

Making literature televisual. Olaug Nilssen's *Get me on the air, goddamnit*
(2005)¹

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In *An Introduction to Visual Culture* (1999) Nicolas Mirzoeff claims that '[m]odern life takes place onscreen', that '[h]uman experience is now more visual and visualized than ever before' and that 'seeing [...] is not just a part of everyday life, it is everyday life'.² This understanding of the centrality of visual experience in postmodern, western culture and everyday life lies behind Mirzoeff's argumentation for a 'visual culture' which does not 'depend on pictures themselves but [on] the modern tendency to picture or visualize existence'.³ Indeed, Mirzoeff notes that '[o]ne of the most striking features of the new visual culture is the growing tendency to visualize things that are not in themselves visual'.⁴

While W.J.T. Mitchell challenges Mirzoeff's understanding by pointing out that the modern era is not unique in 'its obsession with visual and visual representation' and questions the 'visual turn',⁵ he has also argued for what he calls 'the pictorial turn':

[...] a postlinguistic, postsemiotic rediscovery of the picture as a complex interplay between visibility, apparatus, institutions, discourse, bodies and figurality. It is the realization that *spectatorship* (the look, the gaze, the glance, the practices of observation, surveillance, and visual pleasure) may be as deep a problem as various forms of reading (decipherment, decoding, interpretation, etc) and that 'visual experience' or 'visual literacy' might not be fully explicable in the model of textuality. Most important, it is the realization that while the problem of pictorial representation has always been with us, it presses inescapably now, and with unprecedented force, on

every level of culture, from the most refined philosophical speculations to the most vulgar productions of the mass media.⁶

Mitchell maintains that the tendency to view literature as a verbal rather than a visual medium has to be challenged due to the fact that all written texts have a visual component. If we understand literature as being partly visual, Mitchell reasons, we are more likely to be more conscious of how techniques such as ekphrasis, descriptions and formal strategies create virtual or imaginative experiences.⁷ More importantly, Mitchell argues for a notion of visual culture starting from ‘below’, beneath disciplines like aesthetics or media studies, and from a larger field which he terms ‘vernacular visibility’ or ‘everyday seeing’.⁸

Mirzoeff’s understanding of visual culture as our tendency to visualize existence is fruitful when approaching what we see as the aesthetics of much contemporary, postmodern literature.⁹ For we find that the tendency to prioritize the visual and experiment with visibility in the contemporary Norwegian novel calls for a discussion of the consequences of this development.¹⁰ Thus, like Mitchell, we contend that the visual aspects of literature as a medium need to be explored. In the following we combine these perspectives on visibility in order to shed light on the novel *Get me on the air, goddamnit* [*Få meg på, for faen*] from 2005 written by the Norwegian author Olaug Nilssen. In our opinion, Nilssen’s text is a seminal example of literature that thematically and formally causes the reader to visualize existence, to visualize things that are not themselves visual. Therefore, as a case study, it allows us to investigate the concept of visual literature from different angles. We argue that visual culture, and more specifically, strategies, techniques and genre from the medium of TV, are used by Nilssen to create a critical and playful *televsual* form of literature.¹¹

As Karen Lury points out in *Interpreting Television*, television means ‘seeing at a distance’ and she suggests that ‘the ability to see “things” from far away, “up close”, appears

as the most important and appropriate activity for the television image'.¹² In Nilssen's novel, however, television is used as a tool for seeing that which is up close but not 'in focus', that is to say, for framing the everyday lives of ordinary women through mediation. The thematic focus in the novel on mediation and television's 'seeing at a distance' is coupled with elements characteristic of the aesthetics of television. We will therefore discuss formal elements relating to fragmentation, the rhetoric of 'liveness', relevant television genres and visual strategies before concluding with a discussion of the consequences of these aesthetics for the actual reader's perception and cognition.¹³ Our claim is that Nilssen's intermedial approach plays an important role in the formation of an implied reader who is a spectator, a consumer and connoisseur of visual media. In addition, we maintain that the actual reader of such televisual literature visualizes according to a new form of visual literacy.

Get me on the air, goddamnit

The title of Nilssen's novel is taken from the Norwegian TV-reporter Knut Magnus Berge who wrongly assumed that he was not on air during a live news broadcast, and who was therefore seen and heard by viewers all over Norway when he said, 'Get me on [the air], goddamnit!'.¹⁴ This quote explicitly points to the major theme in the novel: the desire to be seen in today's media culture. This need is connected with individual identity and self-image, 'being someone' and feeling loved, in all of the novel's four parts. Thus, the novel can be read as a comical and critical commentary of today's society where being on television is both a means of becoming a celebrity and a goal in and of itself. The contradiction between the anonymous everyday lives of ordinary women and the importance of being seen as subject, as someone of importance, is depicted in each part of the novel.

Part one centers on Maria who works for a firm in charge of cleaning offices and classrooms at a university college and who is also writing an oral presentation about her

working conditions as a cleaner for a class in sociology. The oldest daughter of Sebjørn,¹⁵ who owns a grocery store, and his wife, who is referred to as ‘Sebjørn’s wife’ throughout the novel, Maria has dreams of being interviewed on TV in connection with her oral presentation and fantasizes about becoming a celebrity. Part three continues the story of Maria as she works on her presentation and also includes the text she writes. Part two, on the other hand, focuses on 16-year old Alma who is preoccupied with sexual fantasies, pornography, and the opposite sex. Alma goes to school with two of Maria’s sisters. These sisters and their father, who hires Alma to work part-time at his store, and a boy named Artur,¹⁶ figure predominantly in her thoughts and fantasies. ‘Alma’s mother’ is also a friend of Sebjørn’s wife, the protagonist in part four. Sebjørn’s wife is dissatisfied with her life as a housewife and is interested in getting a job at the local rutabaga (a round, yellow root vegetable) factory where Alma’s mother works, so she goes to Oslo to demonstrate against a potential shut-down of the factory. With the help of her family, Sebjørn’s wife launches new varieties of mashed rutabaga as well as new packaging options. The demonstration, including interviews with Maria and Sebjørn’s wife, is broadcast as news on prime-time television on two different channels.

In their roles as cleaners, factory workers and housewives, these women are placed in an everyday environment where they are not seen as individual subjects.¹⁷ The fact that the adult women lack proper names, but are named ‘mother’ or ‘wife’ according to their relation to others, is indicative of their invisibility and object status. Thus, the novel can be placed within a feminist discourse where making women visible has been an important agenda. Commentary on the tension between ‘being seen’ (as subject) and ‘being looked at’ (as object) has been significant in film studies as well as in studies of visual and literary representations of women and it is also central to the thematics of Nilssen’s novel. Each of the protagonists is coupled to a different aspect of the dialectics of ‘seeing’ and ‘being seen’ and

of ‘looking’ and ‘being looked at’. While the chapters about Maria focus on the issue of (TV and radio) mediation with regard to ‘seeing’ vs. ‘being seen’, the chapter about Alma concentrates on ‘being looked at’ and ‘looking’ as it relates to pornography. In another twist, the chapter about Sebjørn’s wife primarily calls attention to the tension between ‘being seen’ and ‘being looked at’.

While Nilssen’s text explicitly thematizes the invisibility of the everyday life of the average working-class woman and the desire to be seen in today’s media culture, the novel’s final passage emphasizes viewing and the situation of the TV-viewer. For the text ends with a description of the mediated television images seen by Alma and her mother at home:

When the two of them saw the coverage again [...], they could clearly see who stood in the background when Maria was interviewed. Several well-known politicians stood and chatted and laughed with Sebjørn and his wife as they ate mashed rutabaga. They could see Lars Sponheim¹⁸ converse with Sebjørn, and were fairly sure that they also had heard him laugh. They saw Kristin Halvorsen¹⁹ lay an approving hand on Sebjørn’s wife’s shoulder, and it was also possible to see that she looked for the camera out of the corner of her eye as she did this. Sebjørn’s wife didn’t notice. Sebjørn’s wife looked very happy.²⁰

This passage makes explicit that *seeing* – not only *being seen* – is integral to the novel’s thematics and the focus of the novel’s metacommentary. In this final scene Alma and her mother have a second opportunity to see the coverage of Sebjørn’s wife’s demonstration: the television mediates ‘events taking place “there and then”, and present[s] a visceral, intimate link to the “here and now” of every viewer’.²¹

By drawing attention to the discrepancy between the levels of awareness of viewers and ‘characters’, the text shows how the televisual perspective of ‘seeing at a distance’ can contribute to a broader perspective of reality: The television coverage shows Alma and her mother that the politician’s interest in the camera reveals a calculation of movement directed at the television audience and potential voters. This perspective is contrasted with that of Sebjørn’s wife, whose immediate position in the mediated situation includes neither such an awareness nor insight. On the one hand, the (televisual) text indirectly suggests that being the object of the TV camera’s gaze brings happiness. On the other, it suggests the possibility that Sebjørn’s wife’s happiness is based on her naïveté. Thus, the television ‘eye’ presents its ‘knowledge’ to its viewers: mediation is coupled with insight.

But as television expert John Ellis notes, ‘[T]he TV look at the world becomes a surrogate look for the viewers. [...] TV is a relay, a kind of scanning apparatus that offers to present the world beyond the familiar and the familial, but to present them in a familiar and familial guise’.²² In other words, the television ‘looks at the world’, it is ‘the eye that sees’, while ‘the TV viewer glances across the TV as it looks’.²³ Nilssen’s text calls attention to fact that the camera ‘eye’ is ‘subject’, presenting the objects of its gaze (Sebjørn and his wife in the company of well-known Norwegian politicians) to the viewer (Alma and her mother). The camera is thus not a neutral recording device, but an ‘active’ element that selects what the television viewers see.

Television genres: ‘Is this for real?’

Television is ever present and all pervasive in Nilssen’s novel, as part of everyday life, as a trigger for the characters’ imaginations and as a vehicle for achieving their goal of being seen. After talking publicly about a sexual incident involving a classmate, Alma watches television as she tries to sort out the trouble she has gotten herself into. Maria, on the other hand,

fantasizes not only about being interviewed by the local news station, but also about being on Norway's most famous talk show.²⁴ The following passage from the chapter about Sebjørn's wife exemplifies the importance of television in the novel:

Sebjørn had walked 'round and 'round in order to avoid going into the living room while he argued with himself about what was best: book, surfing on the web or TV. TV hadn't won, but he sat in the living room anyway, on the front of the seat of the chair, as if he had just sat down for a little spell while he postponed reading his book.²⁵

Even though the TV doesn't 'win' Sebjørn's argument with himself, it captures his attention to such an extent that the reported news dominates the narrative. While Sebjørn picks out a book from the bookshelf and sits back down in his chair with it in his hand, the narrative continues with a description of the news that he watches on TV. It is not clear if Sebjørn ever starts reading, but his comment to his daughter makes clear that this activity is postponed:

– I'm just going to finish watching the news, then I'm going to read, said Sebjørn.²⁶

By foregrounding the importance of television and other media, the novel can be regarded as part of a new tendency in contemporary literature in which intermedial aesthetics are prevalent. Eivind Røssaak has noted the emergence of a new type of reflective reality-literature and to the tendency to imitate new media genres and mediation forms connected with live coverage, liveness, the immediate, documentation, commentary and 'the new(s)'.²⁷ In our opinion, Olaug Nilssen's text can be said to exemplify the tendency in contemporary Norwegian art and literature to 'give an illusion of liveness, reality, here-and-now, improvisation, theatre' and to hold the illusion of 'raw and unworked reality' as the ideal.²⁸ All these descriptions point to the aesthetics of television.

Television genres such as the soap opera, situation comedy and reality-TV seem to influence the novel thematically, structurally and aesthetically. These genre share similarities in themes, plots and characters as they all focus on ordinary people, everyday life and conflicts or dilemmas related to love, sex and/or friendship.²⁹ Reality shows like *American Idol* or *Survivor* are commonly regarded as an opportunity for everyone to gain their fifteen minutes of fame, and popular serials like *Days of our Lives*, *A Country Practice*, *Friends* and *Seinfeld* have been important in what has been described as everyday life's invasion in television.³⁰

With its use of multi-protagonist plots, a large character gallery with prominent female characters and episodic narration, Nilssen's novel is especially reminiscent of the aesthetics of the soap opera. The soap is also television's prime example of a fragmented and never-ending narration that repeats or mirrors everyday life. In fact, the soap is regarded as a story that can 'go on ad infinitum',³¹ and the most popular serials run for decades.³²

However, the most important television genres represented in the novel are the news, the talk show and reality-television. All of these genres are said to document reality, but the differences among them are many. Even the so-called reality-television genres use a variety of different formats, from carefully staged game shows such as *Idol*, to serials such as *Vets* that echo the soap opera, to programs such as *30 Days* that follow the traditional documentary format.³³

Thus, the term reality-television is in itself not enough to make the viewer believe that what (s)he sees is for real. In fact, Nilssen creates a new genre, namely 'dokurøyndomsfjærnsynsprogrammet', which can be translated as 'the documentary reality television program'.³⁴ According to Maria, who uses this term in her oral presentation, this is the most suitable genre for the depiction of the everyday life of a cleaner. The tension indicated by the blending of 'documentary' and 'reality' points to the juxtaposition of the

understanding of television as a medium that can document the real world as a window or a witness, and the understanding of TV and literature as fictional media.

This dialectic is continually present in *Get me on the air, goddamnit*. As readers, we are constantly ‘fooled’ into picturing scenes that are, in fact, not taking place, that are not ‘for real’. This blurring between ‘actual’ and ‘fictive’ events is most prevalent in the chapter about Alma. In one scene she masturbates at work in Sebjørn’s shop while fantasizing about what she imagines as ‘Sebjørn’s most certainly enormously huge, stiff dick’.³⁵ As she is immersed in this activity, Sebjørn enters the shop and the narrative slips gradually into what can be understood as Alma’s imagined pornographic scenario:

Alma could help herself to Sebjørn’s enormous dick while he murmured:

– Oh, Alma, you are so hot.³⁶

The use of hyperbolic adjectives such as ‘enormous’ and ‘huge’, coupled with the slang expression ‘dick’ creates a pornographic discourse. But after a break that is visually marked by a blank space on the page, the narrative continues: ‘But this doesn’t happen, of course’.³⁷ It is unclear as to whether this statement is made by the narrator or not. Is the narrative explicitly calling attention to the act of narration? That is, does the narrator ‘change her mind’ in mid-stream about the course of events? Or it is part of Alma’s inner monologue, connected to an inner, imagined ‘reality’ that is not based on any ‘actual’ evening that have occurred? In any case, this ambiguity creates an interesting form of visualization since it prompts the reader to create mental pictures of Alma’s sexual fantasies before calling their ‘reality’ into question.

Most notably the text is ambiguous about whether or not her classmate, Artur, did, in fact, touch her with his penis at a party as she claims he did. And when her friend, Sebjørn’s

oldest daughter, visits her in order to find out ‘what really happened’, the scene evolves into the girls having oral sex. But is this ‘real’ or imagined? What can we believe? Is this really a ‘documentary reality program’? These ambiguities in the text call attention to the fact that reality can be edited as in reality shows where the viewer can be uncertain about what naturally is ‘really happening’ and what is staged or performed. As ‘errors’, they call to mind errors occurring on live television and point perhaps most notably to the cursing reporter who inspired the title of the novel.

Like reality television, the text seems to make a point of making scenes appear to be ‘for real’. A dialogue with pornography, where images seen by the viewer have to be interpreted as being ‘for real’, underlines this feature in the chapter about Alma. For pornography can be described as documentary because of its emphasis on ‘what’s going on’.³⁸ Pornography makes the unspeakable visual, and therefore, its main attraction has been described as a ‘visual, hard-core knowledge-pleasure’ or ‘[t]he frenzy of the visible’.³⁹ The viewer wants to see it all and this desire is fulfilled: Nothing is left to imagination. As such, the process of viewing pornography stands in contrast to the process of reading a novel where the reader to a large extent creates her own mental pictures. However, in *Get me on the air, goddamnit* Nilssen’s game with the reader’s imagination presents an intriguing paradox: She ‘fools’ us into picturing pornographic incidents that are not, in fact, ‘for real’ in a double sense.

To ‘see it all’ and to ‘see it with your own eyes’ has been one of the main characteristics of television,⁴⁰ but although television is commonly regarded as a visual medium, it also depends largely on aural information. Particularly the news and the talk show are based on ‘talking heads’.⁴¹ Nilssen’s novel suggests that to be a talking head interviewed on the news or on a talk show is the best way to be seen and several passages in the text foreground the importance of the interview. Nevertheless, the experience of television is

clearly visual, as the phrase 'to watch television' indicates, and to read Nilssen's novel feels in part like watching television. This is related to the narrative strategies Nilssen employs.

Fragmentation: Ebb and flow

The narrative moves forward in what seems to be chronological order, but breaks in the syntax of sentences, between paragraphs, and the novel's four parts, as well as between various kinds of texts within each part, are common. This is, of course, not an original technique in and of itself. Using a narratological perspective one could argue that the many ellipses in the temporal continuity of the plot can be seen to mark the omission of unimportant events in the story. However, due to the markedly visual quality of these breaks, such an approach seems inadequate. Thus, we suggest that the idea of the ebb and flow of television is more fruitful in understanding the sequences and breaks in this text whose structure bears resemblance to television's distinctive aesthetic form, commonly characterized as segments of flow.

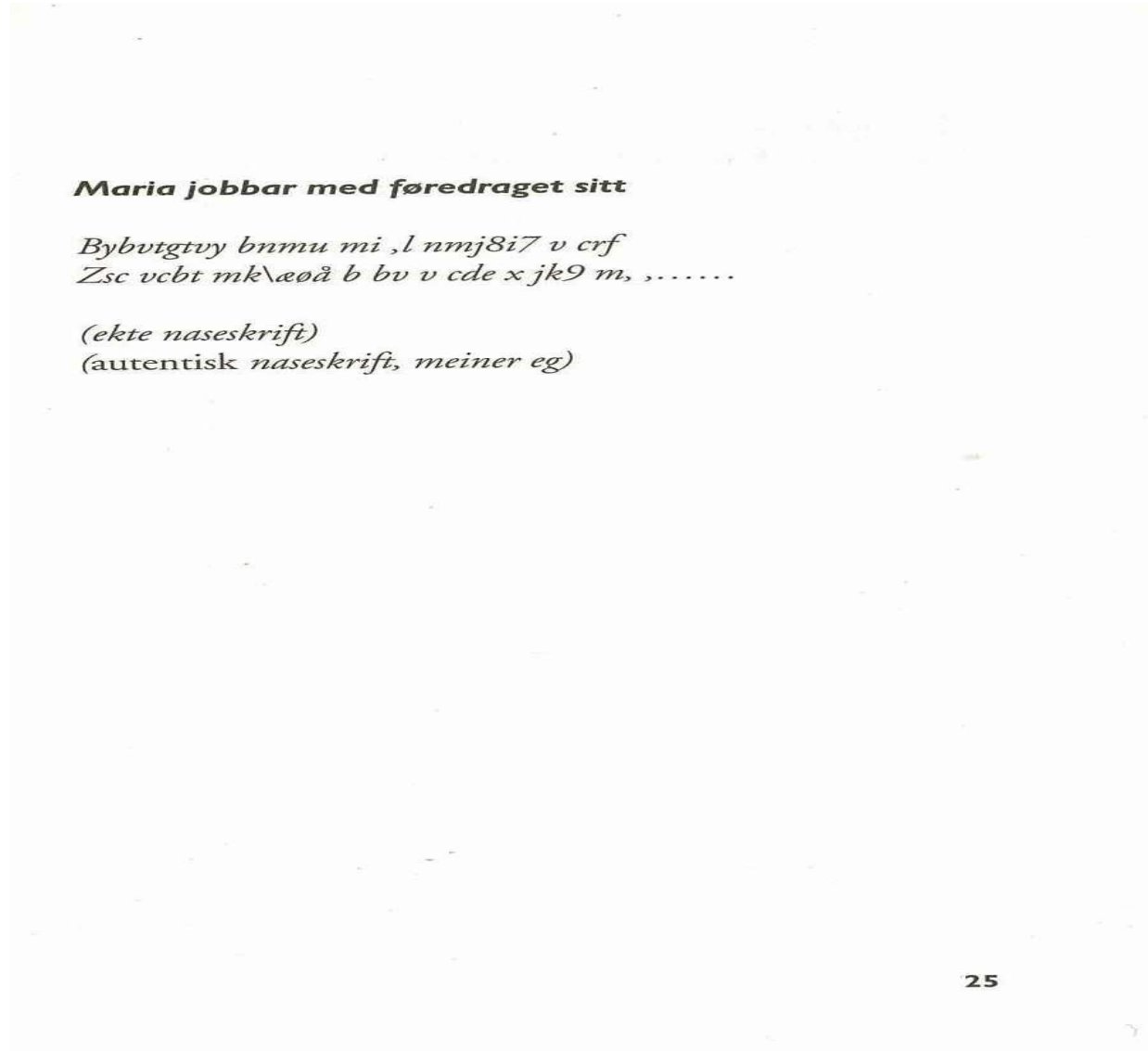
It has been pointed out that the 'maintenance of televisual flow dominates nearly every aspect of television's structures and systems',⁴² and that flow 'assembles disparate items, placing them within the same experience, but does not organise them to produce an overall meaning'.⁴³ This is characteristic of the experience of watching television. Raymond Williams, who coined the term flow, notes that to watch television one evening feels like: 'having read two plays, three newspapers, three or four magazines, on the same day one has been to variety show and a lecture and a football match'.⁴⁴ Watching television means that different genres follow each other and create a meta-flow. And as we have seen, the same technique is used in Nilssen's novel to combine elements from various television genres with pornography.

The term flow can also be used to illustrate the structure of a single television program. John Ellis describes flow as ‘relatively discrete segments’ that are small sequential unities of images and sounds organised into groups, which are either cumulative or have some kind of repetitive or sequential connection, and he points out that ‘[b]roadcast TV narration takes place across these segments, characteristically in series or serials which repeat a basic problematic or dilemma rather than resolving it finally’.⁴⁵ This description of ‘relatively discrete segments’ with marked breaks in-between sheds light on the the structure of Nilssen’s novel. For the idea of narration taking place across segments without resolving the basic dilemma can also characterize both Nilssen’s narrative strategy and the open endings of each of the four parts of the novel. Like televisual flow their organization is not based on cause and effect and consequence, but rather according to ‘sequence (one thing after another) and association (connections among simultaneous programs)’.⁴⁶

In *Get me on the air, goddamnit* the logic of cause and effect and consequence between the story about Maria (parts one and three), the story about Alma (part two), and the story about Sebjørn’s wife (part four) is subordinated to their fairly random sequencing. This sequenced order of the novel’s parts, each presenting a different perspective, can be interpreted in various ways and they can be grouped together to form larger or smaller segments of flow. The discontinuity that is a consequence of televisual flow expands the polysemy or multiplicity of meanings of the (televisual) text and contributes to the interactive role of the reader in the production of meaning.⁴⁷ Association between the novel’s three protagonists has a central function in interpretation and creation of meaning while overlapping characters and thematics underline these associations while adding coherence and continuity to the reading experience.

The shorter segments in Nilssen’s narrative include music lyrics and concrete or visual poetry as well as the segmented formatting of units of narrative or dialog. The following

examples illustrate how the text is ordered sequentially and associatively just like the various parts of the novel. The English translation follows each segment taken from the original Norwegian:



Maria works on her speech

Bybvrgtvy bnmui mi .l nmj8i7 v crf
Zsc vcbt mk\avå b bv v cde x jk9 m, ,.....

(real nose writing)

(authentic nose writing, I mean)

Ikkje lov å reise seg.

*Ikkje lov å reise seg. ikkje lov å reise seg. ikkje lov å reise seg. **ikkje lov å reise seg.** ikkje lov å reise seg. ikkje lov å reise seg, min venn. Ikkje lov å reise seg, min gode venn. ☒◁††††✖✕☐
✕*☆††☒*

26

[You're] not allowed to stand up.

*Not allowed to stand up. Not allowed to stand up. Not allowed to stand up. **Not allowed to stand up.** Not allowed to stand up. Not allowed to stand up, my friend. Not allowed to stand up, my good friend.*

After a segment on page 27 containing only the words ‘sail’, ‘boat’ and ‘lecture’ formatted in the shape of a sailboat, there is a playful rewrite of the refrain of ‘There’s a hole in the bucket, dear Liza’ on page 28:

*Det er eit hol i-i bøtta, kjære sje-ef, kjære
sje-ef, det er eit ho-ol i bøtta, kjære
sje-ef, eit hol.*

*holholholholholholholholholholhol
Holholhol holholholholholhol
Holhol holholholholholhol
Holholhol holholholholholhol
Holholholholholholholholholhol*

*Det er eit hol i-i bøtta, kjære sje-ef, kjære
sje-ef, det er eit ho-ol i bøtta, kjære
sje-ef, eit hol.*

*holholholholholholholholholholhol
Holholholholholholhol holholhol
Holholholholholhol holhol
Holholholholholholhol holholhol
Holholholholholholholholholhol*

28

There’s a hole in the bucket, dear bo-oss, dear
bo-oss, there’s a ho-ole in the bucket, dear
bo-oss, a hole.

holeholeholeholeholeholeholeholeholehole

Holeholehole holeholeholeholeholeholehole

Holehole holeholeholeholeholeholehole

Holeholehole holeholeholeholeholeholehole

Holeholeholeholeholeholeholeholeholeholeholeholeholehole

There's a hole i-in the bucket, dear bo-oss, dear

bo-oss, there's a ho-ole in the bucket, dear

bo-oss, a hole.

holeholeholeholeholeholeholeholeholeholeholeholeholehole

Holeholeholeholeholeholehole holeholehole

Holeholeholeholeholeholehole holehole

Holeholeholeholeholeholehole holeholehole

Holeholeholeholeholeholeholeholeholeholeholeholeholehole

The brevity of these segments illustrates the quality of fragmentation that is integral to Nilssen's style and it calls televisual segmentation to mind. According to John Ellis, the segment is 'a relatively self-contained scene which conveys an incident, a mood or a particular meaning' with continuity of character or continuity of place providing coherence.⁴⁸ He points out that each segment is 'succeeded by another which deals with a difference set of (related) characters in a different place, or the same characters at a different time', emphasizing that there is a definite break between segments with the aspect of break, of end and beginning, tending to outweigh the aspect of continuity and consequence.⁴⁹ In addition, Ellis, whose description is related to the (television) serial and most notably to the genre of

the soap opera, sees each segment as representing a “move” in the argument of the overall programme’.⁵⁰

Nilssen’s text can be understood in this context, with the ‘relatively self-contained’ segments signifying different ‘moves’ within the ‘overall programme’, with each part ‘equal’ to an episode in a serial. Understood associatively and sequentially, the visual poetry we have presented above can be seen as a way of depicting Maria’s attempts to concentrate on her presentation as well as her boredom and difficulty with it. Each segment ‘ends’, but there is no closure. This is illustrated clearly by the following final line of part three about Alma:

Artur stands there undecided.

– We’re stuck in a tricky spot [literally: difficult corner], he says.⁵¹

It is as if the narrative were to continue with a new episode at a later time: the dilemma is not resolved and Artur is undecided about the direction for further course of action. Thus, the entire narrative seems to be *in medias res* and it is difficult to see that – or how – the combination of the individual parts culminate in an overall meaning to be ascertained after the conclusion of the novel. This is also the case if one understands the ‘overall programme’ of the novel as the combination of different individual TV-programs watched in a sitting. But whereas the television viewer has control over what the ‘overall programme’ or meta-flow will cover, Nilssen can be said to have pre-programmed the selection for the reader.

This programming includes the idea of interruption or ebb as in televisual aesthetics. For interruptions and breaks are essential to and a consequence of the aesthetics of flow. As Jeremy G. Butler states, the ‘forms of interruption – from television’s self-interruptions to the interruptions we perform while watching – are not a perversion of the TV-viewing experience. Rather, they *define* that experience’.⁵² In other words, the clear breaks and

‘abrupt’ transitions in *Get me on the air, goddamnit* made explicit by the blank spaces between the segments shown above, demonstrate that they are important in and of themselves. In addition, this ‘ebb’ points to visuality as the focus of the novel.⁵³

Visuality and visual techniques: ‘Look here!’

The incorporation of concrete or visual poetry into the novel’s structure accentuates the materiality of the word, an interest in the physical substance of language, and also contributes to the effect of the text as image, framed by the outline of the blank space on the page.⁵⁴ The shape of the ‘hole’ (in the bucket) in the segment on page 28 is formed by the words [*signifiant*] that signify the objects [*signifié*], visually calling attention to the relationship between the two. Likewise, the ‘nonsense’ of the jumbled letters in the segment on page 25 makes visible the ‘authentic nose writing’ that Maria does with her nose while amusing herself or falling asleep over the keyboard⁵⁵ while the admonishment ‘[you’re] not allowed to stand up’ on page 26 plays with repetition, different emphases of the imperative and the materiality of different fonts and letter size. But while these segments are concentrated in the narrative about Maria, strategies for enhancing the visual, such as highlighting in bold, italics and capital letters, are prevalent throughout the entire novel. In many instances Olaug Nilssen also adds extra vowels to lengthen words for effect, and in addition, we note the frequent use of hyphens, indentation and parentheses as well as frequent shifts, often marked by extra, ‘blank’ space, between paragraphs, narrative passages and dialog, and shorter and longer segments. The following passage describing one of Maria’s daydreams exemplifies many of these strategies. The Norwegian original shows the lay-out of the text and the English translation follows.⁵⁶

– Koooom aaaaan, seier Folgerø med forvridd, sakte stemme. Han vinkar på dei andre, som naturleg nok spring saktare med svære kamera på skuldrene.

– Der er ho, ho med føredraget! ropar Folgerø og spring frå kamerafolka, han viftar med armane til Maria.

– Eg treng kjærleik, tenker Maria på å svare, ho tenker det om og om igjen og finpussar det ved å prøve å synge heile svaret på melodien til Maria Magdalena.

– Eg treng **kjærleik**. **Det** er svaret mitt, tenker ho,

– og så eit *blikk* og ein alvorleg pause før ein frigjerande lått og eit vanleg svar.

– Cooome ooon, says Folgerø in a distorted, slow

voice.⁵⁷ He waves at the others, who are naturally

running more slowly with huge cameras on their shoulders.

– There she is, the one with the presentation! yells Folgerø and runs from the camera people while waving his arms at Maria.

– I need lo-ove, Maria plans to answer, she

thinks this thought again and again and polishes it by trying to

sing the entire answer to the tune of the hit song Maria Magdalena.

– **I need love. That's my answer,**

she thinks,

– and then a **look** and a serious pause before a liberating

tune and a normal answer.

As this example demonstrates, attention is given throughout the novel to highlighted, italicized words, adding nuance to the meaning of the utterances. In some instances, the use of italics or bold letters can be seen to point to an intensity of expression, and as we have seen, all of these strategies underline the visual, material quality of the word.

‘Live’ and close up?

All of the various forms of textual fragmentation and highlighting exemplified here are coupled with narrative techniques that function to give the impression of immediacy and presence. *Liveness* of both images and sounds is central to the aesthetics of television and thus, television narrative prioritizes scenes which give the illusion of occurring ‘live’, with story time and narrative time being identical, and with ellipses marking the breaks in the temporal continuity between them. This characteristic is predominate in the soap opera’s narration which aims at making the viewer feel that the characters are alive and going on with their business even when she is not watching.

While the past tense is used occasionally in Nilssen’s novel as we have seen above, the narrative is predominantly held in the present tense with extensive use of dialogue, which adds to the seemingly ‘live’ quality of the scenes in the text. Described as simultaneous narration or ‘narrative in the present contemporaneous with the action’, the present tense is commonly understood to emphasize closeness to the fictive characters and to create the illusion that the reader experiences the characters’ actions and thoughts with them as they occur.⁵⁸ According to Gérard Genette, simultaneous narrating is in principle the simplest, since the ‘rigorous simultaneousness of story and narrating eliminates any sort of interference or temporal game’.⁵⁹ But he cautions that the blending of story and discourse in simultaneous narration can function differently according to where the emphasis is. So while ‘[a] present-tense narrative which is “behaviourist” in type and strictly of the moment can seem like the height of objectivity’,⁶⁰ simultaneousness can also work in favour of the discourse if the emphasis rests on the narrating itself.

This clarification is interesting with regard to Nilssen’s novel. Where there is dialogue, the third-person narrator naturally ‘disappears’, emphasizing the story and the relationships between the characters, and enhancing what can be called the ‘behaviourist’, ‘objective’ and

dramatic quality of the narrative. In the epic segments of the text the narrating instance is undramatized and seemingly objective (extradiegetic-heterodiegetic), calling to mind the ‘voiceless narrator’ used in television narratives. The focalization rests to a large extent with the protagonists, and therefore, the reader is invited to ‘share’ the subjective perceptions of the characters. The proximity of the narrating instance to the fictive world can be seen to underline the ‘objective’ and ‘live’ quality of the narrative: the narrator’s language reflects the protagonists’ voices in the technique called *free indirect style* or *narrated monologue*.

In her study of representation of consciousness in fiction, Dorrit Cohn states that ‘the effect of the narrated monologue is precisely to reduce to the greatest possible degree the hiatus between the narrator and the figure existing in all third-person narration’.⁶¹ As with simultaneous narration, this technique functions to create the illusion of closeness between reader and fictional universe and to strengthen the reader’s identification with the characters. However, narrated monologue is used to emphasize the narrator’s identification with the character’s mentality, but *not* the narrator’s identity with the character.⁶² This fact adds ambiguity to this narrative mode, increasing the degree of distance between the narrator and characters. Indirectly, then, the narrated monologue can be said to give emphasis to the discourse itself, to point to the mediation of the portrayed events rather than to the story itself. To our minds, the use of narrated monologue adds ambiguity to the immediate and live quality of Nilssen’s novel.⁶³

In addition, because Nilssen’s protagonists are not the round, ‘realistic’ and psychologically believable characters that most often are connected with the narrated monologue, this technique functions *only to a certain degree* to create the illusion of closeness in *Get me on the air, goddamnit*. The female protagonists have neither psychological depth nor multi-faceted characters. Indeed, as we have seen, several of them do not even have a proper name. This playful stance toward psychological realism is underlined

by the frequent shifts between ‘showing’ and ‘telling’ in shifts between *free indirect style*, dramatic dialogue (marked as in dramatic texts) and interior monologue (marking daydreams and fantasies). Not only are the breaks in these different narrative modes and means of creating rupture and distance, but the content of the dialogues and inner monologues can also be seen to be a part of the text’s distancing strategies on a metafictional level: Maria fantasizes, for instance, about different versions of ‘what could happen’, and in other passages the narrator presents first one scenario of events and then another.⁶⁴ Thus, as we have previously shown, the reader is invited to pick her own version of fictional ‘truth’.

At the same time, the illusion of a live and immediate fictional world is subverted by Maria’s extreme self-awareness. As Eivind Røssaak has noted, the preoccupation with the individual self in the cultural industry and the mass media has carried over to contemporary art and literature in a concern with self-perception and self-observation.⁶⁵ Maria imagines (visualizes) herself as being interviewed by numerous reporters: ‘She walks with music in her head. She imagines the team from Vestlandsrevyen [the local television news] behind the corners of all the houses. There! There they come running in slow motion, as if it were an accident they were to get to’.⁶⁶ As in this example, the awareness of a discrepancy between mediated TV-reality and actual ‘reality’ is present in Maria’s day-dreaming and self-observation. For Maria, ‘The problem is that there is never any reporter from the local news channel out at 12 minutes of 7 on a normal Monday morning’,⁶⁷ and this fact is related to the insight that mediated reality is altered in some way, as the following description in one of Maria’s daydreams also exemplifies: ‘[Maria] looks out the window in just the way people who are sitting and relaxing in the car or on the train do in movies and on TV; light and colors (primarily green) rhythmically beam across her face’.⁶⁸

In Maria’s view, mediated reality conveys more attractive or beautiful images than actual reality, and she therefore concludes her presentation with a fictional newspaper

headline commenting on the imagined television talk-show interview that she has previously recounted. The final line she writes, though, describes a picture that accompanies the headlines and calls attention to the mediated image: ‘*Under the title there is a picture of me as I leave the podium. My hair flows behind me as if I were a model*’.⁶⁹ Maria’s perspective of mediated images is connected with her extreme self-awareness and is typical of her self-perception. This is indicative of the novel’s protagonists. And because the protagonists’ focus on how they look and how they are perceived by others is integral to the depiction of their experiences, the reader maintains a greater distance to their voices and mindsets than is usual with narrated monologue. Given the function of the narrated monologue, this is paradoxical, but the self-awareness and self-observance of the protagonists in Nilssen’s text make the reader ‘step back’ and ‘see’ them as they do themselves: as object, ‘Other’ and from the ‘outside’.

Thus, in spite of the use of narrated monologue, the characters’ self-observance not only creates distance between the reader and the fictional world, but also (the impression of) greater ‘visibility’. Likewise, we have seen how the text tends toward fragmentation and distance between character and reader rather than the intimacy that psychological realism tends to create. In each instance the reader is ‘taken aback’, jarred out of the illusion of ‘reality’ and unable to relax in her identification with the fictive characters.

The dialectic between the illusion of ‘liveness’ and the focus on mediation present in self-perception in this novel is precisely that dialectical process that Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin describe in their seminal book *Remediation. Understanding New Media* (1999). Here they argue that the process of remediation, the renewal and reshaping of one medium as it relates to other media, is comprised of the dialectic between *immediacy* and the illusion of unmediated, direct and authentic (visual) experience, and *hypermediacy* and the

consciousness of experience being mediated, ‘expressions of a fascination with media’ and the call to ‘take pleasure in the act of mediation’.⁷⁰

This dialectic is present thematically in Nilssen’s text, but more importantly, it occurs on a metafictional level, in the text’s interaction with the reader. As with the various forms of textual fragmentation and visual markers, the shifts between immediacy and hypermediacy refuse ‘viewers the opportunity to become absorbed in the narrative and lose themselves, to forget their role as viewers’.⁷¹ In our view, the (tele)visual(izing) strategies in *Get me on the air, goddamnit* have changed the textual structure, or what can be referred to as ‘the “force” and the “feel”’ of the text.⁷² A continuous and coherent narrative can be said to suppose an implied reader who has the interest and attention span required to immerse herself in (‘gaze into’) the story (and to reflect on it). In contrast, the ebb and flow of Nilssen’s novel forces the reader to appropriate the text in ‘jerks and starts’. Thus, both the form and graphics seem to point to an implied reader who, like a television viewer, is easily distracted and whose attention must be attracted and held.

Intermediality: Implied reader and reader-viewer

Get me on the air, goddamnit is highly interactive with an implicit focus on an implied reader who can and will assume an active role and bring her own meanings to the text – and who will *enjoy* the process of distancing and find pleasure in the focus on mediation. The concrete reader is thus given the opportunity to realize (meaning in) the novel by filling in the empty spaces or blanks (*Leerstellen*) in the narrative during the reading process as Wolfgang Iser’s reader-oriented theory purports. Iser argues that *Leerstellen* make the reader’s mimetic activity more difficult and allow for different realizations of the reactions that a text offers to its reader. And since one can argue that the actual reader is a co-producer of meaning rather than a consumer of a finished product, the novel can be characterized as *writeable* in Barthes’

use of the term.⁷³ Both polysemic and flexible, *Get me on the air, goddamnit* will be realized differently by readers with more knowledge of media culture and more televisual literacy than by readers with less popular culture capital.

Nilssen's novel can be said to subscribe to the 'postmodern tendency to emphasize irony and a sense of one's own involvement in low or popular culture; a self-awareness of the inevitable immersion in the everyday and popular culture'.⁷⁴ Not only is there a deliberately playful engagement with the forms of popular culture, but the novel's intermedial form 'presumes a significant amount of media literacy and familiarity with many cultural products on the part of viewers. It *interpellates* a media and visually literate viewer who is familiar with image conventions and genres'.⁷⁵ One may even argue that the form of the novel parallels audiovisual parodies that '[demand] a self-consciousness on the part of viewers, in which they are constantly noting the form, style, genre, and conventions (and parodic departures from them) rather than the story itself'.⁷⁶ In addition, the visual strategies point to an implied reader who 'tends to visualize things that are not in themselves visual', and who takes pleasure in this process.

To our minds, this gives cause to rethink the process of reading and the reader's relationship to the narrative in contemporary literature of this kind. One could say that it fosters a practice of reading (looking) that 'glances and abstracts'.⁷⁷ And indeed, John Ellis uses the modality of the glance to describe the act of watching television: 'The position given to the TV viewer is that of someone whose interest has to be courted over a short attention span: a viewer who is seeking diversion moment by moment, and accords little importance to this diversion'.⁷⁸ Therefore, he notes that TV's regime is a 'regime of the glance rather than the gaze. The gaze implies a concentration of the spectator's activity into that of looking, the glance implies that no extraordinary effort is being invested in the activity of looking', that is, a loss of intensity in the viewing process.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, Ellis argues that TV is 'one of the

technologies of the audio-visual which have [sic] introduced a new modality of perception into the world, that of witness'.⁸⁰

Nilssen's novel employs televisual strategies and techniques to help make the average working class women (cleaners, factory workers), the housewife and the teen-ager visible both on an inter-diegetic and metafictional level. A 'roving eye' 'shows' both the fictive characters and the reader-viewer various (female) experiences of invisibility, but at the same time, the reader-viewer 'sees' Maria, Alma and Sebjørn's wife in various positions of subjectivity: as acting, creative, productive, 'seeing' and desiring subjects. Emphasis on the (tele)visual visibility of these women places the reader in the modality of 'witness'.

This modality is crucial in cognitive film theory where the spectator is seen as the active constructor of meaning. Challenging the notion that the visual is something merely 'passively' perceived, Ed Tan points out that we can distinguish between two forms of emotional responses while watching movies.⁸¹ In part, he says, our involvement is related to witness-emotions, that is, responses towards events in the fictional world. In addition, he foregrounds the importance of the enjoyment of how the story is constructed, the text as text so to speak. While it is widely agreed that the classical narrative film involves the spectator in the story itself whereas the modernistic movie draws attention to how the story is told, Tan emphasizes that these two emotional responses are not necessarily contradictory and that they can be intertwined.

In Nilssen's novel we can enjoy the references to Norwegian media culture while we (the actual readers) simultaneously involve ourselves in Alma's or Maria's experiences. The text seemingly creates distance between the story and the reader through Nilssen's playful writing style. On the other hand, by explicitly emphasizing both the visual and visualization in her text, Nilssen has made literature look like everyday life and made the everyday come into focus 'close up', just as on television. As we see it, the novel makes the reader both a close

witness to the stories told at the same time making her aware of the construction of the novel. We maintain, therefore, that this aesthetics creates new approaches for the actual reader during her process of constructing the narrative.

The role of the spectator and the mental construction of visual storytelling are central in cognitive film studies where the spectator is understood as an active constructor of the narrative. Arguing for the importance of a theory of viewing and narrative comprehension, David Bordwell shows how narrative understanding is based on cues in the text and how the dynamical process of film viewing is dependant on our perceptual capacities, our prior knowledge and experience, as well as on the material structure of the text.^{82, 83} Bordwell maintains that the spectator uses different *schematas* in order to grasp what is going on in a story, one of these being stories we have seen before,⁸⁴ and he describes the movie spectator's viewing process as one that to a large degree is about the construction of the causality and chronology of the narrative.

While Bordwell emphasizes the importance of the canonical story format as such a *schemata* as in the classical Hollywood film, we find that his idea of the viewing process is highly applicable when making sense of the television narrative and Olaug Nilssen's novel. In our opinion, the implied reader role presumes familiarity with the narration of television and that the actual reader must enter into this role (at least to a certain degree) in order to adequately understand the novel. In fact, we find that the implied reader in Nilssen's text can be said to point to certain characteristics that are related both to visualization and the metafictional level of the text. This is in turn related to the way in which the novel draws on an intermedial aesthetics.

The fact that *Get me on the air, goddamnit* plays with the dialectic between readers' desire for immediacy and liveness, and their self-awareness of and joy in mediation by explicitly playing on the aesthetics of television leads us to the conclusion that reading this

novel is different from reading a novel that does not explicitly employ visual strategies and emphasize visuality. Indeed, we suggest that the text supposes an implied reader who like the TV-viewer is dependent on her previous viewings of television genres and formats, who has familiarity with pornographic images or movies and who at the very least visualizes based on visual depictions. We use the term *reader-viewer* both of the implied reader role and the actual reader to emphasize the reader's relation to the television viewer and the importance of visualization in the reading process,⁸⁵ and we suggest that the actual reader-viewer visualizes what she reads in an extended and more concrete way while drawing on the pictures or *schematas* that she has previously seen.

While reading has traditionally been said to lead the process of making one's own pictures, the reader-viewer's visualization is pre-constructed since the pictures created in the reading process are pictures that have already been viewed on television. Thus, the reader-viewer 'recreates' pictures from the media, pictures that are televisual. In addition, we suggest that the actual reader-viewer's reading process shares similarities with watching television: The reader-viewer glances at the page while constructing a coherent narrative of the segments presented in a flow. In other words, the reader-viewer creates meaning while reading as if she were watching television.

Not only does Nilssen's novel invite us to envision a new kind of reader, but the televisual strategies that Nilssen employs are perhaps also, and more importantly, relevant to the Western world's 'deep-seated cultural prioritization of the visual and the aural as the key means of apprehending and understanding the world', that 'seeing is believing'.⁸⁶ Nilssen's novel can thus be said to show explicitly how literature points to the visual and visualization as a means of attaining knowledge about the world and as a form of insight in and of itself. And indirectly, *Get me on the air, goddamnit* urges us to further explore media culture's ways

of perception and cognition as a way of understanding contemporary subjectivity and aesthetic expression in the novel.

¹Olaug Nilssen's novel *Få meg på, for faen* [*Get me on the air, goddamnit*] has not (yet) been published in English. All of the translations to English from the Norwegian original are Sarah J. Paulson's.

²Mirzoeff, Nicholas. *An Introduction to Visual Culture*. London: Routledge, 1999, p. 1.

³Ibid, p. 5.

⁴Ibid.

Mirzoeff supports his argument with Heidegger's idea of the rise of the world picture and Heidegger's claim that the essence of the modern age is distinguished by the fact that the world becomes picture at all. In Heidegger's words, 'a world picture [...] does not mean a picture of the world but the world conceived and grasped as a picture'. See Heidegger, Martin. 'The age of the world picture.' In *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Trans. William Lovitt. New York: Garland, 1977, p. 130.

⁵Mitchell, W.J.T. *What Do Pictures Want?* Chicago: U of Chicago P., 2005, p. 348.

The visual turn is also referred to as the 'iconic turn' (Gottfried Boehm) and the 'pictorial turn' (W.J.T. Mitchell's own term).

⁶Mitchell, W.J.T. *Picture Theory*. Chicago: U of Chicago P., 1994, p. 16.

⁷Mitchell, W.J.T. *What Do Pictures Want?* Chicago: U of Chicago P., 2005, p. 350.

⁸Ibid, p. 356.

Mitchell has also stated, 'The notion that we live in a culture dominated by images, by spectacle, surveillance, and visual display, is so utterly commonplace that I am sometimes astonished at the way people announce it as if they had just discovered it'. See Grønstad, Asbjørn and Vågnes Øyvind. 'An interview with W.J.T. Mitchell.' In *Image & Narrative. Online Magazine of the Visual*, November 2003,

www.imageandnarrative.be/iconoclasm/gronstad_vagnes.htm

⁹By 'contemporary' we refer to literature published during the last ten years.

¹⁰See for example also novels by Norwegian authors such as Lars Ramslie, Abo Rasul [pseudonym for Mathias Faldbakken] and Erlend Loe.

¹¹The term *televisual* is, of course, inspired by John T. Caldwell's term. Caldwell uses the term to describe a more visual and stylish form of television production that evolved during the 1980's: 'an important historical moment in television's presentational manner, one defined by excessive stylization and visual exhibitionism [...] [T]elevisuality has become an active and changing form of cultural representation, a mode of operating and a ritual of display that utilizes many different individual looks'. See Caldwell, John Thornton. *Televisuality. Style, Crisis and Authority in American Television*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers UP, 1995, p. 352-353. In this article, however, we use the term to point out that the aesthetics of television is present in the novel, and more importantly to indicate that this contributes to a certain kind of visualization, a visual reading process influenced by television's pre-constructed pictures.

¹²Lury, Karen. *Interpreting Television*. London: Hodder Arnold, 2005, p. 111.

¹³Several of these techniques also call attention to the audio elements of television as well as radio, but we have chosen to focus on the visual aspect here.

¹⁴Berge's outburst literally means 'Get me on, goddamnit!' and, therefore, it would also be possible to translate the title of Olaug Nilssen's novel accordingly. While this title opens up for a variety of associations that are fruitful to the thematics of the novel, the English translation here emphasizes the original context by specifying 'on the air'.

¹⁵Sebjørn is an unusual Norwegian name that is a variation of the more common Sigbjørn, which means 'victorious bear', or a variation of the name Sæbjørn, which means 'sea bear'. In Nilssen's novel the name Sebjørn is a compound word that couples together 'se' [to see] + 'bjørn' [bear], and that can not only allude to the importance of being seen, but call attention to the role of gender with regard to the gaze. See Kruken, Kristoffer. *Norsk personnamleksikon*. [Dictionary of Norwegian First Names]. First edition by Kristoffer Kruken and Ola Stemshaug. Oslo: Det norske samlaget, 1995 [1982].

¹⁶Artur is the Norwegian form of the name Arthur.

¹⁷*Get me on the air, goddamnit* can be seen as a collective novel in which characters share common experiences and life circumstances.

¹⁸Norwegian politician in the Norwegian parliament and leader of the Liberal Party.

¹⁹Norwegian politician in the Norwegian parliament who represents the Socialist Party and who is currently Minister of Finance.

²⁰Nilssen, Olaug. *Få meg på, for faen*. [Get me on the air, goddamnit]. Oslo: Samlaget, 2005, p. 189.

²¹Lury, Karen, *Interpreting Television*. London: Hodder Arnold, 2005, p. 11.

- ²² Ellis, John. *Visible Fictions*. London: Routledge, 1992 [1982], p. 163.
- ²³ Ibid, p. 164.
- ²⁴ 'Først & Sist' [First & Last], also known as 'Skavlan' after host Fredrik Skavlan 1998 – 2007.
- ²⁵ Nilssen, Olaug. *Få meg på, for faen*. [Get me on the air, goddamnit]. Oslo: Samlaget, 2005, p. 143.
- ²⁶ Ibid, p. 144.
- ²⁷ Røssaak, Eivind. *Selviakttakelse – en tendens i kunst og litteratur*. Oslo: Norsk kulturråd, 2005, p. 13.
- ²⁸ Ibid, p. 19.
- ²⁹ We can distinguish between daytime soaps and prime-time soaps, serials such as *Dallas* and *Dynasty* that were scheduled weekly rather than daily. As part of this 'up-scaling', the characters are wealthy, polished and thus less 'ordinary'.
- ³⁰ Ytreberg, Espen. *Brede smil og spisse albuer. Hvordan fjernsynet overtaler*. Oslo: Aschehoug, 2000, p. 19. The Australian serial *A Country Practice* (1981-1993) was in fact called *Hverdagsliv* [Everyday life] when broadcasted in Norway.
- ³¹ Ang, Ien. *Watching Dallas. Soap Opera and the Melodramatic Imagination*. London: Routledge, 1985, p. 6.
- ³² The serial aired episode 10.744 on the 22nd of January 2008 according to www.wikipedia.org. Retrieved on January 22, 2008.
- ³³ The novel's hybrid form also parallels the blending of genres within the reality genres themselves. In *30 Days* the director of *Super Size Me* (Morgan Spurlock) 'tries out' lifestyles different from his own, such as living as a Muslim for 30 days.
- ³⁴ Nilssen, Olaug. *Få meg på, for faen*. [Get me on the air, goddamnit]. Oslo: Samlaget, 2005, p. 117.
- ³⁵ Ibid, p. 68.
The Norwegian equivalent of 'dick' is 'pikk'.
- ³⁶ Ibid, p. 69.
- ³⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁸ Skretting, Kathrine. 'Pornography as documentary?' In *M Tidsskrift for kunst- og medieforskning* 2/3, 1998, (101-104), p. 101.
- ³⁹ Williams, Linda. *Hard Core. Power, Pleasure and the 'Frenzy of the Visible'*. Berkeley: U of California P., 1999, p. 36.
The concept of the frenzy of the visible is taken from the historian Jean-Louis Comolli who in his description of the second half of the nineteenth century uses the term to describes the visual turn: 'The whole world becomes visible at the same time that it becomes appropriatable'. See Comolli in Williams, Linda. *Hard Core. Power, Pleasure and the 'Frenzy of the Visible'*. Berkeley: U of California P., 1999, p. 321.
- ⁴⁰ Ellis, John. *Seeing Things. Television in the Age of Uncertainty*. London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2000.
- ⁴¹ See for instance Sørenssen, Bjørn. 'Jeg tror det ikke før jeg får se det! Fjernsynsnyheter, form og opplevelser'. In *Blikkfang. Fjernsyn, form og estetikk*. Anne Gjelsvik and Gunnar Iversen (eds). Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 2003, p. 230-244.
- ⁴² Butler, Jeremy G. *Television. Critical Methods and Applications*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates (LEA), 2002, p. 4.
- ⁴³ Ellis, John. *Visible Fictions*. London: Routledge, 1992 [1982], p. 117.
- ⁴⁴ Williams, Raymond. *Television. Technology and Cultural Form*. Middeltown, Conn.: Wesleyan UP., 1992 [1974], p. 95.
- ⁴⁵ Ellis, John. *Visible Fictions*. London: Routledge, 1992 [1982], p. 112.
- ⁴⁶ Butler, Jeremy G. *Television. Critical Methods and Applications*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates (LEA), 2002, p 3.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 4.
- ⁴⁸ Ellis, John. *Visible Fictions*. London: Routledge, 1992 [1982], p. 148.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid.
- ⁵¹ Nilssen, Olaug. *Få meg på, for faen*. [Get me on the air, goddamnit]. Oslo: Samlaget, 2005, p. 83.
- ⁵² Ibid.
- ⁵³ Our interest here is not so much to interpret the individual segments themselves, but to discuss their function(s) in the text as a whole.
- ⁵⁴ Visual poetry which, of course, is a later and more inclusive term than concrete poetry, is more appropriate for the poems on pages 25 and 26 as they have no concrete shape.
- ⁵⁵ Nilssen has created a new word for this: 'autentisk naseskrift' [authentic nose writing].
- ⁵⁶ Nilssen, Olaug. *Få meg på, for faen*. [Get me on the air, goddamnit]. Oslo: Samlaget, 2005, p. 13.
- ⁵⁷ The name Folgerø refers to reporter Halvor Folgerø known from NRK's [The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation] regional broadcasting in western Norway.

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- ⁵⁸ Genette, Gérard. *Narrative Discourse. An Essay in Method*. Trans. Jane E. Lewin. Ithaca, New York: Cornell UP, 1980 [1972]. p. 217.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid, 218.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid, 219.
- ⁶¹ Cohn, Dorrit. *Transparent Minds. Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1978. p. 112.
- ⁶² Ibid, p. 112.
- ⁶³ This ambiguity is underlined by the shifts between present and past tense in certain segments of the text. See part five of *Get me on the air, goddamnit* in particular.
- ⁶⁴ See Nilssen, Olaug. *Få meg på, for faen*. [Get me on the air, goddamnit]. Oslo: Samlaget, 2005, p. 11-16 and p. 24 and p. 39 respectively.
- ⁶⁵ Røssaak, Eivind. *Selviakttakelse – en tendens i kunst og litteratur*. Oslo: Norsk kulturråd, 2005.
- ⁶⁶ Nilssen, Olaug. *Få meg på, for faen*. [Get me on the air, goddamnit]. Oslo: Samlaget, 2005, p. 13.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 24.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 119.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 12 and p. 14 respectively.
- ⁷¹ Sturken, Marita and Lisa Cartwright. *Practices of Looking. An Introduction to Visual Culture*. New York: Oxford UP, 2001, p. 258.
- ⁷² Kress, Gunther. *Literacy in the New Media Age*. London: Routledge, 2003, p. 16.
- ⁷³ See Barthes, Roland. *S/Z*. Trans. Richard Miller. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1974 [1973].
- ⁷⁴ Sturken, Marita and Lisa Cartwright. *Practices of Looking. An Introduction to Visual Culture*. New York: Oxford UP, 2001, p. 254.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 265.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 269. Sturken and Cartwright also point out that ‘[I]n postmodern practice, distancing does not imply a critical stance (as in a modernistic practice), but rather a pleasurable process’ (p. 258).
- ⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 250.
- ⁷⁸ Ellis, John. *Visible Fictions*. London: Routledge, 1992 [1982], p. 163.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 137.
- ⁸⁰ Ellis, John. *Seeing Things. Television in the Age of Uncertainty*. London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2000, p. 1.
- ⁸¹ Tan, Ed. *Emotion and the Structure of Narrative Film. Film as an Emotion Machine*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995.
- ⁸² Bordwell, David. *Narration in the Fiction Film*. London: Routledge, 1985.
- ⁸³ Ibid, p. 23-33.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 33-35.
- ⁸⁵ We use the term viewer as opposed to spectator since the former is connected with television viewing while that latter is more commonly used with regard to film.
- ⁸⁶ Ellis, John. *Seeing Things. Television in the Age of Uncertainty*. London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2000, p. 10.