited in different ways. Some were survey respondents that had agreed to be contacted later, and had offered their contact details. Others were recruited directly from the *Conspirare* chat and live/street game events. I managed to interview two people that had only watched the TV series; seven people that were highly active on the forum and in the chat³; two highly active participants that had involvement in the production⁴; two TV/culture journalists that had followed the production early on; one blogger with a large interest in entertainment areas, and apart from the individual interviews I conducted one group interview with a player cell that consisted of four seasoned pervasive gamers.

In January 2008 I did a complementary email survey concerning the game rule ‘pretend that it is real’ because I realised that many *Conspirare* chatters still believed the production to be real after disclosure of the game. The email questions were sent out to all survey respondents that had agreed to being contacted for further questions as well as the thirteen interviewed participants. In all, 155 participants received this survey and 41 answered within two weeks (see appendix Email Survey).

With permission from the producers I contacted a few very active players in September by sending them forum emails. I asked them to write down reflections and experiences in a in-game diary⁵. Two participants sent me notes.

2. GENERAL GAMEPLAY EXPERIENCES

What participants liked and disliked

To capture the participants’ production preferences, survey respondents answered what they liked and disliked to do in *SOM*. Table 7:4 shows the detailed responses. The four most preferred activities were to watch TV (both the TV series and the debate) and to read the *Conspirare* blog and forum posts. The ratio between agree and disagree answers to the least liked activities were: to put up matrices (77 agree/82 disagree); to chat or send material to SVT (73/88); to report assignments in *Ordo Serpentis* (56/79); and to participate in *Entropia* (23/110). This might indicate that a majority of the respondents in the study were lurkers, online viewers, rather than active participants. This would conform to the findings on ARG by Christy Dena (2008a), but this hypothesis could not be confirmed (see below).

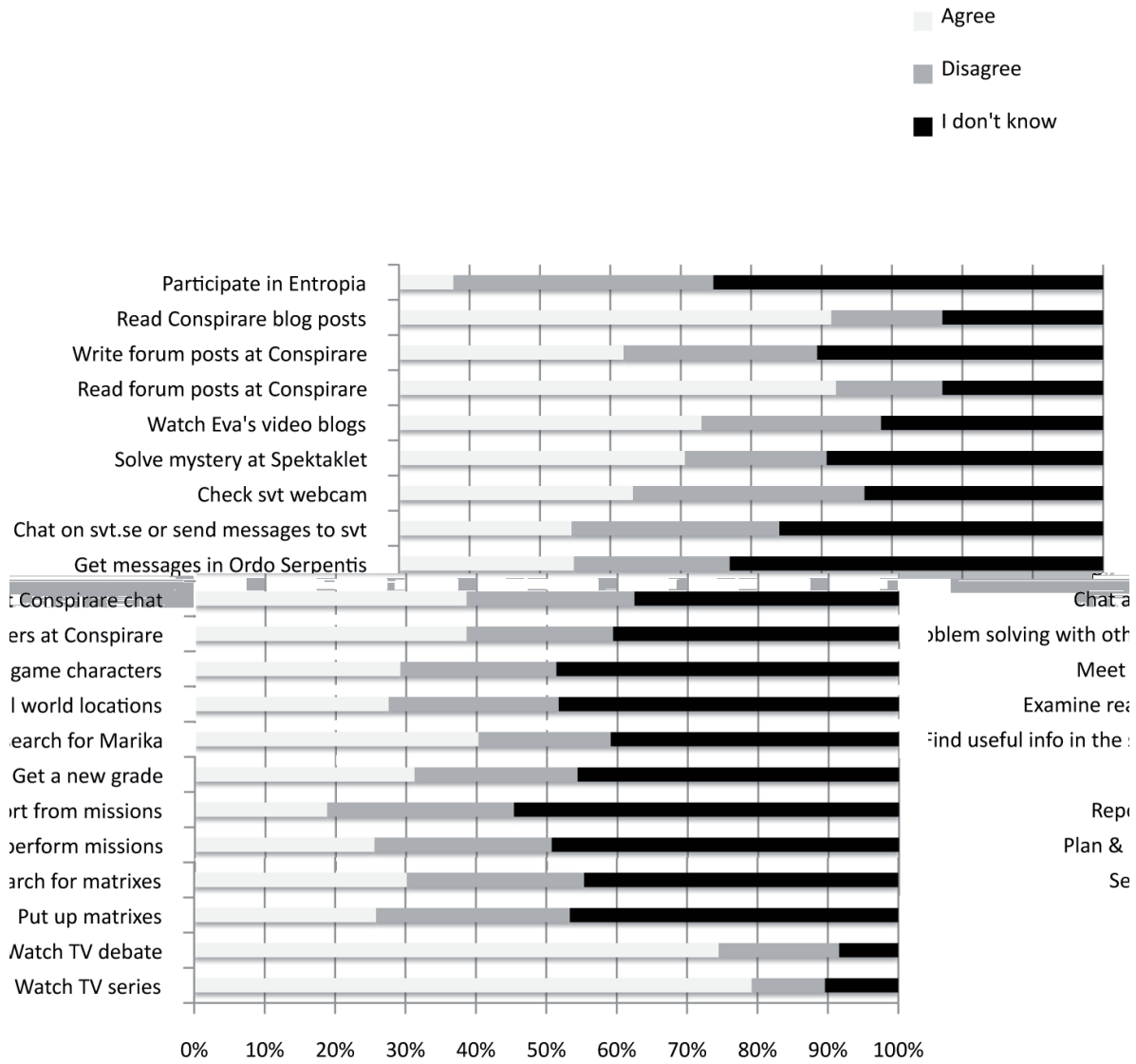


Table 7:4. Participants' preferences (n= 298): I liked to....

To get a better overview of the answers in table 7:4 answers were combined per medium. The results are shown in table 7:5. The television production was most liked (with 77% agreeing and only 14% disagreeing), and *Conspirare* (online) was highly appreciated too. The *Ordo Serpentis* street game activities (online and physical world) that the producers had hoped to become the major game activity, came fourth in popularity of the participatory parts, 27%, compared to the webpage SVT.se/marika that got 35%. However, the major activity at SVT.se/marika was not interactive, apart from the Cutting Machine tool and (to some degree) the SVT ‘chat’. The only part of the production that was more disliked than liked was the *Entropia* activities. There are no figures of how many of the respondents that experienced the *Entropia* activities, but as 55% answer that they do not know what they think about *Entropia*, I assume that a large portion of the respondents did not visit *Entropia* at all.

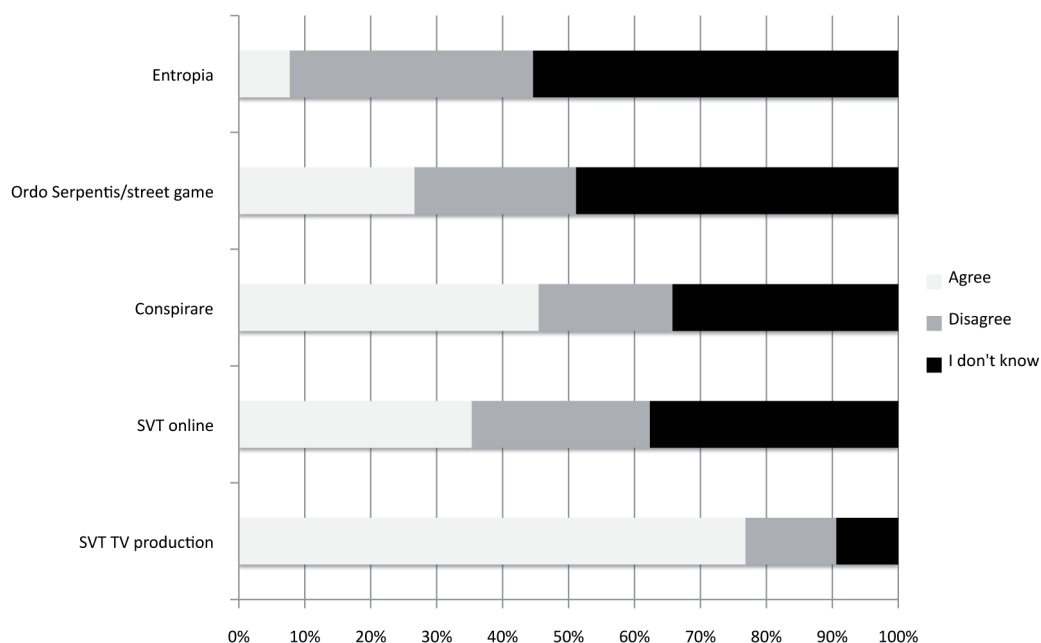


Table 7:5. Participants' preferences (n=298): I liked to..., summarised per medium (Ordo Serpentis game includes here both street game activities and reporting/communicating online).

Parts well integrated and gave a rich experience

About half of the respondents, 48%, had the opinion that to understand SOM you had to read or participate in all parts. This indicates that the parts were well integrated and formed an entity. In addition, 67% answered that they did not find any particular part more important than the other parts. Many survey respondents commented that they felt that the parts contributed to a rich experience:

The different websites which were very well built up, made it more alive than if it had only been small websites giving only the most important information.

For me personally *Conspirare* was the most important, it had worked without the TV series and *Spektaklet* I think, but it had not been as good, and I would never have found my way to it. All of them were important.

The game was more important than the drama series. But of course both were equally important. I love how the game turned up in my 'home area', in reality.

Survey comments

Conspirare, TV drama & debate considered core

However, the text box answers still show that some parts of the production were found to be of larger importance, and that some played had different roles in creating player engagement. When asked about how they came across or entered the game, 30% of the respondents answered that the TV drama series was their first contact. Equally many persons came in contact with the production online, either at the *Conspirare* (15%) or the SVT websites (16%). 16% of the participants first heard about the game in the media and no less than 10% of the survey participants were personally recruited by Adrijanna or other persons from the production team. 16% of the respondents knew about the production before the TV series started. However, as some participants were heavily involved with the production it is likely that this figure also includes instances of 'viral' spread; active participants recruiting new players. 8% had come across SOM through TV trailers.

When asked about what made them engage in the production, table 7:6, the respondents largely selected the *Conspirare* (46%), and to a slightly lesser extent the TV drama (43%) and the debate (31%). By comparison, only 13% considered the SVT site as creating engagement. Although an SVT production website commonly is an important medium for advertising⁶, in this case it did not contribute much.

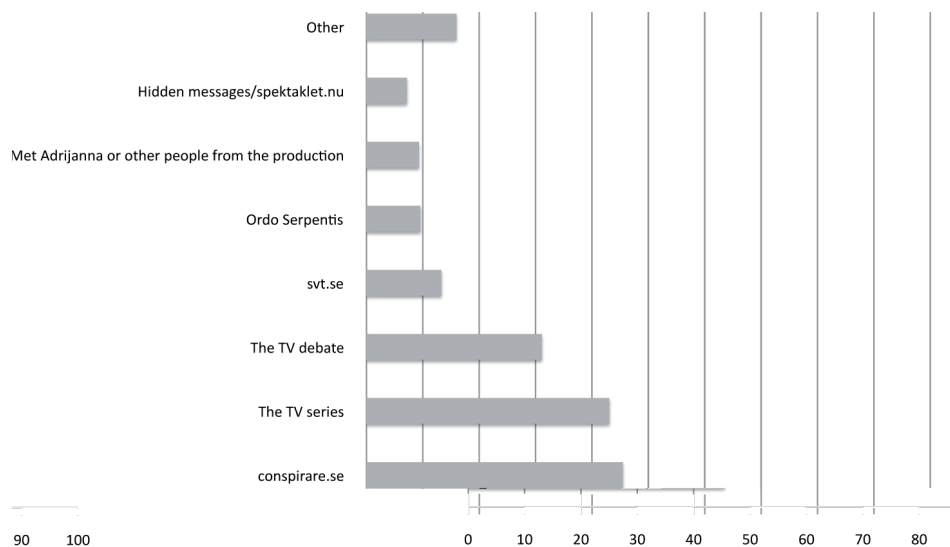


Table 7:6. What made participants engage (n=376). The graph shows that *conspirare.se*, the TV drama and the TV debate formed the major engagement. The staple ‘Other’ consist of webpages like *cityinitiativet.se*, *kerberos.se*, and other web material linked to the production, participants’ own links, webpages, Entropia engagement etc.

In the free commentary field associated to question 7 (if the different parts were coherent) and 8 (if one part were more important than any other), only *Conspirare*, the debate and the drama series were mentioned:

The debate seemed to be like a putty to keep it all together . You could not understand the ties [between the parts] without it, because they had chosen to make it complicated and split the drama series (about mariKa) from the rest, which told the story about mari*a.

The game was very complex and groundbreaking, [but] the TV series was rather ordinary and was mostly improved by the well-made game.

At *conspirare.se* and above all, I think, in the chat you get new contacts, which are immensely important to solve problems and to be able to participate fully.

The engagement in the forum, chat and the entire backstory is much more important than all the fluff around, like Entropia. Spektaklet and the “secret pictures” in the TV series also felt unnecessary.

The reality game – the interactive part. The TV series is important from a marketing perspective but it does not turn people into participants, rather the opposite, into consumers.

Survey comments

10% of the respondents (re-)watched the TV series every day, a pretty high figure for a TV series that is aired once a week. The statistics from the SVT site also showed that the reviewing tool, SVT Play, was in much higher demand for this production than for other similar productions.

Activity levels and interpretational stances

SVT aimed at three levels of participation: television spectating, online participation and physical world participation (see chapter 1). However, the survey findings cannot confirm that the participants were actually split into these three categories.

TV viewers as a subgroup can be identified. In the survey, there are fourteen people in total that answered that they never or only once visited *Ordo Serpentis* or *Conspirare*. Their answers show that they liked the TV series and debate more than the average respondent, but were not interested in any other production part. This group thus corresponds well with what we would consider to be television viewers. A probable explanation as to why so few respondents belong to this group is that the web survey was only put online very late the fifth week of drama airings, so only those who went online around that time (or the weeks after) would find it.

I ran into difficulties trying to find a group that primarily participated online. For example, a closer look at the activity patterns of a total of 96 respondents who had *not* put up matrices or searched for matrices (the two most salient real-world activities), table 7:7, tell us that these participants were less active than the average respondent. However, we cannot conclude that they were primarily active online. They were active users of all media, including meeting 'Adrijanna or other people from the production'. The online activities such as the Cutting Machine and the *Spektaklet* website did not attract these participants more compared to other respondents. Neither were they just lurkers but took active part in the production.

Furthermore, the hypothesis that participants living in the countryside would be more active online, as these had fewer opportunities to travel to the main events and thus would find it hard to form a cell with other participants, could not be verified. Although some of my interviewees indicated that this could have been an issue, the survey did not show any significant difference between the activity patterns of these (countryside) respondents compared to those living in a city.

The conclusion is instead that SOM seemed to have engaged a relatively small but rather active group

of participants, and that these got a true game experience. From the number of registered users at *Conspirare* and their engagement in the forum and chat discussions, my assumption is that this group consisted of approximately 300-400 persons. These participants, or players, were as active as they could be, both online and in the physical world/street game.

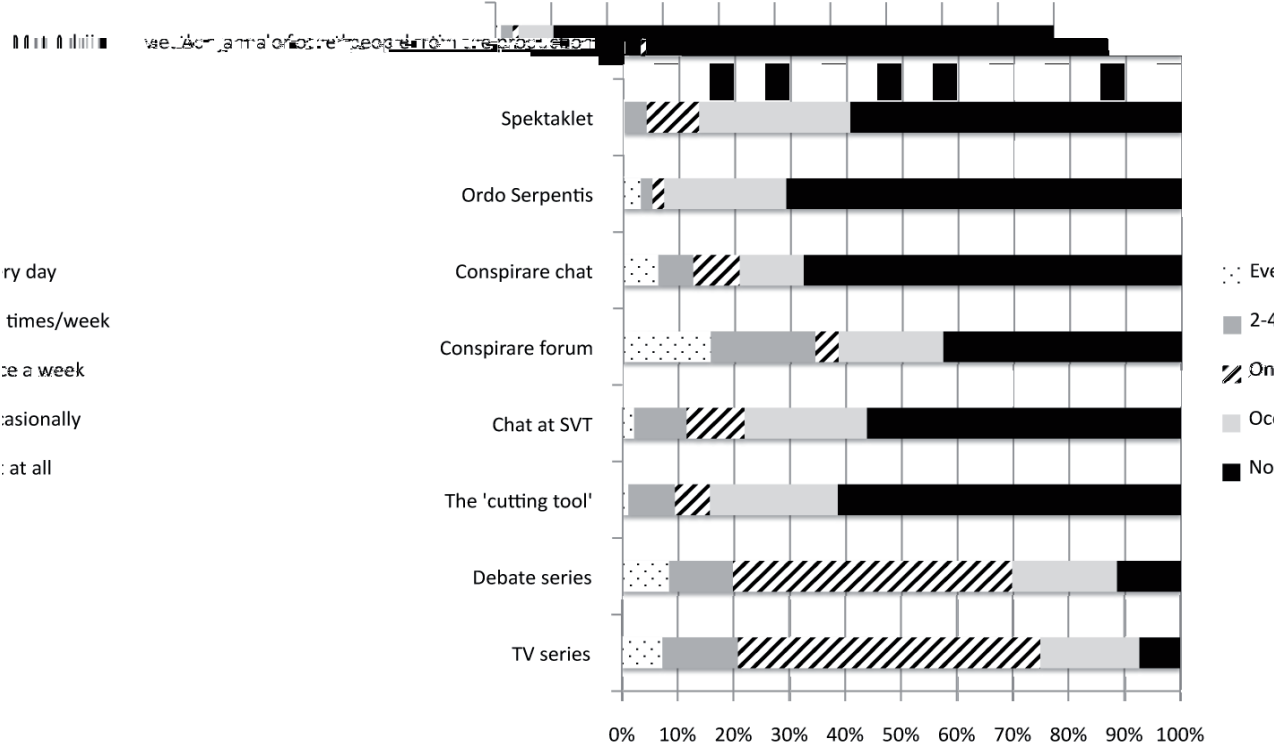


Table 7:7. Activity levels for the respondents who did not search for or put up matrices (n= 96).

Interpretational stances

Based on the analysis of the *Conspirare* and SVT chat communications, an alternative and possibly more fruitful way to tier the modes of participation in *SOM* might be the different interpretational *antimon* the production is 3 'ro ü

ningen om MarikaM

those who wanted to stay within the fiction. Moreover, at times it became apparent that there were chatters that thought it all to be part of ordinary life.

Ordo Serpentis not appealing

One part of the production that did not work out as intended was the *Ordo Serpentis* game (see chapter 2). As reported earlier on, each week the participants were given a physical world mission such as to put up a matrix and then stalk a ‘suspected’ person who happened to pass by or to put a flower at an important place and say a prayer aloud. These real-world quests were often socially challenging and time consuming. Few teams actually carried them out. Furthermore, the secret society, *Ordo Serpentis* ab
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[You have to] take into consideration that not everybody has access to technology, I for example could not use Thummin at all.

Survey comment

One interviewed participant talks about the creation of a player cell and how they:

started it [the cell] and how [we] put up matrices and carried out things [...] But it all changed with the cell item... the tone was very harsh, yeah extremely hard when Bortab demanded you to bar yourself. One of our members gave up our cell because of this [...] the missions demanded a lot, were time consuming, and at times it took the whole afternoon and evening to complete one mission [...] It was difficult to carry out missions. If it had been easier [to participate] more people probably would have participated.

Participant B13

The post-game interviews with the organisers also highlighted that most of the game mastering efforts were devoted to the *Conspirare* forum, blog and chat. The game masters would spend a lot of time creating blog and forum entries, and stay active on the chat. While the rest of the storyline changed and evolved considerably, *Ordo Serpentis* missions and grading were designed prior to the airing of the show, and changed very little after that (also because during runtime it was too late to make changes in the game's construction). So, due to these problems, only a few cells of the about 700 persons that had registered at the site remained active. The survey shows that roughly the same people that were active at *Ordo Serpentis* were the active participants at *Conspirare*. This should be seen in the light of the design intentions for *Ordo Serpentis*: to scale to thousands of players.

What the players actually did

In table 7:4 all types of activities are separated. However, in reality they were not. To dismantle the game activities this way does not give a full picture of what and how the game was played. One of my interview themes was to get a picture of what activities the participants took part in. A few interview quotes illustrate how activities in the game were formed.

Player B4 was only active during the last two weeks. His main participation was on *Conspirare*, chatting, reading and contributing input in the forum. In the beginning, the street game parts did not appeal to him. However when he saw that his input could make a difference he carried out a few missions in Gothenburg, some twenty kilometers from his hometown. He was in contact with other participants too:

I've actually barely touched in at SVTse's forums. It was only afterwards that I checked the logs, but it's Conspirare where I have participated. I tried to update myself on what had been happening all around, the attempts to solve some problems, so I have also checked the Entropia Forum, from the time I started to get involved. Then it was the [Conspirare] chat of course. I followed it in the background almost constantly. So I have been reading blogs and trying to provide input, if there was something I felt I could say something about. I checked the forum daily. [I have] been a bit in contact with other players, particularly thru texting [SMS], to try to synchronise, pick up these Gothenburg matrices and so on. They [other players] wanted to meet and go through the material. Unfortunately, it did not fit me right then. But I have been in contact with them a little bit anyway. And then I took the plunge into the reality and looked up these Maria matrices in the end.

Participant B4

Later this participant participated in the final event in Gothenburg.

Another participant, B6, was active online almost every day since July when the wiki page was set up. This player was offered a forum moderator position in the game by the organisers:

You could probably summarise it this way. I have been on the forum once every day from when I logged on to the Wiki page. A few times I had no time, a week when I did not have access to a computer at all, but I borrowed one, so I was online about three times that week too. I have probably been at the forum almost every day. And things IRL, I've done [missions] four times maybe, four or five times I think.

This player did not carry out too many street game missions either. However, as we will see in the chapter to follow, meeting other players during his street game activities gave him experiences that he rated as very immersive and enjoyable.

Two other participants only watched the television programs. Both of them, B7 and B2, chose not to go online. B2 concentrated on the debates:

I've watched about half [of the drama episodes], I believe. I have watched more debates than drama episodes. I concentrated on the debates.

R: Have you been watching when they were aired?

Yes. I have not been on the internet or something like that. I've only watched the series and the debate.

Participant B2

Participant B8 had no broadband access, but he still thought he could participate in what he called ‘everything’. This player also larped with the *Kerberos* guards (chapter 8):

I watched the series, and the debate. And so I was at Conspirare [blog], the chat and forum and the Ordo Serpentis and participated even if I did not do as many missions. W[his cell] just conducted the first mission where we put up matrices [...] And then I was on Kerberos, and the Spectacle pages too. I was online on most parts.

R: You said that initially it took you several days to familiarise yourself with it?

Yes. And after that I checked almost every day new things popped up all the time. At the forum, blog and chat, I checked some of what had happened, and if there was anything I could do.

Participant B8

Participant B3 lurked a lot but when things started to ‘get tense’ he got more involved:

I was online about once a week. When it was getting closer to [drama] episode 3 and 4, I went online more often. I just lurked, you did not need to [engage] but later I began to discuss the forum posts and things very much until the end [of the game]. That was when there was a week to go, because that’s when things started getting interesting, when it [the happenings] really began to untangle.

Participant B3

B1 and his cell met as often as their ordinary life and work admitted them to. They conducted *Ordo Serpentis* missions together, and tried to chip into the *Conspirare* chat, to help in the clue solving. However they had their own online platform where they gathered their material:

I’m a student, as I said, and working a bit, so it was a little sporadic. And our team took care of our things quite separately. Okay, we shared information with others. However, any dialogue between us was just between us. We put up our own chat, we had our own forum which I put on my website [...] And all the time trying to solve the problems. We tried to get together and carry out missions as often as we could, it was every few days. All six of us work.

Participant B1

This player larped too, and took part in other street game activities. He chose not to go to svt.se/marika since he did not like the off-game information and he felt it hard to ‘uphold the illusion’.

These few quotes show that the activity patterns among the interviewees differed a lot. Some of the

interviewees were active for a long period, others only a few weeks in the end of runtime. All but the television viewers took part at *Conspirare* (blog, forum and chat) to a larger or lesser degree. Their activity could also change over time, from reading to chatting, or from solving clues and writing forum posts to chatting or conducting street world (*Ordo Serpentis*) missions. Some of them watched the television production; others did not like it at all, and thought they could participate without watching it. Many did not visit svt.se/marika either; *Conspirare* was the place for networking and collaborating. Even if the survey respondents and interviewees are not representative of all the people that took part, we could assume that the activity patterns were diverse. The survey does not show any particular patterns. However, as has been mentioned earlier, the production demanded engagement and took extensive reading to grasp and get into. Therefore we can assume that, like most of the interviewees have witnessed, to participate deeper than just watching television, one had to put time and effort browsing and reading, to grasp what it was all about.

3. SUMMARY

Even if we cannot say how many participants *SOM* had, the general impression of the reception that can be traced in the data is that the production reached the Swedish audience geographically. We can also assume that the 385 respondents were among the active participants, since the production demanded engagement. Respondents seemed to like collaboration more than competition (which is typical for ARG), and even if in minority, larpers were overrepresented among the respondents. This might be a result of that the news of *SOM* was spread in the network of larpers that the company P was part of. The most popular activities were to watch the TV shows and to read *Conspirare* forum and blog entries. A majority seemed to have liked the TV shows and *Conspirare*, while *Entropia* was the (only) part that was more disliked than liked. Besides, not many respondents visited *Entropia* at all.

Moreover, all parts had to be read or participated in order to understand the production. *Conspirare* and the TV programs were considered core parts, and these were also the parts that engaged the respondents to begin with. The svt.se/marika site did not create the same engagement. However, conclusions regarding various engagement levels (corresponding to tiers) cannot be drawn from the material. Instead the usage of interpretational stances might tell us a bit more. One group seemed to have been TV viewers perceiving *SOM* as a conventional TV drama, but that became confused/irritated/angry at the debate's fabrication. This group was possibly the majority of the TV viewers and might not have understood the ARG part/ness of the production. The second group, that by further

investigating the online content would come to the conclusion that it was a game, would show up at events like the demonstration in Gothenburg, but they would not larp or carry out missions in *Ordo Serpensis*, although they might have become curious and register as members just to check the online content. The third group would be the players of the game. Two types of players appeared, the ones that knew/perceived from the start, or rather early understood, that they took part in a game. But we also find a group that might have shifted perception, from unaware to aware. Some possibly became reluctant to participate and others plunged deeper, accepting being a bit cheated and further enjoying the game. Unfortunately there is reason to believe that some of them still kept the belief that they were taking part in a proper search for a missing person.

We can also see that *Ordo Serpensis* did not work as expected. There are a few possible explanations. First of all we know that the debate was not linked to the game as intended, which probably influenced participation. Besides, the producers knew that to motivate people to get up from the TV sofa and start engaging in real-world enacted/corporeally engaging missions would be a difficult task to design. In addition, several of the missions were perceived as scary making even the seasoned gamers hesitate (this is developed in the following chapter since it is connected to the 360° illusion/‘pretend that it is real’ rule). The occult features contributed too, perceived as a bit strange. The time frame, one week, was probably too short to manage to gather the cell, find time to perform missions and then to report them (which some interviewees also have mentioned).

The televised parts were broadcast on Sundays at 9:20 PM, with no rerun. The SVT producer had tried to get another airing time, but had been refused. A speculation would be to argue that it might have been better from the perspective of attaining game involvement to air *SOM* earlier than Sunday evenings, say Thursdays or Fridays. This would have given participants time during the weekend to gather and conduct missions. The production teams would have a few days in the beginning of the week to work on contributed material, and lots of time to reflect on the happenings with participants on the forum and the chat. Also rerunning the drama would probably have resulted in more viewing.

Another reflection, that goes counter to the producers’ aim of crafting inter-/activity and demanding engagement from participants at all times, is what Schanke, Sundet and Ytreberg (2009) point out. Their research shows that media professionals take for granted that media users wish to participate, wish to be active, that the active attitude towards participating is a basic and enduring characteristic of audiences, a natural urge to participate, not something new and unique to the current media situation. But the fact is that interactivity creates loyalty, and promoting interactivity through multi-

platform production creates new revenue opportunities and financial advantages. We will come back to this in *Convergence culture: Concluding the analysis*.

The obfuscation of background facts and fabricated ‘facts’ is the focus of the last part of my analysis, chapter 8.

Notes

1 <http://www.christydena.com/online-essays/arg-stats/>

2 <http://www.christydena.com/online-essays/arg-stats/>

3 High rate of forum posts = at least 7 forum posts, activity in the chat = active a few days a week during 3 weeks.

4 One was a Kindergarten team member. The other was recruited during the later stages of the pre-game period.

5 The writing of in-game diaries was used in the Momentum game too, as a method to collect player experiences. See Jonsson S. et al (2007) and Stenros, J. et al. (2007).

6 Interview with SVT production manager.

7 <http://www.aftonbladet.se/nojesliv/tv/article1220125.ab>, retrieved on 5th March 2008.

8 BortAB was the 2nd mission where participants were requested to sign a contract to become members of Ordo Serpentis and prepare a survival kit in case they needed to disappear into the secret organisation.

CHAPTER 8

'PRETEND THAT IT IS REAL!'

The fact that these games indeed propose a more expansive definition of immersion – one in which it is not simply enough to be 'in' the computer, but where the experience of the 'virtual' leaks out into your real world – sets them apart from their more conventional narrative counterparts.

(Taylor and Kolko 2003: 503)

Examining the playing of the game/gameplay and the experiences gained by participating, is somewhat complicated in a pervasive game. A game's commonly accepted magic circle is expanded temporally and spatially and thus has a tendency to expand socially too (Montola, Stenros et al. 2009). These expansions can give very thrilling and very engaging experiences for participants, as they did in *SOM*. The previous chapters contain rich accounts of how the producers created game markers since many participants had difficulties recognising or perceiving them. This led to that many people being unsure of whether it was part of ordinary life or not. My analyses surprisingly revealed that although participants perceived game markers the activities were still not interpreted as a game, but as a true search for a disappeared woman. There are several design elements that when put together, contributed to the appearance of misinterpretations and misperceptions. In this chapter I deal with a few of the misinterpretations; particularly the implicit (game) rule or tagline 'pretend that it is real' and the participants' perceptions, interpretations, and (game) experiences. The aim is to show the diverse spectrum of experiences and to give some possible explanations to why they arose, i.e. what made the production confusing/realistic and what made/how the production was engaging. Furthermore, since pervasive games can be interpreted as non-games one section is devoted to non-participation and players' 'play' with unaware participants.

The analysis in this chapter builds on the data material collected in the web survey, the email survey and the in-depth participant interviews, one group interview and one player (in-game) diary. Quotes from the in-depth interviews and field diary fill the purpose of depicting the deeper and more emotional engagement. A full account of the methods and respondent profiles as well as the general reception can be found in Methodology.

1. BACKGROUND

Tiered participation would create various experiences

The producers' goal was to offer an engaging and adventurous game both for the more 'casual player' participant as well as for the more devoted player through a model of tiered participation similar to ARG (Dena 2008a). Furthermore, the game's ideological-political message (from P's side) implicated individual participants' political awakening. Participants would change and become more critical of various problems in contemporary society and also be better prepared to take (further political) action (chapter 2). This in itself would result in various kinds of gameplay experiences. A variety of pervasive design strategies used in P's previous pervasive larp productions were deployed.

The design clash

As have been described, the two design ideals were not easy to combine. The 360° illusion ideal called for an upholding of the 360° illusion at all times and could thus not be communicated to newcomers. The previous chapters report on the split during the collaboration process, and on how the 360° illusion also hampered participation in the *Conspirare* chat. The director's crafting of a 360° illusion debate program, that in practice, hindered designing (game) participation into it is also addressed previously.

During my participant observations in the *Conspirare* chat and of the production process/the companies' collaboration, I became aware of participants believing that the game was part of reality. They thought that they were taking part in a search of an existing person that had disappeared. Other participants seemed much engaged but fully conscious of the fact that they were playing a game. And many seemed to enjoy and love it. With the post-game interviews I wanted to find out qualitative answers to the questions: How did they perceive the production, what had they enjoyed, disliked, or become engaged in, how did they participate and so on? The web survey was targeted at getting a broader (quantitative) picture: Who were the participants, how did they enter the game, how did they participate and to which extent? Later, when I started to analyse the web survey answers it became obvious that there were participants that believed it to be the truth, although in answering my questions they unveiled the gameness. To query these reactions I conducted a follow up email survey.

2. ON THE BRINK OF REALITY

This section deals with the participants that were unaware of the gameness, or that were reluctant to

accept the idea of a 360° illusion world without off-game communication/space.

In line with the *Momentum* game (Jonsson, Montola et al. 2007), *Sanningen om Marika* was a pervasive game production in which the storyline was not only embedded in reality but also highly realistic. In chapter 2 the construction and aims of these layers have been described (picture 2:2). The fictional nature of the production was explicitly communicated in several places. The most important vehicle for this was the popup windows shown at the SVT site, *Conspirare*, and *Ordo Serpentis*. An example is shown in chapter 2 (picture 2:8). Similar wordings were used in the participant agreements when players signed up at *Conspirare* and *Ordo Serpentis* too. Furthermore, the game was exposed as a game several times over, by perceptive viewers that did not participate in the game. This happened both at *Conspirare* and at the SVT discussion forum and the proof put forward was rather convincing.

It is not completely clear which effect the production team intended to achieve. As truth and fiction were deliberately blurred in the debate and no explicit disclaimer was aired in conjunction with it (see chapter 5), one can suspect that the producers intended to leave the people who only watched television in doubt. An alert TV viewer would, however, observe the ambiguous presentations of the debate's participants and detect it in the credits too. However, with the stress on disclaimers at the websites and the fact that SVT had a discussion up at its forum (as addressed in chapter 4) which exposed the game, I am led to believe that SVT wanted people to understand the fictional nature of the production rather quickly, by just investigating a bit deeper. The intention seems to have been to raise awareness that no media can be trusted straight off. This intention was expressed quite clearly in Redaktionschatten straight after the final show was aired:

Question: Isn't there a risk that people will stop paying their TV license now that you show these kind of things? Some people will probably feel that they do not want to contribute financially to a system where you do not know what is true and what is false.

Answer: Maybe it also means that others start to pay their license. We want everybody to question what they see and hear, and not just accept all claims as truth.

Question: I know that TV4, or rather, the production company that makes their low quality TV programs make cuts in their material for example, and that they then change and manipulate and fool their viewers that way. I know this because I have been exposed to it. So what is real and what is not?

Answer: What is real is more of a philosophical question. One should always be perceptive to all one sees and make a bit of a habit to always question its claims of truth.

Excerpts from the post-game chat at the SVT site

During the post-game chat at *Conspirare* some participants had obviously thought that it was all an authentic search up until the game was over; that Maria had existed and that Adrijanna really was looking for her lost friend. The survey supported this observation, as a question concerning this issue had been included. In all, 124 persons answered the question: How did you perceive *Sanningen om Marika*? One option of four was to be selected. The percentage of answers are bracketed:

- I did not think that it was real (29%)
- I thought that it was real (30%)
- I pretended that it was real (24%)
- I make no distinction between truth and fiction (17%)

The preferred answer from the designers' side would have been option three, 'I pretended that it was real'. The large number of people that answered that they thought that the story was real is troubling, especially since the survey respondents were rather active participants generally, and not just spectators.

In this section, I will try to answer two questions. Firstly, I will discuss what it could have meant for the participants to get heavily involved in a fictional production, believing it to be real/authentic. Secondly, I will analyse and discuss why this happened in *Sanningen om Marika*.

Experiencing an authentic search, as reality

In total, 77 survey respondents answered that they thought that *SOM* was real. Table 8:1 shows the collective activity levels of this group. On the whole, the group is equally as active as the average survey respondent, and slightly more active in *Ordo Serpentis*. The major difference between this group and the average respondent is that the participants to a lesser extent have met people from the production. On the whole, the group that thought *SOM* was real is fairly positive about their experience.

Table 8:2 shows the preferences of the respondents who believed *SOM* to be real. *Conspirare* was less liked by them than by the average respondent, but the TV production, *Ordo Serpentis* game and the real-world activities were liked more by this group than by the average respondent. A difference between *Conspirare* and the other production parts was that *Conspirare* required the participants to actively co-create the fictional reality by role-playing.

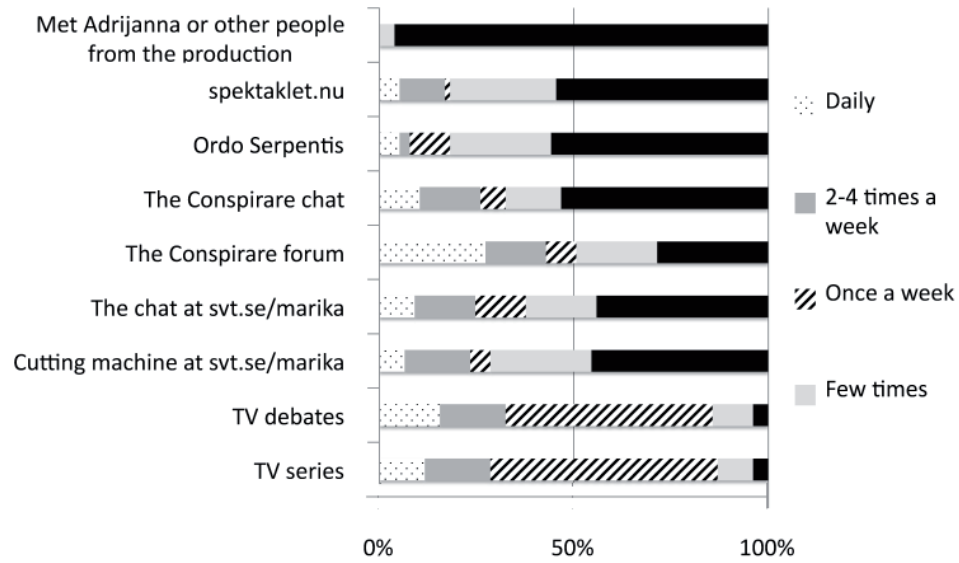


Table 8.1. Respondent activity levels of the group who believed the production to be real (n=77): How often have you been active? (Compare with table 7:1, in chapter 7).

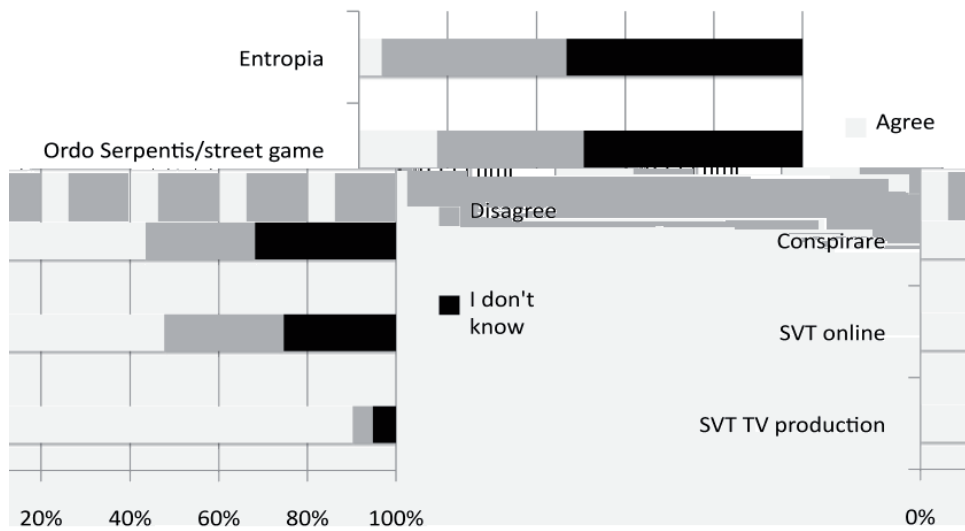


Table 8.2. The preferences of the respondents who believed the production to be real (n=77): I liked to.... (Compare with table 7:5, in chapter 7).

Several survey respondents found it especially problematic that the ‘lie’ was presented in public service television. They reacted to the fact that the (entire) production never was exposed as fiction in broadcast television. You had to visit the webpages to get any disclaimers at all:

A game that gives itself out as being real in Sweden’s only public service channel is bloody dangerous. Give people an alternative and a chance to understand it is not.

The TV series had a bad round off. I missed a clear-cut end, like a debriefing where Sanningen om Marika and reality games and so on would be explained so that the gameplay did not look mysterious and [thereby] get the same stamp role-playing games got when they were new. I sat with uninformed friends in my TV sofa and had to explain that Kerberos and Cityinitiativet were not authentic. It would have been good if all Swedes had got an explanation served on their laps directly from the TV screen.

There were survey respondents that felt confused, but learned something important from being confused too. This group tended to view *SOM* as an alternative way to view actuality:

Nothing else on TV has had a stronger influence on me than this. I felt totally absorbed by Sanningen om Marika. And I still don’t know what attitude I am to take to it. Once I thought I could separate reality from fiction but have realised that this border is blurred and I am even more confused now. I do not know what attitude I am to take to anything anymore.

Is it really possible to separate games from reality, do we have to?

The purport is another way to perceive reality but it is also a “wake up call”... You think you are too sure [of things] in this bloody bubble.

Other survey respondents seemed to still believe that the production was authentic, even when they answered the survey:

If it had not been for the series and the collaboration with SVT I don’t think Maria would have come forward.

[...] interesting, sensational and good that it is taken up, that it gets television time. [The fact] that all other media shut their eyes I think is terribly alarming.

Effects on experiences

In the previous section some participants expressed that they learned an entirely different lesson from SOM, that there might not exist a big difference between truth and reality. That a large part of the active participants perceived the production as part of ordinary life cannot be seen as positive. In figure 8:3, we can see that the people that believed SOM to be an authentic search in addition were more eager to (be able to) distinguish between truth and fiction in the production compared to the average respondent.

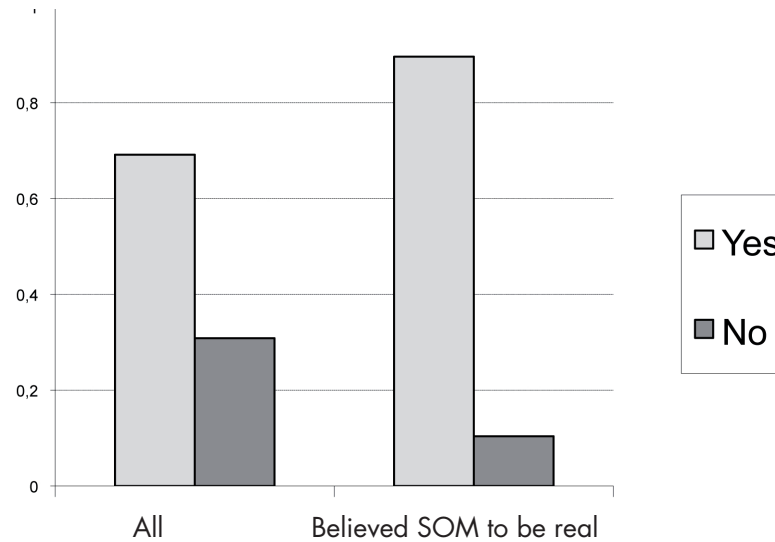


Table 8:3. The respondents who believed in the fictionalised reality were more eager to know what was true than the average respondent.

From active survey respondents' comments, we can see that for them too, the blurring of fact and fiction harmed the game experience:

[...] a pity that so much energy has to be put into discussing if it was real or a game.

I think it is awful with everyone who thought it was authentic and now feel deceived. There should have been a fat info page somewhere that you would be recommended to read from the beginning, where it was more obvious than now is the case, that all was a game and that the most important part of the game was to pretend it was real. I would like to see a more thorough review of the ARG idea and how it works so that people do not

have to get confused [...] This also disturbed the game experience the most.

If all was ‘fake’ (which I have understood) then I would have thought it to be a bit unpleasant sometimes. Everything felt both real and unreal. Some things were realistic while others were unrealistic. It made me confused that the ‘dog car’² for example was owned by P productions and that Adrijanna was employed there.

One interviewee, an experienced larper, pointed out that a larp that blurs the border between fiction and reality in this way made her unsure of what ‘was allowed to do in the game or what was a game and what was not’. This person, who did not know that a TV program was tied to the game, remained uncertain about what was authentic and what was fabricated for a long time, which made her hesitant to fully join:

[I was unsure of] what you can do in the game, and what is actually playing and what is not. Because I got very mixed messages from them, that there is a game, that some parts are a game, and that some parts are real. There was someone who said that Kerberos is a real company. Then I was, uh, wait a minute what have I done. Was really worried about what happened, I had played along [...] Not until the last week did I fully understand that all was a game, so I didn’t commit fully until then.

Participant B5

Ambiguous design: what made the production confusing

SOM created an ‘Orson Welles’ effect (Waern and Denward 2009): despite multiple explicit disclaimers, some participants seem to have believed that the fictional context was authentic. There were several design features that contributed to making it hard to understand the fictional nature, even for active participants and seasoned larpers.

The deliberate blurring of fact and fiction in the debate was one factor. SVT with its strong credibility as a PSB stipulating that their productions must relate objectively on ‘facts’ and that themes and content use an inclusively educational perspective. Another factor was that the The Real Story lay extremely close to the factual backstory of the production (see chapter 2).

Apart from the disclaimers, the actual content at the *Conspirare* and *Ordo Serpentis* sites was kept in-game. This in itself worked as a ludic marker, as can be seen from the example with the registration plates of the *Kerberos* van (see chapter 2) that an alert participant had noticed and put on the *Conspirare* forum, a thread that a moderator later locked. For the aware participants perceiving the game nature of *Sanningen om Marika*, the locking of the thread might have been an obvious (although so-



R: You did not know if you could rely on SVT's disclaimer, because it was so strong on *Conspirare*?

Yes. *Conspirare* told you that they had been forced to put up the disclaimer that it was legal, so that they could not be prosecuted. They had to say it was fake. But then I reckoned that it was a great method to hide it, if you really want people to believe that it is true.

Participant B3

A particularly serious problem was the lack of an official forum where the game could be discussed as a game. Several of the active participants that liked the game still commented on this in the survey:

[...] that you all the time have a 'safe zone', a place/possibility for players to reach producers and talk 'outside' the game, on occasions that a player feels it gets to troublesome and so on.

At one point, a person who disagreed with this strategy initiated an off-game discussion on the *Conspirare* chat. The intention seemed not to have been to ruin the game experience, but to enable participants to agree on the fictional nature of the game. Since several of the participants and the organisers found this disturbing, he was temporarily shut off from the chat. This was noted and perceived as oppressive by some of the other survey respondents:

My gravest critics are about refusing people with differing views admittance to *Conspirare* forum [...] It has irritated me and the concerned.

When a community collectively role-plays a fictional reality, a possible conclusion is that it becomes even harder to understand that it is fictional, compared to when it is merely upheld by a production team.

Brink gaming

In the terminology of Cindy Poremba (2007) *SOM* was a 'brink game', a game in which the players cannot fully consider the game activities as mere game activities, but that they become part of ordinary life. The effect was created through the combination of the pervasive game aesthetics, the emphasis on 'pushing your personal boundaries' inspiring participants to do things they might want to do but never would have done otherwise, and the lack of off-game. Most survey respondents appreciated this aspect highly and found it empowering:

We are The Others, that's it. Let's hope that now more people understand that.

By helping and taking part many more ways have become open now. The world is bigger than you think, that you have been taught, right?

Double thinking, to play so seriously that it becomes the truth, even if I did not succeed in letting go of my other reality (it is an art, demands concentration and training, on the Saturday it was 90%/10% Conspirare reality/ordinary daily reality). I see it as if there is a steady world that connects all the personal ones that are changeable. Sanningen om Marika has been a training camp in double thinking.

This experience was possibly only available for people who perceived *SOM* as a role-playing game and the ‘pretend that it is real’ rule. These players were able to ‘step into a role’ (role-)playing themselves whilst understanding that some of their activities were more than simple game activities. They were left with an option to both decide on what to do and how to interpret those actions.

Not all participants fully agreed with this. Another survey respondent, an experienced larper, remarked that a larp that requires participants to push their personal boundaries only should do so within a clear ‘magic circle’. Otherwise, the participants would find it hard to create the mental distance to the in-game activities and experiences that are required to allow them to reflect on the game and learn from it in a positive way:

I am a larper and for me the Marika project is one huge larp. Everything screams larp, from aesthetics to issues you discuss with the only difference that larps commonly problematise much more than the Marika project does. It is hard to create the mental distance needed to naturally meta-think around your experiences and let them get important in your own life when Marika is so integrated in reality and where the borders are so indistinct. I don’t like sharp larps though but in the Marika project it has been uncommonly clear how important it is to put up borders for the fiction. They have messed up both the discussion about ethics and what to learn just through this borderless concept.

Or, as one interviewee, participant B14, summarised the organisers’ moral of *SOM*:

Think for yourselves – but think as we [the organisers] do.

One rule: Pretend that it is real!

SOM took a slightly different approach than what is commonly used in ARG. As discussed in chapter 2, the game did not aim to uphold a full magician’s curtain. Rather, it was quite easy to expose the game as a game. Most websites were provided with explicit disclaimers starting out ‘This website is part of a fictional production...’ (see pictures in chapter 2).

Instead of creating a full illusion, the companies had created the simple pretence-tagline. This slogan was previously used in the *Prosopopeia* productions to describe how the players should ‘play themselves’ within the larp. The SVT website published it as a sub header to the title (see picture in chapter 2). The rule was very basic to most larping, but now it was put in a different context and directed towards a much wider community. A special follow up survey concerning how the participants had interpreted it was performed by email as mentioned previously . The interpretations can roughly be divided into four main types: a game rule, a disclaimer, an invisible message and a rejection.

A game rule: The largest groups of respondents interpreted the slogan as a game rule. To them it worked as a ludic marker indicating that the production was fictional. Many of them expressed that they had former experience of larping. They liked the rule and even foundt reassuring, since it reminded them that ‘it is only a game’. They were inside the protective frame of playfulness (Apter 1991) and had confident feelings of being inside the semiotic frames of a game (i.e. this is out of the ordinary and) and nothing would harm them. A few that did not initially understand that it was a game got a bit shocked when they first saw it, but then accepted the rule and immersed into the game, or lost interest and quit participating.

I understood it as a game rule. If you join you have to pretend it is real to expand your game experience.

[...] it helped a bit when you got too immersed into the game and started to be paranoid of Kerberos and BortAB, then it helped to calm down, read the instructions and take a deep breath before digging in to it again.

In the beginning I thought it was reality , so I got a bit shocked when these messages appeared but then I accepted it I guess.

I was intensely engaged first, but when I understood that all was made up (?) I sulked and felt cheated, and then I only followed the drama like I would with any show.

A disclaimer: A fairly large group of the respondents viewed the rule as a version of the popup disclaimers, and primarily considered them to be an approach for SVT to avoid taking responsibility for the consequences of the game. Some of them were irritated by it and commented on it appearing too many times. They tried not to notice it since it ‘ruined the game experience’. This group thus reacted quite negatively towards the rule.

I interpreted the instruction as a way for the production company and SVT to acquit themselves of responsibility [...] as a poor emergency sign.

As a defence from SVT, and most of the time quite disturbing.

An invisible message: A fair amount of the respondents missed the message entirely. Still, most people that answered this question remained positive. This is most likely a study effect as I think that the people who were negative towards the production in the first survey did not offer their email addresses. I know from the survey and from observing the *Conspirare* post-game chat that several participants believed the production to be true up until its very last moments. They even had to be convinced with proof by other aware chatters. I discuss this in more depth below.

Rejection: Some of the participants saw the instruction as well as the disclaimers, but still decided or wanted - to believe that the production was authentic.

I don't know how I understood the instruction really. Even if it said so it felt very authentic. I have my own experiences of unreliable authority persons. I used it [the instruction] in the wrong way. Due to my life experiences I felt very bad until I understood that it was a fiction. I think I wanted it to be true and that something would happen to the authority apparatus. At the same time I was disappointed that it was not true because I would like Sweden to wake up and see that everything is not as good as they think.

Frankly speaking, I really thought it to be true and still believe that "the others" exist.

These reactions seemed to be triggered primarily by the political and sometimes by the occult content used in the game. It indicates that some of the participants were less interested in what was 'authentic' in some objective and pre-existing sense, as in creating a new truth within and as a result of the game. It is closely related to the earlier observation in this chapter, that some people felt that they learned that the boundary between fact and fiction is weak.

3. IMMERSIVE GAMEPLAY EXPERIENCES

This section deals with the aware participants that in various ways enjoyed the gameplay. To identify what exactly gives a strong experience may be difficult since many design features are blurred and the sum gives a strong gameplay experience (Montola, Stenros et al 2009).

Surpassing expectations: real challenges

The gameplay experiences for those in total awareness of the gameness became deeply immersive and rich. An example of a pervasive game strategy (Montola, Stenros et al 2009) that can become very thrilling and immersive is when the unexpected happens and it exceeds the participant's expectations.

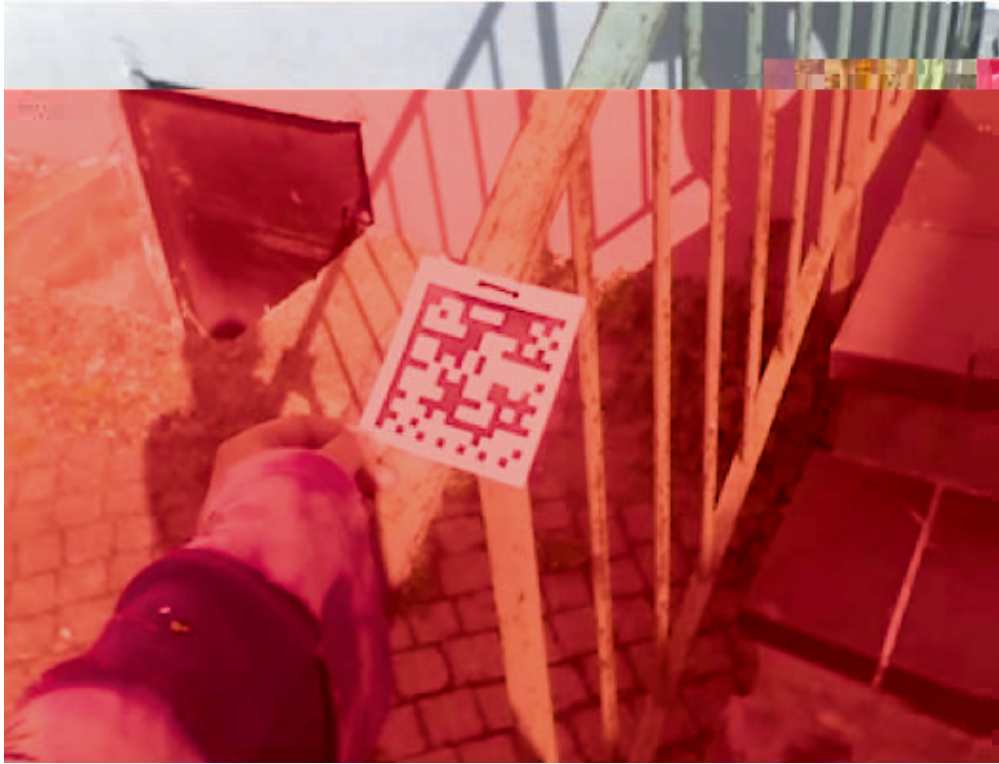
A seasoned larper retold one of her absolute strongest emotional experiences ‘when a matrix appeared at her school premises’. The story goes: In August this seasoned larper moved to attend a new school situated 700 kms south of her hometown Stockholm. At this time the forum was rather recently opened and only around twenty members had registered. This seasoned larper decided to create a street game cell and carry out the first mission with another forum participant. The motive was to ‘not just let things happen in the Stockholm area³. When the agreed evening came a few more players had been contacted and joined. They lived in different cities nearby and decided to spread out matrices geographically. After completing their work the player came home late at night and went to bed, content after an adventurous evening. The next day she was late for her first lesson. Rushing up the stairs she spotted a matrix in the corner of her eye, stuck on the staircase railing outside the classroom building:

I saw it and thought: - Ah, well, but that’s a normal matrix. But I couldn’t leave it, and I thought a little about it during my lesson. So at my five-minute break I walked out and checked it. And... I did not recognise it, it was like ... that was not the matrix! I do not know [how I felt but] thoughts just spun, I become completely overwhelmed, and of course, it felt really weird cos’ Conspirare had until then only been something I had been busy with online, and I was far away from Stockholm. And [now] I had been in Malmö and Luntadoing [game] stuff [...] But now it was like [...] They [Ordo Serpentis] might just as well have put it on my door, because I go to this school [far south] and now... it was pretty unexpected that [any gameplay] would happen here. I have lots of friends who were part of the Momentum [game], and I know the whole Kindergarten [group]. And [I found out later that] it was one of those [persons] that tipped Anty that I did my schooling there so, but if you, because I ignored the fact that they [the game masters] could have known I was there [at my school in southern Sweden] and the other fact was that this strange secret organisation apparently knew where I lived, or at least where I went to school. At that time I had no idea what their intentions were or anything like that... Wow!

Participant B10

The game (masters) managed to have an impact in her ordinary but very private life surpassing her expectations. According to B10, what really made these experiences strong was that

‘these strong emotional shifts are not part of your ordinary life. Because your everyday life is rather calm and safe and then, when suddenly matrices turn up outside your door, or you get a text message then you get very sharp emotional shifts. You get happy, you get very sad and that’s kind of magnificent!’



Picture 8:1. The matrix on participant B10's staircase railing outside her classroom. Photo taken by participant.

Another game event that engaged and created immersive experiences for many participants was the event to free Adrijanna. The background is as follows: Adrijanna had been kidnapped by *Kerberos*. The issue had been discussed frequently in the forum and chat. Where was she? Who had kidnapped her? After lots of research it was found out that *Kerberos* had managed to get her admitted to a psychiatric hospital in southern Sweden (in the city of Växjö).

The following runtime week *Conspirare* members worked hard to infiltrate *Kerberos*. The infiltrator (a player) had contacted another player in the *Conspirare* chat using the PM feature (i.e. private messaging). Apparently Adrijanna was to be transported from one psychiatric hospital to another. A swapping of drivers would take place at a truck driver's café south of Stockholm, on a big bridge in the vicinities of Nyköping town. The swap had to be done before a certain time so as not to make the *Kerberos* management suspicious because the *Conspirites* had managed to set the transfer up before the proper one was to take place. A few *Conspirare* members went there by car, and one of them role-

played the new driver guard that was to take over. They had waited for at least an hour and time was much overdue. The players started to get very very nervous:

I think my most powerful experience was the meeting with the guard down at Nyköping bridge. It then felt almost real, and, you are tense because you are not at home safe and sound, you are out there in the world making something. And [you feel] the thrill knowing that nobody knows what you're doing. And, yes [you know] it is a spectacle to some extent, and there is no audience other than ourselves, but still [...] Anyhow time was overdue and no guard had appeared [...] You feel a kind of authentic flutter, because if you put yourself in this role, to role-play someone else, then you have to take on that role. And the experience is different in a way [...] Then the guard walks in [...] he has a Kerberos label on his sleeve. And oh yes, it's a guard. Everybody in the restaurant saw him as a guard, spring baton, everything. So I walk up and say something, he looks at me like: - Who are you? - Hi, I'm Nilsson, I said. So we start talking over a cup of coffee. And you sit there because you have taken on the role, but you still know that you are someone that is trying to rescue her, you sit there and try to play along. And then, when he starts talking about how he has beaten her unconscious and bundled her in the back of the van, then you feel almost a bit disgusted to sit there and talk to one of those horrible guys [...] Anyhow, we finish the coffee and he says: - Well, I have to get my handcuffs back, they're my private stuff, so let's walk to the van. And we walk out to the van, and, then I get to see her, indeed she is lying there, in foetal position [...] It was a powerful experience, really. It was an absolute highlight for me.

Participant B1

Another participant, B8, had contracted the *Kerberos* company in order to infiltrate it. He made up a story to utilise their services at a party he planned to throw, and *Kerberos* guards drove to his hometown for a business meeting. He never thought they would drive 'all the 500 kms' south. But they arrived, 'in their own *Kerberos* labelled van, uniforms, balaclavas, and we ⁵ were dead funky'. The player thought that all felt very serious with all the material online, 'the fairy tale, all the pen made drawings, the use of voice distorter and anonymous numbers phoning me, personal emails'. This is an excerpt from the player's in-game diary:

Saturday, November 3

Tomorrow it will happen. My meeting with Kerberos, the security company that tortured Ingela, and that according Adrijanna has been chasing her, and nicked things that belonged to Maria too. An unregistered company which has contacts high up in the police [hierarchy], and that has been linked to Basebolligan ⁶. The manager concludes his emails by writing "Sieg Heil". Really unpleasant types [...] Shit, I just received a mobile call from the OS [Ordo Serpentis] people. Asked me to stalk Kerberos tomorrow. Cos' Kerb [Kerberos] has kidnapped members of the OS, and the tracks lead to Växjö. I'm fucked. My whole body is pulsating with adrenaline.

Shit. Now I have to make a lot of calls to my backup [people]. Shit shit shit.

Wednesday, November 7

Last Sunday I met a Kerberos patrol. Honestly, it was the scariest [thing] I've [ever] done in my life. My stomach clenched, my legs felt like jelly, and my brain refused to think of anything else than to run, far far away. I thought they would see through me, drag me into their van to beat me unconscious. But I was wrong. They bought it! Hopefully I soon have a login [password] ¹⁷. But it is far from over yet. When I receive it I have to erase myself from their system, without them becoming suspicious. Cos' if they understand that I have tried to infiltrate them while they are still sitting on all my personal information... then I'm in the doghouse. Luckily I have a little insider help, but I do not know how much he / she can do [...] I'm in a constant paranoid mood at the moment. Every time I see a white van around town I'm close to running. Things can go very wrong, very quickly.

The player had to step back and was very quiet in the game the following week. He only lurked. He did not really dare to have contact with anybody. During this time Agent Orange gave him a mission:

Wednesday, November 15

Oops, it was a while ago since I wrote. Didn't dare to while I was stepping back. Didn't want Kerberos to find me. However, now it seems that Kerb has other problems than "a snotty-nosed 19-year-old" as they nicely put it [...] As expected, a lot happened while I was gone, but I haven't been idle. Managed to smuggle a mobile on the SSS [Sankt Sigfrid's Hospital] to Adrijanna, which was fucking scary. It was as illegal as it could be. We hid a large brown package in there, and then we [video] shot the whole thing. If someone would have found out, they would surely think that it was a bomb or something. But luckily everything went well...

All this in Växjö seems to have blown over a bit. Phu, I can feel a bit safer I have never before been so observant of the high number of white vans, they seem to be everywhere! And as a reflex I look for the Kerberos' logo...

But now I'll eat and sleep.

Fluff Out

Participant B8

When asked, B8 said that he would never ever have dared to conduct a meeting with *Kerberos* if it had been real and would probably not have gone to the hospital to hide something the way he did. He reckoned it to be an illegal act, but it was a challenge and he felt a lot of thrill and a big sense of achievement. He was the only one right then that could help Adrijanna, he told me. The game masters managed to surpass also participant B8's expectations. To offer him a mission that made an impact on the happenings in the game, making him understand that his actions mattered, was a conscious

strategy from the designers' side, they told me. They made it clear that with him placing the phone at the hospital, Adrijanna could be reached.

Players returning the favour

If challenges are created in an open and engaging way, participants will sometimes exceed the designers' expectations (Montola, Stenros et al. 2009). One occasion in SOM was when the first *Ordo Serpentis* mission was handed out. One of the interviewed participants was not so fond of the TV production, it was too obviously fake and he had chosen not to read any disclaimers, not to destroy his gameplay. However, he understood that if he shot the mission he planned to conduct it could become 'dead cool television'. He was going to Riga, Latvia that weekend, so he brought his webcam. Afterwards he submitted a long video film where he pursued a person from Stockholm to Riga. The film displays how he in his car follows another car to the airport, he follows a person onto the aircraft, and in Riga the stalk ended outside the Russian Consulate⁸.

Another player, B5, who was a seasoned larper, took the 'pretend that it is real' face value. She had followed the production for some time, but was not 'hooked' at first. She did not like the conspiracy theories and the matrices and the negative picture of surveillance companies. She had never ever taken part in a game that used so many different platforms and never participated in any similar larp. She was a bit unsure of the gameness but since she had understood that it was some kind of 'online game slash online larp' she thought that she might succeed with what others had failed - to get into contact with the *Kerberos* company:

The fact that it was pretend it's for real. And then I thought ... okay, but others have tried to get into this company in slightly different ways. And then I thought, but what would I do if this was true? I would apply for a job. And, in that it was, there was no popup on the site, I was a bit unsure and thought yes, but I could just as well take a chance, it would be fun if it actually was real, so I sent a CV⁹. Yes, of course, first I sent a request for service, and then they asked me to submit a CV, so I did.

Participant B5

When the game masters got the CV they were utterly surprised and chocked. The participant's CV was filled with references from watchman training courses and previous job references from the field. Everything seemed so authentic, so trustworthy. Was it real? Was the player trying to trick them?

This story continued to unfold with more communication between the player and the 'company'

(game masters) and was interwoven into other events and players' activities. In this way it gave some fire to the game and a lot of pleasure and thrill to other players. But also the game masters' startled faces and thrilled reactions were proof of a strong gameplay experience. There were several situations when they were unsure of whether what participants produced was true or fabricated. In addition, this event shows how one participant's actions and interactions with the game (masters) can spur more activities and tiered participation. It gave rise to many discussions online, to many participants writing and reading forum posts and chatting about it.

The magician's curtain: upholding the illusion

After meeting *Kerberos*, participant B8 was asked by Agent Orange to place a mobile phone (that they would mail him) in a ward corridor at the hospital where Adrijanna was admitted (see previous section). '[I]t was not a dummy but an authentic phone' and as he was a bit curious so he inserted a simcard and tried to turn it on, but found out that it was broken. When asked how he reacted to this he decided to pretend as if it was working. This is common in larp and is part of the unspoken rules to help create the game world and uphold the illusion (Hopeametsä 2008).

Another participant, also a seasoned role-player, discovered a design flaw on the *Ordo Serpentis* webpage. He reckoned that in larp you have to take responsibility for your experience 'to make it work, cos' if you encounter anything illogical you have to rationalise and not take any notice of it'. The occasion was when he logged on the *Ordo Serpentis* member webpage, *Thummin*:

You could choose an element for your cell. It turned out that they [the game designers] had placed them in the wrong order. So if you pressed [the] air [button] you got water instead. It could be very annoying if you had not had a little extra processing in the back of your mind saying: - Ah, okay, what can this be? Is there some sense in it? So instead of sending an error report, we wrote a forum post saying: - Look here, this is strange! If you choose air you get water, for some reason. Are they telling us something? And, of course the moderators read it too. And presto it was fixed [...] At such times you have to take responsibility for your own experience, and in addition not ruin for others by saying that there is an error in Thummin. You can turn it into something playable instead. Then it becomes something to act upon until it has been fixed.

Participant B4

Both occasions are examples of what is called the magician's curtain in ARG (Montola, Stenros et al. 2009). The game organisers strive for creating a coherent game world, hiding the stings and wires that are there to fabricate the illusion. However, the players have to collaborate consciously and not hack

or (overtly) discuss the construction of the game. They must not even let this knowledge influence their gameplay. Accordingly, both players kept their suspension of disbelief and upheld the curtain in different ways, not to ruin the gameplay for themselves or for others.

The importance of collective make-believe, teamwork and real challenges

The examples underneath, from participant B6 and B4, show the importance of collective make-believe; upholding the magician's curtain as a collective act. Both players acknowledged the importance of the other players to become immersed. The quotes deal with the *Conspirare* chat:

[...] it was clearly very suspenseful when there was a discussion in the chat or forum, in-game. Particularly when there was a burning topic, such as when Adrijanna was kidnapped then there was a strong feeling [in the chat/forum] that people actually cared about it for real, because it raised the game experience [for me] when others have acted under the principle This Is Not a game, and taken things seriously, and thought it was important, because then it is easier to feel the same myself too.

Participant B6

It would not have been the same if there had not been an active chat, because I am pretty shy and I hesitate to make contact by phoning unfamiliar people. It would not have been possible to keep in-game without having other players to interact with, it would have been very difficult.

Participant B4

Participant B6 retold a strong emotional experience, meeting up with a cell member to conduct a street game activity. He had only had contact with her online:

We met once and did a mission. We talked quite a lot on the forum. It was a very strong gaming experience when I met her, and we had long discussions in-game. To meet someone in real life and discuss things that happened in-game [as if] it was for real [...] It was really cool.

Participant B6

The fact that they both stayed in-game, even in the physical, ordinary life was a powerful experience. It can be compared with the feeling participant B1 had. The mission B6 carried out was rather simple, but was nevertheless experienced as challenging since it was conducted in the ordinary world (Montola, Stenros et al. 2009). This kind of teamwork made the experience stronger compared to working alone. Collective group play amplifies what players are able to achieve (ibid.).

Dark play

Upholding the illusion for unaware participants can also create fun and help keep the player's in-game. Here are quotes from a television viewer and a seasoned larper that upheld the 360° illusion for their respective friends:

[It was fun] that they were so heated [in the debate program]. And in addition, I watched with some [friends] who knew nothing about what was true or not. And it was so fun to see them become so completely excited and upset too. So I could sit there and laugh. Cos' they interpreted it as authentic, it was for real [...] I did not know exactly what was true, I just assumed most to be fake. And I didn't really think of it, until the end. The last [debate] episode, when the credits scrolled up and you could read who acted... and I wanted the others to read it [the credits]. That they [the discussants] were actors. I said nothing, I said: - But wait, we have to look at the credits. And then they saw that it was [fiction].

Participant B2

The larper B10 took it to an extreme, playing the game 24/7 at her school. She had been involved in the pre-game activities, and in August, had moved to her new school 700 kms south of Stockholm. During summer she had met Adrijanna and Agent Orange during the medieval week on Gotland and 'knew a bit more than the average *Conspirare* member' and she also knew 'a bit of what was going on behind the curtain'. For her it was hard to deny the gameness, particularly during the week after the first episode

cos' then everybody at the forum bombarded us with that this is only a game and simultaneously my parents interrogated me about what I was actually doing. All this made it very very difficult to uphold the fiction. But most of the time it has been easy.

But after that she upheld it for some of her friends and schoolmates. They saw her constructing matrices, putting them up on public places during a class walk in a nearby village. She was also online on *Conspirare* while they were in her room:

I have two schoolmates whom I talked to one night, and they were really afraid of what I was doing, afraid that I would disappear. It was not extremely serious, but at times it turned grave. [For example] when I arrived five minutes late for a lesson, they began to wonder. We had a small system. Every time I sent them a text message, I would end my message with two dots. If it did not include two dots [they would know] something was wrong. It would mean that someone had abducted me or something similar would have happened [...] We created a lot of such mechanisms in order for me to reassure them [...] They were not active on the forum or so, but we watched the drama episodes together.

We saw the last episode when I got home from Gothenburg¹, when most of the illusion was broken for me, but I still upheld it until we were done with the episode.

In both cases the participants played with people not taking part in the game. In this kind of dark play (Schechner 2002) the participant keep the gameness hidden for the others/outsideers that are unaware of being ‘played’ with. The player’s enjoyment is created by the risk, luck, deception or thrill these (game) actions spawn. When B10 was putting up matrices during the class walk the teacher asked what she was actually doing, if it was graffiti (implicitly asking her if she was conducting an illegal activity), she answered: ‘- Ah, no, I am just putting up some matrices, that is nothing to worry about’. She conducted several dark play activities because they gave her enjoyment whilst all the time hoping that her classmates ‘wouldn’t think she was crazy’.

Scary theme is scarier even for aware pervasive gamers

Were any of those seasoned players ever afraid? Yes. The BortAB contract¹² was really scary for both the aware players as well as for the less involved participants:

Yes [I was afraid] , when I was to sign the BortAB contract. I really wanted to do it because then I had of course been with my friends and introduced them everything for the first time, promised that no, I will certainly not disappear, and then when I got home, I would sign this paper saying that they may abduct me at any time [...] At first I thought, I won’t do it! But then I chatted with Agent Orange [in-game]. And we discussed what their [Ordo Serpentis] annual income could be, how many employees, and if they really could do any harm [...] So in-game I felt that I had support and I had people who really kept track of me, so it felt safer. And outside the fiction it felt like, okay he pushes me, so I’ll try to go a little his way, to help. Because I realised that members were needed to make the game continue.

R: But you knew that it was a game? And yet you hesitated?

Mmm, but you uphold the fiction for yourself, you never consciously think outside the game [...] Even if it was an invalid contract, you have given your word [...] When you begin to think about questions like: If you would disappear who would look for you first? How long do you think it would take before your relatives contact the police? Who would contact the police? Then it felt real. Before it felt like ah, well, we may disappear. But now, they will actually conduct it! Although it was fiction, they would certainly abduct us. It was, it was pretty uncomfortable.

Participant B10

Another interviewed participant, B13, chatted on MSN with a cell member (an old friend) about signing the contract and about the harsh tone in the game. The friend said: - Have you seen what has happened now? And B13 had seen it:

Yes, unless you knew it was fake, then you would become really scared. I logged on the large chat [Conspirare] together with all readers, and people were scared, because it was an incredibly tough tone. And it was written in such a way so that you got a slap in the face when you read [it]. And it was contrasted with the chatting with my friend [off-game] [...] When it feels this hard, then I have to think to myself: - But it is a game! And besides, I am here at home after all. If you are on a larp [event] and you experience an unpleasant situation, then you choose your actions according to how the person [character] is and the consequences your actions may have. And then I might not have feared the life of my character; I make trade-offs. But here it is not my character that disappears, but me myself. Here you are in the game all the time and everything that happens in the game, just continues. Because the game is not stopped because I act in a certain way it continues. While here at home, I'm my normal self, and I write something that threatens myself. It is actually dangerous for the person I play. And it is extremely close to me.

Scary themes can be experienced as scary even for seasoned participants (Montola and Wern 2006a). The interviewed participants were both seasoned larpers and still they had to reason with themselves that it was 'only a game' and therefore did not really threaten them. However, they understood the risks. Player B8 reflected on the consequences of (letting himself) being abducted. It could have consequences for his work, and besides, he did not know what to tell his parents if it happened. Both B8 and B10 understood it was scary for the other participants too, participant B10 perceived other chat-ers' fear in the *Conspirare* chat.

Pronoia: positive paranoia

In games like *SOM*, that is taken into the ordinary life, and that in addition blurs the line between fiction and fact, participants are not always able to distinguish between deliberately planned events and coincidental ones. As we have seen, the unaware participants were not always positive about this blur. Among the seasoned participants, on the other hand, this created an extra pleasurable dimension. The participant that had been visited by the *Kerberos* guards did not stop worrying after the guards had left, but continued to look for white vans (i.e. the *Kerberos* van). This kind of positive paranoia, 'pronoia', is a kind of benevolent conspiracy (McGonigal 2006c) where the game masters are conspiring behind players' back to give them a good game.

Another occasion is connected to the disappearance of Adrijanna. One of the members of a player cell was contacted by a (non-participating) friend that knew the group was searching for a disappeared person. This friend who was admitted to a forensic psychiatric ward in the Stockholm area had spotted Adrijanna on the premises. Participant B1 discusses the event with me:

It was a bit of a tricky situation, what was real and what was not. We got a tip when Adrijanna was kidnapped. One of our cell members had a friend who was admitted at Huddingerättsspsyk¹³, and that had spotted Adrijanna there [at the hospital premises]. Then I thought, oh well, last we heard something she was probably down in... that hospital [St. Sigfrid's Hospital]. Then all of a sudden the [seamless] bubble burst a bit. Is it possible that she had to take a break from the game, because she actually did not feel well? Yes, but where do you have such a coincidence that, what do we do? Should we follow this track? Shall we visit his friend and see if she is there? And if so, if she is really there for real, what do you do? How far can you go? What is too far? It was a bit cool [...] But then, the same friend who brought me into this [the game]. He said that, no way Adrijanna is made of titanium. Forget that idea. If she really is staying at Huddinge, then it is part of the game, and if so, then they [Conspirare] either try to get her out, or there is the possibility of the Nyköping bridge thing being a trap [...] Well, should we inform the rest of the players? And if it is just false and 50 people try to get her out? ... So there was a conflict. But it made it all the more interesting and more credible. But it turned out that she [the admitted friend] was just a confabulator. However, we actually made an attempt. He, who knew her, went there, but then she had already been discharged. So we had no access, because it was a locked ward.

Pronoia is a result of taking the game into the physical, real world. This sense that everything is part of the game and that everybody is trying to improve the experience is a fundamental source of fun in pervasive games. As player B1 reflects - even if the piece of information was not true it made the game more interesting and credible.

A compelling, authentic story

When asked about the narrative and story content several participants mentioned how the authenticity of the narrative pulled them into the game. A compelling game narrative provides a frame for play experiences (Montola, Stenros et al. 2009). *SOM* contained one main narrative - the search for a woman. However, the search as such might not have been the most important, the authenticity features, the merge of fiction and the ordinary life was very compelling too. Such features were that the game content was connected to facts like the issue of the 6,000 people that disappear annually in Sweden, the connection to political events, that you could learn 'things', and the conventions of realism:

The first thing you see is Adrijanna's movie [at conspirare.se]. Where she explicitly seeks, as a face, help me! And of course that affects you [...] I think a large part of what made the story exciting is that it was so encompassing. You could engage in the parts that interested you. Also because the story was connected to reality, you could always find something that was worth digging a little deeper into [...] It was not the most important thing for me, the television story. The game behind the scenes at conspirare.se, that story was more interesting, because it had so much more depth. And it was partly a puzzle game, a role-playing game, and in addition something that had substance in the relationship to reality to real politics, and "real" occultism, which meant that you could learn a lot of things, like when you researched things, that was very interesting [...] And you had to reflect a lot. What does this mean? Stop and reflect. There was definitely a political dimension to the problem, behind the scenes.

Participant B4

It is a very engaging game. It's almost like a dream. You can go into it and be inside it for a while, but you still know that sooner or later it's going to end [because] it is not real. In the back of your head somewhere it feels very real. This could be true [...] The best was probably that they had developed so many sides, you could play Entropia, and SVT was on, in that way it was so convincing. The best thing was that they had so many different sources, so many and they seemed to be completely independent of each other.

Participant B3

[What] I think was most fascinating, was all that all tracks and all the clues, all those things you could follow till it ends up in reality. It had not been fun at all without it. Just to be able to even google Metatron¹⁴, that it has existed for a long time, everything can be checked. Except one thing, that was a bit boring - who the van was registered to. But that was the only thing we nailed.

Participant B1

Regardless of the type of realism like the fact that SVT was part of the story, filmic techniques communicating realism with close up shots, facts that could be googled, an almost never ending sources linked to reality - all supported challenges and sources of excitement for aware participants. Compared with the unaware participants for whom all these uncertainties were engaging. It seems that they thought the same about the reality fiction blur.

Reality or fiction, is no sharp border acceptable?

None of those interviewed seemed to bother about the blur of facts and fabricated content. Most of them liked it and even thought it to be an important feature of the production, because it made it both challenging and forced them to think twice about societal issues:

It has not disturbed me that there is not a sharp line. On the contrary it has been a particularly interesting thing, especially in retrospect. The ideas and philosophy behind are of course neither fiction nor reality. You have to relate to them from your own starting-point, what you think about them [...] And fact-wise I do not think it has been difficult to understand when something has come directly from P. However, it has been a bit difficult to know when something does not come from P. But I do not think this has been a problem, rather it has been the strength of the project. But I can imagine that some would view it as a little awkward, not knowing when and where the game ends.

Participant B4

This is ... a pretty strong event and if [it is] possible you may even get a more open view of reality, of what can be real [...] and, yes, the reality is something we create ourselves. I have got a very liberal view of what reality is.

Participant B10

[...] and that is probably what I like the most with the Truth about Marika. That it makes you think a little extra about things you might not have reflected about before [...] The discussion [with my unaware friends] was basically [...] Is this for real? Is this really for real? The Others [do they really exist]? But I think the big issue was that, that you were so shocked; you have not even thought of that before that there may be those who place themselves outside the society.

Participant B2

4. WHAT ABOUT ETHICS THEN?

Previously, the design approach of the alternate reality in *SOM* has been discussed. I have also addressed how this was perceived by the active participants and to some extent also by (TV) spectators. There is no doubt that all the interviewed but one TV viewer, thought it to be an engaging and multifaceted story and equally thrilling, that it supported an immersive gameplay experience. Many of them had never experienced anything similar before. In this sense the game created the kind of experiences the game designers aimed for. However, many participants did not get the same type of immersive experiences, or at least they were not positive according to the analyses of (in particular)

the web and email surveys. In addition, people were not aware that they had participated in a game.

I have deliberately avoided any ethical judgement. To approach this now, I must distinguish a bit more carefully between some different interpretations and perceptions of *SOM*, and also take the designer's intentions into account.

As discussed previously, the blurring of fact and fiction in *SOM* was intentional. And I also discussed that SVT in the end declared post-game in *Redaktions Schatten* that their intention was one of media criticism: SVT intended to raise awareness that no media can be trusted straight off. The company P had a slightly different goal. In the terminology of Cindy Poremba (2007), *Sanningen om Marika* was a 'brink game', a game in which the activities were so authentic that they cannot be considered to be just a game. The brink effect was created through the combination of the ARG and 360° illusion game aesthetics, the emphasis on 'pushing your personal boundaries' inspiring participants to take actions they might want to but never would have done otherwise. In addition, the lack of off-game communication supported the interpretations.

Most participants who embraced the fictional nature of *SOM* felt empowered by the game. I believe that this experience was available only for people who understood the fictional nature of the main storyline and that adopted the pretence instruction as an invitation to role-play. These participants were able to immerse into pretence play, and also to appreciate that some of their activities were authentic. The reaction was a stronger version of the 'Pinocchio effect' (McGonigal 2003b), one where you as a participant actually contribute to bring Pinocchio to life and make him a real boy. As shown above, several of the active participants reported such experiences that in general were strong, positive, and empowering.

However, as one of the experienced larpers pointed out, the fusion between the game and the authenticity made it more difficult to distance oneself from the game experience. The game would have done well to provide some room for distance and reflection. In her article on the Pinocchio effect, McGonigal (2003b) writes that 'the central goal of successful immersive game design is to communicate to players that a cage is in place, while making it as easy and likely as possible for the players to pretend that they don't see the cage'. *Sanningen om Marika* did not achieve this effect, and as discussed above I am not sure that the producers intended it to. SVT may have wished *SOM* to be deliberately confusing to television viewers - otherwise they would have put disclaimers in the TV programs, wouldn't they? And P obviously wanted to create a brink game experience. The fact that this happened was an

effect of importing a set of design ideals from the *Prosopopeia* series (Jonsson, Montola et al. 2006; Stenros, Montola et al. 2007): a fictionalised reality that lay close to the real game background, the pretence game rule, and the lack of an organised forum for off-game communication. It worked in *Prosopopeia II: Momentum* because the game was set up for 30 participants who had explicitly signed up for the game, participated in a pre-game seminar, and also personally signed the printed player agreement form. *SOM* was very differently constructed: it was open for a mass audience, for anybody to enter the game through surfing a set of webpages that were already part of the game diegesis. Furthermore, whereas the participants in *Prosopopeia II: Momentum* had a chance to meet each other in advance of entering the game and hence could establish an informal contract about how to play, a new *SOM* player would only meet players that already were playing.

Albeit there are similarities between the ARG ideal of players ‘performing belief’ and the larp ideal of character immersion into a role, the differences were larger than they might seem. The Nordic larp ideal of full immersion into a story world (Jonsson, Montola et al. 2007) is not equivalent to the ARG ideal of ‘not peeking behind the curtain’ (Lancaster 1999). The ARG players may not wish to see the machinery exposed, but Nordic larpers actively contribute to the machinery. This works well in a closed production where the participants sign up for participation and learn to know each other in advance. In a public production where anyone can join without much preparations, the collective agreement to stay in fiction can work as a strong ‘reality marker’.

This effect was both unfortunate and unethical. It was unfortunate because it made some potential participants afraid to participate, and created unnecessary conflicts between participants and newcomers which harmed the game experience. It was unethical because it made some participants engage in a mission that they believed to be serious, and then made them very disappointed when it was not. At the very least, the time and effort they spent was spent due to misguided grounds. I think the problem was closely related to the lack of off-game forums. These participants did not trust the disclaimers but the social agreement among players and organisers, which meant that they most likely would have trusted the discussions in an off-game space. Transmedia narratives designer Andrea Phillips¹⁵ has examined many previous ARGs and how they have been tricking or endangering the participants with their believable stories. Her advice to deal with the kind of possible participant reactions and interpretations that I have presented here is to not include any (game) content that may be misconceived, if it may create dangerous results. She argues that it is exceptionally important for game designers to take full responsibility, and that designers must ask themselves what the worst that could happen is. If people may misinterpret prescriptions on a pharmaceutical company’s website as real, or the effect

on bystanders of a set-up kidnapping, being unaware that it is not real and mistake it for a real kidnapping then the designers have to think twice. The desire for authenticity must not be mistaken for a desire for 'reality'. A story can be true but it does not necessarily have to be 'real'. Potential solutions, given by Phillips, are to put a fiction tag, a literal HTML-tag (<fiction>Once Upon A Time</fiction>) that would display an icon on the browser, marking the webpage as fiction. Another suggestion is to tell people up-front what to expect, or to make sure participants know where the story comes from, who are the producers or who is telling the story (even if this might 'destroy' the player immersion). SOM was partly 'fiction-tagged', but as one (digital) game designer told me: not even seasoned players do read pop-ups or other information given, even if it would improve gameplay.

For SOM I am in particular critical of the lack of a proper closure of the game with a follow-up meta-discussion at *Conspirare*¹⁶. At an early stage the plans were to literally hand over the entire *Conspirare* to the participants in order for them to continue their 'battle' and strive for a 'better society'. The legal advisors of SVT had agreed to the keeping of all webpages open and interactive for 30 days after closure. I asked a few times about it in mid-November but I did not get a proper answer of why it was not realised.

I let one of my interviewed participants, a seasoned larper that had a great deal of fun and gained very strong and deep (emotional) experiences out of her gameplay, have the last word. She watched the drama episodes with her classmates, keeping up the 360° illusion for them (and herself). What she needed help with was a large and well-designed debriefing that would have helped all the TV viewers too, something that would make her friends understand what kind of novel (genre) production SVT and The company P had crafted. The participants that joined the boat ride on the last evening outside the SVT building got a kind of debrief. But the rest of the participants that could not make it to the closing event were left out. Participant B10 argued that SVT should have taken responsibility and broken the illusion for the television audience:

SVT never said anything about it being a game on the TV screen, when the last drama episode finished. So when it finished and they still thought it was authentic, then I had to break the illusion for them, and I sat there and was totally devastated and thought: - But, but, but, are they [SVT] not going to say anything? And then I had to tell them it was a reality game, and I had to tell them about my [game] involvement, that this is a reality game, and this is how you do it, and [...] They felt cheated, a bit. I tried to alleviate the anger I tried to point the anger at SVT instead because they didn't announce it in the end. And they [her friends] were still worried about all the people that still thought it to be authentic [...] I think they should have debriefed the entire

Swedish audience a bit better [...] They never said: - This is Sweden's first participation drama. This is a hobby and it is called reality gaming, and this is how you conduct it. You can check these URLs if you would like to know more.

Notes

1 With casual play I refer to a lighter form of engagement. Tiered participation aims at offering levels of engagement. Devoted players like to dive deep into the game's puzzles for hours, whilst the casual players are content with surfing the web to find out recent happenings in the game.

2 The dog car refers to the Kerberos van, see chapter 2.

3 The participant's home area.

4 Malmö and Lund are cities in Southern Sweden.

5 The player met Kerberos alone, but had some of his friends as a backup, invisible for the Kerberos game masters, hidden behind bushes and on a house roof.

6 Basebolligan is a nickname for a group of officers in the Stockholm police force that during the early 80s dealt with violence and crime in their own way. Dressed in civilian clothes and baseball caps they used very brutal and violent methods. They were arrested for assault in the service.

7 The login password would let the infiltrator into the Kerberos internal web.

8 A photo of the game masters when they received the film is displayed in chapter 2.

9 CV is short for curriculum vitae.

10 The medieval week is an annual event where the entire city of Visby and surroundings on the island of Gotland is transformed into medieval times with great many tourist attractions like markets, music, theatre and lectures, knights clash in tournaments and much more. See further <http://www.medeltidsveckan.se/eng/index.pab>, accessed 22nd November 2010. A lot of larpers interested in medieval settings go there to larp, and so did Adrijanna and her friends carrying out pre-game activities.

11 She refers to the closing event of the game, outside the SVT building, see chapter 4.

12 The BortAB contract was part of the second week's street game mission.

13 The name of the forensic psychiatric hospital.

14 Metatron was a fabricated secret organisation that had extensive knowledge in occultism and mysticism. It was created originally for the Momentum game but appeared in SOM too, but it was sparsely utilised in the game mastering and game events. Metatron is the name of an angel in Judaism and some branches of Christianity. Metatron is

also called 'The voice of God' through which God talks. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metatron>, accessed 11th April 2011.

15 Article by Michael Andersen in the magazine Wired on 30th March 2011, <http://www.wired.com/magazine/2011/03/cautionary-ales-in-transmedia-storytelling/>, accessed 11th April, 2011.

16 A more thorough post-game discussion was organised at the SVT chat, but most game participants did not visit.

CONVERGENCE CULTURE: CONCLUDING THE ANALYSIS

Sanningen om Marika is an example of convergence culture. The producers' ambition was to utilise their expertise in broadcasting and games development to consciously form a hybrid media production that would offer extensive and novel forms of audience interaction. The initial conclusion is that merging their expertise and attaining this hybrid production was not an easy task. During the collaboration process different kinds of tensions and frictions appeared that imposed on their collaboration and on the design, implementation and production of the final product. This chapter concludes my analysis. I use media convergence as an instrument to analyse the types of issues that appeared.

1 INDUSTRIAL AND CORPORATE CONVERGENCE

The two collaborators SVT and the company P belong to two quite different media industries; the broadcast and games industries. Their collaboration was an example of industrial convergence. However, even though today's media landscape does feature similar collaborations that take place in new and unforeseen ways and with very different and diverse actors, this specific collaboration was novel and unusual. Collaboration was problematic, which leads us to looking into not only cultures of production but also features such as size, history, corporate culture, ideology and the shared learning of the total set of industries and occupations, and to taking into account the various groups within media that may have sub-cultures of their own (Küng-Shankleman 2000).

SVT and P were aware of their differing cultures of production; they tried to anticipate them with workshops and meetings to prepare themselves and build an understanding. But as I have shown, the process of merging their products created tensions and frictions. Though the groups tried to acknowledge each other's differences, the collaboration became strained. The companies had very different views of what quality was and how to achieve and measure it. The two different quality demands could not be merged. Consequently, views of how to craft the production parts differed. Part of the problem consisted of their differing media logics and different viewpoints on what and how to produce, and for whom. The analysis shows that the companies were driven by their own media industrial logics. As other traditional mass media companies (Küng-Shankleman 2000), SVT showed features of still being bureaucratic and with complex government mandates. Governance issues, followed by the involvement of several departments, and communication problems, can be traced to the complex, chaotic, hierarchical and bureaucratic production process where many beliefs, expectations, langu-

ages, norms and practices were embedded in the same project. The SOM production and the management process gave rise to internal tensions and communication issues at SVT. Department managers not commonly involved in decision-making at lower levels were engaged in the unusual project that cut across several departments. The outcome of the issues entailed managerial and financial changes within the SVT organisation. A new improved organisation, updated to deal with multi-platform productions, was launched. It was expected to cater for the needs of future multi-platform productions.

The corporate cultures of SVT and P differed. Alongside the main corporate culture of the large PSB, there also existed inter-organisational cultures that cut across the organisation's corporate culture, as is often the case with large organisations (Küng-Shankleman 2000). Some of the tensions therefore appeared between the more bureaucratic corporate culture and decision-making of SVT, and the smaller project-based SVT team. With its project employed co-workers, of whom several had worked together previously, this team formed their own intra-organisational (SVT) culture of learned, taken-for-granted, shared beliefs and values and non-negotiable assumptions (Schein 2003). Compared to SVT, The company P was a small, young company. They had their historical roots in a subcultural leisure activity, 'a hobby', and were driven by a political and ideological mission. P was a games industry start up, featuring a similar culture to other 'dev-firms' with their rebellious anti-authoritarian attitude of operating (Kline, Dyer-Witthford et al. 2003). They resembled the games industry workforce in several ways: they were all young and they all had significant gaming experience (Deuze 2007). Even if P did not design and develop for the mainstream mass market of console and PC games, all members were born and bred in the gamer generation. Some had been trained for and worked in the field as hard/software engineers, programmers, game designers and graphic designers developing games for a mass market. Others were hackers, autodidacts or artists. And they were all, more or less, members of the Nordic role-playing sub culture. Even if their main/common gaming interest lay in larp, they were familiar with games of all types. The description of the meta-logic of game development firms, described by Kline, Dyer-Witthford et al. (2003: 74), fits well with P: instantaneous, experimental, fluid, flexible, heterogeneous, customised and portable and yet also with fashionable and stylish products and productivity. The P members had a type of shared learning experience with which they had figured out how to survive financially and they had found ways to organise themselves internally (Schein 2003: 171). As a group they had learned to deal with the challenges posed by the environment.

This is not to say that there were not internal conflicts between the P workers; there were. But their culture was one of collaborative authorship, a common feature for game developers. As already noted, they shared the same political/ideological goals, being clear on how this was going to be aesthe-

tically expressed in the game design and the kind of gaming experience they worked towards (Hagen 2010). This can be compared with the interorganisational culture of the SVT team. The occupational cultures of the producer and the director of the debate affected the decisions taken and created tensions between the teams. Both of them were sovereign in their decisions-making and did not (need) to take other team members' opinions into consideration before taking a decision.

2 CONVERGENCE OF TECHNOLOGIES, ARTEFACTS, CONTENTS, GENRES

As a product, *SOM* was created in the borderland between television, games and the internet, and different types of convergence took place. The multi-platform approach tied the broadcast drama and game activities together, offering online interaction and networking; a kind of technological convergence. The multi-platform approach facilitated to merge the parts to become a hybrid product, different from a conventional TV drama with a common webpage containing background information and other add-ons. The similar usage of video blogging in the production merged television's and internet's similarities in expressing liveness, aliveness, intimacy and spatial entrances (White 2006).

In *SOM* the different forms of communication and formats were to be merged, or at least the goal was to make them work together. In my analysis I show that the two different ways, or types, of storytelling - a result of merging forms, formats and contents - created tensions. It resulted in a hybrid production, but the inherent medium specific demands that are part of the media logics of broadcast and games, resulted in different quality requirements. These differing quality requirements made the amalgamation difficult. The logic of TV with its one-way directed (and controlled) narrative is different from an online logic that is built on network(ing), interactivity and feedback. The online logic enables users to consume, produce, collaborate, socialise and play. It is a network logic that contains many possibilities to escape control. The game logics, as expressed in both in ARG and larp, also demand keeping the narrative under control. This meant that the game masters controlled and managed the narrative development. Consequently, it was difficult to achieve an entire amalgamation. The debate (chapter 5) and the *Conspirare* chat (chapter 6) are examples of how these medium specific quality demands interfered with the content, the design, and the outcome of the audience interaction. The differences of TV drama and games lie in the two media's specific features and elements, and in the quality demands that are tied to their diametrically different audience interaction models. TV drama is built on a low ambiguity factor and the audience activity is mainly interpretation. This makes a TV drama opposite to a (digital) game, which is an ergodic text (Aarseth 1997). This means that a game is interactive and that the user needs to make an effort to experience the product. Games are built on

configuration: the user has to configure game elements to create a game experience.

In addition to the merging of TV drama and (digital) game in *SOM*, television genres were also blurred. Hybrid television genres continuously appear (Hill 2007). This time two common television genres, TV drama and current affairs debate programs, were to be merged in a fiction production. The production was implicitly marketed as ‘60-minutes of fiction’ and was aimed at functioning as a standalone TV drama. The reaction to the drama and the debate was partly negative. A possible explanation is that the producers had not managed to keep up to the ‘norms’. The *SOM* audience could not make sense of the (re-)presented social phenomena (Altheide and Snow 1979). The content was not experienced as entertaining, but a bit too far-fetched to represent reality, or to work as a playful experienced picture of reality. One can just speculate about why the production did not attain the viewing figures aimed for, but the fiction-reality blur broke with the producer-consumer contract (McQuail 2005), which meant that viewers had difficulties assessing whether the debate was real or not. In addition, the low budget frames of the TV drama lowered its quality. Acting was not skilful. Viewing also demanded intertextual reading. It was richly filled with events with political, historical and occult connotations and conspiracy theories. Viewers had to have prior knowledge of this to be able to understand and to make what Berentz calls ‘a double contract’ (2006): readers (viewers) have to make contextual considerations about the cultural product to unveil its overlaying aesthetics, because it cannot be perceived as either fiction or factual. However, reading (watching) was not enough. To be able to grasp and understand *SOM* participants had to put the dispersed story together and participate more actively; to search, collaborate and follow the story on the different media platforms.

Another blurring or ‘convergence’ that appeared in *SOM* was the blurring of the ordinary with games and play. Today fiction and facts are blurred in different kinds of media cultural expressions such as flash mobs, reality TV shows, TV news, street performances and street art and mockumentaries¹. Although the *SOM* drama was entertainment, and a game, some people still perceived and interpreted it as a true hunt for a disappeared woman. In chapter eight I question the ethical in crafting an ARG/pervasive larp without offering any off-game space. Mela Kocher (2011) has researched ARG participants interpretations and perceptions, and argues that participants that have prior knowledge (and skills) from other contemporary media cultural expressions - like flash mobs, reality TV shows - are more able to interpret and enjoy the game events. They perceive the different game markers, or fiction markers, even if they are only implicitly expressed by the game designers. There are markers of different kinds such as semantic markers indicating content is impossible or unreal, or formal markers like aesthetic principles of composition and style. The third type, para-textual markers, is a kind of genre

convention like disclaimers or links to Wikipedia articles on ARG. *SOM* contained all three types of game markers. In addition, the contemporary broadcast multi-platform approach with forums and chats was in itself a blur with digital games' community platforms, and an example of how screen technologies interoperate (White 2006).

The problems discussed above pinpoint the difficulties of convergence. Is it at all possible to produce a complex combination of cultural artefacts, using the production methods and processes of, and working according to the same principles as a pervasive larp and ARG, where conventional broadcasting is such a large part? Moreover, media productions that are mainly built on interpretation - as with TV dramas - are quite different from the user's configurative activities of games. To perceive and identify game markers is an important part of the participation/playing of a game. Thus, the SVT aim - to both make a hybrid production that would work as a standalone television drama, to be viewed by a mass audience, and to craft a highly hybrid game that demanded participants to have previous knowledge and a variety of consumer skills - was a bit farfetched. The producer-consumer agreement of TV genres implicates that SVT should have been clear about the fictional nature of it all. As I have shown in my analysis this was not the case.

3 PARTICIPATORY CULTURE: HIERARCHIES, POWER AND ELITE PLAYERS

The motive to craft audience participation, participatory culture, differed between the companies. The reason behind the broadcaster's approach towards participation through multi-platform products was institutional. For the company P the usage of online new media was in the potential for activism. However both companies were stuck in the belief that the active attitude toward participating is a basic characteristic of users, similarly to what Schanke Sundet and Ytreberg (2009) have found among media professionals. Their research shows that media professionals tend to ascribe emotional engagement, socialising and the pursuit of technological novelty to the audiences. The *SOM* producers held a similar opinion of the audience. Even if all of the television viewers would not 'get up from their sofas' and get further involved and active in the game activities, the producers anticipated an active interest and aimed at making as many individuals as possible as active as possible.

The company P were interaction specialists; that was the reason behind them getting their contract with SVT. But to fulfil their own (political and ideological) ideals they had to exercise control over the audience, so that the narrative would develop in their favoured direction. In general terms P criticised conventional media for not being participatory. Agency was a benchmark for P, as mentioned

in several interviews. They claimed that their (live action role-playing) methodology gave rise to, or enhanced, the individual's empowerment and that it had a large potential for individual personal development. However, my analysis shows that the asymmetry between producers and consumers that is inherent in media (Ekström, Jülich et al. 2011) was not altered. SVT and P probably relied on the medium specific potential of the internet as being highly interactive, and on the assumption that it supported participation in qualitatively different way, compared to broadcast television. However, the participation in SOM not only varied between unaware and aware participants, following the interpretations and perceptions of SOM. In addition, the participants had no chance to question the frames of the production. The many qualitative comments in the web survey could be interpreted as if there was a wish, and need, to question it.

The unreflexive relationship that SVT and P had to the audience has to be questioned. Participants were divided into different tiers (see chapter 1) according to how passive/active they were supposed to be(come), and participants were to become as active as possible, and 'not only watch the drama'. This implicitly means that the spectating participants were 'passive', which was 'not so good', according to the producers. Elite players, with knowledge from earlier P larp productions were able to perceive the gameness of the production. They understood that they had to look for (possible) game markers (Kocher 2011). This created a hierarchy between the participants, where the aware and active players got a kind of agency (remembering that there is an asymmetrical relationship between producers and users) and they could act together with the game masters. The unaware and less active participants were left behind and did not get the same attention from (especially P) game masters, the

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audience conscious, no matter whether they wanted to be made conscious or not. They also assumed that people were not politically engaged, or aware that the media mediate the real. However, P might have misjudged the participants. As one participant summarised his understanding of the producers' aim: 'Think for yourself but think as we [the P producers]'

*

To conclude, this is how I have come to understand *Sanningen om Marika*. I believe that by constructing an alternate reality representation of our society the producers aimed to create a political, social, ideological and cultural comment on it. The production crew at P may have aimed even further, hoping that the participatory model would not only make it an alternate world, but that it also would create new opportunities: that players would actually create the collective of the 'others'. When reflecting on the production and its process, I find this to be in line with the ideas of the radical French philosopher Jean Baudrillard (1981/1994), and his thoughts on 'simulacra' – the mediated reality. In Baudrillard's rendition, in our modern society it is the map - a simulation of reality - that we live in. If you subscribe to this idea, it is not so far-fetched to also think that our actions within a game context can change this 'map'.

However, something different happened. The production came with genre and content markers as tools, tools that we, as media users, already know how to use; they help us to distinguish fact from fiction, game and play from the ordinary, and so on. The deliberate blur of reality and fiction created a conflict between these conventions and the communicated simulation that was *SOM*. Even abusing genres must be done from an established convention: if there had been previous similar productions, participants might have been able to refer to them when looking for grounds to interpret this new phenomenon. Now the participants ended up confused, lost in an abundance of details, and unable to make out the overall message.

SOM posed high demands on its participants; the different interpretational grounds had to be blended in a convergence process, a process which had to take place in the reception of media material, in the communication with other participants and with the organisers, in active live participation, and ultimately in the heads of the participants. Most participants did not manage to make this convergence happen. The few who succeeded and thus were able to take part in the full *SOM* experience were those who had found the key:

Pretend that it is real!

Notes

1 A mockumentary (mock documentary) is a film or television show in which fictitious events are presented in documentary format. By using a fictitious setting, or to parody the documentary form itself, a mockumentary is often used to analyse or comment on current events and issues. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mockumentary>, accessed 27th April 2011.

SUMMARY OF THESIS

Media convergence is an elusive term that is used in multiple contexts, and is often ambiguous in its definition. For decades it has gone through periods of hype and stages of interpretations and debates, both within industry and among scholars. On one side, convergence has been viewed as an opportunity for traditional media to align itself with technologies of the 21st century in order to create a prosperous future of economic profits. Others have, on the other side, viewed convergence as an overhyped illusion and the media industries' attempts and enterprises towards convergence as 'yet another illusionary quest'. My thesis depicts and analyses a clear example of this kind of amalgamation where multiple processes, or types of convergences, take place on various levels and places in the design, production, implementation and reception within the same media production. This is what makes the transmedia storytelling production *Sanningen om Marika* such an interesting and extraordinary object of study.

Sanningen om Marika (SOM) was a novel hybrid media production with integrated television and game parts, designed and produced collaboratively from idea to finished product. The main objective for the Swedish public service broadcaster Swedish Television (SVT) and The company P, pervasive game experts, was to craft a novel drama-game production that offered the audience extensive opportunities for co-creation and participation. SVT did not have much prior experience of experiments with this type of audience interaction, compared to entertainment previously produced. For P the mass audience was a challenge compared to their previous (larp) productions that engaged between 30-300 participants. The companies aimed at creating a 'total experience' for a mass audience by utilising various media platforms in the building of the story world, and offering the audience the possibility to participate on various engagement levels. The producers named it participation drama.

My research scope lies in the area of the changing relationship of producers and consumers in today's media landscape. Supported by my choice of method, to approach the production and its creation process holistically, I have had the possibility to stay open in my inquiry and gradually let particular questions emerge. I knew from the start that the teams would intertwine production and consumption as tightly as they found possible and that I would gain another type of knowledge if I approached my research object more openly compared to selecting one of the following: the (primary) producers and their production process, the participants and their reception or an analysis of the (game) design and the production per se. This can also be viewed as a methodological consequence of the study of contemporary society where media, culture and economy are intimately amalgamated and the previously

well-defined spheres of production, distribution and consumption are blurred, and therefore, with my intentions, were less fruitful to study.

My research questions embrace the collaboration between the two teams, and between team members and the participants; the production and the companies' media logics and cultures of production and how they affected the design and implementation of audience participation; the audience reception and how participants interpreted, reacted to, and experienced *SOM*. Lastly, I enquired what types of media convergence that were evident in *SOM*.

As a researcher, I had a unique and unusual opportunity to study the entire production process, from the early planning stages to the running of the participation drama and beyond. I used an ethnographic approach. I conducted ethnographic fieldwork, carrying out participant observations of the two teams, their (daily) work and their co-operation. I conducted participant observations of the participant activities both on- and offline in chats, forums and participated in real-life game events. I conducted ethnographic interviews continuously with the team members. I conducted post-game in-depth interviews with participants and a web survey post-game. I also conducted a smaller email study and some participants wrote in-game diaries of their game experiences. All this allowed me to conduct a detailed study of the birth process, the final result and its deployment. I was able to conduct research both during the design and implementation process as well as during the production phase, well supported by SVT and P in gathering broad empirical material.

In my eight chapters of analysis I have addressed different aspects of the two companies' collaboration and their design and implementation process, the final production and the audience reception. Chapter one constitutes a background description of the conditions for and the early start of the collaboration. I also outline the initial objectives and goals. Chapter two is a depiction of the participation drama, its parts, the construction of the story universe and how the producers managed the game (game mastering). The different parts are described, including their initial and final design. In chapter three I address the different cultures of production, depicting the two companies and the teams. With a focus on how audience interaction and participation was crafted, I describe how the producers constructed and managed the different parts. Chapter four depicts the collaboration process with the emerging frictions and tensions, a result of their differing cultures of production and the differing medium specific demands in the production process. Chapter five and six are detailed analyses of two production parts, the debate program and the *Conspirare* chat, showing how the quality demands of the differing medium logics of broadcast and games affected how the parts were crafted and audience

interaction managed. For the debate this meant that in relation to the objective of crafting 'good' television the goal of audience participation lost importance. In spite of the internet medium's features of networking and interaction that would enable a high degree of interaction and participation in the *Conspirare* chat, audience participation was hampered by the fact that P wished to control the narrative. Chapter seven and eight are analyses of the players' receptions and experiences. Chapter seven gives an overall view of the general reception and chapter eight focuses on the so called 360° illusion and how it was perceived, interpreted and experienced.

In my final chapter, where I conclude the analysis, I address a number of different types, or aspects, of media convergence that *SOM* contained. They belong to the main findings of my study. The two media companies had the ambition to create new forms of audience interaction, or participatory culture, as P, the games developer called it. They were driven by this strong unanimous ambition and were unified by a number of goals: if strong engagement could be created it would pull the users into different tiers of participation. The methods were to utilise each companies' speciality and professional skills, and use the strength of each medium and its platform - broadcast television, online gaming and the cityscape as a playground for physical play. Collaboratively they would amalgamate and merge their two medium specific types of storytelling for games and television drama, and form a novel format. It was a conscious decision to make the different media converge.

Some of the planned amalgamations took place under unforeseen stress and friction. The frictions were partly a result of the differing corporate cultures (broadcast and games industries) but the cultures of production also differed: production processes, the differing views of the audience and the kind of cultural commodity that was actually going to be crafted. In other words, in their collaboration the two companies were dependent on their quite differing media logics. Other elements that would converge, and that would be a crucial part of the novelty of the hybrid production, also created friction. One issue is the opposing storytelling logics of television, games and internet. TV and games (especially the two types of game designs that were implemented) use controlled narratives. Internet media logics, on the other hand, are open and invite audience interaction of different types. Even if a multi-platform approach was used to merge broadcast, games and internet, the proposed audience participation was not carried out due to the need to control the narrative. The audience activity also differs in TV drama and games; TV viewing is an interpretive activity whilst playing a game demands the user configure content, the process of selecting content and putting it together is essential to experience the game. To merge these two activities was therefore difficult as well, partly as a result of the differing audience activities but partly also because the medium specific quality demands differed. The

crafting of the debate program is one example.

I also discuss the strong design ideal of merging fiction with fact in the production and not clearly stating this to the audience, and that the games activities, which are commonly accepted as something outside the ordinary, were merged with audience activities aiming for more serious political societal engagement. Not everyone taking part understood the playfulness or gameness, nor could they make reflections like one player group did. They were aware participants and their critique can be compressed into one quote: ‘Think for yourself but think as us!’. This issue is tied to the blur of production and consumption. To create what was called participatory culture different types of layered, tiered, participation was offered. This was the companies’ main collective goal, and in many respects the production offered many such possibilities, the participants were co-producers. However, the described quality demands were tied to a need for control and so the production did not manage to offer the degree of participation and (personal and political) agency that SVT and P wished to craft. The *Conspirare* chat is an example of how difficult it was to unify the different goals. It was rather hostile and newcomers had difficulties understanding the implicit game rules and could not participate.

Three things can be concluded regarding the producers’ design strategies for *Sanningen om Marika*. Firstly, the two design strategies were not fully consistent. In the vision to create an engaging game the pervasive aim in the single game rule, or tagline, ‘Pretend that it is real’ overruled the aspirations to craft participatory culture. Secondly, in designing the reality-fiction blur I argue that two different strategies used had their roots in two different gaming cultures. Although these strategies have similar design goals they did not blend well. The largest difference concerns the roles of the participants, where they were either supposed to role-play, or just act as themselves. In many ways, the production communicated that the desirable mode of participation was one in which any meta-discussion of the game as a game was prohibited. For many participants, this made it unclear as to how to participate and the route into participation was fussy and obscure. Lastly I argue that the political aspirations in the game caused the game masters at P to retain a level of control over the production, which hampered the participants’ decisions and actions. Thus, participatory culture could not emerge in the way the producers had initially expressed a desire for, a desire that carried political aspirations.

SUMMARY OF THESIS IN SWEDISH

Mediekonvergens är ett dubbelbottnat begrepp som används i många sammanhang, både inom industrin och bland forskare, och där man ger det olika betydelser och tolkningar. Inom industrin har mediekonvergens setts som en möjlighet till kommersiell expansion och ett sätt att öka marknadsandelar. Andra uppfattningar är mer kritiska, där mediekonvergens setts som något 'hypat' och överreklamerat. Den här avhandlingen skildrar och analyserar ett tydligt exempel på medieskonvergens - den transmediala berättarproduktionen *Sanningen om Marika (SOM)*. Mediekonvergens skedde mellan olika produktionsdelar och på olika nivåer i produktionen: under design- och genomförandeprocessen och i hur producenter och deltagare samspelade och samarbetade för att producera/konsumera *SOM*. Just detta, att olika typer och nivåer av mediekonvergens uppstår i produktionen, är vad som gör *SOM* till ett så intressant och ovanligt studieobjekt.

Sanningen om Marika kan beskrivas som en slags hybrid medieproduktion där teveprogram och spelaktiviteter integrerades. De två samarbetspartnerna, Sveriges Television (SVT) och spelföretaget The company P (P), designade och producerade gemensamt produktionen, från idé till färdig produkt. Det övergripande målet var att skapa en ny typ av drama-spelproduktion och erbjuda publiken stora möjligheter till delaktighet och medskapande. SVT hade ringa erfarenhet av liknande publikinteraktion jämfört med tidigare teveunderhållningskoncept. Utmaningen för P låg i den stora publiken, vars tidigare (lajv) produktioner engagerat grupper mellan 30-300 deltagare. Genom att utnyttja olika medieplattformar i skapandet av spelvärlden, och erbjuda publiken möjlighet att delta på olika aktivitetsnivåer och med olika djup i engagemanget, syftade man till att skapa en 'total upplevelse' för en masspublik. Det fanns inte någon liknande svensk teveproduktion och konceptet döptes till 'deltagardrama'.

Mitt forskningsområde ligger i det förändrade förhållandet mellan producenter och konsumenter i dagens medielandskap. Jag valde ett etnografiskt angreppssätt av flera anledningar. Jag ville närma mig produktionen och produktionsprocessen holistiskt, och så öppet som möjligt, så att jag gradvis skulle kunna låta specifika frågor dyka upp under forskningens gång. En annan anledning var att jag från början också visste att produktionen syftade till att skapa olika former för publikdeltagande, former som man inte riktigt var på det klara med från starten hur de skulle utvecklas. Jag förutsatte att jag med ett öppet angreppssätt, där jag kunde studera primärproducenterna och deras samarbete och produktionsprocess, deltagarna och deras spelupplevelser, samt analysera och beskriva spelproduktionen och dess design, bättre skulle kunna förstå hur de olika delarna var beroende av och påverkade

varandra istället för att välja att enbart studera en av dem. Detta kan också ses som en metodisk konsekvens av att studera hur nya och gamla medier samspelar i dagens samhälle där media, kultur och ekonomi hänger samman så intimt, och där de tidigare väl defnierade områdena produktion, distribution och konsumtion är oklara, och med mitt forskningsfokus, därför mindre givande att studera.

Mina forskningsfrågor omfattar de två teamens samarbete; samspelet mellan producenterna och deltagarna; företagets produktionsprocess(er) och medielogik; deras organisationskulturer och hur allt detta påverkade utformningen och genomförandet av de olika formerna för publikinteraktion; hur deltagarna uppfattat och tolkat produktionen; samt deltagarnas spelupplevelser. Den övergripande, och avslutande, frågeställningen handlar om vilka typer av mediekonvergens som kunnat påvisas i SOM.

Jag har som forskare haft en unik möjlighet att studera hela produktionsprocessen, från det tidiga planeringsstadiet för deltagardramat och genom hela produktionsprocessen. Med en etnografisk ansats och ett etnografiskt fältarbete har jag genomfört deltagande observationer av de två teamen, följt deras dagliga arbete och samarbete. Jag genomförde deltagande observationer av deltagarens aktiviteter både on- och offline i chattar och forum och jag har genomfört deltagande observationer av spelet på fysiska platser i Stockholmstrakten och Göteborg. Jag intervjuade kontinuerligt teamens medarbetare. Efter att spelet var avslutat genomförde jag djupintervjuer med deltagare och utformade en webbenkät som deltagare kunde svara på. Jag gjorde också en mindre epoststudie och samlade in några deltagares speldagböcker där de skrivit ner sina spelupplevelser. Mitt rikhaltiga empiriska material har varit ovärderligt i genomförandet av min detaljerade studie av SOM, under hela produktionsprocessen, under design och implementationsprocessen och under själva genomförandet av spelet. Jag har haft full tillgång till alla delar jag velat studera och hela tiden fått stöd av medarbetarna på SVT och P för att samla in materialet.

I avhandlingens åtta analyskapitel tar jag upp olika aspekter av de båda företagens samarbetsprocess under produktionens utformning och genomförande, och beskriver och analyserar den slutliga spelproduktionen och deltagarnas erfarenheter och upplevelser. Kapitel ett är en bakgrundsbeskrivning av hur samarbetet började och de förutsättningar för samarbetet som skapades, samt de mål som ursprungligen sattes upp. Kapitel två är en skildring av själva deltagardramat och dess delar, både den tänkta och den slutgiltiga designen. Här beskriver jag hur berättelsen var uppbyggd och hur producenterna ledde spelet (spelledningssystemet). I kapitel tre beskrivs de två företagen, produktsteamerna och formerna för samarbetet. Jag analyserar de olika produktionskulturerna, och med

fokus på formerna för utformandet av publikinteraktionen beskriver jag hur producenterna konstruerat och styrt de olika aktiviteterna. Kapitel fyra beskriver hur motsättningar och spänningar växte fram i samarbetsprocessen. De är konsekvenser av de två företagens olika produktionskulturer och av de olika kvalitetskrav som de två medierna kräver. Kapitel fem och sex är detaljanalyser av de två produktionsdelarna debattprogrammet och *Conspirarechatten*. Analyserna påvisar hur de olika kvalitetskrav som de två mediernas olika logik kräver påverkade hur debattprogrammet och chatten utformades, vilket i sin tur påverkade hur publikinteraktionen utformades och hanterades av de olika teamen. För debatten innebar detta att det uppställda målet att med debatten skapa nya sätt för tittarna att interagera med tevediet förlorade i betydelse, i förhållande till målsättningen att skapa 'bra' teve. I *Conspirarechatten* hindrades chattdeltagandet av det faktum att P ville styra berättelsen, trots internetmediets omfattande nätverks- och interaktionsfunktioner. I kapitel sju och åtta analyseras deltagarnas, spelarnas, upplevelser av och uppfattningar om SOM. Kapitel sju ger en övergripande bild av den allmänna receptionen och kapitel åtta fokuserar på den så kallade 360°-illusionen och hur den uppfattades, tolkades och upplevdes.

I mitt sista kapitel, *Convergence culture: Concluding the analysis*, tar jag upp ett antal olika typer, eller aspekter, av mediekonvergens som jag funnit att SOM innehöll. De två medieföretagen hade ambitionen att skapa nya former för deltagarinteraktion, eller 'deltagarkultur', som P föredrog att kalla det. De drevs av en stark och enhällig ambition att skapa deltagarkultur och förenades i målet att om ett starkt deltagarengagemang kunde skapas så skulle det locka människor att delta på olika sätt. Metoden var att utnyttja varje företags specialitet och yrkesmässiga färdigheter, och använda varje mediums styrka och plattform för att skapa deltagande: TV-sändningar, onlinespelande och att använda fysiska platser som spelplan. Teamen skulle gemensamt arbeta för att foga samman sina två mediespecifika typer av berättande - spel och tv-drama - och bilda ett nytt sammanhängande format.

En del av den planerade mediekonvergens genomfördes, men under oförutsedd stress och friktion mellan teamen. Samarbetssvårigheterna var delvis ett resultat av de olika företagskulturerna som teve- och spelindustrierna har, men det fanns också produktionskulturella skillnader. Inte bara produktionsprocesserna skilde sig åt, utan även uppfattningen om publiken, om deltagarna, samt vad det faktiskt var för produkt man skulle producera. Med andra ord var de två företagen beroende av sina relativt olika medielogiker i sitt samarbete. Men det fanns även andra faktorer som skapade friktion i konvergenssträvandena. Teve och spel skiljer sig åt vad gäller hur berättelser skapas, men båda medierna kräver en kontroll av berättelsen/berättandet. Dessutom kräver ARG och pervasive lajv olika speldesign. Internetmediets logik, å andra sidan, är öppet och inbjuder till interaktion och deltagande

av olika slag. Även om producenterna använde sig av metoden att sammanlänka flera medieplattformar - teve, spel och internet - tilläts inte publiken vara delaktig i den grad man hade planerat, på grund av behovet att kontrollera berättelsen/berättandet. Deltagarinteraktionen skiljer sig också mellan teve-drama och spel. Teve-tittandet är en tolkande aktivitet, medan spel kräver att användaren konfigurerar innehållet. För att spela krävs spelarens aktivitet, interaktion och deltagande. För att uppleva spelet och skapa mening krävs att spelaren väljer innehåll och sammanfogar delarna till en spelupplevelse. Det var därför svårt att få dessa två skilda aktiviteter att konvergera, dels för att de är så olika men också för att de två medierna har så skilda kvalitetskrav. Debattprogrammets slutliga utformning är ett tydligt exempel på denna problematik.

Ett annat problem var att designidealet att få fiktion och fakta att smälta samman gjorde att man inte tydligt nog kommunicerade till publiken att produktionen trots allt var en fiktion. Spelande/Spel som fenomen är dessutom allmänt uppfattat som en lekaktivitet, något som inte är på allvar utan lek helt enkelt, men i SOM sammanfördes publikinteraktion med aktiviteter som syftade till ett seriöst politiskt samhällsligt engagemang. Inte alla som deltog uppfattade att SOM var ett spel, och inte på riktigt. Inte heller lyckades alla reflektera på det vis som en spelargrupp gjorde. De var fullt medvetna om att SOM var en fiktion och tolkade producenternas (speciellt Ps) budskap med SOM: 'Tänk själv, men tänk som oss [producenterna]!'. Fakta-fktionkonvergensen kan kopplas till konvergensen mellan produktion och konsumtion. För att skapa deltagarkultur erbjöds publiken att delta via olika typer av aktiviteter. Detta var företagets huvudsakliga mål, och i många avseenden erbjöd SOM många sådana möjligheter; deltagarna var i mångt och mycket vad vi skulle kunna kalla samproducenter. Emellertid var de beskrivna kvalitetskraven kopplade till ett behov av att kontrollera deltagarna och utvecklingen av berättelsen/berättandet. Därför lyckades inte heller SOM erbjuda deltagande i den grad man strävat efter, speciellt inte det personligt politiska agerandet hos individerna som P strävade efter att utveckla. *Conspirare*-chatten är ett exempel på hur svårt det var att förena de olika målen. Chatten upplevdes som fientlig och nya besökare hade svårt att förstå det underförstådda spelets regler och kunde därmed inte delta.

Avseende producenternas designstrategier för *Sanningen om Marika* kan tre problem nämnas. För det första var de två designstrategierna för deltagarkultur och 360°-illusionen inte kompatibla. Visionen att skapa ett engagerande spel som skulle genomsyra deltagarnas vardagsliv genom att använda en enda spelregel, eller slogan, 'Låtsas att det är på riktigt' motverkade strävandena att skapa deltagarkultur. För det andra, i utformningen av verkligheten-fiktionskonvergensen hävdar jag att de två olika speldesignstrategierna för ARG och pervasive lajv som användes hade sina rötter i två olika spelkul-

turer. Även om strategierna ytligt sett har liknande konstruktioner och målsättningar så går de inte att kombinera funktionellt. Den största skillnaden gäller vilka roller deltagarna tog, rollspelandet. Ibland skulle de spela en roll och ibland skulle de vara sig själva, spela sig själva. I lajv spelar du en roll (inte dig själv) och i ARG kan man säga att du spelar dig själv, dvs du är dig själv i spelet (för det är ju ett spel). Men på olika sätt kommunicerade producenterna att det önskvärda (spel)deltagandet var att delta utan att erbjuda någon metadiskussion av spelet som ett spel. Metadiskussioner var förbjudna. För många deltagare blev det oklart hur de skulle delta; det var dessutom svårt att förstå hur man skulle kunna börja delta, ingångarna till spelet var oklara och otydliga. Slutligen hävdar jag att den politiska ambitionen i spelet fick spelledarna på P att behålla kontrollen över produktionen, vilket hindrade deltagarnas egna beslut och handlande. Således kunde deltagarkultur inte skapas på det sätt som producenterna ursprungligen hade uttryckt i sin vision.

GAME GLOSSARY

This glossary contains the majority of names of people and personas, game expressions and game parts, that are mentioned in the text.

Anders Weideman is the director that wrote the television drama manuscript.

Andreas is the name of Maria's husband in the TV series (Jonathan in 'The Real Story').

Adrijanna (Addi) is the game protagonist searching her best friend Maria who had disappeared. Her real name is Adriane Skarped.

Adrijanna's tour is the name of pre-game when Adrijanna travelled Sweden summer 2007 to gather support for her enterprise.

Agent Orange is the boyfriend of Adrijanna in the game (as well as in real life). He was the creative director and the main constructor behind SOM.

Anty is the game tech geek character and also the P producer, Andie Nordgren.

Argos is the character, a female student librarian that organised all the information at *Conspirare*. The P CEO took on this role, see chapter 4, and picture 2:7.

Arvikafestivalen is a Swedish music festival that Adrijanna visited on her pre-game tour.

Bildrebus is Swedish for 'picture puzzle'.

BortAB is the 2nd mission where participants were requested to sign a contract to become members of *Ordo Serpentis* and prepare a survival kit in case they needed to disappear into the secret organisation. It is mentioned in chapter 7.

Café Hängmattan is a café in central Stockholm where one street game event took place and the *Kerberos* van was spotted racing by. An IA book, *Maskspel*, had a release there one evening and Adrijanna went there to take part. It is mentioned in chapters 2 and 7.

Cell/player cell, is the name of a group of *Ordo Serpentis*/street game players.

Cityintiativet is the name of the organisation that Andreas' grandmother managed. The organisation's mission was to help homeless people in Gothenburg, Maria's and Andreas' hometown. However this was a cover up, instead they tried to get rid of homeless individuals.

(The) Cutting Machine (Klippmaskinen) is the name of the online tool with which the drama episodes could be watched slowly in a step-by-step manner to find the subliminal messages that together formed puzzles used to solve the weekly picture riddles, see picture 2:10.

Coffe, Christopher Sandberg is CEO at P. He acted as Argos in the game.

Christian Wikander is the SVT drama director and the legally responsible publisher.

Conspirare is the name of the website for the blog, forum and chat where the main game activities took place.

(The) Conspirare chat is the real-time chat function that held an important role in the game. The free-ware www.lingr.com was used.

Conspirare team/crew is the name of all the participants and the friends and helpers of Adrijanna.

(A) Conspirite is a Conspirare member.

Crimethinc is the name of one of the *Ordo Serpentis* missions. The Swedish radio news program *Ekot* found out that conspirare.se had a link to crimethinc.com, with information about how you could cope with living in society without money, using illegal methods. The link had to be taken away, and the SVT production management explain themselves. Mentioned in chapters 2 and 4.

Daniel Lägersten is the SVT producer. He used his real name in the game.

Debatten (The Debate) is the short current affairs debate programs that are aired after the drama episodes, see chapter 5.

The Dog (Hunden) is a nickname for *Kerberos Bevakning*.

Dom Andra (The Others) is what the *Ordo Serpentis* people were called in the game, a small community living outside social conventions of society.

De hemliga mästarna (Eng. The secret wizards) is the deepest dimension of game participation.

Det Osynliga Templet (The Invisible Temple) is the original name of the *Ordo Serpentis* street game.

(The) disclaimer/The pop-up window is the pop-up warning message that informed about the production's fabrication. It was put on both SVT.se and conspirare.se, see picture 2:8.

(The) Enochian alphabet first appeared during the 16th century. The Court Astrologer and Magician, Dr. John Dee (1527-1608) and his associate, Sir Edward Kelly (1555-1597) claimed that the alphabet and the Enochian language were transmitted to them by angels. The alphabet is used in the practice of Enochian Magic on Enochian Calls or Keys, which are used to call angels. [http://www .omniglot.com/writing/enochian.htm](http://www.omniglot.com/writing/enochian.htm).

Entropy Universe is the virtual world where Adrijanna and her friends searched *Ordo Serpentis* and Maria. See www.entropy.com. It is owned by the company MindArk.

Eva Rados is the name of the SVT web editor. She used her real name in the game.

Evy is the name of Andreas' grandmother, politician and manager of *Cityinitiativet*.

Friends and allies were a range of NGOs, smaller companies and entrepreneurs that were all part of, or shared ideological standpoints within the live action role-playing sub culture. SVEROK, the national youth association for role-playing and conflict games, small games companies like Green Hut People and avant garde art collectives like Interacting Arts (IA) were within this group of friends and allies.

Hunden (the dog) is a nickname for *Kerberos* Bevakning. The dog refers to the company logo, see picture in chapter 3.

Games Creator In a joint research venture with the Swedish Institute of Computer Science and The Interactive Institute, P developed the technology platform that enabled participation on all available media - websites, forum, chat, mobile application, game - and the orchestration of the larp parts. This game mastering tool was called Games Creator and was part of the mentioned IPERG research project, see chapter 1.

(A) grade is a level in the *Ordo Serpentis* game, that consisted of five grades. Participants could move forward approximately one level grade every week.

Green Hut People is a small games developer that crafted mobile games at the time.

Göteborg/Gothenburg, is Sweden's second biggest city and the hometown of Maria and Andreas. This is also where the SVT department that collaborated with P is situated.

Göteborg strike team (and Kindergarten strike team) are the specially instructed players that were game masters. They planted various props, drove the *Kerberos* van and so forth. One was placed in the Stockholm area and the other in Gothenburg. Some of them were previous *Prosopopeia* players. See chapter 3.

In-game is anything that happens within the game: character actions, time periods in the story et cetera.

Interacting Arts (IA) In the international issue of their magazine they write: Interacting arts is one or all of the following: a group of cross-disciplinary artists, media critics, and activist network, a conspiracy, a brand, a think-tank and a magazine which is circulated both on the web and in print. They claim to inspire and activate people into becoming our fellow creators of fully lived and experienced lives. Their theories are the theories of our real life and of the possibilities experienced or perceived in it. They strive to coordinate their refusal of existential poverty through affirmation of creativity, co-operation, solidarity, play and a blistering desire for freedom (Haggren et al. 2005) www.interactingarts.org.

Ingela Klingbohm is Maria's dead mother. She had been a hippie and hobo oracle.

IPerG was an European Union-funded project (FP6 - 004457) which lasted from 1st September 2004 to 29th February 2008. The aim of IPerG was to create entirely new game experiences, which would be tightly interwoven with everyday lives through objects, devices and people. Through an exploratory approach several showcase games were created which came under the description of "pervasive games" - a radically new game form that extended gaming experiences out into the physical world. To achieve a high quality of interactive experience for these games, new technologies and methods were explored for the creation of novel and compelling forms of content. <http://www.pervasive-gaming.org>, accessed 29th April 2010.

Janna is the name of the protagonist in the drama series (Adrijanna in The Real Story).

Jannas blogg is the original name of the protagonist's blog that later came to be called the *Conspirare* blog.

Jonathan/J is the name of the disappeared woman, Marika's husband in the drama series.

John Carlson is the name of the debate program host. He used his real name.

Kerberos Bevakning is the name of the surveillance company that stalked Adrijanna.

(The) Kerberos van was *Kerberos* company van, spotted throughout Sweden during runtime. A picture of the van is found in chapter 3, picture 3:3. It was nicknamed The Dog (Hunden).

Kindergarten strike team (and Göteborg strike team) are the specially instructed players that were game masters and planted various props, drove the Kerberos van and so forth. One was placed in the Stockholm area and the other in Gothenburg. Some of them were previous Prosopopeia players. See chapter 3.

Klippmaskinen (The Cutting Machine) is the name of the online tool with which the drama episodes could be watched slowly in a step-by-step manner to find the subliminal messages that together formed rebuses used to solve the weekly picture riddles, see picture 2:10.

Larp is an abbreviation for **live action role-playing**. See explanation in Theory.

Leif is one of the policemen that chased Adrijanna. He is the father of Maria and the person that probably killed Maria's mother.

Libertatia is Maria's old blog.

Lingr.com is an online freeware for chatting. It was used for the *Conspirare* chat.

Martin Eriksson is the P creative director and 'larp right' of *SOM*. He is the game character Agent Orange.

Maria is the name of the woman who disappeared in The Real Story . She never existed although in the last debate episode she appeared and delivered a speech. It might still be accessible at *YouTube*.

Marika is the name of the disappeared woman in the drama series.

Martin Schmit directed the drama series.

Matrix is a message with which the *Ordo Serpentis* organisation communicated with the surrounding world. A matrix consisted of 18 x 18 squares holding a ciphered message, that the game masters programmed using the Enochian alphabet's mathematical system.

Medeltidsveckan is an annual weekly festival that gathers larpers interested in medieval settings. Adrijanna and her friends were there during summer 2007 to conduct pre-game activities. See chapter 8.

Metatron Metatron was a fabricated secret organisation that focussed occultism and mysticism. It was created originally for the *Momentum* game but appeared in *SOM* too, but it was sparsely utilised in the game mastering and game events. Metatron is the name of an angel in Judanism and some bran-

ches of Christianity. Metatron is also called ‘The voice of God’ through which God talks. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metatron>, accessed 11th April 2011.

MindArk is the Swedish company behind *Entropia Universe*.

Mission is a task that players were supposed to conduct in the Ordo Serpentis game.

Momentum is the name of the second game in the *Prosopopeia* campaign, see *Prosopopeia Bardo II*.

Nimrod is the original name of the SVT editorial team, the same name as Marika used to call herself online.

Ordo Serpentis (abbreviated O.S.) is the name of the secret organisation where it was thought that Maria had connection to. It is also the name of the street game.

PM Personal Message was a *Conspirare* chat feature that allowed two chatters to chat secretly between themselves.

Patric Leijon is the name of the CEO of *Kerberos Bevakning*, a character in the game.

(The) pop-up window/the disclaimer is the pop-up warning message that informed its readers about the production’s fabrication. It was put on both SVT.se and *conspirare.se*, see picture 2:8.

Porten (The Gate) is the original name of the webpage that could be opened with the solutions of the weekly picture riddle. It changed names to *Spektaklet* (Eng. The Spectacle).

Pretend that it is real is the implicit game rule.

Prosopopeia is the name of the pervasive game campaign where *Sanningen om Marika* is viewed as the third pervasive larp.

Prosopopeia Bardo I: Där vi föll is the first game in the *Prosopopeia* campaign.

Prosopopeia Bardo II: Momentum is the second game in the campaign. It was staged in, around, and under the city of Stockholm. It was played during 36 days, fall 2006. The game was designed and played around the central idea to ‘play as if it is real’. This was reflected in the game world, characters, playing style, character selection, game areas, runtime, game mastering, and the general mood of the game. Everything was to be as realistic and seemingly as unmediated as possible: if you wanted to dance, climb, drink, or punch in this game, you had to do it for real (Montola, Stenros et al 2009). Martin Ericsson was employed by the IPerG project to create the game design for *Momentum* and wrote this at the same time as he wrote the treatment for *SOM*.

Ractor P used the word ‘ractor’ to refer to people playing one or several of the characters in the game, either in person or mediated through email, or other remote means of communication. The people playing Agent Orange, Adrijanna, Anty were called ractors as well as the people playing the characters ‘Leif’ or ‘J.’, that only appeared in electronic communication (emails, SMSs or chatting). Adrijanna was the most visible ractor, although most game masters worked as ractors for several characters at different times in the game. The word is derived from science fiction and was used in *SOM*

because it signified closeness to the role of an actor, and at the same time emphasised the role-playing aspect of the task.

Redaktionschatten (Editorial chat) is the ‘chat’ feature at SVT.se/maria webpage, see chapter 4.

Redaktionen live (Editorial office live) is the webcam that was put up as an experiment, according to the SVT editorial team characters, see picture 2:9.

Rickard is the name of the director of the debate. His real name is Rickard Jarnhed.

Riga is the capital of Latvia. Riga appears in the game; a participant conducted his *Ordo Serpentis* mission stalking a person from Stockholm to Riga, see chapters 2 and 8.

Sanningen om Marika is the name of the TV drama and the name of the entire game production.

Semacon codes A matrix consisted of 18 x 18 squares holding a ciphered message, that the game masters programmed using the Enochian alphabet’s mathematical system. P had permission from the owner of the mobile technology behind the matrices, Semacon. The use of matrices is explained further in chapter 2.

Subliminal messages are the hidden messages that the SVT employee cut into the drama series.

Spektaklet (The Spectacle) is the name of the picture riddle that was presented in each of the five weeks the drama was aired.

Spelarnas forum (The players’ forum) is the original name of the *Conspirare* forum.

Stockholm is the capital of Sweden and the city where the company P has its office. This is also the city where much of the street game took place.

Stockholm Spelkonvent is an annual gamers’ convention. Adrijanna, Agent Orange, Anty and Eva Rados, the SVT web editor, held a presentation/promotion of *Sanningen om Marika* in September 2007. The presentation was made in-game. It is briefly mentioned in chapter 2.

SVEROK is the national youth association for role-playing and conflict games. See www.sverok.se.

SVT.se/marika is the SOM production webpage of SVT.

SVT Play is a online application that allows watching SVT productions streamed. At the time of the SOM game it had just been implemented.

(The) SVT inbox is the application to which participants could upload contributions to SVT.se.

SOM is an abbreviation for *Sanningen om Marika*.

SISed player/SISad spelare is a specially instructed player. In SOM all of them are members of the Kindergarten strike team.

Thummin is the name of the *Ordo Serpentis* webpage where cell members could keep track of their missions.

Upptakten (The Upbeat) is the original name for Adrijanna’s tour, the pre-game (promotional) activities.

Urim is the name of the mobile phone application that players could download to their phones to be able to shot photos of missions they conducted and put-up on matrices.

The white van is the company van of *Kerberos* Bevakning that was also used in previous *Prosopopeia* games.

The Real Story is the name of the so called truth that was communicated on *Conspirare*.

The Others is the name of a small community living outside social conventions of society (*Ordo Serpentis*).

TINAG abbreviation for This Is Not A Game, common ARG glossary for the implicit rule of the game.

TIAG abbreviation for This Is A Game.

(A) **Troll** is a person that in one way or the other tries to break the game rules or destroy the game by talking about it as a game. This happened a lot in the *Conspirare* chat, see chapter 6.

Wizards are participants initially recruited from the former participants of the *Prosopopeia* games and other active ARGers and larpers, but any player showing exceptional engagement could be taken up in the wizard crew.

APPENDICES

1. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL - PRODUCERS

Interview protocol used for the initial interview of team member (performed from May - December 2007).

1. Make the aims explicit.
2. Explain the project.
3. Explain taping, ask for permission.
4. Explain anonymity, how to be used in research reports.
5. Explain interview content and about the themes.

I would like to interview you about the concept, the game and its position in your production range, a bit about goals and aims with Sanningen om Marika and the background experience of your company (for P pervasive experiences)

1. What is a pervasive experience to you?

describe an experience of your own

give example of typical pervasive experiences

define

What is NOT a pervasive experience?

compare with other entertainment product(ion)

2. Other products/services in the experience industry that you could compare SoM with most important differences

3. How do you work with pervasive experiences (products/services that are PE)

What is your motivation?

How do you work with PE?

What makes you want to work with this?

Who are the target group/customers; the players/participants?

Describe some typical players for this type of experience

What would pervasive experiences be for them? What could it be?

4. What is an ARG?

important features/aesthetics
areas of use
expressions
give examples of good/bad ARG
where you took part as a player/participant
that you have created
define

5. What is a pervasive game?

define

exemplify

6. Where do you place SoM:

What does SoM mean/purport for SVT?

What does SoM mean/purport for P?

Influence on media landscape?

Influence on audience?

2. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL - PARTICIPANTS

Interviews performed in December 2007

1. Make the aims explicit.
2. Explain the project.
3. Explain taping, ask for permission.
4. Explain anonymity, how to be used in research reports.
5. Explain interview content and about the themes.

These questions are asked to all interview subjects, both players and TV viewers.

1. What did you experience? Tell me about your impressions.
2. Experience – immersion. Describe a strong/weak experience. Mention a few more.

Do they differ? Compare.

Compare with other media products.

3. First contact What was your first contact with SoM?

Your 'rabbit hole' how did it start? What did you do then?

4. Describe SoM.

What is it about?

What is it? Describe.

If you need, compare with something else – other productions – realities?

Message(s)? Learn anything from it? Have you learnt anything? What then?

5. Request to participate

Did you experience a request to participate? Tell me!

6. Good/Bad

Could you mention something that was good and bad respectively?

7. Ethical questions (if any)?

8. Disclaimer?

Did you see somewhere that it was a game or not? What did you think and experience?

9. Participatory culture

Who is responsible for your experience in a production like this?

SVT, you or anybody else?

In what grade could you say that you co-create a production like this?

10. Balance

What does it take for you to go into a experience like this?

What makes it an (strong) experience?

Is there a quality difference in various parts?

11. Activities

How active were you?

Tell/describe what you did.

Describe how you participate/play.

Do you do different things at different places?

How often, where & with whom?

What components have you visited, watched or used during runtime?

Go from passive to active? Do you remember what made you go to other sites – playparticipate, look for information?

12. Time – long/short participation?

What made you continue participation? Did your participation change over time? OR Why did you not continue to participate/watch?

13. Story – narrative. Did you think the story was exciting? Could you go ‘into’ it? What did it mean for your interest?

14. Playing - ‘gamist’

What parts do you think are important to participate in? Were there moments when you forgot it was a game?

15. Rewards – contact

Levelling, matrices, puzzles? Rebuses? Did you seek contact, and did you get it? What did it mean to you?

16. Changes

New themes, new game modes, changes. Were there any and how did you experience it in that case?

17. Fiction - reality?

Are there a difference between game and reality? Game and fiction?

What do you think about the play with reality and fiction?

Have you thought of what is real and what is not in the whole story?

Were there anything you experienced very confusing?

18. Brink game

Was there anything you did in the game that you would not have done else? Anything extreme?

19. Discussed primarily with the Kindergarten cell

Did other participants contribute to your experience? Tell me! Were they more or less active players?

Did you read/use other participants’ material?

Your own player experience? Examples, good/bad, where you have participated?

Role-playing/larp?

ARG? Define.

20. All

Did you answer the online survey?

3.EMAIL SURVEY

Questions sent out by email to all survey participants who had left their email address as well as the interview participants, in February 2008:

Dear Sanningen om Marika Participant!!

Thanks a lot for your online survey answer and also for the interviews that I had with some of you! I have a few more questions though, that I would be grateful if you could take some time to answer. They will be treated confidentially which means that your identity will not be revealed in quotes for example.

It would be good if you could answer in the next few days.

Thanks in advance!

And, if you have any questions – just give me a ring or mail me.

Best

Marie

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

In the header of the SVT.se/marika webpage, you could read the instruction “pretend that it is real”. The same information could also be found on other Sanningen om Marika websites. See the screen dumps below from Conspirare and SVT.se.

1. How did you understand this instruction?
2. How did you use it?
3. What consequences (if any) did it have for your participation?

0 månader 1 dag 8 timmar 43 minuter 22 sekunder



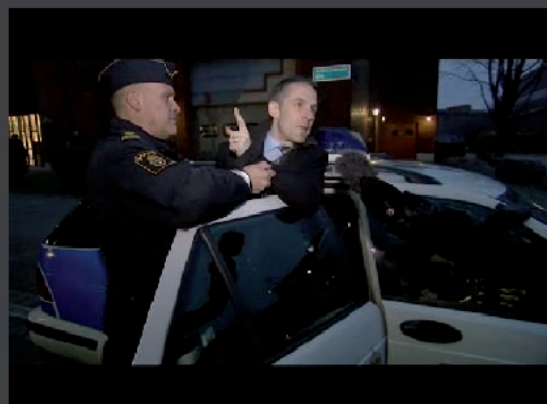
Sanningen om Marika.

[Start](#) [Dramaserien](#) [SVT Play](#) [Bloggen](#) [Arkiv](#) [Forum](#) [Dold information](#)

2005 försvann Maria Klingbohm spårlöst. Nu är även hennes vän Adrijanna, som sökt efter Maria sedan dess, borta.

Det finns bara en regel... låtsas att det är på **riktigt!**

Senaste nytt: Adrijannas fritagning



GÖR DIN RÖST HÖRD! VINN EN I-POD ELLER T-SHIRT

Fyll i enkäten och delta i utlottningen av 100st specialtryckta Sanningen om Marika T-shirts eller vinn en iPod.

→ [Fyll i enkäten här!](#)

SE PROGRAMMEN!

Missade du programmet eller debatten på TV? Se det i SVT Play!
Obs: Se alla bloggar i din mobil!
mobil.svt.se/marikamobil

- [Se programmen här!](#)
- [Debatterna ser du här!](#)

CONSPIRARE

<http://www.conspirare.se>

Varning! Conspirare är en del av ett fiktivt verk. De åsikter som presenteras återspeglar inte alltid företaget P:s eller SVT:s värderingar. Eventuella överensstämmelser med verkliga personer är ibland rena tillfälligheter. Deltagande sker på egen risk och under eget ansvar. Conspirare har bara en regel – låtsas att det är verklighet. Du deltar genom att följa bloggen, se videoklipp, läsa och diskutera i forumet. Sökandet leder dig ut på internet och ut på gatorna i din stad. Tryck OK för att visa att du förstått detta.

OK

- [Gå direkt till forum](#)
- [Om forumet och c](#)
- [Nya inlägg](#)
- [Tidslinjen och ibla](#)
- [Vad vet vi?](#)
- [Maria](#)
- [Början...](#)
- [Sökandet...](#)
- [Visa matriserna!](#)
- [Background \(Englis](#)
- [The Search \(Englis](#)
- [Ordo Serpentis](#)

Appendices

4.WEB SURVEY

1. Questions about Sanningen om Marika

The survey is anonymous and takes 10 minutes to fill in.

Fill in your name and address to win an iPod and t-shirt!

This survey is part of an evaluation to find out what you as a participant think about Sanningen om Marika. It consists of 20 pages and deals with the production parts like *conspirare.se*, *spektaklet*, *dramaserien* and so on. The evaluation is part of a research project, tied to Stockholms universitet that deals with how people participate in games, TV and radio.

Fill in your email address if we may contact you for an interview where you can tell your opinion about things.

Thanks!

OBS! Do only fill in the survey once, even if you come across the survey again.

2. (of 20)

1. WHAT was your first contact with Sanningen om Marika?

Pick the best alternative.

- the TV series Sanningen om Marika
- the debate programme Bakom Sanningen
- svt.se
- conspirare.se
- printed media
- website, blog, forum
- met Adrijanna or other persons from Sanningen om Marika
- tv trailer

2. WHEN was your first contact with Sanningen om Marika?

Pick an alternative.

- during summer 2007
- during fall before tv series begun
- during airing of tv series (okt-nov 2007)
- after tv series had finished (after 25 November 2007)
- before summer 2007

3. (of 20)

3. What made you engage in Sanningen om Marika?

Pick the best alternative(s).

- tv series
- debate series
- svt.se
- conspirare.se
- Ordo Serpentis
- hidden information/spektaklet.nu
- met Adrijanna or other persons in Sanningen om Marika
- other

4. Sanningen om Marika contains both facts and fiction.

Is it important for YOU to know what is facts and what is fiction?

- yes
- no

4. (of 20)

5. I liked to

	agree	do not agree	do not know
watch the tv series	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
watch the debate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
put up matrices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
search matrices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
plan and carry out missions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
report missions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
become upgraded	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
collecting information that helped in the search for Maria	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
explore playgrounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
meet game characters	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
solve problems together with others in conspirare forum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
chat in conspirare chat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
get messages in Ordo Serpentis (Thummin)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
chat in svt.se/write to web editor at svt.se	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
watch svt web editors via webcam	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

solve the spektakel mystery	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
watch Eva's video blogs at svt.se	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
read forum posts at conspirare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
write forum posts at conspirare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
read conspirare blog posts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
participate in activities in Entropia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. (of 20)

6. Which parts have you visited, watched or used during Sanningen om Marika?

Pick the best alternative(s)

- tv series
- debate series
- chat at svt.se/marika
- Eva's blogs at svt.se/marika
- forum at conspirare.se
- chat at conspirare.se
- blog at conspirare.se
- Ordo Serpentis
- klippmaskinen at svt.se/marika
- spektaklet.nu
- webcam surveillance web editors at svt.se/marika
- met Adrijanna or other persons from Sanningen om Marika
- visited Entropia

6. (of 20)

7. Pick the best alternative

	agree	do not agree	do not know
I can understand SOM without watching, reading& participating in several parts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The different parts are well tied together. they are different parts of the same story.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. (of 20)

8. Do you think any part is more important?

- no
 yes

9. If Yes, comment:

8. (of 20)

10. I think that...

	is difficult to understand	is easy to understand	have not read, seen, participated in
Tv series	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Debate series	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SVT.se	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
conspirare.se	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prosopopeia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ingela's story	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maria's story	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adrijanna's story	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Others/Dom Andra	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ordo Serpentis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mr E's story (spektaklet)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. (of 20)

11. Do you think that Sanningen om Marika reminds you of something you have experienced, read or seen before?

- yes
 no
 I do not know

12. If Yes, what?

10. (of 20)

13. How often have you been active?

	Every day	2-4 timesweek	once a week	once or twice	never
tv series	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
debate series	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
klippmaskinen at svt.se/marika	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
chat at svt.se/marika	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
conspirare forum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
conspirare chat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ordo Serpentis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
spektaklet.nu	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
met Adrijanna or other persons from Sanningen om Marika in real life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. (of 20)

14. Have you had direct contact with anybody from Sanningen om Marika?

- no
- yes, via email
- yes, chatted
- yes, via phone call
- yes, met in person
- yes, met in Entropia

15. If Yes, whom have you been in contact with?

- yes
- no, emailed but NOT got answer
- no, TRIED TO chat
- no, phoned but NOT got answer
- no, TRIED to meet
- have not tried to get contact

12. (af 20)

17. What do you think Sanningen om Marika is?

Pick the best alternative(s)

- a tv series
- a game
- another way to understand reality
- neither

18. Please, comment you answer:

19. If there is anything new in Sanningen om Marika, what is then new?

20. How did you perceive Sanningen om Marika?

- I did not think it was reality
- I thought it was real
- I pretended it was real
- I make no distinction between fantasy and reality

13. (of 20)

21. I am

- a woman
- a man
- I do not want to define myself

22. Year of birth:

23. Family/Living:

- I live alone
- I live with parent/s
- I live with friend/s
- I live with partner & child/ren
- I live with partner
- I live with child/ren

14. (of 20)

24. I live in (city):

25. My house/accomodation is situated

- in the countryside or in a smaller town
 in a city

15. (of 20)

26. My latest education is

- comprehensive school (current or completed)
 upper secondary school (current or completed)
 university (current or completed)
 other (current or completed)

27. My occupation:

- I work
 I study
 other

16. (of 20)

28. My main (sparetime) interest is

29. If your sparetime activities are conducted with others, with whom do you conduct them?

Pick the best alternative(s)

- my family
 friends in real life
 friends online
 strangers in real life
 strangers online

17. (of 20)

30. Do you play these games?

	Ja	Nej
Parlour games (like Monopoly, Trivial Pursuit, Alfapet)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ball sport (like football, boule, golf)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Video games	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Handheld games (like Game Boy, PSP)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Computergames (like Tetris, Counter Strike, Warcraft III, Rôj)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online RPG (like World of Warcraft)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Role-playing games (based on printed books like Drakar & Demoner, Mutant, World of Darkness)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Larp - live action role-playing games (like fantasy medieval)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. (of 20)

31. I like

	Yes, definitely!	Yes, rather much.	No, not too much.	No, not at all!
strategic thinking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
adventure & storytelling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
role-playing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
mysteries and riddles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
collaboration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
competition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

32. Pick ONE alternative

- I prefer playing with others
- I prefer playing alone
- I do not like playing games at all

19. (of 20)

20. (of 20)

Sanningen om Marika?

Fill in the space if we may contact you for an interview. _____
 Fill in your name and address if you want to take part in the raffle of an iPod & t-shirt
 Your survey answers will be treated confidentially, which means that if you fill in your
 name it will not show.

34. YES, I agree to you contacting me for an interview.

Here is my email address:

21.

35. YES, I want to take part in the raffle:

My name:

My email address:

My address:

PER THANKS for taking your time to answer the questionnaire!!

answers we hope to be able to conduct a good evaluation so that many new, fun, engaging & exciting
 s like Sanningen om Marika can be created in future!

about the iPod och t-shirt winners will be published on conspirare.se during December

22. SUP

With your a
 production

Information
 2007.

5.PRODUCTION PARTS

Table showing production parts: platform, technology, function and how this part was communicated to the audience.

Part	Platform	Technology /application	Communicated as	(I)nteraction (S)tatic	
Drama	Broadcast		Fiction		
Debate	Broadcast		Implicit Fiction		
- Conceptual - (Vide)blog - Floor - Clac - Strategisk - Facts - Backstage - SVT inboxen	Conceptual	Web		Fiction/Reality game	S/I
	(Vide)blog				S
	Floor		Moderated		I
	Clac		Unmoderated		I
	Strategisk	Web		Reality/Reality game	S/I
	Facts		Streamed (SVT Play)		S
	Backstage		Moderated and edited		I
- SVT inboxen Spektaklet Ordo Serpensis	- SVT inboxen		Uploading application		I
	Spektaklet	Web/broadcast	web app & webpage	Fiction/game	I
	Ordo Serpensis	Web	YouTube Google Maps MobilePhone/Mobile real	Reality	I
- Ordo Serpensis - Entropi	Ordo Serpensis	Physical world	Learning AR/VR	Reality	I
	Entropi	Web	Entropi	Reality	I

6.MEMBER STATISTICS

The chart gives an overview of the number of members at Ordo Serpentis (OS) and Conspirare forum (C), put-up matrices (Ma), completed and reported missions (Mi), and forum posts.

The statistics are collected on different weekdays which is the reason why figures are missing some weeks.

	Number of OS members	Number of OS cells	Matrices (Ma)/missions (Mi)	Number of C forum members	Forum posts
Transit June/July				Forum opens	
4 weeks before					
3 weeks before	O.S. opens				
2 weeks before	60	17	3 Ma		>1000
1 week before	203	79	15 Mi		
Week 1	446	185	40 Mi	279	1534
Week 2					
Week 3	520	283 of which 247 at grade 0		402	2185
Week 4					

7. DEBATE PROGRAM

The chart shows how actors in the debate shows were presented in the credits.

Episode 1	Name in Credits	Name in Show	Program host	Author's comment
Program host	John Carlsson	John Carlsson	Program host	Using first name
Web editor	Eva Rados	Eva Rados	Web editor	Using first name
Participants				
	Adrijanna Skarped	Adrijanna Skarped	'Family member'	Real first name: Adriane Skarped
	Daniel Lägersten	Daniel Lägersten	SVT project manager	Using first name
	Sasha Becker	Sasha Becker	Drama protagonist	Using first name
	Magnus Karlsson	Magnus Karlsson	Sociologist	Using first name?
	Not mentioned in credits.	"Andreas Svensson"	Maria's husband	

Episode 2	Name in Credits	Name in show	Title in show	Author's comment
Program host	John Carlsson	John Carlsson	Program host	Using first name
Web editor	Eva Rados	Eva Rados	Web editor	Using first name
Participants				
	Adrijanna Skarped	Adrijanna Skarped	'Family member'	First name: Adriane Skarped
	Thomas Fuxborg	Thomas Fuxborg	Press Spokesperson Police Authorities	Using first name
Castings				
	Sixten Gunnar Danielsson	Sixten Gunnar Danielsson	Dropout (from society)	Using first name?
	Not credited	"Andreas Svensson"	Maria's husband	

Episode 3	Name in Credits	Name in show	Title in show	Author's comment
Program host	John Carlsson	John Carlsson	Program host	Using first name
Web editor	Eva Rados	Eva Rados	Web editor	Using first name
Participants				
	Anders Wellsmo	Anders Wellsmo	Psychologist	Using first name?
	Lars G Larsson	Lars G Larsson	Former member of Maria's mother's collective	Using first name
Castings				
Birgitta Axelsson	Lena Nordberg	Birgitta Axelsson	Maria's foster-mother	
Lisa Green	Åsa Bilén	Lisa Green	OS spokesperson	
Patrik Lejon	Ulf Michael	Patrik Lejon	Kerberos CEO	

Episode 4	Name in Credits	Name in show	Title in show	Author's comment
Program host	John Carlsson	John Carlsson	Program host	Using first name
Web editor	Eva Rados	Eva Rados	Web editor	Using first name
Participants				
	Martin Ericsson	Martin Ericsson	Adrijanna's boyfriend & Conspirare Spokesperson	Using first name
	Aina Teives	Aina Teives	Forensic dentist	Using first name
Castings				
Lennart Berggren	Jan Coster	Lennart Berggren	Spokesperson Cityinitiativet	
Ambulance man	Eric Löwenthal	Henrik Eriksson	Ambulance man	Mentioned as ambulance man

Episode 4	Name in Credits	Name in show	Title in show	Author's comment
Witness	Karl Eklund	Karl-Gunnar Malm	Witness	Mentioned as witness
	Not credited	Jonathan	Maria's husband	Mentioned when interviewed

Episode 5	Name in Credits	Name in show	Title in show	Author's comment
Program host	John Carlsson	John Carlsson	Program host	Using first name
Web editor	Eva Rados	Eva Rados	Web editor	Using first name
Castings				
	Bertil Hansson	Bertil Hansson	Chair of Municipality Board, social issues	Using first name
Jonathan	Niclas Fransson	Jonathan Johansson	Maria's husband	
Elsy	Maria Gran	Elsy Johansson	Director Cityinitiativet	
Maria	Moa Millsgård	Maria Klingbohm		
	Anders Ahlverén	Anders Ahlverén	Policeman	Using first name
	Not credited	'Mattlo'	Spokesperson Conspirare	Mentioned when interviewed

CREATIVE WORKS

This thesis deals with media production in today's converging media landscape. I have therefore chosen to gather and list all types of creative works like games, films, books and pieces of art under one heading. Academic references are listed in the Bibliography.

Andra Avenyn was a drama series that started concurrently with the airing of *SOM*, during fall 2007. Peter Emanuel Falck and Christian Wikander (the SVT Väst drama manager and also the *SOM* responsible publisher) wrote the series that ran for three seasons. 185 episodes were produced, some of them as online content. This production was similar to *SOM* in its scope to engage the TV audience with a multi-platform approach.

Alias Online Adventures is an ARG based on the ABC action television series, *Alias*. It was broadcast during six seasons starting 2006. It is created by J.J. Abrams. The main theme explores the CIA agent, Sydney, and her attempts to conceal her true career from friends and family. It is produced by Touchstone Television and Bad Robot Productions. A video game and novels were produced in conjunction with the production.

The Art of H3ist was also created to promote a product; the Audi A3 car. The game circled around an art retrieval business and its owners who tried to stop the world's largest art heist. Six Audi A3 cars spread out in the USA contained clues. The cars were tracked down and the hidden information retrieved. By piecing all information together, participants uncovered the full scope of the art heist. Three layers of participation were offered; data cracking, live events and character development (<http://mckinney.com/#!/work/item,116/client,22/>, accessed 30th April 2010).

The Beast counts as one of the first and most influential ARG. It was created by a team at Microsoft to promote the Steven Spielberg movie *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence*. It ran for twelve weeks during 2001.

The Big Donor Show was a Dutch reality TV show aired in May 2007. It was created by the producers of *Big Brother*, Endemol.

De Drabbade was a SVT television thriller series with supernatural features and a fight between the good and the evil, aired 2003. It was set in contemporary Nordic countries and in Scotland 400 years ago. It contained new audience interaction and online services. Directors Björn Stein, Dean Tomkins and Måns Mårdlind.

Dungeons and dragons is a fantasy role-playing game originally created by Gary Gygax and Dave Ameson. It was first published by Tactical Studies Rules, Inc. in 1974.

Drakar och Demoner is a Swedish fantasy role-playing game published since 1982 by Target Games and later by RiotMinds.

Entropia Universe is a massively multiplayer online virtual universe designed by MindArk, a Swedish software company.

Eurovision Song Contest is one of the longest running television shows in the world. In 1956 it was aired for the first time and has since had 54 runnings (2010). Around 50 countries have taken part.

EverQuest is a 3D fantasy-themed MMORPG released 1999 and published by Sony Online Entertainment.

Expedition Robinson (Survivor) is a popular Swedish docusoap that was aired between 1997- 2004 by SVT and 2009-2011 by TV3. The format has been produced in several European countries and is one of the most spread docusoap formats alongside Big Brother . The format was created by Charlie Parsons and initially produced by the Swedish production company Strix Television.

The Game is a thriller from 1997, directed by David Fincher Michael Douglas is the protagonist who takes part in an ARG, although without knowing it to begin with. It provides a good reference to what an ARG is. It is produced by A&B Producoes Lda.

Gömda: en sann historia is a novel by the author Liza Marklund (Piratförlaget 2006) which was marketed as a true story. Marklund later had to withdraw some of the truth claims after severe critique.

Hundparken (Eng. The Dog Park) was a virtual world created by Danish Radio 2002 and further developed together with the Norwegian and Swedish public service providers for Norwegian and Swedish audiences. Here young people could socialise and chat in a virtual park for dogs, buy hats, find bones, swim and a lot more with their personally-created puppy avatar.

Kommissionen (Eng. The Commission) is a Swedish television series in twelve episodes aired 2005. The plot is set in contemporary Sweden and the aftermath of an act of terror that takes place in the parliament building. Anders Lenhoff directed and SVT produced the series.

Lord of the Rings Online is a MMORPG released in 2007 by Turbine and Codemasters. This fantasy game is based on J.R.R. Tolkien's fantasy world Middle-earth.

Idol is a popular television entertainment series based on the Idol program format. It gives non-professional singers possibilities to compete and get recording contract.

I Love Bees served both as a real-world experience and a viral promotion for the video game *Halo 2*. It tasked players worldwide to collectively solve problems, and a major component in the game was answering pay phones located in various countries and completing tasks at specific times and places. The happenings culminated by inviting the players to one of four cinemas to play *Halo 2* before its release.

The Majestic The game *The Majestic* was released 2001. 'Drawing on similar themes and aesthetics to The X-Files, 24 and a general culture of conspiracy theory. The narrative of the game was one that folded back in on itself. Indeed, this kind of immersive genre is even portrayed in films like *Existenz*

and *The Game*, in which players find the game boundaries blurred with their own ‘real life’ such that they lose the ability to even distinguish between the two. *Majestic* was a game about a game’ (Taylor & Kolko 2003:499).

Maskspel was a kind of underground project and reality game taking place in Stockholm in 2007 to 2009. The project started during the SOM production fall 2007 and the producers collaborated with The company P. Ulf Staflund was the producer.

The Matrix Trilogy is a science fiction franchise created by Andy and Larry Wachowski and distributed by Warner Bros. Pictures. The trilogy began with *The Matrix* film (1999) followed by two more: *The Matrix Reloaded* and *The Matrix Revolutions* (both released 2003). The characters and settings

in other media, including animation, comic books and video
link story that merged numerous references to religious and

response to Lisa Marklund’s novel *Gömda: en sann historia*.

The author Monnica Antonsson claims that much of what Marklund describe as facts and a true story is fictional. Printed by Blue Publishing 2008.

Plus is a Swedish consumer program produced by SVT. It started in 1987 and had the same program host until 2010. Reportages and consumer right issues have been its main focus.

P.S. was a program produced by SVT 1999-2004. During its five year long lifetime it was a popular youth oriented program airing the diaries of the audience. The weekly program was developed to include, at that time, interactivity such as webpages and direct contact with the program makers.

Viewers could apply to get instructions and borrow video cameras for two weeks to make program contributions.

Push, Nevada is an American ARG where a mystery TV series set in the fictional town of Push, Nevada was intertwined with viewers that followed along and solved the mystery of Push could win a large sum of money. Each episode contained clues like web addresses in the opening credits and particular phrases uttered by the characters in the show. It ran in seven episodes during 2002 on the ABC network and was created by Ben Affleck and Sean Bailey.

Prosopopeia Bardo I: Där vi föll was a pervasive larp staged in Stockholm in June 2005. Twelve participants played themselves, possessed by ghosts that temporarily come back to our world to fulfill a mission and redeem their old wrongdoings. The larp used surveillance and mobile communications equipment to create a larp that extended to the streets of Stockholm. Produced by The company P. See http://www.pervasive-gaming.org/iper_games5.php, accessed 29th March 2011.

Prosopopeia Bardo II: Momentum was built upon the foundations of larp, MMORPG, urban exploration and alternate reality gaming. It took place 2006 and was a pervasive game about conformity and

revolution. The aim was to explore the borderlands between real and ludic, exploring the design space where reality and fiction merge in a seamless, immersive and coherent role-playing experience. The game was a research project within the European IPerG project, and the main research goals were to design evaluate a socially expanded game with long time duration and a dynamic participation model, driven by runtime game mastering. *Momentum* was based on knowledge gained by the previous research game *Där vi föll*. See <http://momentum.sics.se>, accessed 29th March 2011.

På Spåret is a popular television program where famous/well known persons/artists compete in two teams.

ReGenesis The *ReGenesis* ARG was produced by The Movie Network.

Second life is a virtual world developed by Linden Lab and launched 2003. Through avatars its online visitors can interact, socialise and participate in the world's activities.

Superbetter Jane McGonigal created *Superbetter* 2009 to recover more quickly from a concussion she had. It is 'a superhero-themed game that turns getting better in multi-player adventure. It's designed to help anyone recovering from an injury or coping with a chronic condition, get better sooner – with more fun, and with less pain and misery, along the way'. See <http://blog.avantgame.com/2009/09/super-better-or-how-to-turn-recovery.html>, accessed 1st December, 2010.

Super Mario is a 1985 platform video game developed by Nintendo, published for the Nintendo Entertainment system as a sequel to the 1983 Mario Bros.

Trivial Pursuit is a board game created by Chris Haney and Scott Abbott in 1979. Progress is determined by a player's ability to answer general knowledge and popular culture questions.

The Theatre of the Oppressed by Augusto Boal (London, Pluto Press), describes how theatrical forms may be used to transform reality and where the audience becomes active explorers and analysers of their lifeworld.

Ultima Online is a graphical MMORPG released in 1997 by Origin Systems. This online-played fantasy game opened up for the creation of similar role-playing games.

The War of the Worlds was an American radio program directed and narrated by the author Orson Welles. It was aired on 30th October, 1938. The show's first part consisted of a series of simulated news bulletins, which suggested that an actual Martian invasion was in progress. Despite the fact that multiple explicit disclaimers bracketed the show, both before and during the actual airing, some listeners perceived it as an actual threat.

World of Warcraft is a MMORPG by Blizzard Entertainment. The game is the fourth release game set in the fantasy Warcraft universe and was released 2004. It is the one of the most-subscribed MMORPGs in the world with over 12 million subscribers.

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Malmö Studies in New Media, Public Spheres and Forms of Expression

1. Denward, Marie: Pretend that it is Real!: Convergence Culture in Practice 2011.

Media convergence may not only be defined and explained as a technological and industrial phenomenon in today's hybrid media landscape. Convergence also takes place as a bottom-up social process initiated by media users that move almost anywhere and everywhere in search of entertainment experiences, blurring the borders of production and consumption.

This thesis sheds light on the different types of media convergence that took place in the process of making the transmedia storytelling production *Sanningen om Marika*. The Swedish public service provider, SVT, and the pervasive games upstart company The company P, combined their expertise in broadcasting and games development to craft this 'participation drama'.

Using an ethnographic approach, field studies were conducted throughout the design, implementation and production phases.

The author argues that even if instances of convergence could be identified, the collaboration did not proceed smoothly. The different logics of television, internet and games also created tensions and frictions. The blurring of fiction and facts both in television genres and in games activities made the reception and interpretation of the audience differ extensively. Lastly, the analysis shows that the inherent asymmetrical relationship between producers and users in media highlighted issues of hierarchies and inequality between producers and participants and between participants.



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