Confessions in Social Media – Performative, Constrained, Authentic and Participatory Self-Representations in Vlogs

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ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

To be presented, with the permission of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Helsinki, for public examination in Auditorium, Arppeanum, on 26 April 2014, at 12 noon.

Helsinki 2014

ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I study confessional me-centered communications of vlogs in the context of DIY cultures. Confession refers to a communicative strategy that aims to reveal intimate matters of an individual and, at the same time, serves as a way to socialize with others. I ask: "How and why does confession operate in communication and interaction in social media environments?"

The participatory act of confession in DIY environments is understood as a process of constructing the individual as a social being–so-called social self. This is the new type of individual as suggested by mediatization theory—individual as a social being dependent on the recognition she gets in and through the media. Because of mediatization, the question of how to confess and represent oneself becomes crucial. Thus, the confession is conceptualized as a recognition-seeking activity. To understand this activity more profoundly, this study focuses on how a confessional I-narrative is constructed in and through the representation.

This study generates a new understanding on the particular representational means by which the confessional I-message generates cultural participation in vlogging environments. The findings demonstrate that confessions need to be performed context-wise, strictly following the sociocultural, aesthetical, and technical constraints of a particular environment. However, even though confession was understood as a regulatory mechanism, it also proved to be a way to reveal authentic self-disclosure by performing as one's real self. This occurred not despite but because of the regulative constraints of the researched DIY environments. This finding modifies the figure of a mediatized and confessional individual as disciplined and an actor with free will who is able to construct her real self through DIY-mediated I-messaging in social and constructive relationships with others.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

In this study, I focus on confessional and self-representational, me-centered messages, so-called I-narratives (Herring et al. 2004; Hodkinson 2007; Livingstone 2008; Lundby 2008; Reed 2005) in the vlogging culture (term for video blogging; coined from blogging, see Griffith & Papacharissi 2010) of 'do it yourself' (DIY; Jenkins 2006) environments. Vlogging DIY environments are understood as places where individual engage in confessional storytelling centering on intimate revelations (Griffith & Papacharissi 2010; Kuntsman 2012; Matthews 2007), self-disclosure (Raun 2012), and "honest self-representation" (Miller 2010: 21). These messages are also understood as a central means to build social contact with others (Burgess & Green 2009; Hodkinson 2007; Lange 2008; Livingstone 2008; Lundby 2008; Ogan & Gagiltay 2006). According to Livingstone (2008), "Social networking is about 'me' in the sense that it reveals the self-embedded in the peer group, as known to and represented by others, rather than the private 'I' known best by oneself" (p. 7). Thus, confessional me-centered storytelling can be understood both as a way to reveal intimate matters of oneself (Matthews 2007) and as a way to construct a social self that is shaped in relationships (Hjarvard 2012; Lundby 2008). This dissertation aims to generate conceptual knowledge on confessional communications operating toward these two ends simultaneously.

Specifically, I generated new knowledge on the audiovisual confessional communication in vlogs and the aesthetical and social ways these vlogs operate. I produced site-specific knowledge of cultural participation (not referring to political participation but understood as a cultural and vernacular participation), which is a type of agency central in new media environments as proposed by Burgess and Green in their study on YouTube (2009). However, danger exists in simplifying the concept of participation. As noted, (public) exposure of ones confessional I-narrative does not automatically mean that it receives the attention it aims for, "Some simply fail to turn exposure into dialogue" (Navarro 2012: 142). Thus, the once propagated utopia of having a "voice" on Internet and its ability to generate social attention and participation automatically (Jenkins 2006; Rheingold 1991) has become a cacophony of voices (Zoonen, Vis & Mihelj 2012: 4) where it is unclear who is actually listening (see more on "crisis of voice" Couldry 2008a: 56; Couldry 2008b). However, the cacophony of voices does not mean that the problem of voice and participation has withered. Rather, it means that an urgent need exists to map more precisely how an individual messaging in a particular environment has his or her "voice," how it is heard, and whether it enhances attention and participation. Therefore, confession is used here as a specific tool to understand the interactive and participatory potential in social media. Thus, I ask how and under what circumstances the act of self-representation serves as a form of engagement with others in web-mediated (social media) environments. The overall research question was constructed as follows:

1. How and why does confession operate in communication and interaction in social media environments?

From a wider perspective, the study of a confessional communication in a DIY environment needs to be understood in connection with the notion of mediatization and the new type of

individualism it produces and demands (Hjarvard 2013). Accordingly, the individual in a mediatized society is constructed through an intensified monitoring of his or her social environment. Individual characteristics include one's "highly developed sensibility toward an extended networks of both persons and media" (Hjarvard 2013: 144). This new type of individual is foremost a social being who searching for recognition in and through the media (Hjarvard 2013: 149-150). The notion of mediatization—connected to the new type of individualism—helps one frame the performer, a confessional individual in quest for attention and social contact, in a wider perspective. It also helps avoid either-or narratives that are often connected to the overwhelming amount of confessional storytelling at both the macro and micro levels of particular DIY environments.

As already known (more thoroughly introduced in Chapter 2) there is the understanding of mediated confessional communication, as researched in the context of confessional (Foucault 1979; White 2002; 1992; Fejes & Magnus 2013) and emotional (Furedi 2004; Giddens 1991) culture in neo-liberal society. In the context of media culture, foremost focused on the television, confession has been understood as the act of sharing, in which private stories become public (Furedi 2004: 40). The media, particularly the television, is understood as playing a crucial role in enhancing the confessional communication that is emblematic in contemporary culture (White 1992: 180). Furthermore, confessional communication is understood in relation to the therapy culture that tries to manage emotions and, through them, the individual (Lupton 1998).

Even though self-revealing subjects and I-narratives, or confessions, are understood as being at the center of the confessional act, confessional communications are conceptualized as a strictly regulatory mechanism. Specifically, the confession of an individual is understood as being the product of a media-environment following the regulative constraints of the environment and, thus, a

strictly formatted and scripted (Dovey 2000; White 1992). On the other hand confession is understood as a product of the more abstract confessional and therapy culture, which are characteristics of a confessing society (Fejes & Magnus 2013; Furedi 2004) that aim to control the individual by the means of his or her confessional self-revealing (Fejes & Magnus 2013; Lupton 1998). Both these accounts frame the confession foremost as a managerial discourse in which the individual is not left with much choice but to confess (Dovey 2000; White 1992).

The confessional communication is claimed to be a discourse in which the management of individuals occurs through the intimate I-centered narrative. This understanding builds on the notion of confession as conceptualized by Foucault (1979; 2003), both in the *History of Sexuality* and in *The Technologies of the Self*, whereby the disclosure of oneself through confession is a way to produce truth about oneself. The confession was originally understood as a means to reveal all the intimate aspects of oneself, in order to be able to govern one´s sexuality. Since the confession is such a powerful technology, it has widened itself all over the society, to the extent that the modern individual has become a confessing animal. The confession produces a type of legitimate truth through which the individual can be fitted into the existing regime to self-constitute as a subject through confessional enunciation, and become governed by oneself (Foucault 1979; 2003).

To understand confession this way, is the underlining idea of "exploitative participation" that has been claimed a characteristic of DIY environments (Andrejevic 2007; 2005; 2006; Dubrofsky, 2007; Pecora 2002; see also Burges & Green 2008). The participatory act of a self-disclosure is understood as a way to monitor individuals and produce responsible citizens (Andrejevic 2006: 396). In our society, these notions operate at the macro level of the confessional. Specifically, the confessional is an individual act generated and regulated from above, by media institutions, and inside the

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constraints of the mediated confessional culture. However, it is not enough to understand the confessional communication conceptually.

As the research stream on webcam-mediated communication suggests, the individual confessional storytelling in DIY environments also needs to be understood as a free willing communicational act of a vlogger who is strictly controlling of to what he or she exposes of him/herself (Hillis 2009; Raun 2010; Senft 2008; White 2006). Further, as the research stream on intimate sexual storytelling suggests (Plummer 1995), the confessional and intimate communication may also function in productive ways. By means of intimate self-revelatory storytelling individuals may form intimate relations and become intimate citizen, which is a positive outcome of self-revelation. Thus, the self-revealing confessional storytelling in DIY environments needs to be understood as a 'real product of a real individual,' not as an abstract concept orchestrated from above. That is, as a product from below, if we use the analogy common in DIY cultural theoretization.

In his study on transgender vloggers, Raun (2010) examined the extent and reasons confessions are exposed. He proposed that, following the Foucauldian understanding of a confessional act, vlogs should be understood as a type of "empowering exhibitionism" (Koskela 2004), which is more to the point also in vlogs I studied. However, exhibitionism describes, only to some extent, the way vloggers seemed to present themselves.

I was interested in confessional communications that operated in the DIY cultural continuum; therefore, it needs to be understood both as a product of a free willing individual agency and as a product of a communicational environment through which it is produced. Thus, mediatization theory offers one solution to understand these extremes simultaneously.

The concept of recognition, as mediatization theory suggests, may explain why the micro level of confessional acts can be understood as a central means to constructing the confession maker as a social being. The act of self-revelation, characteristic to the new type of individualism, is understood in connection with the confessional that operates in our society on a larger scale (Hjarvard 2012: 149-150). Therefore, the knowledge of the confessional operating in our society can be expanded by obtaining a detailed understanding of confessional communications that take place in microenvironments (where the confessional individual is at the center). Because the recognition the individual receives plays a crucial role in these environments, the micro level of confessional acts, particularly within DIY environments, becomes closely connected to the question of representation, the particular aesthetical and performative modes it takes, and to the question of what is revealed.

My interest in representation needs to be understood in connection with the arguments between mediatization (Hjarvard 2008; 2012) and mediation theorists (Couldry 2008a). As noticed, for both of these camps "The narrow definition of the other's main concept is focused on the representations" (Lundby 2008: 13). [1] Thus, weakness lies where one focuses on representation. However, the question of representation becomes crucial if (1) the individual is understood as a social being who is dependent on the recognition received in and through the media, and (2) if this recognition is understood as a regulatory mechanism at the micro (regulatory mechanisms operating on the technological, aesthetical, and social levels) and macro levels of a mediated society (Hjarvard 2012: 138, 149-150; see more on Kaare & Lundby 2008).

The dilemma in how to represent oneself becomes linked with the dilemma of recognition in a process of becoming a social being in a

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[1] Here, mediation refers to the representational act of transmitting something through the media, and is an established definition of mediation in media research (Couldry 2008: 46).

mediatized society. This is why the highly complex process of having one's voice, to have it heard, and to have it recognized as a modern individual, can be understood as a problem of how a confessional I-narrative is constructed in and through representation. In the end, the representation plays a crucial role in the complex process of recognition seeking; the way the individual represents herself defines whether she is able to become a recognized, social being in a modern society (Fraser 2000). By framing the confession as a recognition-seeking activity, we can better understand confessional communications not only as managerial discourses used to manage the individual in and through self-revelation.

In this study I approach the confessional communication as a recognition-seeking activity from four interconnected angles; representation, discipline, authenticity, and performance. These approaches are constructed as four interconnected research questions to answer the original research question. These questions motivate and guide the four equivalent chapters, into which this book is divided.

From Disciplined Confessions to Performing the Real Self

As stated, the confessional I-narrative can be understood as central way for an individual to become a social being in a mediatized society, and not only as a managerial discourse disciplining the confessional subject in the name of organizational control, be it on the level of particular media-environment or more broadly on the societal level. However, to understand the confessional as a potential recognition-seeking activity, I must specify the meaning of confessional messaging in a particular environment, the particular way in which self-revelation is constructed and understood as a confession, and the ways in which it is understood as a recognition-seeking activity.

Given that most theories on confessional communication understand it as a managerial discourse that operates on the societal, macro level, on television (Aslama & Pantti 2006; Dovey 2000; Dubrofsky 2007; Matthews 2007; Sumiala-Seppänen 2001; White 1992) or on journalistic apparatus (see Aldridge 2001; Pantti, 2005), there seems to be a need to study the confessional communication in a context-specific manner within DIY environments. The DIY environments are as places for self-revelatory messages (Griffith & Papacharissi 2010; Kuntsman, 2012; Matthews, 2007; Miller 2011; Raun, 2012) and I-narratives (Herring et al. 2004; Hodkinson 2007; Livingstone 2008; Lundby 2008; Reed 2005). These messages are also generated in search for social activity and attention (Griffith & Papacharissi 2010; Huberman et al. 2008; Hodkinson 2007; Kuntsman 2012; Matikainen 2009). These notions suggest that DIY environments may play a crucial role in the interconnected process of recognition-seeking and confessional self-representation in recent mediatized confessional communication.

Because these processes operate at the level of the individual confession maker and not only at the macrolevel, it is important to understand the role these representation plays in the process of recognition seeking within a specific environment. The central and popular role of YouTube as a DIY environment offers this particular study a natural framework to analyze the interconnected processes of recognition and representation in a particular context. Specifically, this environment is based on videos; thus, the visual representations of confessions are understood as central (see Chapter 2).

Even though individuals may receive recognition through and for their confessional self-representations, DIY environments are also noticed as places in which individuals are disciplined through the DIY cultures (Andrejevic 2007; Hjarvard 2012;). The participatory act of self-disclosure produces modern panopticon (Andrejevic

2006: 396) in which vloggers act under the controlling gaze of co-participants. Strangelove (2010) noted, "We can thus speak of the surveillant and normative gaze of the online audiences as always being co-present with the video diarist" (74).

Thus, the confessional self-representation in the vlogging environment of a DIY culture can, to certain extent, be understood as a communicational act that is disciplined, even though it needs not be understood solely as operating inside a managerial ethos of a confessional culture. Thus, recognition and representation performed in DIY environments needs to be understood as being bound with the disciplinary aspects of these communicational environments.

Co-participants (Calvert 2004; Lyon 2006; Mathiesen 1987; Nolan & Wellman 2003; Whitaker 1999) and the structural properties of a particular environment (Andrejevic 2007; Gandy 1993; Lyon 1994; Poster 1989) can perform discipline. Particularly, panopticon as a disciplinary concept is emblematic for confessional DIY cultures (Andrejevic 2007). However, the notion of panopticon operates on the general level and notifies the regulative mechanisms that operate on the level of the society and through the DIY environments. While some suggest that the regulative mechanisms of panopticon power should be studied at the micro level (Albrechtslund & Dubbel 2005; Bell 2009; Ericson & Haggerty, 2005), little specified studies exist.

The specific understanding of a disciplined individual confession making is, to my understanding, possible only through a contextual analysis. Here, the panopticon type discipline is not only a general regulative mechanism but, foremost, a nuanced technology of discipline that is written onto the structure of the particular environment and, thus, into the individual. For Foucault (1995), the essence of discipline power is its ability to produce individuals. Thus, the conceptual understanding of how the disciplinary mechanism operates at the micro level needs to be generated

thorough the analysis of particular DIY environments. My interest was on how the structural properties of a particular vlogging environment regulate the confessional messaging in vlogs. I asked the following research question: "Is there a mechanism that disciplines the confession maker and regulates the confessions she is able to produce" (see Chapter 3).

However, to understand the confessional communication as a disciplined representation of oneself in search for attention is, of course, one-sided. The history of vlogging cultures and their connections to life-cams, home movie culture, autobiographical storytelling, and documentary film genres suggests that there exists a certain amount of authenticity and free will in the confessional vlogging culture (Aymar 2011; Buckingham & Willett 2009; Renov 1996; White 2006).

The vlogging culture has been connected with types of realism that aim to show real and authentic everyday experiences (Aymar 2011). Several studies on DIY environments have claimed that representations of authenticity and reality are characteristics of DIY culture (Bruns 2008; Jenkins 2006; Lister et al. 2009; Miller 2011). This seems particularly the case for YouTube and its vlogging environments (Strangelove 2010; Wesh 2009). Considering this characteristic, it is necessary to determine the authentic reality in relation to confessions performed on YouTube and in DIY environments in general. Thus, I suggested the possibility that the confessional individual may participate in an environment in which, even though is disciplined, may at the same time serve as a place for individual confession making that is understood as a free will and authentic self-revelation. This idea contrasts the notion of inauthentic authenticity as a claimed characteristic of DIY cultures in the context of YouTube (Burgess & Green 2009; Hess 2009).

I framed the confessional communication as a recognition-seeking activity. Thus, the recognition one aims for needs to be understood in connection with the representation one offers of herself (see

Chapter 2) and disciplined by the regulatory mechanism of a particular communicational environment (see Chapter 3). Further, the regulatory mechanism needs to be understood in relation to the context specific aesthetics and its authenticity; specifically in terms of the right type of message in a specific context.

Authentic confessional storytelling in vlogging environments is constructed by way of webcam-mediated documentary aesthetics (Aymar 2011; Creeber 2011; Newman 2008). Thus, the assumed authenticity claimed characteristics for DIY environments needs to be understood in relation with the aesthetics through which authenticity is constructed. Thus, I ground my interest in the representation of authenticity in a particular DIY culture environment and asked, "How is it that a confessional vlog message is understood as an authentic confession, and what narrative ways exists to produce something that is authentic" (see Chapter 4).

Thus far, the interest on authenticity and realty has been posed in contrast with understanding DIY environments as disciplined spaces (Andrejevic 2007; Hjarvard 2012) in which self-disclosure produces a type of panopticism (Andrejevic 2006) under the controlling gaze of co-participants (Strangelove 2010). However, the other extreme, and to my understanding is equally one-sided, is understanding the realty and authenticity in vlogging environments mainly as performative, playful, and "not so real," as is often proposed (Ardèvol et al. 2010; Hess 2009).

If the vloggers have such a strong agency over their own confessional self-exposures (Hillis 2009; Senft 2008; White 2006) then the mediated and performative nature of these environments can be understood even as a hindrance to expose vloggers' real realities. Moreover, the understanding of the real, constructed by means of vlogging, has been problematized further with the concept of telefetish. Researchers have argued that, by means of webcamming, the vlogger may construct an idealized image of him or her (a telefetish) that is produced through self-aestheticization on

the level of the image/screen apparatus. This telefetish is an online transmission of one's fantasy-self, a virtual ideal of oneself, which eventually fuses the "real" and the "virtual" (Hillis 2009: 242).

Hillis (2009) studied gay and queer webcam communities and the ways they empower their gay and queer existence by means of visibility. Therefore, it seems rational that this project took place through the idealized image. However, it also seems that this digital human eventually remains on the level of the image/screen and does not construct "the real" (Hillis 2009: 235). The vlogs that I studied did not seem to apply this idea of telefetish quite in the same manner, which eventually has something to do with the theme of the vlogs.

Therefore, I suggest that the confessional vlogging genre should be one in which the real and performative converge; because of this convergence, it produces a type of "real," which would not be constructed without the mediation process between the vlogger and her audience, and because of the sociocultural, aesthetical, and technical constraints of the particular environment (Bruzzi 2006; Hess 2009; Van de Port 2011; Van Dijk 2012). Thus, in Chapter 5 I ask, "How and why the performance of the real happens in confessional vlogs?"

Method, Setting, and Phases

Epistemologically, this work takes part to the pragmatic turn in humanities and social sciences (Jensen 2007: 38). The vlogs are understood as a media that uses particular language, of which, the main meaning is not the language/text itself as a formal system but it's social use. Thus, I understand language/text as a general category that includes audiovisual material and analyzed chat streams. Even though I analyzed the videos using familiar concepts from the structuralist and narratological approaches, my main

interest was not the text as an inherent unit in itself; rather, the way in which the text was taken in its social use.

To understand the way confessional vlogs are constructed in social interactions, I focused on the level of representations that deepens understanding of a text as an inherent unit in itself toward an enabler for participatory meaning making; of which the outcome is the confessional vlog. Therefore, my aim was to understand how the confessional is constructed and how it operates in and through representation, at the level of a confessional video.

I understood representation as a non-mimetic presentation of an object of which the aim is not to produce a mere copy or a replica of the object. Rather, through representation, we construct meanings about the world. Thus, representation refers to the use of language and image through which this construction happens. Using this definition, representation is understood as a system that has its own rules and conventions. Therefore, the tools for analysis are often borrowed from, for example, semiotics (Sturken & Cartwright 2009: 12).

I analyzed the representation of the vlog, which consists of videos, audiovisual type of narration using image and sound, and the written comments in the chat section. To analyze these representations I borrowed concepts from film and literature theory that are consistent with the understanding that these representations are constructed through a certain set of rules used to express and interpret meaning (Sturken & Cartwright 2009: 12).

In the process of meaning making, which is a participatory act between the viewer and the image or text (Sturken & Cartwright 2009: 12), the viewer plays an active role. Thus, the social interaction between the viewer and image or text in a vlog needs to be understood as a way to construct the presentation and create meanings (of what is performed). This way, the text and its interpretation—the social use of it—is understood as an action and

performance, not an entity in itself. This concept relates closely to the pragmatist understanding of communication as performance (Jensen 2007: 38).

I define confession as a performance that is understood from two interrelated aspects. First, confession is understood as a speech act, a performative utterance in which words can be understood as actions that both describe and perform an action at the same time (Austin 1962; see Bruzzi using Austin's 2006: 187 concept of performative speech acts on performative documentaries). Second, I defined confession a performance by applying Goffmann's (1959: 206) conceptualization of performance as the staged presentation of ourselves that takes place in interactional situations

In the context of web-research, this study is part of the sociocultural research stream (Hine 2005; Shneider & Foot 2005) and a work of virtual ethnography (Dicks et al. 2005; Hine 2003; 2005; Jones 1999; Baym 2000; Miller & Slater 2000; Pink 2007). The researched vlogging environments (i.e., YouTube and the webcam community Webcamnow) were understood as "the field" of research (Beaulieu 2008: 183; Maanen 2011). Additionally, in this study, the Web was understood as a place for social reality that could be studied as a culture (Hine 2005) and presented by means of a written report of that culture (Maanen 2011).

Following the ethnomethodological ethos, the confessional vlogging culture takes place in the DIY environment and is approached as a social world "created and sustained in and through interaction with others, when interpretations of meanings are central processes" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw 2011: 2). The understanding of that culture is achieved from the inside, by means of immersion (Emerson et al. 2011: 3; Maanen 2011: 3). This immersion allowed me, as the researcher, to inscribe the social discourse, by writing it down, and produce the type of "thick description" that is characteristic of traditional ethnography (Geertz 1973: 19).

In this study, I did not participate in the studied contexts as a type of participant observer that is common in ethnographical approaches, socializing with the studied culture and people by actively participating in their daily-today affairs. Rather, I participated as a lurking observer. Walstrom (2004) noted that the "ethnographer should attempt to experience the online site the same way that actual participants routinely experience it" (175; Garcia et al 2010). Because lurking is in the context of YouTube and in the context of the researched webcam community the dominant form for participation, this method was a valid form of participation.

In this sense, lurking was a way to get close more purposefully than the traditional means of active participation used in ethnography and Web ethnography. Additionally, lurking is a way for social researchers and ethnographers to "invisibly observe the social interactions of Web members, gleaning a previously unavailable type of ethnographic data" (Murthy 2008: 845). In fact, some have criticized the insistence on active participation and "sharing" in the social world has been criticized. Maanen (2011) noted:

> "Fieldwork asks the researcher, as far as possible, to share firsthand the environment, problems, background, language, rituals, and social relations of a more-or-less bounded and specified group of people. The belief is that by means of such sharing, a rich, concrete, complex, and hence truthful account of the social world being studied is possible. Fieldwork is then a means to an end." (Maanen 2011: 3).

In this study, the "field" was participated to understand the confessional communication; thus the purpose was not to study the environment for its own purpose, but as a stage for interactional communications (Goffman 1959). Defining the research context in this sense, I followed the ethnographic understanding that the research context cannot be understood as a space for objective observation of which the observer is outside, but one that is always

affected by the researchers' own perspective (Emerson & Pollner 2001).

Dicks et al. (2005) claimed, "The internet should never be read as a 'neutral' observation space as it always remains a fieldwork setting and, as such, a researcher's data selection and analyses are always biased by agendas, personal histories, and social norm" (128; in Murthy 2008). Thus, immersion, commitment "to getting close" (see Emerson et al. 2011: 2) and "thick description" (Geertz 1973) was achieved in this study but not by means of the researcher's active communication with individuals, but by extensive observations of the communications that took place within the studied environments.

It is important to understand that web ethnography (as defined above) had important implications for the outcomes of this study. Specifically, the understandings of confessional communications this study generated are not absolute truths (see Emerson et al. 2011: 4) in general, nor do they occur in all possible situations. In the context of this study, the researcher developed a report of a confessional communications that occurred in the studied situational realities (of social worlds), based on immersive participation in the studied environments and on the field note descriptions (including the video streams analyzed), which were products of the researcher's interpretation of the observed confessional communication. Therefore, these same environments, when observed by another researcher, should produce a somehow different version of these social realities. However, as noted, "Ethnography is about telling social stories. When an ethnographer comes back from 'the field', they, like Walter Benjamin's (1969: 84) 'storyteller', have 'something to tell about' (Murthy 2008: 838). This study aimed to "tell a story" of confessional communication in vlogging environments and generate new knowledge of how confessional communications operate.

The setting of this research included three different vlogging environments. The first fieldwork setting, reported in Chapter 2, was the confessional vlogging scene located on YouTube. This setting is generally known as the "people & blogs" category based on the categorization of themes provided by YouTube. Inside the wide thematic category, I used the YouTube search engine find vlogs labeled as "confessions" by the vloggers themselves. Consistent with the ethnomethodological approach, I took part in the confessional vlogging scene within YouTube as a social world. My status was that of a lurking observer, which refers to a productive strategy of observing social interactions on the Web (Murthy 2008: 845). This fieldwork period took place between fall 2008 and spring 2009, and can be shared to three phases.

Stage 1 was the initial entry (Emerson et al. 235) at which time I entered the field and searched for confessional vlogs (titled confessions by the vlogger herself) that were the type of everyday diary entries characteristic of vlogs (Griffith & Papacharissi 2010; Kuntsman 2012).

Stage 2 required immersion, which is important in ethnographic research. Therefore, I chose 20 vlogs for closer observation; half were the most viewed ones and the other half was the least viewed. During this time, I became familiar with the setting, participants, and interactions, which are general fieldwork phases of ethnographic research (Emerson et al. 2011: 235). I also learned the basic methods of interacting in the vlogs environment.

I realized that to gain an understanding of the environment, I needed to limit the vlogs under observation and concentrate on the confessional vlogs that were part of the same social setting. Thus, I chose to concentrate on the vlogs that commented on each other either by the vloggers themselves or by the viewers; I did this with the most and least viewed vlogs. However, the least viewed vlogs did not generate interactions among YouTubers, thus, the study of this social setting was limited.

Stage 3 included concentrating on the vlogs chosen during Stage 2 and taking a closer look at the visual means by which the confessions took place. This stage required a longer term participation in the social setting, which is characteristic of ethnographic research. In the report of the fieldwork, introduced in Chapter 2, the four videos analyzed are introduced as exemplary of the way in which confessionals operate in YouTube. These videos were retrieved on 20 October 2008. Additional information on the videos is shown in Table 1.

The videos were studied by visual analysis, which focused on the mise en scène (Monaco 1981), a term used in film theory that includes specific issues such as setting, location, lighting, camera position, and performer position. The reasons for focusing on mise en scène needs to be understood in connection with my ethnomethodological approach. The knowledge of the social world of the vlogging scene on YouTube, which I gained during the fieldwork, guided me to analyze these videos in such a way that I understood the characteristics of this environment. I noticed during Stage 1 that the cameraman, producer, and star of the video were usually the same person, as is also common in webcam narrations in general. Accordingly, the main visual way to modify a video is to control the mise en scène: camera and performer position, lightning, locations and settings (Newman 2008).

The features of mise en scène are those that are analyzed as the inherent qualities of webcam aesthetics (Burgess & Green 2009; Newman 2008; White 2006). Thus, to "tell a story of a field" I analyzed the videos according to the aesthetics that I and previous research has found to be characteristic of this field (Murthy 2008). It is necessary to determine a method for analysis from within the field consistent with the methodological understanding of the internet, not as a neutral observation space, but always as being affected by the researcher's agenda (Dicks et al. 2005: 128). My

agenda was to analyze the visual confessional communication in a way that proved was characteristic to the environment.

The second setting of fieldwork, as reported in Chapter 3, took place in a webcam community, called Webcamnow (WCN; http://www.webcamnow.com), on a so-called family-site, which was an open side of this community; and in contrast to adult site with strict restrictions. At the time of my first participation phase in the field in 2005, the community was one of the most popular ones among webcam enthusiasts, which was why this setting was choosing; in 2005, the site had about a million users per month. Compared to other popular webcam communities, WCN was not only about webcam porn; the community was divided between an "unmonitored" porn site and a "family" site reserved for everyday communication. In 2005-2006 the family site experienced active participation, whereas in 2009-10 participants seemed to have either moved to the "unmonitored" site or to other social networking sites; YouTube being the favourite.

The field was visited during two periods; the first one took place from 10/2005-3/2006 and the second from 10/2009-3/2010. The analysis was conducted through participatory observation during these two periods, which were divided into three phases of observation.

During Phase 1, I chose the appropriate webcam community, to which I then made initial entry and learned the basic methods of interaction in the field. I observed that the community was divided into two sides, those of monitored and unmonitored sites. The unmonitored site included adult pornography, whereas the monitored site was reserved for everyday vlogging and chatting. It was possible also to follow both sides at the same time.

Communications in this particular environment took place by the means of video streams that vloggers broadcast of themselves and chatting that took place in real time and was evolved quickly. To

become a member of this community, one could either broadcast a video stream by webcam or take part as an "invisible observer" who did not stream video. However, all participants present, streaming or not, were shown on the real time list of participants on the site. I chose to take part as an invisible observer of the communications and did not stream video. Thus, as the researcher, I participated in the community as a lurker; as noted is a common type of participation in DIY environments (Schneider, Krogh, & Jäger 2012).

During Phase 2, I became acquainted with the participants so I could concentrate my observations on the regulars to the site, whom I supposed offered a more thorough reflection of the social interaction characteristics for the field.

During Phase 3, I observed the social interaction according to my conceptual framework (see Chapter 3). Given that participants took part worldwide and in different time zones, the community was alive 24/7, I had to set criteria for the daily observation periods. For example, during Phase 1, observations were conducted in the early morning hours, and the observations I made concentrated on the regulative mechanisms of the community inside which communication took place. The most active phase of the day was between 00 and 04 am (Finnish time); therefore, this period was chosen as the primary time for fieldwork during Phases 2 and 3.

The third fieldwork setting took place in the YouTube vlogging environment. Because the first fieldwork case concentrated on the confessional vlogs on a wider scope, in this third setting I wanted to focus more closely on the particular vlogging environment around a particular and limited theme. Additionally, I wanted to study the confession in vlogs as a means of creating a free will and authentic reality presentations. Therefore, I concentrate on pregnancy vlogs; a limited theme and a subject of which truthfulness and relation to reality can be verified to some extent.

Considering the third setting, during Phase 1, I made entry into the pregnancy vlogging environment. This setting proved to be vivid and popular; therefore, criteria for observations had to be considered to gain a deeper understanding of the interactions that took place. Thus, I chose the vlogs on early pregnancy, most of which were teen pregnancy vlogs. The messages of these early weeks contained announcements of one's pregnancy and, thus, could be understood as authentic intimate confessional revelation of the vloggers' realities. During Phase 2, I immersed more thoroughly into these vlogs and became acquainted with the vloggers to whom I aimed to concentrate more thoroughly. During Phase 3, I observed the chosen vloggers and, to become immersed thoroughly in this environment, I followed their vlogs, not only of their early pregnancy weeks, but also those following this period, when possible. During this time, I observed 50 early pregnancy vlog videos created by 36 individual vloggers.

My observational activity in the field was guided by the research question that motivated Chapter 4, which was, "How is the authenticity, in respect to exposing vloggers real lives/realities, represented." Consensual understanding exists in the research literature of the so-called confessional, intimate aesthetics, which produces a sense of authentic, real life representations (Aymar 2011; Creeber 2011; Newman 2008; Senft 2008; White 2006). Thus, on the grounds of the research literature, I concentrated on seven features/variables, through which these confessional and intimate aesthetics operated. Chapter 4 includes an analysis of my participation, which was strongly affected by my preconceptions of the relevant aesthetical features that focused my attention.

As stated, I have defined the researched web environments as a field site for research and as a culture. To understand the specific web environments as a culture implies that the communication that takes place is understood containing special characteristics. To understand the context specific ways that communications took

place in vlogging environments, I took an ethnographic approach. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss the type of ethnographic material and knowledge that my participatory activities within the vlogging environment produced.

The way in which I entered the field, even as a lurker, was ethnographic in two senses. Firstly, to understand the specific and former unknown culture I was surrounded required my presence as a researcher in the field. Through this presence, I learned the methods of communication in this environment. Secondly, my presence in the field was extremely intensive; for example, I followed webcam streams almost 24/7 for weeks. Also, elsewhere in the phase of field study, I felt the intense experience of existing, not essentially in the research field, but as surrounded by an unknown culture. Understanding that the knowledge of this culture was an accumulative process that was possible only because my ethnographic participation in the field. Therefore, I felt that the term "participant-experiencer," instead of "participant-observer," better characterized my role in this setting (Garcia et al. 2010; Walstrom 2004). The term participant-experiencer "specifically refers to a researcher who has personal experience with the central problem being discussed by group participants" (Garcia et al. 2010; Walstrom, 2004: 175).

The knowledge I was able to construct was possible due only to my ethnographic participation, without which I would not have been able to produce the type of understanding of a confessional communication that I describe here. As known, ethnographic knowledge is a product of a researcher's participation in the site of a former unknown culture. The web is by no means such an unknown culture; however, the confessional culture I participated in and of which I offer a description, served as such an unknown field. Additionally, the ethnographic method of attaining knowledge of this culture best served my purposes.

It is also necessary to discuss the ways in which the ethnographic material I found in the field is reflected in the analysis of the material and how the treatment of this material defined this study characteristically as ethnographic. In Chapter 2, I propose that, because the visual form that the studied confessional videos took seemed to be important (in contrast to the idea that the verbal enunciation would have been dominant), I felt the need to analyze the particular webcam aesthetics closer. In Chapter 3, the impression of a disciplinary mechanisms operating within the studied webcam community, which was due to my participation on the site, led me to study the disciplinary mechanisms more thoroughly.

The concept of panopticon served here as a way to open the experience of this disciplinary system. The analysis accomplished equal results in the phase of interpretation in ethnographic analysis. In Chapter 4, I focused on the problems of representation and the ways in which authenticity and the impression of reality are constructed at the level of visual representation. Therefore, I wanted to enter a vlogging field that would serve as a fruitful arena to explore these issues.

The above mentioned problems seemed important based on previous research as well as the grounds of my preconceptions of the vlogging environment. These preconceptions were obtained through my previous (ethnographic) participation conducted when I was planning the study, and naturally during the actual fieldwork phase. In this way and by means of analysis, I developed the ethnographic understanding that, for the purpose of this study, best served to describe the special type of cultures I had visited on the sites.

Given the complex nature of web-enhanced communications, ethical consideration of the study need specified. Particularly, these are important in three related ways: (1) in the definition of the private/public boundaries of the studied environments, (2) the level

of human participants involved in the study, and (3) the question of what constitutes personhood. The ethical solutions accomplished were a direct consequence of the particular definition of these parameters. However, as widely suggested (Ess & Committee 2002; Orton-Johnson 2010; Wilkinson & Thelwall 2011), given the complex nature of web-enhanced communication, ethical solutions need to be specified contextually, applied from the particular online setting, and of its special characteristics, including its legal frameworks and cultural norms. Thus, the AoiR (2012: 5) ethics Guidelines underline that it is "the researcher's responsibility for making such judgments and decisions within specific contexts and, more narrowly, within a specific research project". I acknowledged this responsibility; explicitly defining my understanding of these considerations. Further, I explain the implications of these considerations on the ethical solutions on level of privacy, informed consent, and anonymity, which are consistent with classical social science research (Heath et al. 2009; Wilkinson & Thelwall 2011).

The fluid boundaries of public and private spaces online and the different meanings that participants connect to them is a widely known complexity of web research (Garcia et al 201; Markham & Buchanan 2012; Wilkinson & Thelwall 2011). Orton-Johnson (2010: electronic version) pointed out, "The blurred boundaries of public and private spaces and interactions online and, crucially, individuals' expectations of privacy in different contexts, are problematic and shifting constructions". Because the definitions and expectations of privacy are ambiguous, contested, and changing, both individually and culturally, the AoiR (2012) guidelines suggest, "Privacy is a concept that must include a consideration of expectations and consensus" (Markham, Buchanan 2012: 5). When considering the relations between private/public, the concept of contextual integrity (Nissenbaum 2010) is offered as a fruitful tool because "what people care most about is not simply restricting the flow of information but ensuring that it flows appropriately" (Markham & Buchanan 2012; Nissenbaum 2010: 2).

I understood YouTube and the researched webcam community as types of publicly accessible places in which people upload material freely and realize that the material is watched and discussed by others including researchers. This openness is evident and the studied vlogs were open without restrictions, which allowed me to follow the videos and comment sections without logging in.

In the studied webcam community, I observed an open family site, which was contrary to the restricted "adult" site where pornographic webcam shows were the majority. I limited my attention to the common chat the family site, and did not take part in the cam-to-cam meetings, which allowed for more intimate communications between two participants. Thus, the material studied was publicly available and the research was a type of "drawing on public archives, public web pages and posts to public lists or groups" (Ess & Committee 2002: 7). This characteristic has implications on the level of privacy considered in this research, and causes a reduced expectation of privacy and reduced ethical obligation to protect that privacy (Ess & Committee 2002: 7), which is contrary to environments in which participants assume or believe their communications are private. Further, I considered contextual integrity in two ways: (1) in defining the researched environment as a public place and (2) in understanding that the communication flow was not private information that would concern cause for strong ethical protections.

The degree of publicity and privacy of online spaces is shown at its best in the ways that participants understand and manage these environments (Markham & Buchanan 2012: 8). Thus, in the researched YouTube vlogs, vloggers were not sensitive about their privacy; they had all decided to post vlogs frequently on a site that advertised itself with the slogan "Broadcast Yourself." Equally, the WCN promoted itself as a repository of "free webcams."

Because the studied videos were publicly available, the vloggers knew that anyone was able to watch them. Additionally, specific

requests from the vloggers in these postings to watch and enjoy the videos supported this understanding in that the vloggers were asking for audience members. Therefore, participants seemed conscious about their own public/private visibility and had strong agency over their online presence and authorship. I encountered the same conscious functioning in WCN (Orton-Johnson 2010). Thus, I saw no reason to exclude myself from being a part of this audience, and asking for permission to participation would have been contrary to the cultural norms of this environment and a violation against contextual integrity (Markham & Buchanan 2012; Orton-Johnson 2010).

Consequently, some vloggers on YouTube were already YouTube stars, a kind of media personality that resembled public figures and lowered their privacy status (Ess & Committee 2002; Wilkinson & Thelwall 2011). The content of the vlogs was not particularly sensitive either, thus was not a risk category of sensitive topics or vulnerable groups (Orton-Johnson 2010). I also reviewed previous studies and found an useful way to understand the YouTube environment (Raun 2010: 116) as defined as a publicly accessible archive promoting itself as the world's most popular online video community, a space open and available for everyone, where everyone has the possibility to access without any form of membership. The research pursued in these types of environments are considered ethical and researchers do not need to use anonymization, informed consent, or inform of participation (Lomborg 2013; Raun 2010; Sveningson Elm 2009; Wilkinson & Thelwall 2011); this factors apply to content that is not understood as extra sensitive. Particularly, when an individual uploads a video on YouTube, it is considered informed consent and, thus, a contract agreeing that the vlog will be watched and discussed publically (Raun 2010).

Keeping in mind the features of these environments, in relation to their publicity, I pursued my study without ethical extra sensitivity

on the level of privacy by ways of anonymity and the mechanisms of informed consent. Thus, I did not anonymize the researched vloggers or obtain informed consent.

However, equally profound implications at an ethical level exist in the way the research objects are conceived as individuals or as documents (Ess & Committee 2002; Markham & Buchanan 2012; Orton-Johnson 2010; Wilkinson & Thelwall, 2011). That is, are they understood as cultural products and texts of their own or as interface of a subject (Lomborg 2013)? Therefore, it is relevant to ask the extent to which, for example, a vlog is an extension of oneself. Ultimately, this is not an ontological question, rather a practical one that is related directly to the fundamental ethical principle of minimizing harm to participants (Markham & Buchanan 2012).

I applied a humanities understanding, according to which I defined vlogs as representations (i.e., texts) that are cultural productions (Wilkinson & Thelwall 2011; Hookway 2008) and in contrast with the arguments of the vlogs offering an interface to a human being. This concept was also emphasized by the use of analytical methods; vlogs were analyzed as texts through which the vloggers may represent themselves. Additionally, my focus was on the level of the representations; I was not interested in the extent to which the vlogs disclosed actual information about the individuals as human subjects. Thus, as Lomborg (2013) suggested,

> 'The way internet phenomena, and with this, the data of internet researchers, are conceptualized in regard to personhood will determine whether the research involves human subjects or not, and thus under what circumstances ethics measures such as informed consent are required or recommended" (electronic version).

To understand my research material as text removes the individual from the picture, which eventually implicates that informed consent is not needed (Wilkinson & Thelwall 2011; Hookway 2008). As

Wilkinson and Thelwall (2011) stated, "Default position is almost the reverse of that for traditional social science research: the text authors should not be asked for consent nor informed of the participation of their texts" (395). However, as AoIR (2012) suggested, the question of informed consent is a contextual and case-sensitive issue that needs to be answered while keeping the underlying question in mind: "How are we recognizing the autonomy of others and acknowledging that they are of equal worth to ourselves and should be treated so?" (Markham & Buchanan 2012: 10). Thus, it was important to ask whether the vloggers understood themselves as either 'subjects' or as authors of texts intended to be public (Ess & Committee 2002; Orton-Johnson 2010).

The complex question of vloggers representing texts and a representation of oneself was the central aim of this study. To answer my research question, I was not interested in the actual facts of these representations, rather on how individuals are reflected at a surface level of the representation. Thus, I felt that I recognized the autonomy of others and understood their representations more as works of art, which is a concept that eventually distances the actual subject from the author. By understanding the need for informed consent this way allowed me to follow sensitively the way informed consent has been translated into different online spaces as a procedure originating from offline research practices (Orton-Johnson 2010).

Vlogs as Multidimensional Research Object

The vlogs as places for nuanced and context spesific confessional self revelation in search for recognition, in order to become a social self in a mediatized society is a complex process. The multidimensionality of vlogging communication, particularly the ways the technological, financial and social issues co-operate, needs

to be taken carefully into account. In the following I briefly notify these issues. I suggest that they are clearly visible on the aesthetics of the vlogs; the "raw look" claimed characteristics for vlogging environments serves here as a concept which helps to clarify this convergence.

At first, the aesthetical ways to represent vlogs and, particularly the home-mode style (Willet 2009:15) they represent, can be understood as part of longer term technological evolution that dates back to filmmaking in the realm of home movies and onto the early days of webcamming. Thus, the (visual) evolution of vlogging needs to be understood in relation to these technical developments. For example, the "raw look" that is understood as a signifier for many popular vloggers (Felix & Stolarz 2006: 23) was once the only aesthetical solution because of limitations in technology.

The history of the home movies dates back to the 1923 when the 16 mm Cine Kodak and Kodascope Projectors were introduced. At the time, cameras were extremely heavy and expensive and used primarily by professionals. In 1965, Sony released the first portable video recording system. In 1967, Sony, and then Panasonic and JVC, introduced the first truly portable video recording systems that weighted less, though usually required at least two persons to operate (the recording system and the camera were still separate). In the 1970s home movie making slowly became more affordable with the invention of the videocassette (1971), half-inch videotape cassettes, (1975) domestic videocassette recorders (1975), and the first camcorder for domestic use (1983). However, these devices for home movie making where "significant financial investments and thus not for average consumers" (Willet 2009).

As late as in 1995, the first truly handheld digital camcorder was introduced using the mini-DV tape. The material from the camera could be transferred to a computer hard drive via FireWire or USB. This transferring technology and digital editing software available on home computers "brought sophisticated and good quality film-

making and editing within the reach of ordinary people" (Willett 2009: 9). With the advent of digital transferring technology, the internet as a distribution channel for camcorder footage evolves. Camcorders where also used by professional filmmakers for documentaries, reality TV, fiction films. Here, portability was often a low-budget solution as well as an aesthetical way to create material that was perceived as personal camcorder footage and, in that respect, authentic.

A few years prior, video cameras that fed its image in real time to a computer or computer network, was introduced. The name of the device was coined a webcam, which emphasized the new ability to connect the camera straight to the evolving net. The status of the first webcam is often credited to the Trojan Room Coffee cam, which started streaming in 1991 (Burgess and Green 2009). This camera was located in the Computer Science department at Cambridge University. The simple idea was to offer a continuous gaze at a coffee machine in the office. However, the cam was more a playful experiment among colleagues than is was aimed for wider audiences, understandably, given the state of the art of the internet at that time. Connectix (today known as Logitech) introduced the first commercial webcam, the famous Quickcam, in 1994. This eyeball-shaped Logitech only shot black and white, and the resolution was extremely low (320 x 240 pixels). These still manufactured Quickcams were the first widely available webcams, are relatively easy to operate, and allow the user access to produce video online.

The introduction of webcams for online video production was a starting point for the webcam culture of the 1990s. The first webcams were typically silent black and white cameras that shot still objects, such as fish bowls (Senft 2008). The JenniCam in 1996 is most often credited as the beginning of live streaming one's personal daily life in webcam shows; however, this status is often questioned. During this time, several video cameras offered a

continuous/unlimited gaze to the life of Jennifer Ringley (see Banet-Weiser 2013). Whether she was the first one is actually not as interesting as the fact that the early adopters of webcamming aimed to offer a continuous show of their daily lives by means of lifecasting; examples of these early adopters are the so-called "camgirls" (Senft 2008) and the gay/queer men (Hillis 2009).

The pioneers of webcamming experimented with the new tool, and aimed to broadcast and share their daily lives, and create social contacts and networking with their audiences. Much of this activity happened either by webcammers' own websites or through webcam communities. Senft and Hillis traced the early heydays of webcammers from the late 1990s to the early years of the millennium (Senft 2008; Hillis 2009). This pioneering period of vlogging, which evolved shortly after the invention of blogging and at the same time as audio-blogging, was an experimental period to the extent that webcamming was even understood as "a new art form in the style of "cinema vérité" (Felix & Stolarz 2006: 23).

Additionally, that period and the aesthetics typical during this time can be dated as beginning in late 1990s, and is, for most part, dependent on the evolving technology, cameras, network connections, and more powerful computers.2 However, technology has played a significant role in the ending of this period as well—the rise of social networking services (Senft 2008) and particularly the introduction of YouTube as an easy platform to sharing one's private life, both technologically and financially.

Researchers have noted that even though the technologies of lifecasting through webcams have sophisticated, the aesthetical

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2 Still at the end of 1990s, the main ways of producing audiovisual material for the web where either a live webcam broadcast without editing or with a camcorder that recorded footage to mini-DV then transfer it to computer using FireWire or USB to share the material, even though the platform for sharing videos was limited. Today, the built-in laptop cameras, digital still cameras, USW web cameras, camcorders, mobile phones, and tabs are all used to produce and share videomaterial, which offers a wide continuum between the raw and high-end quality videos that are shared.

practices have remained much the same (Hillis 2009: 205). Thus, it makes sense to argue that the traces of these early days are still present in the vlogging culture and, particularly, in its aesthetics. Felix and Stolarz's (2006) praised guide for blogging and vlogging suggested:

> *"In fact, most successful video blogs, although having a "raw" look, are well scripted and filmed on carefully designed, if spare looking sets. For film school graduates with directorial backgrounds, it can take a lot of work to make a video blog look like it doesn't take a lot of work." (23)*

This is the point at which the history of webcamming and the history of homecamming converge in the aesthetics of recent vlogging cultures studied here. However, this evolution occurred in the name of high-quality filmmaking, and blurred the boundaries between the professional and more amateur-based productions[3] on the one hand, and the pioneering ethos of which aesthetical manifestation is the "raw material" born as "a new art form in the style of "cinema vérité" on the other hand (Felix & Stolarz 2006: 23). Much of the rawness of the material today, as in my studied context, can be understood as a produced one.

As stated, rawness is a tricky concept that demonstrates the multidimensional nature of web-video communication. Certainly, cameras and editing programs play a central role, but equally important are the financial (and legal) issues of which the network connection in use is the essential parameter. The following illustrates this problem well:

"Streaming, an attempt to prevent copying by keeping the data on the server and doing it out to media players in small, jerky chunks, was the state of the art for online video. Watchable video, generally ten times larger than audio when compressed was really limited in distribution to broadband viewers on college or corporate networks" (Felix & Stolarz 2006: 19).

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[3] Buckingham and Willett (2009) used the word "serious amateur."

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Additionally, in the beginning of webcamming, this rawness of the videos was due to poor and expensive connections; specifically, dial-up connections through modems (Felix & Stolarz 2006: 19). Following the introduction of broadband connections, better, or at least watchable, videos were still available only to broadband users on college or corporate networks (Felix & Stolarz 2006: 19). The costs of broadband for an active webcammer were also high as fees were charged by the amount of information transmitted to end users (Senft 2008: 20). Therefore, the higher quality the video, the more expensive it is for the producer. Financially, webcamming was a burden. Aesthetically, the "webvideo" was often a silent black and white image that refreshed, for example, in 30-second intervals, which offered a series of still-like images rather than a video in the strict sense. Thus, as White (2006) and Senft (2008) pointed out, equally important was that which was not showed—the time elapsing between the images.

If one compares the early days of webcamming to today's vlogging on YouTube on a financial level, the situation is almost vice versa, which has consequences on the aesthetical level as well. Today, popular YouTubers earn a considerable amount of money because of the new e-commerce model that introduced after Google purchased YouTube in 2006 (Kim 2012; Gao et al. 2010). Earnings are made either through revenue sharing programs (programs place small ads at the bottom of the videos or in YouTube pages and the revenue is split between the host site and the vlogger based on the number of views that the video receives), product placement (vlog includes affiliate advertising, as shown as a small text-based link; the vlogger receives a small amount of money when the link is clicked), or through sponsorship (Kaminsky 2010).

The basic idea of the e-commerce model is to play commercials during streaming videos (Kim 2012; see Sorkin 2006). Naturally, numerous alternative ways to make money exist; for example, the opportunity to create products related to the vlog and earn by

selling these products, use vlogs as a way to expand small businesses, sell a vlog to a media company, or expand the vlog as a TV show (Kaminsky 2010).

If webcamming in the early days as a financially burden and the raw aesthetics of the videos were partly explained because of this burden, vlogging today may be used as an effective way to earn a living. This aspect has consequences on the aesthetics on the videos, which complicates the understanding of the rawness of the video.

Kim (2012) has pointed out that the evolution of YouTube is consistent with the broader evolution of internet from personal content creation to commercial content. I do not wish to argue here whether this is occurring throughout the internet, but certainly the story of the commercialization of YouTube is one that helps explain how web video aesthetics have evolved. For example, in the early days of YouTube, videos were characteristically user-generated content whereas, after the commercialization of the service, videos became increasingly professionally generated (Kim 2012). Kim used YouTube as an exemplary of new media practice, where the so-called new and old media (by which he refers to traditional broadcast media; particularly TV in the United States) have imitated each other. Here, the evolution of YouTube coexists and is part of the wider story of the market expansion of the TV industry onto the web (Kim 2012).

YouTube has provided "old" media companies a new distribution practice, an extra channel to transmit programs and recover lost audiences, and, most importantly, a new way to increase advertising revenue (Kim 2012). On the other hand, YouTube has applied stricter copyright laws and advertising practices, but also content-wise with the separation of brand-safe clips from amateur-produced videos and the more traditional methods of the genre. In effect, these practices have influenced the viewing culture of online videos as it now resembles the viewing culture of TV that is interrupted by commercials. This emergence can be seen with the aesthetics of

YouTube videos—videos produced by amateurs borrow specific TV formats (Kim 2012), and partly because the advertisements in the videos seem natural, even to the extent that they function as stamps of quality.

I argue that the confessional videos in my studied contexts do apply these techniques in part. As I will discus in Chapter 2, the confessions that generated attention were those constructed as more professional quality TV shows, rather than those of "life in the raw." The advertisements and their stamp of quality is also a known fact among YouTubers. The higher attention rating a vlogger has, the more probable it is that she will take advantage of the e-commerce practices as well because one has to apply to be part of the revenue sharing program, which is decided on the grounds of viewer ratings.

Whether professionally and commercially driven content is marginalizing the user-generated content is somewhat out of the scope of this study. One might argue that Kim (2012) lacked contextualized and empirical evidence of this tendency. However, the implications he pointed out on the aesthetical level connotate interestingly with my research material. Specifically, he identified the evolution between the old and new media, and, particularly, the way amateur-driven web videos borrow formats and expressions from commercially-driven TV to attract viewers on YouTube, is somehow parallel with my understanding of the evolution that has taken place on vlogs. Thus, it makes sense to argue that the studied vlogs apply both the TV-driven commercialized aesthetics of recent YouTube and the pioneering "raw" ethos of early webcammers because one of the most important ways to attract viewers and gain popularity is to perform context wise in the particular social vlog environment. This "solid" performance in my studied context can be understood as visually balancing between the raw and polished look of the video. Here, the aesthetics of homecamming, vlogging and professionally produced television shows collide. It seems that

these aesthetics are one parameter of the multidimensional nature of web video production and consumption, the level at which the technological, financial, and social converge.

On the social level, vlogs can be understood as a part of this evolutionary project as well. In early webcamming culture, much of the attraction of a particular webcammer was in her original way to offer a controlled show of her life. The attraction of the show was not only measured in the amount of viewings, but the very novelty of the medium and the fact that someone was streaming a video altogether.

Given the huge amount of vlogs only on YouTube and the numerous subcategories and themes they encompass, it is logical that there is serious competition for viewers. The vlogs on YouTube seem to gain views when they follow a certain grammar inside the specific vlogging scene. As Aran, Biel, and Gatica-Perez (2014) studied, certain differences exist between vlogs that gain social attention and those that do not, which parallels my findings presented in Chapter 2. Here, the vlogs that gain attention are those "with more motion, more editing, whereas another set of vloggers produce more conversational vlogs with less editing and not much activity" (Aran et al. 2014: electronic version); the latter received much less attention. Importantly, vlogs were consistent with vloggers' personality traits:

> *"People scoring higher in extraversion are more active in their vlogs, they edit their videos more, include more non-conversational parts in their vlogs, choose locations with dynamic background, and frame themselves closer to the camera"(Aran et al. 2014).*

The features of the vlogs that receive less attention include conversational and monologue style, less editing, and vlogger positioning is mainly stationary in front of the camera, which resembling much the of the early webcamming aesthetics.

The significant links that researchers have found between the vlog production, social impressions, and social attention vloggers receive, may vary contextually because the specific attention economy inside YouTube vlogging environments, or to be more precise, the various attention economies inside each particular vlogging subcategory, as constructed around the shared issue that vlogs scopes (e.g., teen pregnancy) shape the aesthetics of videos created. Concerning the vlogs I studied, it seems that the way to gain social attention was partly by producing the type of vlogs Aran et al. (2014) suggested. However, more importantly, the dominant style in the studied vlog was still the conversational vlog in monologue style with the vlogger positioned mainly stationary in front of the camera. Nevertheless, these vlogs were actively gaining social attention.

It is true that the vloggers studied were not the type of YouTube stars with tens of millions of views; however, they received active participation and were long-lasting vlogs. Therefore, the heritage of the early webcamming and its insistence on presenting life in the raw in a monologue style; was still in use in these studied vlogs. Thereby, the way the aesthetics of the video were shaped by the social level seems to also be an evolutionary process. Therefore, it is important to understand these videos not only within a particular vlogging environment but, essentially, as a historical genre that has its antecedents that shape the way particular videos are created and how they gain attention.

CHAPTER 2: Visual Confessions

This chapter aims to understand confessional communication and the specific ways it enhances agency through the level of representation. Consequently, one parameter for the agency is the level of participation in social media environments. The term participation is not understood in terms of political participation, rather as a cultural and vernacular participation and type of agency central in new media environments proposed by Burgess (2007). Consequently, the question of cultural participation is bound with the dilemma of cultural inclusion and exclusion; who gets to participate on whose terms and does this activity enhance individualistic self-representations, formation of collectives (Burgess 2007), or something else?

The literature includes two, contradictory narratives about confessional and I-centered storytelling. On one hand, there is the story of mediated confessional communication in neo-liberal society in which the confessional is used as managerial discourse to govern the participants of that communicational act. Researchers have argued that confessional storytelling in different forms is a signal of an emotional (Furedi 2004, see also Giddens 1991) and confessional culture (Fejes & Magnus 2013; Foucault 1979; White 2002; 1992).

At the center of confessional communication is the self-revealing subject (Dovey 2000; White 1992). Self-revealing is mediated through the TV (Aslama & Pantti 2006; Wood 2009) and journalistic (Aldridge 2001) apparatus that transform the individual emotional narrative into a produced spectacle (Dovey 2000). For Dovey (2000) mediated first-person communications in television produce freakish subjectivities, a spectacle of particularity, through which normative identities are produced. Furthermore, the

spectacle is understood as a commercial package that is part of the consumer culture in which it is produced (White 1992; 2002).

What is troubling in the theories of mediated confessional culture is the underlying negative stance toward such communications. Specifically, the individual experience is used as a voyeuristic proposition in the production of the televisual spectacle (Mclaughlin 1993; Peck 1995; White 1992; Wood 2009). Consequently, the confessional mood is understood as a way to exploit both the audience and the original storyteller (Dovey 2000; White 1992). Therefore, it is not as clear as to whether confessional communication operates only in an oppressive way.

On the other hand, there is the more positive narrative about social interactions in web-mediated communication and the possible empowering effects they may have. Thus, the confessional trend and stance toward it might be rather different when compared to the acknowledged participatory trend that has taken hold in new media environments (Burgess & Green 2009; Carpentier, DeCleen 2008; Hess 2009; Jenkins 2007). Such participation has even been connected to individual empowerment (Duncombe 2007; Jenkins 2007).

Both in research literature and in the public exists a constant search for the mechanism and motives for the explosion of social media participation and I-narratives (see for example Huberman et al. 2008; Hutton, 2008). Accordingly, new media is filled with mediatized me-centered storytelling (Herring et al. 2004; Livingstone 2008; Lundby 2008; Reed 2005) that is understood as a symptom of the individualization of online activities (Hodkinson 2007). These me-centered messages are precisely the ones that are reported to enhance social activity in social media. Specifically, they are reported to generate conversation (Hodkinson 2007) and social interaction (Ogan & Gagiltay 2006). According to studies on YouTube, the interaction (Lange 2008) and social networking (Burgess & Green 2009) drive individuals to participate.

At the core of these narratives is the self-revealing storyteller. The agency of the confession maker and her audience is, however, different; confessional storytelling is either a way to exploit participants or a motivation for participation. Indeed, it seems that confessional storytelling is highly context specific. Thus, research is needed to specifically understand whether a particular context operates as a managerial and suppressive form of communication or as a reason to participate (in the social realm of new media).

This Chapter generates knowledge on the confessional I-narratives and their functions in the vlogging context. Additionally, the presented study deepens the understanding of confessional communications and the complicated and contextually nuanced and specific ways they enhance agency through the level of representation. This understanding is in contrast to the earlier research stream on mediated confessional culture, which focuses on media texts on television, and which underrated the agency of the participants.

Further, I generate knowledge on the mechanism by which highly individual, autobiographical narratives become a means for social performance and interaction. The policy implications for this knowledge and its functions are potentially useful; and could led to a more profound understanding of cultural exclusion/inclusion that occurs in fixed environments and communicational ways in which it could be diminished.

The Mediated Confessional Culture

Research on mediated confessional culture is connected to discussions on the intimatization (Van Zoonen 1998), emotionalization (Pantti 2005; Furedi 2004) and tabloidization (Aldridge 2001) of the public sphere (Berlanti 1997; Lupton 1998; Mestrovich 1997), the emergence of mediated confessional and therapeutic cultures (Furedi 2004; Illouz 2008; White 1992; Wood

2009), first person media discussions (Dovey 2000), participation in new media environmentsᵢ (Duncombe 2007; Jenkins 2007) and the individualization of online activities (Herring et al. 2004; Hodkinson 2007; Livingstone 2008; Lundby 2008; Reed 2005). This study is also connected social media research in social sciences, which tries to characterize the inherent characteristics of social media use and participation (Gennaro & Dutton 2007; Huberman et al. 2008; 2009; Schrock 2009).

In media research, confession has been studied widely in the context of television and journalism (see for example, Aldridge 2001; Pantti 2005; Van Zoonen 1998). However, much of this research has focused on television; the genres of focus have been, for example, talk shows (White 1992), reality TV (Aslama & Pantti 2006; Dubrofsky 2007), docu-soaps, factual television (Dovey 2000; Matthews 2007), and religious TV programs (Sumiala-Seppänen 2001).

The Negative Stance towards Mediated Confessional Culture

I-centered confessional communications have been linked in media studies to confessional and therapeutic discourses. For example, White (1992: 180) viewed therapeutic and confessional communications as exemplary modes of contemporary cultural expression that television rewrites and transforms. On the other hand, Furedi (2004) connected the confessional more broadly to the so-called culture of emotionalism that highlights the public display of one's own emotions. For Furedi (2004: 40), confession is an act of "sharing" in which private stories become public. This communicational act requires the naming of an emotional pain to a therapist, which has become a dominant act in public life. The therapy culture is a managerial discourse that tries to manage emotions and, through them, the individual (Lupton 1998). In this context, the confessional is understood as working inside this therapeutic culture (Furedi 2004). Consequently it has been argued

that the confession and the will to disclose oneself is a way to produce responsible citizens (Fejes & Magnus 2013).

In close relation to this managerial ethos, confessional storytelling has also been connected to theories of the surveillance society. As Andrejevic (2006; 2005) claimed, interactive participation in the web in contemporary neoliberal society serves as a technique to produce responsible citizens. For Andrejevic (2006: 396), the interactivity and the incitement to self-disclosure are the mechanisms of a governed, panoptic space; citizens watch one another to redouble the monitoring gaze of authorities (406).

Pecora (2002) concluded in much the same tone that the interest in intimate stories is connected to the prolific surveillance of the individual. Thus, surveillance takes place through intimate self-revealing in reality TV, which produces a kind of "intimacy surveillance" (Pecora 2002: 352). Here, participants know that they are observed, but they are still willing to participate and, respectively, observers are willing to watch (Pecora 2002: 358). Furthermore, Dubrofsky (2007) claimed that reality TV serves as a means for "therapeutics of the self." Here, participants' confessions of their "true" selves also occur through constant surveillance. However, in contrast to the term "therapeutics," the produced presentation of the self remains unchanged throughout the show. The message is that we should be content with the way we are and that no change in individual, social, or political levels of society is needed (Dubrofsky 2007).

Thus, both therapeutic and confessional communication are claimed to be discourses in which the management of individuals occurs through the intimate I-centered narrative. Consequently, therapeutics and "healing" of an individual are understood as joint processes in this managerial project. However, there seems to be no clear evidence that the confessional operates only in the service of this managerial discourse, even though this may be an important

part of it. (It is worth noting that my interest here was the confessional communication, not the therapeutics).

Participation through I-Narratives

Hence, bias might exist when discussing confessional and me-centered communication and the ways they operate on the societal level. Many theories on mediated confessional storytelling build on the analyses of television texts. It might be that TV offers different types of confessional stories in which acts center only on the individual confessant. If TV is foremost a so-called lean-back medium (Newman 2008; White 2009), then there are reasons for understanding confession as a managerial and suppressive form of communication. However, the lean-forward attitudes that have been connected to web-based communications can have different effects. This attitude affords the user an experience of "agency to direct the experience as desired" (Newman 2008; 5). If we also follow the studies that have found that most valued in social media communication is attention (Huberman et al. 2008), then confessional stories on the web could have participatory potential, both for the (forward-leaning) viewer and for the self-revealing confessant.

Web confessions are, for certain, an activity of free will and not only a managerial discourse to discipline the individual[4]. It is useful to bear in mind the apparent connection between life-cams and

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[4] Naturally, at least two levels of constraints exist in which YouTube communication takes place. First, communication is made possible in a technological sense through the mediated webcam stream, chat environment, and the associated technology. Second, confessions are mediated by the framework of YouTube as a communicational environment. Some videos receive attention and enhance participation, while others do not. However, popularity among YouTube vloggers is comparable to viewer ratings, and certain parameters exist for a "good" video. Elaborate techniques, such as naming the videos and visual style are important means through which individual expression becomes a mediated confessional video.

confession videos on YouTube. At the core of this genre is the opening of one's life in front of the camera, usually at home, willingly (see White 2006: 65).

Thus, I-narratives may also be understood more positively as enhancing social interactions in DIY and vlogging environments (Hillis, 2009; Hodkinson, 2007; Matikainen 2009; Senft, 2008). The web has been notified as a place for self-revealing and confessional communication (Griffith & Papacharissi 2010; Kuntsman 2012; Matthews 2007; Miller 2010; Raun 2012). Some studies have examined specific confession sites that rely on the written word (Ogan & Cagiltay 2006, Paasonen 2007); confessional vlogging culture (Miller 2010; Raun 2012; Senft 2008); the camgirl phenomena (Senft 2008; White 2006); gay/queer vlogging scene (Hillis 2009); and transgender vlogging culture (Raun 2010). The studies notify the self-revealing, confessional communication characteristics for vlogging. Attention-seeking activities have been understood as one of the central motivations for vlogging (Hillis 2009; Raun 2010; Senft 2008), and furthermore, confessional, self-revealing messaging has been noted as a central way to participate in vlogging environments (Griffith & Papacharissi 2010; Lange 2009; Raun 2010; Wesch 2009).

Because the vlogging environments, YouTube as an example, are a platforms for confessional videos, and if these self-revelatory messages are exposed for triggering participation, inside a mediatized DIY confessional communication on which the main thrive is the recognition-seeking for one's messages and individuality, it makes sense to ask in what ways does this attention-seeking activity operate on the level of a specific vlog. This question directs the focus to the level of representation, which may serve as way to ask for recognition in nuanced ways.

The visual representation of the confessional, self-revealing communication has been studied in nuanced ways (particularly Aymar 2011; Creeber 2011; Hillis 2009; White 2006). However,

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studies connecting the participatory activity and visual aspects of vlogs are of limited number (Aran et al. 2014). Interestingly though, Aran et al. (2014) suggested in their extensive study of YouTube vlogs, that vlogs that gain attention are dynamic with more use of motion and editing compared to those that gain less attention. This finding suggests that there may, indeed, be a relationship between the aesthetics of these videos and the social interaction they trigger (Aran et al. 2014). Therefore, it seems a need exists to study these aspects as interconnected, on the level of aesthetical representation. In this chapter, I concentrate on the aspect of visual representations and connect confessional me-centered and self-revealing messaging to the interactions they triggers, as noticed as audiovisual social media participation.

The Imagery of the Confessional

To answer the research question, "How is the (visual) confession represented and how does the (represented) confessional operate in interaction?", I concentrated my analysis on the visual forms of these confessions and the possible participatory activity they enhance. [5]

In order to find confessional videos, I entered the research field, "people & blogs" category of YouTube, and focused my attention on the videos that the vloggers themselves had titled as "confessions". I introduce here an analysis of four exemplary videos, which serves as a report of the fieldwork. This clarifies how the confessional operated in the field and particularly how the visual representational level and the participatory activity were

[5] Visual aspects are foregrounded because YouTube is a place where the visual message dominates. I followed an established movement in new media studies (e.g., Bolter & Grusin 1999; Manowich, 2001; see also Campanella 2002) that views new media environments as (mediated) places where presence and telepresence are what matter most. Following this, presence in social media environments, such as YouTube, can be understood foremost as (audio-) visual.

interconnected. Additional information on the videos is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Videos analyzed

Title	Performer	Time	Attention (views)	Participation (comments)
Confessions of a Fat Ass: I	Cree	6. 07	10	0
Confessions of a Fat Ass: II	Cree	9. 11	5,100	5 (text)
Oral Fixation	MemeMolly	3. 16	302,000	2,451 (text) 8 (video)
I am a Coke Addict: Confession	Val's Art Diary	2. 59	186,224	1,340 (text) 10 video

The video makers themselves considered all videos confessions. Two of the chosen were video diaries of popular vloggers who participate on YouTube on a regular basis. These videos have received a lot of attention, and have generated participation. Attention refers to the number of views a particular video received, whereas participation is the number of comments (text and video). In comparison, the remaining two videos received less attention and generated much less participation.

Naming a video is one way to sell it to viewers, and understandable names such as "Oral Fixation" and "Coke Addict" attract more attention than names such as "Confession of a Fat Ass." However, I was more interested in the commenting activities than in the exact number of views. After the observation period, "Confession of a Fat Ass I" and "Confession of a Fat Ass II" by Cree were removed by the video maker. The removal of these videos is a reminder of the inherent characteristics of web research; the data gathered from the web is always a "snapshot of a cyberspace" (Mitra & Cohen 1999: 198). Thus, these removed videos are included in the analysis because the removal itself may have some implications for this research.

In the following section I analyze the chosen four videos more closely; and concentrate on their visual qualities and the potential participatory activities they enhance. The following Table 2 was used in the analysis.

As I explained in Chapter 1, I wanted to analyze the representations following the context specific grammar of the environment. During my participation on the field I learned that most of the features of the webcam aesthetics, and thus the grammar of this environment, operate on the level of the mise en scène, as notified also in previous literature (Burgess & Green 2009; Newman 2008, White 2006). Hence the visual analysis of mise en scène was for my understanding a most informative way to report the culture of confessional communication, which I entered on the field.

Table 2: Interpretative schema

Subject of the confession	Mise en scène/ 1. Setting 2. Location 3. Lighting 4. Camera Position 5. Performer Position	Attention activity/ number of views	Participation activity/ number of comments	Participation activity/ Main topics of comments

"I Need to Be Responsible to You"

In the series, "The Confession of a Fat Ass," Cree talks about her serious weight problem. In the opening sequence, she gives her reason for posting the video: her psychiatrist advised her to be responsible to someone as a way to heal. By revealing this information, Cree opens up a confessional narration in which she tries to tell everything about her problems.

CreeIngles.com: Confessions of a Fat Ass - Part 2

Figure 1: Confession of a fat ass setup #1

The video is quite wordy; however, the images are not revealing. Because of the framing of the image, this series offers only a few clues about the location, setting, and her physical appearance. The camera is positioned on the top of Cree's computer, which is the narrative standard in webcam aesthetics (Newman 2008, Creeber 2011). Additionally, the image is framed tightly around her face, and attention is focused on the speaker (Aymar 2011, Creeber 2011, Burgess and Green 2009).

The mise en scène highlights the speaker with the help of lightning; the video uses backlighting that foregrounds Cree. Because the viewer clearly sees the source of the light in the ceiling, the unedited style of the confession is accentuated. This feature emphasizes the reality aspect and the "newness" of the video. According to White (206) this reality aspect is common in webcam narration.

The shot seems to be recording an unmediated reality, as if the camera simply records a trace of an object that was in front of it.

Barthes (1981) refers to this trace as "that-has-been," (77) which is like looking at the object and being in the same moment (Sturken & Cartwright 2009; White 2006). According to Monaco (1981), the grayish and fuzzy picture usually signalizes documentary and truthful narration (158), which is apparent in this series as well.

On the whole, Cree uses visually generic conventions of webcam narration, and images are close-ups in which she addresses the camera directly (Aymar 2011: 128; Creeber 2011: 601). The performer is positioned near the camera, which is used as a microphone and produces a talking head effect (Newman 2008: 4). Webcam narration is typically associated with the intimacy (White 2006) and is partly due to this convention of visual narration with the talking head near the camera. White (2006) suggested that both the spectator and performer need to position themselves close to the screen; the performer in order to be seen and the spectator in order to see. When the performer comes too close to the camera, what occurs is a "slightly uncomfortable intimacy" (Newman 2008) that accentuates the presence of the performer.[6]

The visual analysis revealed that the mise en scène here highlights the speaking subject, the performer's intimate presence, and the reality aspect of the video. The actual confessional speech is foregrounded through these features, and Cree is the (tele-) present speaking subject. This is made clear in the closing sequence when she sends her kisses, turns off the camera, and states "Kisses and out."

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[6] White (2006) concluded that this "too closeness" is a way for female video makers to escape the controlling (male) gaze. In a sense, this is true when one looks at Cree. She seems to be controlling what she wants to show, a grayish and fuzzy partial image of herself.

CreeIngles.com: Confessions of a Fat Ass - Part 2

Figure 2: Confession of a fat ass setup #2

The videos "Oral Fixation" and "I am a Coke Addict: Confession" used quite different visual styles. They represented more clearly the confession maker and the (private) space in which they were filmed. These features have an interesting effect on the confession and a striking effect on the participation activity.

Table 3: Mise en scène: Cree

Setting	Location	Lighting	Camera position	Performer position
Just a few clues, home	Just a few clues, home	Motivated backlighting. Source: the ceiling lamp	On top of the computer, camera as a microphone, standard webcam aesthetics	(too) close to the screen
		Foregrounds Cree, emphasizes the "reality" aspect of the image	Tight close up; the image is framed around face; focus is on the speaking subject	Tight close up; the image framed around face; focus is on the speaking subject

Performing Confession Making

In "Oral fixation" MemeMolly, one of the most viewed YouTube Babes (see Burgess & Green 2009; Lange 2008), confesses about her nail biting problem. The video uses three types of mise en scène, which are hereafter referred to as setups. The first setup is one in which the confession maker, MemeMolly, is positioned as a speaking subject and looking toward the viewer in a similar way to Cree. Here, the picture is not framed as tightly as in Cree's video, and her physical appearance is more visible. MemeMolly seems to be sitting on a bed or a sofa, part of a private location, evidently a bedroom. The sequence opens up an intimate conversation from an intimate place for the YouTube audience. The narration underlines the autobiographical, and is a form of private leaking into the public.

Figure 3: Oral fixation setup #1

This vlog was created using an authentic bedroom setup as a provocative quality of amateur webcam videos (Hartley 2008;

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Newman 2008; Raun 2010). These bedroom setups expose the subject in a controlled manner and are usually short sequences of narration or "peeps into the room" (White 2006: 79). [7] The "bedroom mise en scène" is an essential image in YouTube video diaries. YouTubers know this, and the "authentic" mise en scène is parodied and commented on ironically. MemeMolly uses this convention cleverly.

Oral Fixation

Figure 4: Oral fixation setup #2

Setup 2 presents MemeMolly lying on a couch (watching television). Because she is looking away from the camera and the viewers, it seems that the narration is shot from an objective point-of-view (and is connected to the omnipotent/omniscient narrator tradition)

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[7] The mediated teen's room is one of the most typical images on the Internet, and has become iconic, bearing such meanings as authenticity and self-revealing. This authenticity has been noticed, for example in docu-fiction, which uses this type of setup when emphasizing the realness and authenticity of a story or first-person narration.

(Monaco 1981). Hence, the gaze toward MemeMolly in this scene could be analyzed as belonging to MemeMolly (or to the audience) in the first and fourth setups (introduced later in this paper). This setup breaks the intimate mood that is usually associated with the self-shot video. In this second setup, MemeMolly is not a self-revealing actor, rather more an object under voyeuristic gaze.

Figure 5: Oral fixation setup #3

Setup 3 introduces MemeMolly, again, in a more private place. The open closet and bed are more visible here than in the first setup. The point-of-view is still that of the omniscient narrator.

Oral Fixation

Figure 6: Oral fixation setup #4

In Setup 4, MemeMolly transforms into a specialist/therapist and analyzes her oral fixation. The objectifying gaze toward MemeMolly in Setups 2 and 3 was probably that of this specialist. In this scene, MemeMolly reads Freud as she analyzes the problem. One more ironic twist is that the book in her hand is that of Paul Feigs, S*uperstud: Or How I Became a 24-Year-Old Virgin*, which is a comedic tale of the writer's early sex life. The setting is otherwise similar to scene one.

The transformation of the speaker and the different shots from the omniscient narrator's point-of-view are in strict contrast to Cree's confessional storytelling. The intimate storytelling is suspended so often that the confession becomes more of a representation and performance than a confession, which becomes more evident in Setup 5.

Oral Fixation

Figure 7: Oral fixation setup #5

In setup five MemeMolly states "I have a confession to make." She positions herself close to the camera and the screen. It seems that she tries to approach the viewer to create a more intimate mood of storytelling. The way she poses, makes flirty gestures, and uses her voice in the phrase makes the viewer suspicious of the authenticity of the confession.

To conclude, Mememolly uses various settings such as the bedroom and living room. Location is that of a home environment. She also uses motivated lightning to create the impression of the "reality" of the image. The camera is positioned according to webcam aesthetics on top of the computer; however, its location varies as does performers' positions. Consequently, the video uses different types of shots from a long shot to medium close-ups. This technique places the performer in relation to surroundings and reveals MemeMolly, not so much as a "speaking head," but as a bodily performing character. The setting and location are quite characteristic in vlogging in general; however, the active performing and camera positioning seem to apply slightly different aesthetics;

one that is more dynamic. The dynamic aesthetics used has been suggested as the type of vlogging that triggers attention at its best in YouTube (Aran et al. 2014). The implications for the confessional storytelling are interesting.

Table 4: Mise en scène; MemeMolly

Setting	Location	Lighting	Camera position	Performer position
Various; bedroom, living room	Home environment	Setups 1, 3, 4, 5: motivated lightning, source not identified Setup 2: motivated lightning, reading lamp in the background	On top of computer, camera location varies, Setups 1, 3, 4, 5; camera as a microphone.	Various: from close to the screen to moderate distance
			Setup 2, long shot, places MemeMolly's figure in relation to its surroundings Setups 1, 4, 5, close-up/ medium close-up; shows facial expressions and body language; focus on the performing body	Setup 2, long shot; places MemeMolly's figure in relation to its surroundings Setups 1, 4, 5, close-up/ medium close-up; shows facial expressions and body language; focus on the performing body

Because of the different types of shots in the video sequence, she performs a play in which he constantly changes the setups and narrator positions. The confession highlights the vlogger as a performing character and her bodily appearance. She acts as a speaking MemeMolly—as the subject, MemeMolly to be looked—as an object, and as a psychiatrist—reading Freud and analyzing the

whole performance. In doing so, she breaks up the intimate mood and the documentary type of storytelling. Thus, even though MemeMolly offers clues about the intimate, homelike spaces, her visual storytelling does not highlight her intimate presence (in the same way as Cree's did). Consequently, her confessional speech was not foregrounded in the same way as was Cree's confessional.

Participation

The findings are interesting, when we move forward and examine the participatory activity these videos enhance. As seen in the visual analysis of Cree's videos, the mise en scène highlighted the speaking subject, her intimate presence, and the reality aspect of the video, and, through these factors, the actual confessional speech. She also used the generic webcam conventions quite strictly.

On the other hand, MemeMolly did not follow the conventions of webcam narration. The video did not foreground the reality type of storytelling nor her intimate presence. The confession highlighted MemeMolly as a performing character. Consequently, her visual storytelling and confessional speech was not as intimate as was Cree's confessional.

What is interesting is that, even though Cree foregrounds her confessional speech, her videos gained low attention and participation rates. Additionally, she did not received comments; and the option to leave comments on her site was blocked. However, in the video she stated "I need to be responsible to you," which implies the need for some kind of audience. Further, Cree explained the rationality behind her confession: "I see myself more clearly when I look [at] myself in a picture, through [the] camera."[8] What is interesting is that, in the video, she performs as if asking for

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[8] Certainly these statements are part of her performance and of mediated text. Is it unknown whether she really needs that type of attention or if she is just playing with the audience, but such speculation is not of interest here.

attention, yet she still does not receive any. What is more is that Cree connects the confessional self-revealing to the project of healing and (self) empowerment. In the beginning of March in 2009, Cree removed these messages from her own site.[9]

Ironically, MemeMolly has received an enormous number of comments compared to Cree. On 20 November 2008 "Oral Fixation" received 302.000 views, 2.541 text comments, and 8 video comments. The video attracted a high-level of participation right from the beginning. As jay2tc noted:

> *"ow there r more comments to this vid than there r views. but mollly is ftw."*

Many of the comments are, not surprisingly, about MemeMolly's appearance, as "fuccface100" commented:

> *"Molly you are fucking gorgeous. Goddamn hot. Bollocks, you're one fit bird as you people say. You've got an oral fixation while I gots me a potty mouth. Funny."*

The "asking for" comments are noticed by many posters, such as Recoil42 and trigunner87.

> *"All I can think of watching this is 'oh my god, the youtube creeps are going to jump all over this'. You, on a couch in short shorts, and talking about oral fixations? Good lord, woman, if that's not asking for it.... ;P*

> *"hm i sense alot of sexually based comments heading your way."*

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[9] Most interestingly, Cree's confession, performed on a therapist's recommendation, was not the only confession of its type on YouTube. These types of videos can be, for example, about serious mental diseases and sexual problems. The attention these videos have gained is similarly very low. If one's "healing" is supposed to occur with the help of recognition as measured (on YouTube) by attention and participation rates, such poor response is quite alarming.

The correlation between visual attractiveness and viewers' participatory attention seems characteristic of YouTube. Chris 512 noted:

> *"I just dont understand why its necessary this share this with everybody.....Would you still do it if you were a 300lbs, pimply chick & would you still get 245,000 views? It only seems shallow & selfish too be talking about yourself..... ask Friod why you feel that need to do that."*

Interestingly, many have also encountered the "oral fixation" problem and want to share that in their postings. As deatbytango and TheBorzoi posted

> *"I chew a lot too. Like, the little bits that they use to protect pen tips before you buy the pen? I chew on those. And also the backs of writing utensils, paper, and then now I chew sugarless gum a lot so that I don't bite other things."*

> *"I find myself always chewing on something. For example, all the way through this video, I've been chewing on my hand (the part between the index finger and the thumb).*

It seems that the playful confession generated participation precisely in this way. The original confession generated new confessions and enhanced participation, both in text and video. This confessional game is reported to work in so-called confession sites elsewhere on the web as well (Paasonen 2007). Here, the original confession likewise produced counter confessions (for more on counter confessions see: Brooks, 2005; deMan 1979; Paasonen 2007).

Overall, the visual form and trivial problem of nail biting proved to be effective on YouTube. MemeMolly received comments about her (sexual) presence, which is quite impending. Interestingly also, her actual issue of the confession received comments, which was not foreseeable.

In comparing MemeMolly's and Cree's videos, it seems that performing to tell an intimate story is more important than actually

doing it, at least if one seeks audience attention and participation. It is still important to examine the third type of confessional video: Val's "I am a Coke Addict. Confession."

Post-Produced Confessions

Here, Val tells about her coke (Pepsi Cola) addiction. She promises to give up drinking coke because it has given her kidney stones. At the end of the video, she pours the cola away and crushes the bottle. The location is probably her home. The lighting foregrounds both the performer and the environment, including the background objects. Additionally, the lighting brings out overwhelmingly bright colors, which do not emphasize the clear documentary aspect of the narration (Monaco 1981).

Figure 8: Coke addict setup #6

The setting provides more background information than did that of the previous videos; brushes in the basket refer to artistic creation. However, the composition of the setting is interesting, as shown in Setup 6. Here, oppositional diagonals create instability of the image (Monaco 1981). Specifically, with the static camera position, typical in webcam aesthetics, the diagonals create an image that is horizontally imbalanced and fleeting. Thus, the temporary presence of the confession maker is highlighted; as if the performer has just sat down to confess.

The performer is positioned near the camera, at a comfortable distance. Even when Val leans forward, she is careful not come too close to the camera and take up too intimate of a position. Thus, on the level of mise en scène, it becomes clear that Val is not interested in providing too intimate of a confession; rather, her confession is more like chatting about a problem. Interestingly, at the end of the video, she adds a new layer to her confession with a rapid and clear cut to a scene in which she pours the cola away (see Setup 7). This scene is key in which she interrupts the plain confessional speech and creates a visual performance of her confession.

Val's facial gestures and mimicry are highly exaggerated, and they resemble the gestures of TV show hosts. To ensure this confession is transformed into a televisual presentation of confession, the final shot includes a written statement that instructs the viewers to "Consult your doctor," a familiar message on TV. Surprisingly, the end of the video emphasizes the art of the production and making of the confession. Visually, the video is reminiscent to that of a professional TV production. Interestingly, though, this "good-looking" televisual spectacle of confession enhances attention and participation.

Figure 9: Coke addict setup #7

Participation in the comments section is active. Based on the comments, the attention appears to be largely due to the title of the video. Postings underline the confusion between cola and coke (cocaine) and reveal that, for many, the reason they watched was the supposed cocaine addiction. The comments section includes a constant discussion about the "realness" of Val's confession. Some participants understood the cola confession as a good joke, whereas others strongly opposed the whole idea of confusing cola and coke. The title confused many viewers. As pjb wrote:

> lol omg i soo thought this was a cocaine addiction confession video. lol.

The coke addiction has produced counter confessions as well. Thus, the confessional game is performed as a participatory activity. A good example is a comment from DarknessHalloween:

yes i to need help im so addicted to pepsi and mountain dew its not even funny i can drink and will drink 2-5 liter a day i have gained 25 pounds from it and am tired alot. now is the time to quit but i still need help.

Comments about Val's visual attractiveness were common as well. The comment atiisd posted was typical:

damn she iz fine.

Some comments were demeaning, and used the catchwords "whore," "moron," and "retarded." d4rkn0va wrote:

stupid bitch youre lucky your only addicted to cola not cocaine.

To conclude, Val is at the center of attention in the video. She speaks of her addiction and positions herself as a speaking subject. Her direct speech toward the listener and clear presence near the screen highlights the confessional speech. However, on the level of mise en scène, she seems to be careful not to get too intimate. Finally, at the end of the video, the direct, confessional speech becomes a performance of confession through her mimicry and post-production techniques. Participation on her site was, however, highly active.

Outcomes of the Analysis

The visual analysis revealed that MemeMolly's and Val's confessions were televisual mini-programs that foregrounded the performance of confession making through mise en scène. The issues that were confessed were trivial and represented in a playful manner. Both the confession maker and the audiences participated regularly. These confessions enhanced participatory activity on the site as measured by the number of views and posted comments. The confession makers invited the viewers to spectate and participate.

The analysis of the chat section revealed that most comments were directed toward the performing actor and her physical appearance or toward the bold title of the confession. Postings regarding the actual issue of the confession prompted counter confessions. As proposed in a study on the confessional speech act (Brooks 2005), the confessions produced counter confessions. Thus, the confessions generated participatory and interactive communicational acts in the context of YouTube. The participatory activity of the confessional videos under study also supported the findings that me-centered messages enhance social activity in social media. These messages also generated conversation (Hodkinson 2007) and social interaction (Ogan & Gagiltay 2006).

The comments directed toward the confession maker and her visual appearance were connected to the stereotype of the confessional vlogger in YouTube. The term "YouTube Babes" refers to self-revealing, posing, and flirtatious female video makers (see Burgess & Green 2009; Lange 2008).[10] Here, the YouTube Babes strictly controlled their confessional storytelling, thus, the study was consistent with the finding that women webcam narrators control strictly what they expose of themselves (White 2006).

Even though confessional me-centered storytelling can enhance participation in YouTube, this medium does not function as a site for participation for all types of confessions. For example, Cree's confessions did little to enhance participation and attention. The camera was used as a means to transmit the confession mainly through speech, and visual information was minimal. The speaking-centered video used tight close-ups and an unedited direct speech mode toward the camera and audience. The intimate presence of the confessor was highlighted visually by her position near the screen and her emotional self-revealing in the form of speech and crying.

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[10] The "whores" category is reserved for video makers who expose too much of themselves. The "whore" category can be found among MySpace users as well (Holland & Harpin 2008).

Together, these characteristics implied an intimate and documentary type of storytelling. Most interestingly was that the confessed was severe, and the storyteller revealed that she needed an audience to recover.

Of interest were the differences in the visual style of mise en scène between the participatory and non-participatory confessions. The participatory confessions contrasted traditional webcam aesthetics. This finding suggests that the successful messaging in the studied YouTube confessionals used different, and partly, new types of visual language. This is the type of visual evolution in new media environments that needs further research.

In this study, confessional me-centered messaging enhanced participatory activity in the studied vlogs, as long as they performed playfully and were the type of a good-looking televisual show. These aspects served to create a kind of hybrid between the amateur-driven confessional self-revelatory vlogs and confessional, professionally produced shows. Borrowing a format of a human interest talk show, the show reuses the narrational conventions of commercial television. This finding is in line with the notion that the TV and web aesthetics and formats have imitated each other, which is partly due to the commercialization of YouTube and other DIY environments (Kim 2012).

The studied confessional videos took place in environments that seemed to be a place where playful, visually attractive messages were participated, if one understands the participatory activity on YouTube foremost as attention given to video postings. As Huberman et al. (2008) found in their study of over one million YouTube vloggers, the driving force on YouTube seems to be the attention that is desired for one's video postings.

Discussion

The original research question guiding the research in this Chapter was, "How is the (visual) confession represented and how does the (represented) confessional operate in interaction?" The study draws attention toward the connections between the acknowledged participatory trend that has taken place in social media environments and the growing confessional trend in media of which symptoms are, among others, the overwhelming number of confessional and therapeutic program formats on TV and the massive amount of confessional self-revelations in the vlogging scene of social media, and YouTube as an example. Of note, individual me-centered messaging is acknowledged as a key feature in both of these "turns."

The study focused on confessional communication in the leisure-orientated audiovisual social media environment of YouTube. The aim of this study was to understand whether me-centered or confessional communications operate as a managerial and suppressive form, as often suggested in media studies in the context of television, or as a reason to participate in the social realm of new (social) media.

The study revealed that the studied vlogs functioned as a platform for visual confessional stories, triggering social activity. The participatory confessions foregrounded the performance of confession making and the participatory activity it enhanced in the chat.[11] Importantly, not all types of confessional videos enhanced attention or participation. These include videos that were

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[11] The notion of the centrality of the act itself is supported by other findings in the context of TV. White (1992) arques that the actual "healing" is not as important as the speech act and the flow of the TV programme itself (White 1992). Matthew's study on "Videonationshorts" in television revealed that the things that people told were not secret sins but banal everyday matters and anecdotes which were only told in an ironic tone of confession (Matthews 2007: 29). Dovey points out the same trend in talk shows in which the problem resolution structure is weak; more important is the display of problems (Dovey 2000: 117).

therapeutic confessional in nature and that the search for an audience was clearly articulated. These videos also used direct and intimate speech toward the YouTube public in an unedited, documentary style.

In the context of confessional storytelling on TV, the confessional experience is a way to exploit both the audience and the original storyteller. Specifically, the individual experience is used as voyeuristic material (Mclaughlin 1993; Peck 1995; White 1992) in the production of a televisual commercial spectacle that dupes participants and viewers (Wood 2009) and produces freakish subjectivities (Dovey 2000). In my analysis, this negative stance toward confessional communication proved invalid; the performance of visually attractive, playful, and funny confessions was not a way to produce freakish subjectivities. Instead, these videos produced participatory sites where both the viewers and performers communicated with each other.

The freakish subjectivities and non-participatory communication inside YouTube was produced when the performers were not performing in the context-specific manner of YouTube. On the non-participatory sites, the imagery of the confessions consisted of grayish, documentary-style talking heads that faced the audience while communicating serious problems: heads "telling their truths."

Thus, the study was consistent with previous studies on YouTube. Environment understood characteristically playful (Hess 2009) and of which the main meaning is the social networking activity it enhances. Burgess and Green (2009) noted that intimate self-revealing and self-expression goes hand-in-hand with participatory and collective play. It does not actually matter whether the video or, in this context, confession is authentic or real. What matters is that it enhances attention and produces participatory activity. It seems also that the exploitative model of confession and participation (see also Burgess & Green 2009) was not valid with the YouTube confessions studied here.

The studied vlogs seemed to take place in an environment which favours "inauthentic authenticity". Important was that the confession is represented visually in the right way, which refers to the authenticity of the story, but not too much. Hence the vlogs here were exposed in a context spesific manner. In the studied context of light confessional and participatory vlogs, the confessions were televisually styled, smoothly edited, funny and flirtatious - "confessions". However, this is not to say that this would hold true with the YouTube as a whole. This suggests that the content defines strictly both the form and the content. Thus it makes no sense to draw parallel between the vlogging environment of YouTube as a whole and the type of confessions it enhances. Instead, the spesific vlogging environment seems to constrain strictly one´s confessional self-representation, which needs further research.

CHAPTER 3: Panopticon and Webcam - Disciplined Confessions

In this chapter, I focus further on the question of how the structural properties of a particular DIY environment regulate the confessional messaging in vlogs. I ask, "Is there a mechanism that disciplines the confession maker and regulates the confessions she is able to produce." Introduced by Foucault in Discipline and Punish, the Benthamian Panopticon model has become a primary metaphor for surveillance. According to Foucault, the central features through which the disciplining power in panopticon works are space, visibility, normalizing gaze, and hierarchical observation. This paper examines Panopticon features in a particular Webcam community. The formation of subjectivity and the communicational activity inside a specific environment is understood as being bound with the structures of that environment. By researching the possible panopticon logic within a webcam community, this paper aims, first, to raise the question of the acclaimed participatory and empowering functioning of social media practices, and second, to generate new knowledge on the leisure-orientated "free" organization and the mechanism in which it disciplines subjects within.

A primary metaphor for surveillance is the Benthamian Panopticon model, famously introduced by Foucault. In this context, Panopticon refers to a utilitarian architectural concept for organizing the masses. The individual in a Panopticon machine is the object to be controlled by (Rabinow 1991) and produced through that machine. This construction is a paradigmatic example of disciplinary technology (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982).

The Panopticon model is especially interesting from the perspective of electronic surveillance; for example, in the context of database,

data-gathering, closed circuit television, and ubiquitous wireless networks (Farmer & Mann 2003; Lyon 1994; Koskela 2003; Poster 1990). The panopticist features have been applied extensively to the web (Andrejevic 2005; 2006; 2007) and even to the extent that the web has been conceptualized as a large-scale Panopticon prison (Poster 1989). Consequently, a number of related concepts such as superpanopticon (Poster 1989), panoptic sort (Gandy 1993), electronic Panopticon (Lyon 1994), participatory Panopticon (Whitaker 1999), and virtual Panopticon have emerged and been used within varying scope in the analyses of surveillance systems (e.g., Farmer & Mann 2003; Hogan 2001; Parenti 2002). Many of these theories assume the logic of the Panopticon behind the whole of western neoliberal society (see e.g., Andrejevic 2007; Gandy 1993; Poster 1989; Webster & Robins 1986; Zuboff 1988).

Consequently, many Panopticon studies about electronic surveillance are dystopian. However, to see the Panopticon and its possible manifestation in the web as dystopian is in contrast to Foucault's original understanding of the power that operates in that "machine." For Foucault, Panopticon was essentially an ideal construction, an example of the productivity of power (Foucault 1995: 137).

Because of the bio-power operating in this machine, individuals will internalize the discipline. Thus, if we follow Foucault literally, the disciplining power in Panopticon should not be conceptualized negatively in its essence because it is foremost productive. This idea of productivity makes the Panopticon interesting in the context of a virtual community. However, the same lack of studies connecting discipline and the productive features of the panopticon machine, known as self-governance, has been noticed among surveillance studies as well. As Elmer (2012) pointed out:

> *The concept of discipline as developed by Foucault, in the context of his writings about the panopticon in Discipline and Punish: The birth of Prison…amplifies the philosopher's theory of power as a bio-political phenomenon, an internalization of power. Curiously*

the notion of self-governing, or modifying one's behavior in the face of the panopticon, is perhaps one of the least developed theories in surveillance studies. (22)

Popular audiovisual social media practices (e.g., YouTube, Flickr, Facebook) are fundamentally based on visibility, on the actors self-revealing and me-centered messaging (Herring et al. 2004; Hodkinson 2007; Livingstone 2008; Lundby 2008; Reed 2005), and on the telemediated presence (Campanella 2002; see more about tele-presence Manowich, Bolter, & Grusin 1999) of the actors in these networks, as analyzed in various studies on the blogging scene and social media.

Online webcam communities [12] are also based on visibility, the presence of participants, and self-revelatory representations of individuals. In a webcam community, one exists only by representing oneself online and being seen. Consequently, new media environments are often as places where the liberating powers of expression are at work (Jenkins 2007), not as places where the disciplinary power operates.

Panopticon operates similarly with the concepts of constant visibility and participant presence. The power in which it operates seeks invisibility whereas the objects that ought to be controlled are visible and under a controlling gaze. According to Foucault, the central features through which the disciplining power in Panopticon work include space, visibility, normalizing gaze, and hierarchical observation.

Thus, taken these similar features, it is worth of asking whether there is some disciplining project in the communicational spaces of new (social) media. Additionally, are there places where a disciplinary power is at work to control the mass of people by

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[12] Webcam communities were precursors for the present (audiovisual) blogging scene; social media and YouTube as the most common example. There are apparent connections between early lifecams on the web (Wood 2008) and the social media of today. We may argue that webcam communities have a central role in this metamorphosis.

individualizing them? This paper examined the possibility of Panopticon in one webcam community. Thus, the focus here was to identify and analyze one possible application in which the features of Foucauldian bio-power could be traced. By researching the Panopticon logic that work inside a webcam community, I raised a question of the regulative mechanisms that operate in vlogging environments in general, and the ways in which it affects confessional messaging. This questioning further problematized the acclaimed participatory and empowering functioning of social media practices and generated new knowledge on the leisure orientated "free" organization and the mechanism with which disciplines the subjects inside it.

Panopticon, Webcam and Visibility

Many have criticized the Panopticon model and especially its relevance in understanding the surveillance society that the web has enabled. Many of these concerns are connected to the question of visibility. As known, the original Panopticon relies on the visibility in which the few watch the many (Foucault 1995). The omnipotent gaze(s) controls the bodies. However, in our mediated environments, it has become the other way around; the many watch the few. This synopticon (Mathiesen 1987) has been acclaimed as the way that contemporary mass society works. Many viewers control the actions of the few, mostly that of politicians and celebrities. Once private and intimate things are revealed by means of surveillance (Lyon 2005: 36).

This is the type of synopticon serves as a model for our contemporary "viewer society" that the television and cinema produces (ibid). Calvert (2004) claimed the same trend takes place in a "voyer nation." Whitaker (1999) proposed that the model of participatory Panopticon also suggests that the watched are doing the work of watching themselves. Further, Mann, Nolan and

Wellman (2003) used the term "co-veillance" in which individuals monitor one another. As Andrejevic (2007) concluded in his utterly pessimistic theory of cybernetic interactivity and participation:

> *"In an era of distributed surveillance, the amplification of panoptic monitoring relies on the internalized discipline not just of the watched, but also the watchers. We are not just being habituated to an emerging surveillance regime in which we all know that we could be monitored at any time…in which we are all expected to monitor another – to deploy surveillance tactics facilitated at least in part by interactive media technologies." (Andrejevic 2007: 239)*

For him, the surveillance society consists of mutual monitoring and investigative technologies that are connected to the climate of "savvy skepticism" and "generalized risk." However, the question is not only of power and hierarchical position of the controlling and omnipotent gaze, but also the performer's willingness to reveal himself and the viewer's enjoyment in watching. As argued mostly in a context of neoliberal theories of surveillance society, citizens have internalized surveillance. Consequently, popular culture has made use of surveillance, which has become a genre of entertainment (e.g., in the form of reality TV) (Andrejevic 2007; Dubrofsky 2011; Pecora 2002) and webcam shows (see e.g., Ericson & Haggerty 2005).

According to Andrejevic (2007), surveillance is portrayed as a spectacle. Here, the spectacle centers on the "savvy subject" who self-consciously performs for the imagined gaze of the watchers. Through this spectacle, the "image of the dupe" is avoided, both by the performer and the audiences (238). Much in the same tone, Pecora (2002) analyzed how the surveillance takes place through the intimate self-revealing in reality TV. The interest toward intimacy and intimate stories goes hand-in-hand with the growing surveillance of individuals, and together, they produce a kind of "intimacy surveillance" (Pecora 2002: 352), in which the participants know they are being observed but are still willing to participate, to act out. Further, observers are willing to watch. In the

end, the reality TV format serves as a "real-time social-psychology experiment" (Pecora 2002: 358). Dubrofsky (2011) argued similarly concerning how the surveillance of oneself in reality TV formats may be an internalized but desirable feature felt by the participants:

> *"What is particular to reality TV is the suggestion that surveillance of the self is not only acceptable but desirable, insomuch as it can be used to prove authenticity of the self. Paradoxically, this translates into an ability to appear under surveillance as if one is not under surveillance." (Dubrofsky 2011: 19)*

Consequently, researchers have argued that surveillance operates at the level of the individual and his subjectivity (Vaz & Fernando 2003). Thus, web-mediated surveillance has become a form of smooth and efficient control (Bogard 2005). As Andrejevic (2006: 396) claimed, the interactivity and incitement to self-disclosure is actually how a governed panoptic space works. Citizens watch one another to redouble the monitoring gaze of the authorities. In the end, the interactive participation of the web, in recent neoliberal society, serves as a technique to produce responsible citizens. According to Jarrett, it is the interactivity that works as a disciplinary technology to produce self-governing neoliberal subjects:

> *"It is a disciplining into a liberal ideal of subjectivity based around notions of freedom, choice and activity. This discipline is not about the construction of 'docile bodies', yet it remains true to the spirit through which this is achieved – the normalisation and inculcation of subjection to power." (Jarrett 2008)*

In addition to these claims about subtle surveillance working at the level of the individual, there is a growing field of research in surveillance studies that point to the importance of resistance toward surveillance (see cf. Albrechtslund & Dubbel 2005; Bell 2009; Koskela 2008; Monahan 2006). For example, Bell analyzed how sexuality is a way to play out voyeuristic and exhibitionist experiences. This is performed playfully in the form of reality porn or webcam porn, at the level of the "surveillance-savvy" (Bell 2009:

203) subject. Similarly, Albrechtslund and Dubbel (2005) propose that resistance should be understood foremost as an enjoyable, playful, and entertaining practice.

There also seems to be a quest for specific analyses of Panopticon and surveillance at the individual level (see Ericson & Haggerty 2005). Indeed, considerably less discussion exists about the Panopticon "from the inside" or analysis of specific communication practices from inside that practice. Specifically, studies on virtual communities in general and webcam communities in particular are deficient.

At the same time, with the concerns about telemediated and subtle surveillance on the web, individualized possibilities to resist it, and quests for in depth and contextualised analysis of particular web-based surveillance practices, there is an alternative narrative of web-based communications. In the realm of social media research, the so-called social media applications are appraised as a new [13] types of communicational cultures, where the sense of empowering participation might be central (Duncombe 2007; Jenkins 2007; Rose, Grönlund & Andersen 2007).

Characteristically, messaging takes the form of I-narration (Herring et al. 2004; Livingstone 2008; Lundby 2008; Reed 2005). Additionally, various studies on particular social media applications have found explanations for communicating in these networks including friend making (Baym 2008), participation (Lange 2009), attention (Huberman et al. 2008), and social interaction (Burgess& Green 2009; Hodkinson 2007; Ogan & Gagiltay 2006).

Considerably fewer studies have analyzed of particular social media applications and user behaviors as being connected to the inherent

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[13] The discourse of novelty and transformation has been connected to the so-called new media (see Carpentier and De Cleen, 2007; Slater 2000). The new media has been connected to a new type of cyber culture and, thus, appraised as a potential place for new (better) types of participation. The older one is, by implication, the worse one, the one to be healed. This paper aimed to draw a clear distinction to that type of techno-optimism.

questions of disciplining and organizational control inside those particular application. There is also a lack of study on the inherent mechanism that produces these I-narratives. However, for Foucault, the essence of disciplining power was exactly its ability to produce individuals; the force of bio-power lies in defining reality as well as producing it (Foucault 1995).

Thus, when searching for motives and mechanisms for these I-narratives and for participation on the Web, the Panopticon model offers one theoretical tool [14] . The particular communicational network could be analyzed as a "machine" that produces, or at least favors, certain kinds of discipline and, thus, certain kinds of communications. Panopticon may be one possible and efficient solution to that. In the following, I introduce the general features of the Panopticon model and research methods used in this study, after which I move on to the analysis of WCN.

The Origins of the Panopticon: The Architectural Concept

Panopticon was originally an architectural concept that Jeremy Bentham proposed in 1787. With this, he joined the prison reform debate going on in France in the 18th Century. Bentham's original intention was purely utilitarian: to design a construction for discipline purposes. The main design question for him was how to control the masses in the most effective way. He intended to design an instrument for power that could be used in various institutions. As such, he proposed that the logic of Panopticon could be easily

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[14]As Lyon proposed, the mediated communication works by the logic of bio-power (Lyon 2001; 175). For Foucault, bio-power includes both aspects of control and discipline—individual as an object. The paradigmatic example of discipline was exactly the Panopticon model. However, bio-power also includes the confessional act—the individual as a subject (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982: 169).

applied, for example, to harem, and he noticed that the same logic could be used throughout society (Rabinow 1991).

The originality of the model lies in the fact that the power of ruling is transformed from the visible representation of that power to the spatial construction. As Foucault observed, discipline was written into stone (Foucault 2000). Bentham himself claimed that the major benefit of Panopticon was the "maximum of efficient organization" (in Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982: 189) because "the persons to be inspected should always feel themselves as if under inspection, at least as standing a great chance of being so" (Bentham 1834: 44)

As Foucault stated:

> *"In short, its task was to constitute a prison-machine with a cell of visibility in which the inmate will find himself caught as "in the glass house of the Greek philosopher" and a central point from which a permanent gaze may control prisoners and staff."(Foucault 1995: 202)*

The Disciplinary Technology – Individual as an Object

In Panopticon, the disciplining power operates primarily on the body (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982; Rabinow 1991). The individual is an object to be controlled (Rabinow 1991: 10) and, at the same time, is produced through that machine. For Foucault, this meant, that even though the body is the target of the discipline in every society, in the modern disciplinary society, the difference is that the body is conceptualized as a useful resource (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982) that can be controlled, manipulated, and improved (Foucault 1995). Finally the "machine" produces a mute and docile body that is also productive (Foucault 1995; Helen 1995). Thus, the body is centralized as a target to be controlled and governed in bio-power (Helen 1995) where control arises from individuals themselves in the form of self-control. As Foucault wrote:

> *"The major effect of the Panopticon is to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power." (Foucault 1995:201)*

In this way, it is possible to maintain the operations of disciplining power as efficiently as possible.

Space

The discipline of the Panopticon machine is transformed to the spatial construction (Foucault 2000). Hence, Panopticon itself is not a construction that embodies power, but a construction that serves as "a means for the operation of power in space" (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982: 190). On a more practical and spatial level, this means that there exists no owner of power and, consequently, no subject above the other (Foucault 1995). Therefore, power seems to exist everywhere and nowhere simultaneously.

In practice, the individual bodies to be controlled are organized in a serialized enclosure of space in which "each individual has a place and each place has its individual" (Foucault 1995: 197-199). Foucault described the cell in Panopticon as an individual stage, one for each prisoner/performer. On this stage, the prisoner is completely individualized (Foucault 2000). Thus, the disciplining over bodies through the space is made possible by on staging, or dividing the diversity and masses into individual slots (Foucault 2000). This "living table" arranges the disorganized mass of bodies into an organized one under control (Foucault 2000: 202). Here, each individual has, in effect, his own place in this order, and inside these individual slots, no margins or gabs exists (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982; Foucault 1995). Further, the space is organized through the absence or presence of dichotomy (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982).

The Use of Visibility as Part of the Disciplining Power

The central characteristic of the Panopticon machine is its ability to produce individualized subjects under control. This is achieved through surveillance, which takes place with the help of constant visibility (Foucault 1995). The visibility of the Panopticon machine is reversed for the subject, which makes him the object of reversed visibility. By this, Foucault means the way in which power tends to hide and highlight the subjects under control. As Foucault (2000) noted, "visibility is the trap" (273). Consequently, the more subjects are highlighted, the more they gain marks of individuality, whereas the holder of the power remains invisible. For Foucault, this is an essential element in modern disciplinary technology and in strict contrast to the sovereign need to establish power to rule the masses, seamless individuals. This is also why power is so easy to expand because it cannot be traced, and it is not perceived as oppressive. Consequently, Panopticon creates, for the prisoner, a state of conscious and constant visibility (Foucault 2000). A Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) states:

> "The act of looking over and being looked over will be a central means by which individuals are linked together in a disciplinary space" (156).

Normalizing Gaze and Hierarchical Observation as Part of the Disciplining Power

Visibility and omnipotent gaze are tied together in disciplinary power; without them, surveillance would not be successful. Foucault (1995) wrote:

> "By means of such surveillance, disciplinary power becomes an "integrated" system, linked from the inside to the economy and to the aims of the mechanism in which it was practiced." (172-174)

However, surveillance would not work without a normalizing gaze as it is through this normalization that Panopticon gains its

"lightness" as a disciplinary machine. Through the normalizing gaze, the individual internalizes discipline and the surveillance of himself. Thus, discipline seems to be coming from the inside, not the outside (Foucault 1995).

This normalization operates with the help of normalizing judgment. Through a fine specification between the axis of right and wrong, a normative, complex ranking system is created. After that, even the most meaningless acts of everyday life can be valued along these axes (Foucault 1995). Because of this (institutionalized) normative judgment that operates within Panopticon, the machine itself seems to be value-neutral.

The ultimate efficiency of disciplinary power is possible, when combining this normalization (normalizing judgment) with (hierarchical) observation. Together, they combine in a procedure of examination. Foucault (1995) stated:

> "A normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify, and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates and judges them" (184-185)

The descending individualization and anomalies are created through these technologies of normalization, such as examination (Rabinow 1991). This examination is intensified through documentation (Foucault 1995). Consequently, an individual is constituted as an analyzable, describable object that can be arranged and classified. In the end, this objectification produces a reversed visibility of the individual.

Controlling the Body on Webcamnow

Particularly interesting for this analysis is how the docile bodies are produced through disciplinary technologies (Foucault 2000), which

get grip of the individual through delicate details (Foucault 2000). Thus, to examine the parallelism with Panopticon and webcam community under analysis, it makes sense to concentrate on the particular classes/operations of disciplinary technology introduced above. These conclude the specific procedures over body work through the use of space, use of visibility, normalizing gaze, hierarchical observation, and examination (Foucault 1995, 2000, 2002). Table 5 details these classes and presents how they are thematized as research questions.

Table 5: Thematization

Strategies of Panopticon	Visibility	Hierarchical observation	Normalizing gaze
"Each individual has a place and each place has its individual." "The space is organized through the absence/presence dichotomy."	"Panopticon creates for the prisoner a state of conscious and constant visibility." "The more the subjects are highlighted, the more they gain marks of individuality, whereas the holder of the power remains invisible."	Hierarchical observation as mutual monitoring	Normalizing gaze is combined with normalizing judgment.
Thematisized Questions:			
1. Does there exist a (communicational) space that is arranged to different individual slots around the participant? 2. a) How do absence and presence take place? 2. b) Do participants refer to absence/presence as constitutive elements (of the WCN space)?	3. a) In what ways does visibility take place? 3. b) Do participants refer in chat section to the visibility as being constant and/or conscious? 4. How is individual visibility negotiated in rule violations?	5. Do chat postings contain instructional comments to other co-participants?	6. What types of instructions do chatters post to each other (if they do)? 7. Does there emerge a normative axis of right/wrong in the form of chat postings?

My observational activity in the field was strongly affected by the conceptual framework I built based on the theoretical model of Panopticon. The story "of a field" that I tell as a web ethnographer needs to be understood as operating within this framework. Observation concentrated on four variables and their representations, space, visibility, normalizing gaze, and hierarchical observation.

Variables were developed base on the research literature built on the theory of disciplining power that Foucault introduced in *Discipline and Punish*. The operationalization of variables is shown on the Table 1. Thus, I noticed that my observation was strongly affected by my own perspective and, particularly, by the theoretical framework inside which I operated (Dicks et al. 2005; Emerson & Pollner, 2001; Murthy 2008). However, as proposed, content analysis should connect the texts more broadly to the social aspects of the web (Shneider & Foot 2005). Here, the figure of Panopticon served as such a tool, which made it easier to connect the individual level of enunciation in web (in a form of webcam picture and text chat) to the wider question of disciplining power operating in the social context of web communications.

Analysis

Analyzing Space

1. "Does there exist a (communicational) space that is arranged to different individual slots around the participant?"

In order to exist (bodily) in WCN, one has to log onto that space. The primary way to connect to the community is through a webcam picture. To become a full member, the participant needs to be

visible, which equates to sending a webcam stream online. Visually, participation on WCN is communicated with a snapshot of a participant's webcam stream. Watching individuals' web stream was similar in 2006 and 2009. By clicking the list of participants, the observer was directed to the chat room in which both the webcam picture and the chat discussion was visible. Additionally, during the 2006 observation period, the habit of presenting the attending participants included presenting a collage of the webcam streams. During the 2009-2010 observation period, the collage technique was no longer used.

The communication space was indeed arranged as slots around individual participants. Each individual has his own place reserved. This reserving of space was done on two different levels. First, the individual participant was represented visually inside a webcam frame, which was visually resembled as situated in a box. Here, the participant was identified from a webcam stream. Secondly, "the box" contained the associated chat where the participant was represented textually. Here, identification was possible through chat postings that identified the sender of the posting by his or her nickname. In 2006, there was a third way to create a slot around an individual. Specifically, individuals were anchored in their places by a collage of several webcam streams. Strikingly, the collage was reminiscent of a "living table," a term Foucault used to refer to a space where a mass of anonymous participants was made into a controllable and recognizable quantity of individuals.

2.a "How do absence and presence take place in WCN?"

The absence and presence in WCN space occurs through (mediated) bodily existence by broadcasting a video stream of one's body. The visual way to present bodily presence is to broadcast a close-up or medium close-up, most often concentrating on one's face (in family-part) or sometimes to the genitals (in the unmonitored site). Thus,

to exist in this environment, participants need to be present, which occurs by logging into the (virtual) space with the (webcam mediated) body.

However, it is possible to participate in the WCN without streaming one's bodily presence via the webcam, and that is by participating in the chat. In 2006, one such member, called Grandelf, was an active chatter. However, often only a request is enough to turn the cam on, which may imply that it is important to see the image (and the mediated body).

A quite typical request posted to Grandelf in October 2006 was as follows:

> *"Please. Grandelf, get your cam on!"*

Accordingly, it was common to present oneself as absent, but nonexistent. One way to communicate such absence is to transmit a video stream of an empty room.

In sum up, five types of presence took place in WCN: presence through webcam stream and active chatting, through webcam stream, through chatting, and as a visitor through observation but not active chatting. Absence, in effect, occurs in two basic ways. Either the webcam is on but the performer/participant is not represented through the video stream or the webcam is completely off, and the participant becomes non-existent.

2.b "Do participants refer to absence and or presence as constitutive elements?"

According to the chat postings, participants themselves underlined the importance of the absence/presence dichotomy. Both in 2005 and in 2009-10 there seemed to be a strong habit of informing co-chatters of one's absence, even if for only a brief duration. In 2006,

it became evident from such messages in the chat as that of Grandelf:

"getting a soda, brb" (brb=be right back).

In 2009, the same habit was still valid. For example Krissy 68, a top ten favourite vloggers in the unmonitored site in September 2009, informed:

"I gotta pee, I'll be right back"

In January 2010, PeterHull gave the same information in arieflii's chat room:

"i need a pee"

The cause for leaving is often informed, as topless32563, in the same chat room, wrote:

"OK GOT TO GO WORK U HAVE A GOOD DAY DEAR MAYB C U THIS AFTERNOON"

The cause for absence can also become a statement toward the webcam show itself, as that of Queezie to arie2flii in January 2010:

"well I am bored so I'm off"

Returning is often stated as well, as simo003 wrote in January 2010 in several postings in arie2flii's chat room:

"!!just came back"

"i came back"

"!!!"

"im here simo is hereeeeeeee"

To conclude, absence and presence proved to be constitutive elements in WCN based on the frequency of chat postings of these facts. Of note, absences equated most usually to nonexistence.[15]

On the ground of analyzing the space, it can be stated that the discipline over bodies worked through the use of space. The analysis of the question "Does there exists a (communicational) space that is arranged to different individual slots around the participant?" revealed that the participant diversity was visually divided into individual slots in which the participant became identifiable.

The analysis of the question "How do absence and presence take place in this environment?" revealed that presence was the principal way to exist in this space. According to the chat postings, the absence/ presence dichotomy was regarded as important.

Additional Ways to Control the Body in a Space: Controlling Gestures

Interestingly, there seemed to exist other detailed ways of controlling the body. As noted, disciplinary technologies may operate through specific and contextually detailed actions (Foucault 2000). Thus, before proceeding to the analysis of the remaining variables, some remarks on the additional ways in which the body was controlled in the context of WCN are necessary.

The control over bodies also emerged by controlling strictly bodily behaviors and gestures of the members. However, the forbidden bodily behaviors are not explicitly documented. Only by

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[15]Presence has been understood as a main characteristic in web-mediated communication; the new media environments have been noticed as (mediated) places where presence or telepresence is what matters most (Bolter & Grusin 1999; Campanella 2002; Manowich). Presence takes place in a mediated way, hence, established concepts such as telepresence. In this environment, the need to transmit presence in order to exist is also a way to control the body. We can state that it is the disciplining power working at its minimum.

participating in the community and by observing the co-participants it is possible to gain knowledge of these rules. In the unmonitored site, such gestures include undressing and sexual gestures. Occasionally, there are attempts such as getting one's shirt, which is mostly performed by newcomers. In general, the forbidden acts are seldom broken. Especially, regular members obey the rules and inform promptly in case of violations. Interestingly, the most active members of this community seem to have internalized the discipline over body in a way that it has become transparent and a form of self-control. This is, of course, reasonable because the ultimate penalty of the wrong-doer is banning and exclusion from the community.

The Use of Visibility as Part of the Disciplining Power

3a. "In what ways does visibility take place?"

Communications in WCN are based on watching and sending webcam shows and commenting on them. The visibility and previously analyzed category of presence are interconnected. As stated, presence is the main way to exist in WCN space. It is through visibility that presence takes place. Thus, there are different ways to be visible as there were different types to be presence. Two main ways to become visible are (1) sending a webcam show and (2) active chatting, where visibility correlates to chat posting under a nickname.

3. b) "Do participants refer in chat to the visibility as being constant and/or conscious?"

Participants often referred to the propounding concept of visibility. As simo003 wrote in arie2flii's chat room about watching her show in January 2010:

> *"arie im here if u need to talk to me im watching u all the time and im doing some stuf on computer"*

BexleyBoy commented back on simo003, which reflects how the conscious visibility in WCN is a well-known fact to regular participants:

"why tell her what she already knows...?"

Participants' conscious attitude of being visible was well evident in a long chain in Rochelle_36's chat room on 13.1.2010, after she exhibited a show that included showing her tits and genitals. Feyg began a conversation by posing a highly unusual question in a WCN context:

"what motivates your exhibitionism?"

Rochelle_36 answers:

"im a stripper"

Feyg does not buy it:

"you don't have the heavy makeup of a stripper"

"also if you strip at work, why do you wanna do that in free time?"

Rochelle_36 admitted that indeed she was not a stripper, and it is in the following chain that the visibility and consciousness of showing off became evident. Feyg seems to be the only one who was not accustomed to the self-conscious visibility. That the regular participants are familiar with being looked at and looking over was well stated at the end in nzjez's sarcastic comment to Feyg's ignorant questions.

1. ok im not a stripper lol

Rochelle_36

2. so why are you an exhibitionist, why?

Feyg

3. lol

Rochelle_36

4. i really wanna know

Feyg

5. just enjoy chatting and showing fey

Rochelle_36

6. u have a problem with roch showing feyg

meanit

7. nd i love it roc

johnlefty49

8. she just loves to share her great body with us

carewlion

9. ty

Rochelle_36

10. what you mean. does it turn you on or something?

Feyg

11. and we're happy about that

camham42

12. i wouldnt be on here if i didnt like it

Rochelle_ 36

13. appreciate you share with us

german47

14. and ty for sharing you have a great body

caravanmick

15. feyg if u don't care for it just leave fag

Pocatwild

16. ty

Rochelle_ 36

17. no what i mean is does it turn you on or you like peoples good comments

Feyg

18. are u a towel head feyg

meanit

19. i enjoy it for myself fey not for anything else

Rochelle_ 36

20. well said

camham42

21. good for u rochelle

carewlion

22. i respect that

Feyg

23. thats the right way

german47

24. i am so gullible. i really thought u were a stripper

Feyg

25. give a sheep the internet and..................

nzjez ignore

As we can notice from the example above, visibility is a prerequisite for communications in WCN. The regular participants were well adjusted to the visibility operating in this context. Additionally, the performers seemed happy to perform under the gaze. However, the performers were highly self-conscious; the most popular ones were very strict that nobody instructed their show. This tendency was well illustrated in the chain in arie2flii's chat room in January 2010 in which she was constantly asked to show her breasts. For example, Gogoscrotum wrote:

1. "take ur top off"

Gogoscrotum

2. "GO TO CHATEY IF U WANT TO SEE TITTIES..SHE A EASY HOE"

arie2flii

3. ":)"

Jason 5656

Arie2flii's and Jason's answers illustrate well how the self-consciously performed visibility and self-esteem play an important role in WCN communications. It is indeed bad behavior to direct the webcam shows as ThaBlakCat, monitoring the chat posted in arie2flii's chat room:

"SHE DOESN´T SHOW GUYS, JUST HERE FOR THE CONVO"

("convo" = conversation.)

and

"NO, SHE SHOWS WHEN SHE WANTS"

Similarly, the chatters in krissy68's chat room informed:

1. "I dont think krissy likes being told what to do"

shoes_in_can

2. "well a little rude yes"

ggf

4. "It's rude to order a lady around ;)"

Nobody001

Further, one performer, arie2flii herself, stated:

"NOOOO I HATE THE ONES THT KEEP SAYIN) SHOW TITS, ASS, PUSSY,"

It seems that the communication goes on well, as long as the performers are watched but not instructed. They are aware of the possibility of the gaze, but there is no way to know exactly whether one is looked at or not. The conscious performing and chatting

under a gaze proved to be a prerequisite element in WCN communications.

At the same time, in Panopticon, the gaze is supposed to be constant. Worth noting is that the performers may themselves control when they are visible; the performers seem to decide willingly when they log on and make a show. In this sense, the gaze is not conceived as constant. However, as soon as the camera is turned on, the camera(s) may be constantly looked at; this time aspect is referred to occasionally in the chat. An example is the postings between ThaBlakCat and arie2flii

> *"HAVE U BEEN ON AT ALL THIS YEAR"*

> *"ThaBlakCat"*

> *"UMM I JUSS GOT BAKK ON"*

> *arie2flii*

Jason5656 created irony out of the possibility of being looked at constantly. He joined beggers in arie2flii's the chat room and posted:

> *"i am just waiting until the uncontrollable urge hits her to strip naked and run around..."*

> *"waiting......"*

> *"waiting........"*

> *"still waiting....."*

> *jason5656*

In conclusion, the analysis of statements about visibility (1. a. "In which ways does the visibility take place?") revealed different ways to be visible. The main ways include sending the webcam show and

active chatting. The analysis of the second statement (1. b. "Do participants refer in the chat section to the visibility as being constant and/or conscious") revealed that, according to the chat postings, the conscious and constant gaze proved an important and a given fact in WCN. However, the consciousness about gaze seemed to generate remarkably more postings than did the time aspect or constancy of the gaze.

The second statement concerning the reversed visibility concept was approached by asking "How is individual visibility negotiated in cases of rule violation?"

The chat messages and the webcam streams were ways to share more information about oneself to others. However, the logic of reversed visibility proved not to work fully in this environment because of the banning system. Namely here, the wrongdoer is banned from the conversation and not highlighted, as in Panopticon. The wrong doer is sanctioned to invisibility and to non-existence/absence because he is excluded from the communication. Thus, the more one tries to behave according to the communicational norms of WCN, the more visible one is, either through the webcam show or in the chat. The banning system is quite effective as it forces participants to behave according to the rules of the communicational game.

At the heart of the banning procedure is the monitoring system. Here, regular members of the WCN play the role of monitor, at the same time, chatting and broadcasting. It is an honor to become a monitor in this environment, which is possible through regular attendance and appropriate behavior. The following chain illustrates how monitoring takes place, and some of the numerous unwritten rules of the communication become evident. This chain took place on 13.1.2010, when Rochelle_36 was making her show.

"the directors have arrived"

meanit

"STOP DIRECTING"

maxbodyworks

3. "ok the gatekeeper is here"

meanit

4. "she knows what to do"

maxbodyworks

5. "stop shouting stop begging roch don't view and she bans beggars and shouters"

meanit

Here, the first posting on line 1 "the directors have arrived" refers to the numerous posts begging for Rochelle to perform. The second line is the first warning for "wrongdoers;" maxbodyworks is working as a monitor. "Meanit" specifies on line 3 that maxbodyworks is indeed a gatekeeper. Further, on line 5 he specifies all of the forbidden acts, the ultimate penalty being the banning.

Later, in the same chat section, is a typical case of how the bad behaving person, this time open_zip, was banned out. This chain illustrates well how the concept of reversed visibility does not work because the sanction is non-visibility and absence. Interestingly right from the beginning Rochelle_36 is ignoring open_zip.

1. "couple here...cam to cam in yahoo ..pls join only Female my yahoo id cpl_ind63"

openzip

2. "no advertising open"

Rochelle_36

3. "hi Rochelle"

openzip

4. "hey Rochelle"

openzip

5. "couple here...cam to cam in yahoo ..pls join only Female my yahoo id cpl_ind63"

openzip

6. "open stop begging"

meanit

7. "cut m paste openzip byeeeee"

nzjez

8. "bye openzip"

Rochelle_36

The banning out is most often preceded without little comments as the chatter just disappears from the chat as in the example above. Naturally, the exclusion may receive comments from the others as well, such as that posted in October 2005 in pinklady's chat room.

"Good, finally we succeeded to get him out"

pinklady

To conclude, the analysis of "rule violations and how individual visibility is negotiated" revealed that the more visible one is in the WCN, the more one obtains individuality. Thus, reversed visibility did not work fully. The more participants were highlighted in the

form of a webcam show, the more they could share information about themselves. In this sense, they gained more marks of individuality. However, in Panopticon, the one to be highlighted is the wrong doer, whereas in WCN the wrong doer is excluded out of the sight and out of the communications. Therefore, the "right" way to participate in WCN is to behave according to the unwritten communicational rules. The next step of analysis takes the normalizing gaze at its center because, according to Foucault, normalization gets people to act as they are supposed to act in the Panopticon machine.

Normalizing Gaze and Hierarchical Observation as Part of the Disciplining Power

Hierarchical Observation

5. *"Do chat postings contain instructional comments to other participants?"*

When one logs into the WCN, aside from some very general restrictions, there are no exact written rules concerning communications. However, co-chatters do carry out hierarchical observations toward each other, mainly through posted instructional comments and warnings to each other. In most cases, the monitoring causes direct warnings, which occur when a participant tries to behave incorrectly. Sometimes, this observational activity is performed in a sarcastic manner as the postings of jason5656 in arie2flii's chat room on 10.1.2010 illustrate. Here, simo003 has been posting comments constantly about his presence in the environment and questions to arie2flii as to whether she is crying. Arie2flii starts to get tired of simo003's chatting behavior. Jason5656 notifies this:

> *"he is ALWAYS here for YOU arie..."*

jason5656

And further:

"lets play a game arie.."

jason5656

BexleyBoy noticed what was going on and joined the game:

"me too...!"

BexleyBoy

Jason5656 answers:

"ok lets all play a game of Simo says..."

jason5656

The chain illustrates well the monitoring tendency. The "Simo says" -play was an effective way to get rid of the disturbing chatter, and no direct warnings were needed. According to the analysis, chatters do post instructional comments to each other, which was commonplace in the chat postings in general.

Normalizing Gaze

6. "What types of instructions do the chatters post to each other (if they do)?"

7. "Does a right/wrong axis emerge on the ground of chat postings?"

The technical and practical instructions include those about webcam use or chat settings, such as the right angle of the camera or lowering the cap shift. Another major part of the instructions were those warnings participants who behaved improperly. Usually, these

warnings specified the bad behavior. The message in Rochelle_36's chat room on 13.1.2010 is a typical example:

"STOP DIRECTING"

maxbodyworks

After a specific warning, a list of other related proscribed doings or sayings was often posted, as those in the same chat room:

"stop shouting stop begging roch don't view and she bans beggars and shouters"

meanit

Often, the instructions were directed to a specific chatter, as those to openzip:

"open stop begging"

meanit

"no advertising open"

"Rochelle_36"

Apart from the evident bad behaviors, such as directing, shouting, undressing or swearing, the right/wrongs axis was negotiated constantly, and it seems to have evolved over time. An occasion in October 2005, when a novice was banned, illustrates this well. The cause for banning was that he was giving too specific of a location when discussing his living environment. This chatting behavior was regarded as a suspicious activity, though, a rather unexpected reason to be banned. After this case, the specific localization of webcammers' whereabouts was added to the "wrong" axis in WCN communications, which showed how the normative judgment and the right/wrong axis evolved over time.

Worth noting is that, most often, the novice participants were those who tried to behave incorrectly; an established member of a WCN seldom does. Naturally, for a newbie, it is quite impossible to know the exact communicational rules before because no written rules exist. However, that established members behave according to the communicational rules in WCN is interesting. Here, the normative gaze seems to work just as Foucault proposed that the individual internalizes the discipline and the surveillance of himself (Foucault 1995: 173).

To conclude, the analysis of the question, "What kinds of instructions do the chatters post to each other" revealed that chatters posted either practical instructions about the techniques of the show and chat settings or direct instructional warnings, of which the main purpose was to eliminate wrong behaviors from the WCN.

The analysis of the question, "Does there emerge a right/wrong axis on the ground of chat postings" revealed that normative judgment operates in a WCN. Many of the normatively categorized wrong acts were commonplace and of shared knowledge. Some of these norms, such as advertising, shouting, or instructing the show too dominantly, applied to both areas, that of the family part and that of the restricted area. Understandably, there were also area specific rules, and some were particularly evident in the 2006 observation period when the both areas were still active. For example, swearing or undressing where strictly forbidden acts in the family part. Importantly, the right/wrong axis proved to evolve over time. Thus, in theory to become fully aware of the sanctioned acts in a WCN, one ought to participate regularly and constantly, under the monitoring gaze of the co-participants to become fully aware of how to be a WCN participant in rightly manner.

Conclusion

The analysis revealed that the central features through which the disciplining power in Panopticon working (space, visibility, normalizing gaze, and hierarchical observation) worked in a WCN. On the grounds of analysis, the discipline over bodies working through the use of space. Individual bodies to be controlled were organized in a serialized enclosure of space in which "each individual has a place and each place has its individual"(Foucault 1995: 197-199). The diversity of the participants was visually divided into individual slots where participants became identifiable. Finally, the presence was the principal way to exist in this space and, according to the chat postings; the absence/presence dichotomy was regarded as important.

Interestingly, disciplinary technologies may operate through specific and contextually detailed actions, which seemed to be the case here as well. Namely, the control over bodies emerged by controlling bodily behaviors and gestures of the members. However, because the forbidden bodily behaviors are not documented anywhere explicitly, it was possible to gain knowledge of the rules only by participating in the community and by observing the co-participants.

Communications in the WCN were based on watching and sending webcam shows and commenting on them. It was through visibility that presence was established. Likewise, there were different ways of being visible as there were different types of presence. According to the chat postings, the visibility in the form of conscious and constant gaze proved important in WCN. Interestingly though, the reversed visibility did not work fully. In Panopticon, the one highlighted is the wrong doer, whereas in WCN the wrong doer was excluded from sight and from the communications. However, visibility did not work completely against the logic of reversed visibility either because the "rulers" did not gain visibility over the participants. As a matter a fact, it was difficult to identify the "rulers" and they also seemed to be easily replaceable (which, again,

is in connection with the Panopticon logic) because of the monitoring system.

Thus, normalizing gaze and hierarchical observation worked in the WCN. Chatters monitored each other by posting instructional comments, which proved to be a commonplace in the chat postings. The main purpose of these was to eliminate wrong behaviors from the WCN. Thus, normative judgment operated in the WCN. Many of the normatively categorized wrong acts were commonplace and of shared knowledge; however, some of had evolved over time. In theory, to become fully aware of the sanctioned acts in the WCN, one ought to participate regularly and constantly, under the monitoring gaze of co-participants.

To conclude, WCN proved to be strikingly similar with the logic of Panopticon. Control seemed to arise out of the individuals of themselves in the form of self-control. To be a WCN participant in a rightly manner, one ought to be visually present, under the conscious and monitoring gaze of co-participants, follow the normative rules (on the body), and avoid the wrong behaviors. The sanction of not following this Panopticon discipline is exclusion from the community.

However, there was one main difference. Namely, the central gaze proved to be a multitude of gazes. The WCN was effective as a self-organized disciplining machine exactly because of this mutual monitoring tendency. This finding resonates well with the reconceptualizations of Panopticon, which point to the logic in recent society as a multitude of gazes, individuals watching over each other (see Calvert 2004; Lyon 2005; Mathiesen 1987; Nolan & Wellman 2003; Whitaker 1999). This idea seemed to present itself in the WCN as well.

The key conclusion is that, for a webcam community to function, discipline is necessary, a panopticon type of power. The WCN was effective as a self-organized disciplining machine because of the

mutual monitoring tendency. In this way, the acclaimed and plain participatory potential of social media becomes a complex issue because the structural properties of the environment determine both individual confession making and cultural exclusion/inclusion.

However, to understand surveillance as negative would be to ignore the productive power of it. The notion of participatory surveillance (Albrechtslund 2008) suggests that disciplinary power can be understood as positive and empowering in the context of DIY cultures.

> *"Online social networking can also be empowering for the user, as the monitoring and registration facilitates new ways of constructing identity, meeting friends and colleagues as well as socializing with strangers. This changes the role of the user from passive to active, since surveillance in this context offers opportunities to take action, seek information and communicate. Online social networking therefore illustrates that surveillance – as a mutual, empowering and subjectivity building practice – is fundamentally social" (Albrechtslund 2008).*

In the studied context, the co-surveillance made the vloggers act and communicate context wise, inside a disciplinary machine. Whether this is understood as a positive or negative consequence is more a matter of opinion in the debates between techno-optimists and techno-pessimists (Fuchs 2009). What this study suggests is that DIY environments use disciplinary technology, and it is a prequisite for communication in these environments.

CHAPTER 4: Authentic Confession – or Just Faking It

In this chapter, I discuss authenticity in respect to presenting reality in the context of the vlogging culture of YouTube. I build my argument of authenticity in DIY environments on studies suggesting that the representation of authenticity and reality is emblematic for DIY culture (Bruns 2008; Lister et al. 2009; Jenkins 2006; Miller 2011), and particularly for YouTube and its vlogging cultures (Strangelove 2010; Wesh 2009). The chapter also discusses the meaning of revealing the authentic and real. I ask how authenticity, in respect to exposing a vlogger's real life, is constructed. Because my interest here was on how authenticity or real is represented, I focused on the aesthetics of the vlogs. However, in the emerging research, intimate aesthetics are the central means of producing authentic storytelling in relation to expose one's reality. Thus, I studied the extent to which these intimate aesthetics apply to the studied vlogs and how they enhance representations of reality.

The chapter presents an inductive qualitative analysis of confessional videos found on YouTube. The intimate confessional speech and visual storytelling examined is connected with webcam communities and video blogs, so-called vlogs on the vlogosphere, (term coined from blogosphere (see for example Griffith and Papacharissi 2010) where life-cams offer an unedited representation of individuals in their home environments (White 2006: 65). Because of the unedited visual style, webcams are often understood simply recording an unmediated reality, which is why webcam narration is often connected with documentary and

autobiographical genres that aim to reveal the "real" (Aymar 2011; Creeber 2011).

On the other hand, several recent studies of YouTube communications have shown that "inauthentic authenticity" is emblematic (Burgess & Green 2009). Intimate self-revealing and self-expression goes hand-in-hand with the participatory, collective play (Hess 2009). Therefore, it does not matter whether the video or "confession" is authentic or real. What matters is that it enhances attention and produces participatory activity.

This paper analyzed the generic webcam aesthetic associated with confessional storytelling on YouTube. I argue that the webcam culture of the 1990s and the "original" aesthetics associated with it is still a mark of a sincere confessional storytelling. Thus, the notion of inauthentic confessions on YouTube is mostly a question of aesthetics. YouTube confessions do not use all of the visual conventions of older webcam cultures, which is why they seem to not be recording the "real" autobiographical narration, rather appear to be more performance-based, and thus are perceived as inauthentic.

Background

The case of Lonelygirl15 is often cited in the histories of web-mediated communication. On 4th of July 2006, Bree, under the username "Lonelygirl15" posted an emotional post on YouTube discussing her personal and intimate problems with her parents. In 48 hours, the video received half a million views and rapidly developed a viewership around 300,000 per video (Burgess & Green 2009; Davis 2006). Bree became a phenomenon of public interest, both in YouTube and in mainstream media. In her videos, she made use of the vlogging culture and the confessional style associated with it (Burgess & Green 2009; Strangelove 2010). However, even though these videos seemed to be just the type of

intimate confessional speech that was already common in webcam communities, something was slightly wrong. These videos appeared polished, they were a bit too nicely shot and edited, and they looked too "good." Soon, the YouTuber community found out that Lonelygirl15 was a fake, a filmmaking experiment by independent film producers (Burgess & Green 2009; Strangelove 2010). Because the series was published in the YouTube environment, the video needs to be understood in relation to the participatory DIY, do-it-yourself, culture (Jenkins 2006).

In a peculiar way, Lonelygirl15 is a product of that culture and of the YouTube environment. Characteristics of DIY culture are that the products are created by amateur producers (Bruns 2008). Through this, the authenticity of the product is assured. In video and webcam narration, the DIY cultural insistence on authenticity is connected to new type of realism (with direct cinema and reality television), which attempts to show the real "lived experience as mundane and everyday" (Aymar 2011: 132). Aesthetically, especially in early videos on YouTube and webcam communities, this realness meant the rawness of the image, mostly due to the relatively poor quality of technology used (Aymar 2011; Creeber 2011; Newman 2008).

Where Lonelygirl15 failed, was that, even though it made use of authentic vlogging style, it did not follow the characteristic raw aesthetics carefully enough. What makes Lonelygirl15 interesting is that the videos played with vlogging aesthetics, but were not careful enough, which is why some suspected the authenticity of these videos. Thus, it seems that in the vlogging cultures of early YouTube, there was an urge toward authenticity and realness (Miller 2011) and codes of representation developed that determine whether a video is real or fake (Aymar 2009). That Lonelygirl15 violated the culture of authenticity on YouTube (Burgess & Green 2009: 29; Miller 2011) makes of it a landmark in the evolution of the webcam and vlogging cultures. In this chapter, I argue that the

shift modifies these confessional vlog videos and their visual style and content in respects to "exposing the real" and authentic.

Visual Methods for Reality Production

Part of the recent research on DIY cultures of the internet has focused on the question of authenticity. User-generated content has been praised for its ability to deliver mediated authenticity and originality (Lister, Dovey, Giddings, Grant, Kelly 2009). The "ideology of authenticity" is understood as emblematic for DIY culture in general (Bruns 2008; Jenkins 2006; Miller 2011) and particularly for YouTube and its vlogging cultures (Strangelove 2010; Wesh 2009) for which the updated version of authenticity is understood as a characteristic (Burges & Green 2009: 29).

The widely stated understanding of vlogs is that they are sites for intimate revelations, connections (Griffith & Papacharissi 2010; Kuntsman 2012), and self-disclosure (Raun 2012). The term "confessional vlog" has been associated with YouTube video blogs (Raun 2012). These vlogs are understood as having "affinities with self-disclosure" (Raun 2010). The authenticity in relation to confessional storytelling on the web is a "revelation of intimate matters, something hidden or denied" (Matthews 2007); and, particularly, in vlogs as the real person to reveal him or herself as an underlying presence and, thus, as an "honest self- representation" (Miller 2011; 21). The general understanding of a confessional communication underlies its relation to truth (Brooks 2005).

Specifically, webcam narration used in vlogs has the capacity to create the sense of revealing the "real" everyday life; this narration is understood as authentic when the webcam captures the mundane and trivial (Creeber 2012). Additionally, authenticity is "a glimpse into the 'real' world" of 'authentic' feeling and emotion which is located in 'the private and normally hidden realm of the domestic space'" (Creeber 2012; 598) into which the homemade aesthetics of

webcam narration offers a window (603). Even though in this account the 'real' is mediated and constructed through the narrative conventions of homemade aesthetics, the metaphor of a window suggests that there is something "real" or authentic to be mediated, and the camera offers this representation of real.

According to White's (2006) classic study on women webcam operators, the spectator was encouraged to interact with the webcam image as an unmediated reality, as in Creeber's account of a window. Here, the webcam image was closely associated with photographical documentary qualities (White 2006). The referential mode of the webcam image was highlighted in a way that the image was a direct, real-time (referent) of an object in front of the camera. However, this referential mode can never be fully achieved because, for White, the webcam image is impartial because of the technologies in use (e.g., image quality may be low) and the webcam operator's active controlling over his or her own images (the screen offers no steady view of the object, or gaze to use the Mulvey's much propagated term). This impartiality forces the spectator to form a "claustrophobic closeness" with the screen (White 2006: 77).

White's finding suggested that the webcam narration, as a pure document of a real (life), is not sufficient because the agency of both the spectator and operator is denigrated in this view. From a different angle, Miller (2011) argued that it is precisely the intimate relationship with the camera and with the screen as a mediating apparatuses that "interpose[s] the filmmaker-as-subject" (Miller 2011; 7) and that is of central importance in autobiographical video-diary narrations.

For Miller, these narrations are camera-based (autobiographical) performances of identities, or performative self-documentaries in which authenticity is understood as central (Miller 2011). Claims on mediating the authentic and real through a webcam may be well in line with White's notion of the agency of spectator/operator. This agency does not have to be eroded, even if the webcam is

understood as mediating "real world of authentic feeling and emotion" to reiterate Creeber (2012: 598). However, what it complicates is the question of what is meant with this authentic and real. To my understanding, it becomes a question of how the authenticity or real is represented, which leads the focus inevitably toward the representation itself and its aesthetics.

In his critical article on the presumed DIY cultural authenticity, Tolson (2010) claimed, building on Montgomery (2001) that the term authenticity needs to be understood as a relative term, and not as an analytical idea. He traced the term, particularly in the context of YouTube make-up tutorial vlogs, in relation to the traditional broadcasting talk and understood/located authenticity in this respect. Further, he argued,

> *'The authenticity of vlogging, if it is to be perceived as such, is located in its excessive direct address, in its transparent amateurishness and in the sheer volume and immediacy of 'conversational' responses, by comparison with and relative to the constraints of traditional broadcasting''(2010; 286).*

What White and Tolson both suggested from their own standpoints for this study was that the authenticity and realness are not in any means essentialist claims about vlogs or DIY cultures in general. Building on White's notion of vlogging, not as a window into authentic or real, but as a representation (a co-construction between spectator and the operator) and on Tolson's (2010) argument that the authentic may be traced only as a relational judgment that needs to be operationalized differently in each media context, this study focused on the representations of authenticity in vlogs in YouTube.

My context of locating and relating the "authenticity" was that of confessional audiovisual storytelling in vlogs. The confessional speech and visual storytelling in YouTube vlogs has its precursors and look-a-likes in webcam communities and video blogs; the so-called vlogs on vlogosphere. In the studied context, webcams were understood as offering a peek into the domestic worlds of

individuals and, through that, a presentation of an individual's reality (Creeber 2012; White 2006). In this study the word authenticity refers to that type of reality presentation.

Despite the common understanding of vlogs as sites for authentic intimate revelations, few studies have focused on the aesthetical means for producing this sense of authenticity in webcam narrations (Aymar 2011; Creeber 2011; Hillis 2009). Therefore, I asked how it is that a confessional vlog message is understood as an authentic confession, and what narrational ways exist to produce the authentic. Here, the authentic needs to be understood as a relational term; therefore, my interest was not the authenticity in itself, but the representation of authenticity.

Homemade, Intimate Aesthetics

According to the literature, there are commonly used ways for reality production in vlog narration (Aymar 2011) to produce the sense of authentic storytelling. Aymar (2011) referred to these solutions as confessional aesthetics whereas Creeber (2011) stated that they were homemade or intimate aesthetics. At the core of these aesthetics is the produced sense of intimacy and personal revelation. These generic narrational ways of exposing oneself in an authentic confessional style are mainly due to the formal constraints of the webcam as a technical apparatus, such as the camera positioning on top of the computer, which produces the commonly known speaking head effect in vlogs. Of interest is that the aesthetics of confessional vlogging are alive (and strongly so) although the technical constraints may already be outdated (such as the use of camera on top of the computer versus the use of a head camera)

Thus, the literature on webcam narration offers a consensual understanding of the main aesthetical means of vlogging. Accordingly, the confessional, intimate aesthetics of vlogs builds on

the extensive use of close-up, direct address straight to the camera, use of static or handheld camera, the mise en scène of domestic space, rough image quality, use of no post production or editing techniques, and the impression of character shooting alone/themselves (Aymar 2011; Burgess & Green 2009; Creeber 2011; Hartley 2008; Newman 2008; Raun 2010; Senft 2008; White 2006).

In the following, I concentrate on each of these seven variables more closely and analyze whether they are at work in personal confessional vlog diaries on YouTube, an environment where storytelling is said to bear the characteristics of "inauthentic authenticity" and of an "updated authenticity." I ask how these methods for reality production work (and how the audiences, so-called YouTubers, respond to them). Thus, I ask "How is authenticity, in respect to exposing a vlogger's real life/reality, represented".

Research Material

My material consisted of 50 early pregnancy vlog videos; the majority focused on the surprise pregnancy, and most were teen pregnancy vlogs. Videos were created by 36 individual vloggers. The pregnancy vlogs were a small but dense and intense net of videos that focusing on one intimate revelation. The confessional style associated with the YouTube vlogging cultures seems to resonate well with the issue of the vlogs.

As some studies have shown (Raun 2010; 2012), the authentic self-disclosure seems to be an important theme in parts of YouTube such as in the context of transpeople vlogs. The same self-revelatory need may be expected in the surprise pregnancy vlogs. The reason I chose the unexpected pregnancy vlogs, including teenager pregnancy vlogs, was that the announcements were of unexpected pregnancies and the willingness to still share it with YouTubers resonated with

the research question about the authentic and real presented through the camera. Further, early pregnancy weeks were chosen for this phase of the study because the announcement of not yet to be seen pregnancies raises questions about the authenticity of these situations. However, in the category of pregnancy videos, these videos were posted throughout the pregnancies, and the visual evidence of the evolving state became observable and evident as time went by. Thus the "realness" of the announcements was easily observed. The final reason I chose this type of research material was that the mundane, every day and, at the same time for an individual, an exceptional issue, suggests further that the sharing of one's life through the web might be a sincere and important issue, which is different than the sheer notion of the light playfulness that the YouTube environment suggests.

Analysis

Extensive Use of Close-Up

> *"so yes back, you know, to the reality then, and this is real time I am speaking now" "vlogger "xxxjoelpolexxx"*

The close-up focused on the actor's face, which is a convention in classical film narration (see more on classical film narration; Bordwell 1985; Elsaesser & Hagene 2010).[16] Here, the close-up has traditionally been acknowledged as a way to center on the (main) character, on his or her dialogue and intimate conversation, and on his or her inner psychological life, and the shot often used in dramaturgical turning points (Bordwell & Thompson; 2001). The close-up highlights the most emotional moments of the character(s) life. Additionally, the use of emotional close-up explains why

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[16] The notion of the close-up here needs to be read in relation to classic film theory with the cinematic representation as a transparent representation of reality (see Elsaesser & Hagene 2010).

webcam communications in vlogs has so often been referred to as an intimate type of storytelling (see more on intimate storytelling Hillis 2009; Newman 2008; White 2006).

The focus on one's face in vlogs produces an intimate state in which the video performer seems to be having a conversation, not with the audience, but precisely with "You." This intimate addressing is a central feature in forming authenticity of vlogs. Newman (2008) proposed that the intimate close-up may also be spatially too "close" and produce (emotionally) too intimate of storytelling. However, the notion of intimate storytelling in vlogs has often been quite simple, as if the confessional revealing of oneself in a close-up makes is necessary for authenticity. In fact, the posing of a close-up, as if sharing an intimate story has become a common means of parody among YouTubers.

The close-up also affects the spectators' positioning (White 2006). Because the operator offers an impartial image of her, the spectator is asked to move closer and, in effect, encounters her own reflection on the screen. Accordingly, the "full picture" is never achieved. What White (2006) proposed is a reformulation of the webcam image as a representation of reality and of the operators' intimate, inner life; the webcam offers no easily observed intimate storytelling. Thus, the webcam representation works more like a mirror, which resonates with film theories concerning cinematic representations as a mirror and the close up as an image of spectators' own reflected selves (Elsaesser & Hagene 2010). What this means in the context of vlogging is that the "intimate" message in a vlog becomes intimate, but not before it is perceived as a one. Thus, the framing of an image as a close-up helps to frame the message as an intimate type, but certainly does not make it one.

The close-ups in vlogs do not just signal a potential intimate conversation. Rather they produce a certain type of realism that needs to be understood in relation to the classic film narration, which uses close-up sparely. This is why it highlights the intense

moments of narration so effectively (Bordwell & Thompson 2001). Interestingly it is just the opposite in vlog narrations in which the close-up is the most usual and often only type of shot. Thus, the narrational exception that classic film narration has in vlogs becomes ordinary. This notion underlies the enthusiasm of representing reality (and the operator's inner life). As Aymar (2011) analyzed, because vlogs aim to broadcast the mundane everyday life, their realism means and looks like a close-up on one's face.

Close-ups in vlogs resemble the so-called "talking heads documentaries" (Bordwell & Thompson 2001; 112) in which the close-up or medium close-up of a person records testimony of an event or issue. In producing the authenticity in documentaries, the talking head is used as evidence (see more on authenticity of documentaries Nichols 2010). In vlogs, the talking head similarly produces authenticity.

However, just as in talking heads documentaries, authenticity means a testimony of an issue of which the viewer needs to be persuaded. In vlogs the talking head produces the same testimony of an issue (here being pregnant) and a testimony of a person per se and of her presence. Thus, in vlogs, the close-up mediates both the authenticity of a person by representing her real presence (and through that the "real") and her testimony of an issue.

The vlogger, xxxjoelpolexxx, is in a medium close-up, which presents her as a talking head in a home environment in the vlog titled *"WE'RE PREGNANT! -The day we found out :)"* She stated the following:

> *"so yes back, you know, to the reality then, and this is real time I am speaking now"*

The line is stated after a heavy edited introduction to the video, which begins with her sitting on the toilet with her pregnancy test, followed by various shots of pregnancy tests devices, and a voiceover speculating whether they are positive. Finally, the

introduction ends with a shot of her husband holding the test in his hand.

Therefore, the line, "so yes back, you know, to the reality then, and this is real time I am speaking now," underlines that the edited introduction of the video is not her as "real" or not representing the real. In effect, what underlines the "reality" is the medium close-up shot and the talking head pose she takes in the home environment. Precisely, these types of shots are typically conceived as an authentic and confessional self-exposure in vlogs to the extent that they are often parodied. However, this vlog did not generate parodies of her confessional self-revealing. The mood of the video is rather playful, and the vlogger makes a rhyme, sticking her tongue out at the same time:

"I have a baby in my belly, I have a baby in my belly"

The vlogger plays with the viewer through this performance and through the mixture of heavy editing and confessional talking head, which produces a testimony of her real presence and of her pregnancy. As noted earlier, the close-up may become in a vlog intimate, but not necessarily, only when it is perceived as intimate. In this vlog, it seems that the playful self-revealing through close-up has succeeded and produced an intimate type of storytelling that was viewed and commented. Important to note, is that the absence of trollies and parodies may signify that this is not the type of "too intimate" storytelling Newman (2008) proposed. Often these "too" intimate messages are either enhance no attention or are a rich breeding ground for parodies.

The above excerpt illustrates the notion that the realism in vlogs looks like the close-up on one's face, at least for this particular vlogger. The close-up succeeded in producing a storytelling that was appropriate enough in this context. The excerpt also suggests is that the talking head produced a testimony, but first, a testimony of

vloggers real presence and of the occasion being real and only secondary, the testimony of her pregnancy.

Direct Address Straight to the Camera

The direct address technique is a situation in which the character looks in the direction of the audience and seems to be looking straight at the viewer. In the classic fiction film, direct address is rare, even to the extent that it has been referred as a "breaking of the fourth wall," the metaphor underlining the risky business of the fictional character addressing the viewer (Brown 2012).

Direct address is used in comedies and experimental films in which it unfolds the narrative flow (Renov 2004), which complicates the narrative structure and heightens the agency of the spectator. To this end, the technique is roughly equivalent to the use of an extradiegetic narrator, which is a term used in the classics of narrative theory and narratology (Chatman 1980; Fludernik 2005; Rimmon-Kenan 2002).

Direct address through the camera complicates the narrative structure and heightens the agency of the spectator. Therefore, the use of direct address can be understood as a transition from one narrative level to another (Rimmon-Kenan: 94), which asks for spectators' attention. Thus, the spectator becomes aware of the construction of the narrative and the narrators reliability, which affects her attitude and understanding of the story (Rimmon-Kenan 2002).

Again, this notion further complicates the narration of the story, and poses questions such as to whom and by whom it is told, what is the story that the narrative transmits, and what is the discourse; what are the means/expressions through which the story is communicated (Fludernik 2005; Genette 1990)? In other words, playing with narrative levels, by using direct address straight to the camera, questions the borderline between reality and fiction, and

suggests that there may be no reality apart from its narration (Rimmon-Kenan 2002).

However, this is precisely the type of direct address used in some documentary films in which vlogs find their antecedents. As Nash (2011) argued, documentary filmmaking is not a homogenic entity in itself; the technical choices depend on the types of documentaries we are speaking of. As she pointed out, referring to Nichols' classical documentary categorization, each mode differs in terms of narrative, truth claims, audience expectations, and film making technique (Nash 2011; Nichols 1991). My purpose here was not to the map the vlog as a certain type of documentary, but to notify that, to some extent, vlogs use techniques familiar in different types of documentaries. It was precisely these techniques of direct address that I was interested in.

As noted, in fiction (film), the direct address unsettles the fictional universe (and thus the coherent "reality" of it), but in documentary film, making the direct address is used for opposite purposes when creating authentic storytelling. As I mentioned, the talking head effect, originally in documentaries, helps construct evidence for the issue of the documentary and, through this, claims authenticity to the story. The effect is naturally not perfect without the direct address in which the person in focus addresses the viewer personally and shares her point of "truth."

In all of the YouTube vlogs under analysis, eye contact was directed toward the viewer, which suggests her eagerness to share her story with the viewer, at least on the visual level. That the vlogger addressed the viewer in person was intensified through her speech when using specifics forms of address, such as "You," "Fellow," and "You Guys." Precisely, the visual direct address, eye contact straight to the camera, was often heightened with the oral form of address. However, eye contact with the viewer may be suspended as well, which occurs when the vlogger gazed downward on her keypad.

Here, the visual mode of direct address was substituted by written forms of address in chat.

Interestingly, Bordwell and Thompson distinguish a certain technique of direct address used in many types of documentaries across media; the rhetorical form in which the subject of the film is a matter of opinion and not of any "truth" (Bordwell & Thompson 2001). Here, the filmmaker tries to persuade the viewer by addressing her openly and by appealing to the viewer's emotions[17]. In confessional vlogs, it seems that the direct address is used precisely to this end quite often. However, whereas in rhetorical form the filmmaker tries to make a difference and change the opinion of a viewer on a subject matter, in vlogs, the rhetorical enunciation is not applied to change opinions as such, but as an invitation to log into the vlog and watch the story. If the persuasion is successful, the viewer subscribes to the channel, which is naturally connected to the attention-seeking activity emblematic in DIY (Hodkinson 2007; Huberman et al. 2008; Ogan & Gagiltay 2006; Thelwall 2008) and vlogging environments in general (Hillis 2009; Senft 2008) and on YouTube, in particular (Burgess & Green 2009; Lange 2008). Thus, the persuasion with the help of direct address is a central means in the attention economy of YouTube.

That the vlogger addresses the viewer personally and shares her point of "truth" and, at the same time, asks for future attention as is evident in GabeandJesss' two chronologically posted vlog postings. First posting; named "SURPRISE?!?!?!"; records with a handheld camera the pregnancy test that the vlogger takes in her bathroom. The video includes the revealing of her pregnancy to the father of the baby. In the video, the vlogger addresses straight to the camera, but the talking head pose occurs only in the beginning. The video still seems to be a real documentation of her testing with a

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[17] The rhetorical form addressees the viewer openly, the subject of the (film) is a matter of opinion, not of any "truth." The filmmaker appeals to emotions of the viewer and finally, through all these aspect, tries to persuade the viewer (Bordwell & Thompson 2001; 122)

surprising result; pregnancy under birth control pills. Keeping this in mind, the sequel to the vlog posting is somehow surprising. In a video named "My Thoughts - The Truth" the vlogger literally shares her truth. She explains that the viewers understood that video number one was a hoax; her faking the pregnancy and the pregnancy test situation. This is why the vlogger aimed to tell, as she stated the "true side of the story" and "my side of the story."

What is interesting is that the aesthetical solution to shoot the "true story" of her pregnancy is a talking head conversational format in a close-up, straight to the camera. This solution seems to work if evaluated by the flow of the supportive comments of the viewers. Interestingly, the aesthetical solutions of direct address and the talking head format are in strict contrast to the earlier video that was filmed with a handheld camera and focused visually on the pregnancy test devices and on the becoming father lying on the bed. The vlogger herself appeared in the video only occasionally and even then in a medium shot.

The vlogger GabeandJesss makes use of the rhetorical form of direct address, straight to the camera to "You Guys" and of the talking head format. She also offers a testimony of an issue that she wanted to persuade the viewers; the issue being the unexpected pregnancy under birth control pills. The video was for "the people who have negative thoughts about this pregnancy" and the tendency of changing their opinion is strong, as stated at the end of the video. As she said, "I hope this video changes people's mind."

At the same time, the vlogger underlined the "truth;" the reality of herself and her life that she presented in the video and on her channel, not only of her pregnancy being true. This concept is finely illustrated in following three excerpts.

> *"But I am a real person with a real life and I hate that people don´t see that… and my videos are not for anyone's entertainment."*

> *"This is my life and I am gonna continue my life the way I am living it."*

> *"...And after saying all this you are gonna still not believe me and continue to make rumors... and continue to act you know my life better than I do. But I know the truth and this is the truth and everything you see is the truth. Like I have absolutely no reason no motivation to lie a bunch of people that I don´t know on YouTube."*

As stated, in vlogs, the rhetorical direct address is also used as an invitation to log into a vlog, and this is what this particular vlogger did as well. She also tells about the importance of sharing her life and the reciprocal activity it enhances:

> *"I really enjoy of putting my life out there for people to see and to relate because I get so many people telling me how much I have helped them".*

At the same time, when she wants to "tell the truth" with the help of direct address, she also makes a statement of how important it is to have an audience on her channel to "share" and "relate" (terms she used). That the direct address is used in vlogs to get attention for the vlogger and her story; is interestingly connected to Bruzzi's (2006) theory of a new documentary. She claimed that the notion of performative documentary helps explain the way recent documentaries (referring here to Michael Moore) take as their central target the production of the documentary itself.

Bruzzi (2006) stared with Nichols' notion of performative documentary, but took a step further and argued that performative documentaries complicate the representation of reality and, by this, they acknowledge a different notion of documentary "truth" if compared to a more traditional understanding of documentary as presenting and referring to the "real," outside the film itself.

In the performative mode of the documentary truth, Bruzzi (2006) used the word "honesty" (187), which is possible because it precisely focuses on the construction of the documentary story. Performance in this context is understood as an "enactment of the documentary

for the cameras" (2006: 187), and is the point at which vlogging and performative documentaries converge.

As analyzed, the ways the close-up and direct address are used in vlogs have centralized the presentation of the vlog and the vlogger herself. This method might distance the viewer from the vlogger and her story. However, the notion of performing as "enacting the documentary for the camera" (Bruzzi 2006: 187) helps explain, why this does not occur and why many vloggers unquestionably perform in their videos as presenting something real and authentic. It is the "honesty"—to use Bruzzi's term—of the video and of the vlogger's self-presentation on the video that seem constructed with the help of direct address and intimate close-up. Thus, the authenticity connected with DIY and vlogging cultures and their aesthetical styles (Aymar 2011; Creeber 2011; Newman 2008; Tolson 2010) may partly be because of this performative documentary storytelling that they make use of. Interestingly, Newman (2008) used the same term of "honesty" when describing the amateur aesthetics of vlogs: "Amateurism is an ideal form for personal expression because it brings a sense of raw immediacy and unfiltered honesty" (6).

It seems that honesty is a special type of truth and, through that, a certain kind of authenticity was achieved in GabeandJesss' second video:

> *"But I know the truth and this is the truth and everything you see is the truth. Like I have absolutely no reason no motivation to lie a bunch of people that I don´t know on YouTube."*

Most notably, the line, "and everything you see is true," tries to construct from this particular video and the first video titled, *"Surprise,"* an honest peak into the real. Both of these videos may be understood as performative types of documentaries in which the construction the documentary itself and the enactment for the camera were clearly present, only in different visual forms. The first focused on the bodily performance of the vlogger and the becoming

father, and showed the actual testing situation and the test device itself all precisely for the camera. The first video also tried to make a statement of this "true" by using these agents of narration such as the pregnancy test, father, that are supposed to show and ensure the viewers of the honesty of the video. It seems that the enactment of these agents for the camera was not enough to construct an honest documentation.

That the second video tries to "get things right" (a line the vlogger used), makes the narrational choices of the video interesting. This is precisely the intimate close-up and direct address mode that the vlogger relies on and the enactment for the camera occurs only through these. The second video also focused also on the construction of the story and her pregnancy saga; however, in an opposite way to the first video. Here, "honesty" was constructed by overflowing speech, which used often words as "true," "truth," "real," "real person," "real life," and "my life," and by camera that focused on the vlogger in a close-up and of her telling the truth. The enactment for the camera occurred by and through the vlogger's speaking head "honesty," which, in addition to viewers' comments, is where the authenticity of the video series seems to be achieved.

Static or Handheld Camera

When speaking of vlogging, the production constraints have a considerable role, which eventually affect the aesthetical choices and style of the video. The use of a static camera has become a stylistic convention that, at the same time, is a highly practical solution. The vlogger usually makes a video by herself, thus being the performer and photographer of the video at the same time. The camera is often located on top of the computer or on a tripod, which produces a static image. Often, the built in microphone of the camera is used for voice recording as well.

The handheld camera was also used in some of the vlogs studied here, which produced an unstable and jiggling image. The handheld camera technique originated in cinema-vérité documentaries, which is why its use is understood as producing an air of authenticity to the storytelling, an effect used also, for example, in mockumentaries (Bordwell & Thompson 2001). Often the use of handheld camera functions to create a subjective point-of-view as well (Bordwell & Thompson: 228). In the pregnancy vlogs studied here, the handheld camera was most often used when documenting "live pregnancy test" situations that took place in bathrooms. In these videos, the vloggers shared their excitement and anxiety about the results with the audiences. Often, the vloggers asked for help from "You Guys" when reading the test. The question that TweedleTee posed at the beginning of her "Live pregnancy Test 10 DPO" video, shot by a handheld camera is one example:

> *"Okay somebody please tell me I am not going crazy. Does anybody see what I see here?"*

The image in these shots was often jiggling, focusing on the testing device itself in real time, and documenting the timely progress of the test. That the handheld camera produced a subjective point-of-view was evident. The "thin line," a term used for positive pregnancy tests showing a line as an indicator of pregnancy, whether seen on the test or not, was the subject of these videos. The subjectivity of these videos that the handheld camera constructed was finely illustrated on the issue of "seeing the line." Most clearly, the subjective point-of-view was shown in cases in which the vlogger clearly sees the line, but from the viewer's point-of-view the line is nonexistent. Often, the technical quality of the camera is used as an excuse and the vlogger explains in detail how and where on the testing device she sees the evidence of her pregnancy. Clearly, the vlogger's subjective point-of-view of the test is highly different from that of the viewers.

Additionally, the way the handheld camera often frames the testing "stick" produces a highly subjective point-of-view, even though the camera is used to document and share the situation. This occurs when the shaky camera focuses on the screen of the test, and the rule of interpretation is left out of the focus. In this case, the viewer is left with the anxiety of what the result should look like and where and what type of line should show up. In these occasions, the viewer shares the "reality" of the situation with the vlogger. At the same time, showing off this reality highlights the subjectivity of it and, in effect, the final impossibility of sharing it through the camera. However, the authenticity of these testing situations is highly evident, which the partial image of the handheld camera helps to construct. The movements and shaking of the camera are also evidence of the vlogger's authenticity in terms of her presence; her jumping, crying, and laughing as she feels real/ authentic emotions that are transferred through the movements of the camera.

As GabeandJesss explained, when seeing the results of her live pregnancy test in a video titled *"SURPRISE?!?!?!"* shot with a shaky, handheld camera.

> *"I am like shaking"*

However, in the pregnancy vlogs studied here, stationary cameras were used more often compared than were handheld cameras. Even in videos that use a handheld camera, the tendency to show the "real" using a static camera was evident, as in the cases of vloggers xxxjoelpolexxx and GabeandJesss analyzed earlier.

In their research on presentation of truth and authenticity in documentary form, Spence and Navarro (2010) argued that the conventional procedures and techniques of documentaries help us distinguish them from other types of films. Precisely, these conventions help establish the authenticity of nonfictional representations (Spence & Navarro 2010). The use of a static camera is such a convention and, interestingly, it seems to have a

similar role when constructing the authenticity in the vlogs studied here.

As they point out, the static camera is used to reinforce the seriousness of the story and storytelling, which is typical of the documentary genre. By reinforcing this presentation of seriousness, the story gains its authenticity; this is the reason the technique is widely used in documentary interviews as well. Furthermore, the static camera may serve as a witness to an occurrence and as an internal or surrogate audience.

In most of the vlogs studied here, the camera was indeed used both as an audience and as a witness at the same time. In many vlogs, the audience became not a larger audience, but an interlocutor and an implied "you" of the story. In his study on YouTube vlogs on pain, Fox (2010) suggested that the camera gaze manifests the presence of an implied you and creates the sense of someone witnessing.

In the vlogs under analysis here, the most evident way the camera was used as a witness were the frequent shots in which the positive pregnancy test was shown to the camera, most often in a close-up. Here, the test was precisely shown for YouTubers. The vloggers often understate that, because the test is shown to "you" through a camera, the pregnancy is real. The camera and, through that, the audience were asked for witnesses of pregnancy and its realness. That the witness was asked for the pregnancy test is evident because the videos under analysis here were early pregnancy vlogs. Later on in pregnancy the vlogs, the camera as a witness was asked usually for the growing "belly" in so-called "belly shots," which constructed the authenticity of the pregnancy further.

That the camera functions as a silent witness or "you" is transformed from time-to-time. Specifically, this occurs when the operator needs to adjust the camera (e.g., adjust the lens, move the position of the camera, turn the microphone of the camera on/off) or when the shot seems to be "wrong," such as showing only part of

the head in the talking head format or the voice recording of the camera is too low. However the "wrong" shot does not break the narrative flow and the authenticity of the vlog, rather, it seems to intensify it.

In effect, the adjustment heightens the presence of the interlocutor. This is often understated by the performer herself with explanations of how the adjustment will help to "see more clearly," etc. Thus, the adjustment eventually affects the storytelling. As in the case of the vlogger MeganAndBaby XOXOXO; a 16 year old teenager in her early pregnancy weeks. She used a built in microphone that hardly transmitted any sound. She also often whispered so that anyone else in the house could not follow. Because it was so hard to listen her revelation, the videos seems to be a sincere documentation of her situation. She explains on her video "5-6 Weeks Pregnant & Belly Shot" that she has not revealed the pregnancy to anyone. It is the shared secrecy and hard-to-hear audio that constructs the authenticity of the video. The messages about the "realness" of her and of her pregnancy are strikingly nonexistent, and it seems that the viewer's believe her authenticity.

What is interesting is that, in some vlogs, the camera as a witness and as an audience are both used and denigrated at the same time. In these videos, the pregnancy is announced to a YouTube public and "You Guys," but at the same time, the situation is withheld from outside of the YouTube environment. For example, bibiandbaby12, a 17 year old girls has just found out she is pregnant, in her "First Pregnancy Vlog : 1-4 Weeks." She talks utterly about her pregnancy, describes the symptoms carefully, shows the pregnancy test device to the camera, and even writes on the written introduction for the video how much she wants to share the pregnancy with "you all:"

> *"Heyy everyone im Brianna im 17 and i just found out i was pregnant on July 1 2012 . Its a bit of shock but all i can do is enjoy it :) so i hope to share my experience with you all :)"*

However, interesting is that, in the video, she reveals that she has told just a few people about the situation and that she is not going announce the pregnancy to anyone else. As she stated on the video:

> *"And I didn't wanna to all the people, like I am not gonna go around to people and, hey, I'm pregnant. Hm, no" and "Like I am not gonna tell to people I am pregnant. Like that's not gonna to happen".*

Thus, even though the camera and YouTube audiences may serve here as witnesses, they are indeed treated as a kind of safe witness. However, their role seems to be important because the vlogger asks the viewers to interact and share the situation, to subscribe, send comments, and questions, which are types of requests common in other pregnancy vlogs studied here. As she wrote in the beginning of the video:

> *"...I came here to share my experience not get judged or hated on. Comment? Subscribe?"*

It is the asking for comments and sharing of the situation that constructs her vlog as an authentic story about her (real) pregnancy. To understand why the notion of static camera functioning as a witness and as an internal or surrogate audience is so important, we need to relate it to the concept of confession. The recent understanding of mediated confession builds still heavily on Foucault's notion of confession making as a ritual that unfolds the power relationship (Elden 2005, Magnus & Feijer 2013). He stated,

> *"One does not confess without the presence (or virtual presence) of a partner who is not simply an interlocutor but an authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console, and reconcile" (Foucault 1979: 62).*

What this means in the current context is that the vlogger needs the presence of an interlocutor (as an authority) and it is the (static) camera that helps construct this authority as a witness and an

internal or surrogate audience. However, the power relationship and the authority that the interlocutor is supposed to exercise in vlogging environments is complex. On the other hand, the audience can hardly be understood as possessing any authority, especially if the vlogging and the confessional act in that context are understood as self-revelatory statements with no intentional addressees. However, as several studies on YouTube communication (Burgess & Green 2009; Lange 2008) and on vlogging communications in general, Griffith & Papacharissi (2010) revealed it is precisely the attention that is asked for in one's messages in these environments. In this respect, the audience exercises a highly effective type of power when deciding who gets the attention. Thus, the possible judgment, punishment, forgiving, consolidation, and reconciliation that the interlocutor is supposed to make takes place in the attention economy of a specific environment; on the large scale of attention ratings of the video and on the micro level of this environment as an individual posting to the video.

On the other hand, Renov (1996) pointed out in his study on first-person video confessions between 1970-1990 that the confession maker seeks an expressive release and not forgiveness. This release occurs in the form of dialogue between the imaged subject and a present, but un-imaged, interlocutor. In Renov's study, it is precisely the presence of the camera that signals the virtual presence of a partner and "spur(s) self-revelation" (89). In effect, confessional videos enhance reciprocal confessions that are mutually exchanged. He also notes that it is precisely this exchange that subverts the authority Foucault claimed for the interlocutor because the places of the confessor and confessant are reciprocal. If this reciprocal relationship is understood as a social, co-productive confessional narrative (Strangelove 2010) in which the confessional self-revelation generates counter confessions (Brooks 2005; deMan 1979; Paasonen 2007), it proves that this reciprocal process is working on the studied early pregnancy vlogs. Often, the vlogger received counter confessions; individual pregnancy announcements

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from her audience. For example, the announcement of the 18-year old teenager in "2011TeenageMom" on her "4 week VLOG!" generated the following:

"You can do it! I just found out I'm pregnant on Yesterday, I'm excited as well! Congrads, and good luck!"; By "NiceysAhDoll"

And

"ahhh congrates from me we are like the same amout pegos :) u also cant eat peanuts :X"; By "misslfrost

Renov underrated the authority of the confession maker from other perspective as well; because the confession maker controls the camera, the entire (confessional) self-revelation occurs by and through controlled direct address to the camera (Renov 1996). This is in line with the notion that vloggers control actively over their show (Hillis 2009; Senft 2008)

The virtual presence of the interlocutor; the self-revealing of the confession maker; and the controlling power that the confession maker exercises are intertwined in YouTube as well. The camera plays both the role of the audience and of a witness. The confession maker performs because of them, but she also has the power to control her own performance. Thus, in these vlogs it seems that the virtual presence of an interlocutor does not impose the authority over the confession maker as the Foucauldian understanding of a confessional act suggests. This notion becomes evident in the next step of the analysis, which concentrated on the character and the impression of her being the creator and shooter of the vlog alone.

Impression of Character Filming Alone

The "confession" seemed to happen in private in all of the studies videos with two exceptions. Two of the vloggers had their older children; one had the baby sitting on her lap while the other had the

child playing around her; however, child was framed out of the image almost entirely. Both vloggers excused themselves for being not alone and stated that the children did not understand or they focused on something else. Thus, their vlogging occurred in private in that sense that there was no one listening to the speech or at least no one who understood it.

The DIY cultural understanding of people being the real creators of the artifacts is literally present in these pregnancy vlogs in which the vlogger 'alone' is also the only shooter of the video. This becomes evident from the phrases by MeganAndBaby XOXOXO explaining, for example, the pre arrangements for shooting the video, such as

> *"I had to shut the door so that anybody can´t hear"*

> *"I have to whisper since everybody are sleeping".*

Additionally, the environments of the videos often suggest that the vlogger is doing the shooting alone, such as the environment of bathroom in "live pregnancy test" videos. The way the speaker of the video as "me" and her utterance to "You" is constructed suggests that the filmmaker of the video indeed is the vlogger herself and most evidently alone. That the vlogger is indeed the only source of the message seems to be a mutual contract between the viewers.

In the vlogs studied here, this type of authenticity was never under suspicion. This resonates with Bordwell & Thompson's (2001) notion of rhetorical type of documentary and the way they try to persuade the viewer of the reliability and authenticity of the documentary itself. One way for this is to use "arguments of the source" (Bordwell & Thompson 2001: 122) so the film comes from reliable people and the viewer should be persuaded because of that fact. As they proposed, "the people who made it and those who narrate it try to give the audience the impression that they are intelligent, well informed, sincere, trustworthy..." (Bordwell & Thompson 2001: 122).

In the vlogs studied here, the impression of the character shooting the video alone was precisely a way to persuade the viewers of the trustworthy and sincerity of the vlogger and her message. As earlier noted, the sincerity of the vlogger and her message is, at the same time, created with the use of direct address. Bruzzi's notion of the performative documentary and the importance of the character's enactment for the camera need to be understood in connection with this use of storytelling, which is associated with the rhetorical type of documentary.

At first glance, they seem to be incompatible; the rhetorical type of documentary is associated with persuading the viewer to adopt an opinion and of making an explicit argument. Conversely, Bruzzi's notion seems to be just the opposite, the performative documentary asks for attention for the production of the documentary and not any explicit arguments about the reality outside it. However, at least in the context of the vlogs studied here, it seems that the vloggers' performances for the camera and the arguments about the reliability of the vloggers' as the source of information (about herself) were necessarily intertwined. They were coined because the vlogger constructed and acted her performance and, at the same time and because of that performance, she persuaded the viewers about her sincerity.

That the statements she made were perceived as real or, at least trustworthy, can be understood by the peculiar connections with the reality representation that vlogs pursue. Vloggers' performances construct their realities and trustworthiness as a source of information. In this respect, any type of performance might as well be understood as constructing this reality inside a vlog. However, because the vlogs seem to use common generic narrational ways rather strictly, as studied so far, the context of the vlog defines whether the vlogger's performance and trustworthiness, as a source of information, are in balance (see on trust in DIY environments; Dutton & Shepherd 2006). An important way to build this trust and,

thus, the authenticity of the vlog is to give the impression that the vlog is made and shot only by the vlogger alone.

Rough Film Quality

The impression that the vlog is a solitude creation of the vlogger herself is heightened occasionally by the rough image quality of the vlog message. As proposed, a central features in vlogging intimate aesthetics is the low technical quality of the videos (Aymar 2011; Creeber 2011). From that perspective, it is curious that in half of the studied vlogs, the technical quality was low. Often, the reason was explained either in the written introduction of the videos or at the beginning of the video. As the vlogger MandeeTheGreat explained in her video, "Guess what?...................... I'm pregnant!!"

> *"I put this together rather quickly so I apologize for my head being cut out and all of that. Please pray that our baby is all right. One minute I am excited and optimistic and the next I am worried out of my mind and sad. Thanks for watching and please subscribe and comment!!"*

Also MissMommyMaddiLarie, a 15-year old teenager told in the introduction of the video "Pregnant Teen, Week 8 & How i told my boyfriend and Parents"

> *"Sorry about the really crappy quality my webcam sucks and i couldnt find my memory card for my camera. So this is my first vlog... Ill probablly make a couple , if i get enough views and/or feedback ill continue making more.."*

When analyzing the use of camera, whether handheld or static, I found that the "wrong" shots or bad quality of the video heightened, to some extent, the authenticity of the vlog message.[18] The rough image quality helped construct the impression of the situation as an authentic and real one. For example in MandeeTheGreat's video in

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[18] This occurred when the camera was functioning as a silent witness of the vloggers confession.

which half of the vlogger's head was framed out of the image, the static camera underlined that the confession was given in private and that the camera was only a witness and plain recorder of the situation. The untraditional positioning of the camera assured the viewer that the vlog was an authentic peak into the vlogger's situation. Just as the vlogger wrote, referring that she had not spent time on editing the video:

"I put this together rather quickly"

However, once the occasion is shared, the "realness" and authenticity of the vlogger and her message becomes a question of relevant comments that the message enhances. The rough image quality is one way to build reliability of the message, and this is a way to enhance attention and participation of the audience. However, only half of the pregnancy videos studied here made use of the low quality of the video. The remaining videos were well shooted with good technical quality. Three videos were almost professionally shooted and made fluent use of editing techniques.

The technical quality of many vlogs studied here evolved over time. In early vlogs, the phase under analysis, quality was often low whereas the late pregnancy videos were sharper and framed the speaking subject in a more traditional way. The late videos also made more use of editing.

Overall, the technical quality was low in many videos; however, not to the extent that it would have been a common denominator. The evolvement of the technical quality also proved important. Foremost, this occurred in the long-term vlogs that contained many videos. This finding is naturally connected to the vlogger's popularity and her status as a "real YouTuber."

Even though there seemed to be no "lingua franca" in early pregnancy videos studied here, with respect of the technical quality of the videos, it seems that the vlogs of good technical quality were

also the longer lasting ones, meaning that they also attracted audiences (Müller; 2009). However, the good quality does not mean that it contained any extra demanding filmmaking skills. A good video is understood as simple as an easily observable video.

To my understanding, it is the high quality of the image that blurs the question of authenticity and realness of the YouTube vlogging videos. This factor needs to be seen in relation to the DIY cultural favoring of amateurism in contrast to professionalism in which the creation of the real amateur is understood as original and authentic. Aesthetically, this is often understood as a rawness of the image because of the relatively poor technology used. However, the original low aesthetics of the vlogs originated on the evolving webcam cultures of the 1990s when the technical quality of the equipment offered few options, and the easiest way was to transmit video that was "harsh." Equally, today, the easiest way to share videos on YouTube is to use editing software that almost automatically customizes the video as a good looking, or at least good looking enough.

These good-looking videos are still to be understood as authentic and real pregnancy videos as they seem to contain no faking of or inauthentic authenticity (Burgess & Green; 2009). As noted, these videos were often made by long-time YouTubers who were a type of professional in this environment (Burgess & Green 2009). The realness and authenticity of these long-term vloggers has grown over time because of their active participation, alongside the improved quality of videos.

No Post Production or Editing Techniques

Some early pregnancy vlogs studied here made, at least, some use of post-production and editing techniques. Because most of the videos used overwhelmingly static camera and confessional speech using direct address to the camera, the editing and post production was

most evident in the introductions. These introductions often contained texts, photographs, prerecorded video, and music. The versatile elements in the introductions were used mainly in three different ways. Vloggers constructed their vlogs as a serial of the pregnancy, which made each video an easily recognizable part of the timely evolving narrative. For example, TweedleTee10's introduction of her pregnancy vlog begins, not surprisingly, with a shot of word "pregnancy." Then she shows in a series of medium close-up shots of her belly, her measuring it, dancing at the same time, then weighting herself, and finally writing the pregnancy weeks, which the video is about to tell. This type of introduction suggests that the vlogger is committed enough to provide more videos under the same theme, and that the authenticity of her vlog is constructed partly with the help of this serial quality.

Second, these introductions help construct a pre-story of the vlogger and her family. A good example is the introduction of the vlogger allharr, who edited a collage of photographs marking the traditional lifetime milestones/transition points of her life. Interesting to note, is that these ritualized milestones are often photographed in personal photographs in family albums (Holland & Harpin 2008; Mendelson & Papacharissi 2011). Here, allharr chose engagement rings, the wedding picture, the belly shot when expecting her first child, a picture of the newborn, a picture of her positive pregnancy test for the second baby, and a photograph of herself holding her belly, a type of belly shot as well. Each of these transition points were explained by written text on the video, except for the final belly shot.

Thus, the pre story sets the parameters of the narrative for the video to come; a narrative about her pregnancy in a traditional autobiographical family documentary format. The images she used were such traditional transition point photographs that feeds the atmosphere of the introduction as a type of self-revelatory, autobiographical documentary. In effect, this raises the expectations

for the video as that type of documentary as well. Thus, the pre story constructs the authenticity of vlog as a self-revelatory autobiographical narration.

These intros exemplify further how the "new" and "old" media environments imitate each others on aesthetical level (Kim 2012). Some of these vlogs made use of the televisual aesthetics, by way of borrowing the program formats from the television. Here it seems that the use of the intros was a way to persuade the viewers that the vlog video will be a quality product (Kim 2012), given the tv-serial nature of the vlog.

Mise en Scène of Domestic Space

That the videos were shot in private places by the performer herself, positioning herself near the camera and uttering/confessing her innermost feelings is the cultural image of "mediatized bedroom cultures" (the term Burgess & Green propose 2009: 26; see also Creeber 2011; Hartley 2008). As Creeber (2011) described, "a lone individual in the comfort of his own (generally unobserved) private environment" (597). Precisely, this authentic bedroom mise en scène is understood as one of the strongest qualities of amateur webcam videos, and is a fundamental part of the imagery of the revealing the self and confessional speech. This bedroom scene has become iconic and bears such meanings as to the authenticity of the story and authentic first-person narration. Interestingly, because of the strong iconic connotations, this scene is often used ironically; for example, on YouTube within the context of confessional video diaries. However, the notion of the confessing self in a bedroom is not a new phenomenon. Abbot noted that in diary-fiction, the "room" is a conventional way to emphasize the theme of isolation of the I-narrative (Abbott; 1984). In this sense, these self-shot amateur confessional videos have their antecedents in written diary narration where the "I" confesses her innermost feelings alone in a room.

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The bedroom mise en scène was evident in the vlogs studied here as well. In addition to the bedroom, videos introduced spaces such as the living room, kitchen, corridor, and home office. All of these places situated evidently in vloggers' home environments, which are traditional environments in vlogs. Particularly, the teenage vloggers were often sitting behind a closed door that was shown in the background. Usually, closing the door was reasoned on the video as the need for privacy or quietness.

Interestingly, though there was a new private space introduced in these pregnancy vlogs. The bathroom was the location for videos documenting "live pregnancy tests." This is somehow surprising because sharing the bathroom is highly intimate indeed. However, the authenticity of the testing was achieved with the use of this environment effectively. The test was not only told or reported, but the progress of it was also shown, so there was not much hesitation left about the authenticity of the situation.

These different types of home environments affected the understanding of the video as an authentic one. For one, these environments helped the audience understand the video as authentic because they appeared to be normal looking non-polished home environments. As noted, the extremely personal is often understood in vlogs as authentic and the environment of a home is an extremely personal place. As White proposed, at the core of the vlogging genre is the opening of one's life in the vlogger's home environment (White 2006). Thus, the ground for the "authenticity" in these vlogs was constructed through the traditional use of mise en scène, which took place within the vloggers' intimate and personal environments of their homes.

Also, the "peek into a room" authenticity (White 2006) where life-cams represent individuals in their home environments in unedited style came up, which understates the momentous. The framing of the environment did not seem preplanned (often even somehow disturbing objects in the background, the messiness of the shot

visually unbalanced). Thus, it often appeared as if the confessional vlogging took place suddenly and unplanned, in an unedited home environment. This technique affected the position of the viewers as they can take short look into the vlogger's reality, but are constantly voyering. Interestingly though is that the look provided is as the vlogger wants it, the way she wants to construct her authenticity. However, from time-to-time viewers commented on the environment of a video in a way that the vlogger did not expect. The following discussion was on the vlog "4 Weeks 1 Day Pregnant" by abbyb0416, and it illustrates well how viewers not only listened to the vlogger's talking head but also actively looked at her home environment.

> bdplatify: "hi! Funny question: what is the color of the paint on your walls??? Btw. I am 4 weeks, 1 day, and that's how I found your video:)"

> abbyb0416: "Cool, I'm glad you found me :0) I have no clue about the color! It's at Home Depot and it's by Behr, that's all I really know. We painted it about 2 years ago so the paint cans are long gone!"

Overall, the intimate, homemade aesthetics of webcam narrations, in the form of traditional domestic mise en scène, emphasized real life connections. The authenticity of the story was achieved through this "realness" that the camera seemed to purely transmit.

There is no question that this interest toward the home and home-like mise en scènes needs to be understood in connection with the more general interest in amateur media production and, specifically, in video and camcorder productions, which has been understood as favoring the "home mode" (Buckingham 2009: 47; Willet 2009: 15). Here, the video is used to represent the private domestic life, such as everyday occurrences and family events. It can be understood as an "authentic, active media production for representing everyday life" (Moran 2002: 59).

As proposed by Buckingham (2009), the history of the home-mode concept suggests that it might not be understood as such an innocent mean of representing everyday life. Particularly, in the context of family photography and early home movies, it has been understood as a kind of an ideological tool in constructing appropriate and selective representations of life stories of the family and the individual (Chalfen 1987; Zimmerman 1995). What is interesting here is that, in spite, of the increase in media production opportunities at the grass root level, the represented content represented may follow rather strictly ideological and cultural norms and socially expected parameters (Buckingham 2009).

In the videos studied here, this selectivity of representing private life was present as well and can be understood as containing this aspect of constructing a socially appropriate private domestic life, at least on two levels (as studied through the represented mise en scène). First, the "live pregnancy test" mise en scènes illustrated the selectivity of these representations. As noted, the "realness" of the recorded private lives was constructed here through mise en scènes that the camera seemed to transmit. These "live pregnancy test" situations took place in intimate spaces of bathroom and toilettes; however, were shot in a way that the spectator was not positioned "too close." This technique implies that the situation will not be constructed as being "too real." Thus, what occurred in these videos was that a socially appropriate way of representing private life seems to be that of getting real and authentic, but not too much.

The socially appropriate private life was constructed on another level as well. The home (or home-like) environments seemed to be strikingly similar; cozy western middle-class environments. One would have suspected that the environments that these vlogs represented would be much more versatile, given their theme. This finding suggests that, even though the technical facilities for capturing and sharing one's personal lives are more affordable than ever before, it may be that these represented domestic lives are still

narrations by and for the western middle class, or at least favor visually that way of living, in this studied context[19]. Interestingly, this western domination has been noted elsewhere in the context of trans people vlogs among (male) vloggers in the United States (Raun 2010); and research has suggested that YouTube is U.S.-dominated (Burgess & Green 2009) and racially homogenic (Jenkins 2009). Thus, it might be that a gap still exists between those with the technical and social affordances to share one's private life and those still lacking this luxury. Certainly, it seems that the socially proper environment to represent one's private life is understood as that of being cozy and looking a middle-class private environment.

The mediatization process takes place in and through recognition in the networking environments and may partly explain why these domestic environments are such look alikes (see more on mediatization in Chapter 6). As suggested in theory, the recognition that we seek, both as individuals as and as a part of a social group, is central. This recognition may take place on three levels, the intimate, the public, and the social spheres (see Honneth 2006). Regarding networking sites, it is argued that this recognition may take place on all these levels at the same time, as Lundby (2008) pointed out:

> *"In a mediatized society, the very representation and visibility of an individual or of a group may already serve as a means for regognition, both as a private, public and social person. Many social networking media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, etc. are not only forums for communication and contact, but also media for the recognition of various private, social, and public achievements." (150)*

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[19] However, it has been suggested that, because of the increased affordability and easy-to-use video technology, the use of home mode may as well result to less selective representations (Moran 2002; van Dijk 2005).

Thus the reason to expose such look alike environments may also be that the vloggers are seeking recognition on all these levels, and the homemode represented may be explained as a recognition-seeking activity on the social sphere; as a social person, as a part of a social group. The social group that asked for recognition and inclusion was that of pregnant western teenage YouTube vloggers, but more importantly, a group that shares the same visual parameters in their home environments; those implying of the western middle-class way of living. Thus, the earlier noted discussion about the color of the paint serves as a way to build social inclusion within this group by sharing the same taste and (aesthetical) ways of living. Interestingly enough, the unsuccessful recognition on the level of social sphere is understood exactly as violating the ways of life (Hjarvard 2013; Honneth 1996).

Thus, the authenticity on the level of mise en scène in these vlogs is a complex mixture of "realness" that consists of the camera as if purely recording real life in a domestic scene; in a homemode scene that connotates socially appropriate private life, which, eventually, can be explained as a recognition-seeking activity to be part of a social group.

Conclusion

As suggested, "Theory is constantly at risk of slipping into the domain of fictionality by our too quickly dismissing the possibility of the transparent, real, and authentic in even YouTube´s more premediated performance videos" (Strangelove 2010: 79). This study intended to focus on authenticity in respect to presenting real life and reality in the context of the vlogging cultures of YouTube.

I grounded my interest of authenticity in DIY environments on studies that understood authenticity and reality representations as emblematic for DIY cultures (Bruns 2008; Jenkins 2006; Lister et al. 2009; Miller 2011) and, particularly, for YouTube and its

vlogging cultures (Strangelove 2010; Wesh). As suggested, the amateur vlog videos of YouTube have been understood as representing "more real" compared to, for example, television (Strangelove 2010; 65).

The theoretical argument was built on the earlier research of vlogs as sites for intimate revelations, connections, and self-disclosure (Griffith & Papacharissi 2010; Kuntsman 2012; Raun 2012). The webcam narration was understood as mediating "a glimpse into the "real" world" of authentic feelings and emotions (Creeber 2012: 598) and as a co-constructive representation between spectator and operator (White 2006). Additionally, the camera-based narration was understood playing a central role in constructing the authenticity of the narration in vlogs (Miller 2010). Finally, authenticity was understood as a relational judgment that is different in each media context (Tulson 2010).

Building on these arguments, the research focused on the question of what is meant in revealing the authentic and real. A central concern of the above-mentioned studies proved to be the dilemma of representation itself. Thus, I became interested in how authenticity or real is represented, which was why I focused on the representation itself and its aesthetics. I asked, "How is authenticity, in respect to exposing vloggers' real lives, constructed?

I was not interested on the authenticity and its relation to reality in itself, but of the representation of these concepts. Thus, my aim was to track the traces of reality of vloggers' real lives. These traces of real life were understood as constructing authenticity in confessional autobiographical storytelling. The research material consisted of 50 early pregnancy vlog videos by 33 individual vloggers in YouTube.

Building on the research literature on features of intimate aesthetics, I found seven variables, which formed the seven units in my analysis. These units included the use of (1) close-up, (2) direct

address, (3) static camera, (4) impression of the vlogger as the only creator, (5) domestic space of mise en scène, (6) rough image quality, and (7) no use of post-production or editing.

On the grounds of my analysis, I found that the vloggers made some use of the so-called intimate aesthetics of webcam narration and, through that, constructed authenticity both for their vlogs and for themselves. This occurred in five units of analysis: (1) close-up, (2) direct address, (3) static camera, (4) impression of the vlogger as the only creator (5) domestic space of mise en scène. However, the use of relatively good image quality and the use of post-production and editing techniques were in contrast to the intimate aesthetics claimed typical to vlogs. Thus, on the ground of analysis, two features of intimate aesthetics proved not to work in this research context: (6) rough image quality; and (7) no use of post-production or editing.

The first step of the analysis concentrated on the use of close-up. The authenticity of the vlogger and of her vlog was created using close-ups, which signalized intimate addressing and conversation. The focus on one's face produced an intimate state in which the vlogger had a conversation, not with the audience, but with "You." The close-up was used also in creating the talking head testimony. Here, the close-up constructed both the authenticity of a person by representing her real presence (and through that the "real") and her testimony of an issue that underrated the "reality" of the narration. The close-up also produced a type of realism with respect to the underlining enthusiasm of representing the "real." All these ways of using the close-up constructed the narration that centered on the vlogger and her exposing intimate revelations of her reality.

The authenticity of the vlog was created using direct address straight to the camera. In all of the vlogs under analysis, eye contact was directed toward the viewer, which suggests that the vlogger addressed the viewer personally and aimed to share her "truth"/reality with the viewer. The rhetorical enunciation used in

different types of documentaries was also in use here and was most evident in the direct address. In this case, the rhetorical enunciation was not only applied to make testimony of an issue that the vloggers aimed to persuade the viewer, but also as an invitation to log into the vlog and watch the story.

The vlogs made use of performative documentary storytelling (Bruzzi 2006) as well in which the enacting for the camera was characteristic. Most evidently, this was achieved with the use of direct address and intimate close-up. Here, the vloggers performing themselves in front of the camera and, through this performance, represented their realities. Through that, the vloggers constructed their situations as real and authentic. Bruzzi used the term "honesty" in contrast to the documentary "truth;" it was this type of honesty that constructed the authenticity in these vlogs.

The third class that the analysis focused on was creating authenticity using the camera. This analysis found that the static camera was used more often compared to handheld camera. The static camera reinforced the seriousness of the confession, and constructed the authenticity of the narration. The tendency to show the "real" using a static camera was evident. The static camera was also used as a witness and as an audience; the vlogger confessed her truth for a camera and asked for attention.

The fourth class of analysis was the impression of the vlogger as the only creator. In all of the vlogs studied, the vlogger was alone in the shooting situation. That the vlogger was the only source of the message proved to be a mutual contract between the viewers and vloggers. The impression of shooting alone was connected to the rhetorical type of documentary (Bordwell & Thompson 2001: 122) and the way they tried to persuade the viewer of the reliability and authenticity of the story using arguments of the source. The understanding that the vlogger is the only source of the information was one way to persuade the viewers of the trustworthiness and

sincerity of the vlogger and her message. This, in effect, constructed the authenticity of the vlog.

The fifth unit of analysis was the low technical quality of the videos. The impression that the vlog was a solitude creation of the vlogger herself was heightened occasionally by the rough image quality. This technique was also used as a way to build authenticity of the message and, by this, enhance audience attention and participation.

Interestingly, low video quality proved to be valid in less than half of the videos analyzed. More common were videos that were well shot and edited. Thus, it proved that the "low harsh looking aesthetics" is not the only way to pursue a vlog that is taken seriously. The good looking videos under this analysis were understood by viewers as authentic and real pregnancy videos, often made by long-time YouTubers who were a type of professionals in this environment. Thus the vlog, a creation of a single individual aiming to tell an authentic storytelling of her life, appears as a good quality video, of which is easy to watch and enjoy. To my understanding, it is exactly this improved technical quality of the image that has blurred the question about the authenticity and realness of YouTube vlogging videos. On the ground of these videos, authenticity that has been connected with the "harsh look" may be outdated, as "good looking" videos were understood by viewers as authentic and real.

The sixth unit of analysis, no use of postproduction or editing techniques, proved not to be valid. This finding was achieved in two different ways within the introductions of the videos. First, vloggers created their vlogs as serial production, which made each video an easily recognizable part of the timely evolving narrative. Second, the introductions helped construct a pre story of the vlogger and her family. The pre story constructed the authenticity of vlog as a self-revelatory autobiographical narration and set the parameters to interpret the video itself. The use of post production for intros was also understood as a way to persuade the viewers of the quality of

the forthcoming video, by having resemblance with commercial television formats (Kim 2012).

In contrast, the intimate aesthetics worked on the elements of mise en scène. Videos were shot in domestic and private places by the performer herself, positioned near the camera. In addition to the the bedroom mise en scène, the videos introduced spaces such as the living room, kitchen, corridor, home-office, and balcony. A relatively new place of vlogging was introduced, that of a bathroom in "live pregnancy test" videos. In these pregnancy vlogs, the intimate, homemade aesthetics of webcam narrations, in the form of domestic mise en scène, constructed the "real life" presentation of the vlogger, and thus, the authenticity of the story. The authenticity was constructed by exposing one's real life in a domestic environment.

Overall, it seemed that authenticity was achieved in the vlogs studied here partly according to the intimate aesthetics of vlogging, but also in more modern ways such as making the vlog a kind of a good looking serial with the good technical quality of the video and skilled use of post-production and editing. However, these features did not destroy the understanding of a vlog as authentic, real life presentation about the vloggers' pregnancies. What they did was propose a new understanding of good looking but still sincere confessional vlog in a versatile environment of YouTube.

Discussion

This chapter suggests further research on the authenticity in respect to exposing the "real life" in DIY environments, and in YouTube; specially, the aesthetical means of creating this authentic and real. More precisely, the concept of performance in vlogging and the ways it enhances reality representation needs further research. In the following, I concentrate briefly on each of these.

The new authenticity needs to be understood in relation to the notion of 'the cultural production of the real' (van de Port, 2011)[20] of which the central question is. "How do sensations of the 'real' come into being?" Here, the "real" is not understood as something solely revealed or transmitted, but as something that is essentially constructed in the process of mediation/narration. It is claimed that we "upgrade our reality definitions through rhetorical, aesthetic and performative practices" (van de Port 2011; 85-86) and that the sensation of creating the 'real', for example in DIY environments, is achieved when concentrating on the medium itself and on the technology of the mediation.[21] Here, the medium is not naturalized or hidden, but "revealed for what it is, in all of its human-made, technically-put-together manner" (van de Port 2011; 84).

It seems that the visibility of the medium itself and the understanding of its technical constraints help explain this finding. Specifically, that the intimate aesthetics are working on some points of early pregnancy vlogs, but not in all, and that still these vlogs are understood as authentic by the viewers. That is, the features of the intimate aesthetics analyzed call attention to the medium itself and its limitations. If we follow van de Port's argument, this focus onto the technical constructiveness creates the sense of the real. By using fluent editing and "good looking" videos these limits become faded, and the "realness" may become questioned.

Some aspects of intimate aesthetics, such as editing videos and relatively good film quality, have become such lingua franca and transparent in audiovisual storytelling that we may not notice them. This is why the trace of the vlogger/performer and her "human hand" is not as visible in these points. Thus, the claims for upgraded authenticity and inauthentic authenticity of YouTube, in other

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[20] Van de Port (2011) also used the term 'processes of authentication' (86).
[21] This naturally is closely associated with White's (2006) notion of the agency in webcam narration and the ways it helps, not to transmit the "real life" of a vlogger, but serve as a mirror-like co-construction between spectators' and performers' realities.

words "not so real," are also a question of identifying the aesthetics of narration and, through this, the technical visibility of the medium itself. Once the mediation of the vloggers' real lives becomes transparent, it is easy to question its relation to reality and to the authenticity of the story.

Interestingly, viewers did not question the authenticity of the narration in these good looking videos. This notion needs to be understood in connection with the ideas that the awareness of the media technology, "the real of media technology" (van de Port 2011; 84), does not necessarily replace the real and the authentic representation, to which van de Port pointed as a "real real" (ibid). This was what happened in the vlogs studied here; even though at some point, the viewer became aware of the technology, it did not destroy the understanding of the vlog as a real life narration of one's pregnancy. The mediated real may still be real.

Finally, the notion that the real comes into being in the act of revealing the mediation process helps explain why the Bruzzis' (2006) notion of "acting out for the camera" in performative documentaries proved to be so important in the vlogs analyzed. Specifically, this acting out was evident with the use of direct address toward the viewer and intimate close-up, both of which the reality of the vlogger and her narrations (in Bruzzis' term "honesty"). To my understanding, this was possible because performing through the camera was foregrounded and made visible.

The understanding of the real becomes more complicated when the image/screen is understood as a way for the vlogger and her or his audience to construct an online transmission of one's fantasy self (Hillis 2009), which, according to Hillis, eventually fuses the "real" and the "virtual." Thus, the telefetish stays there in between, as a strategy to cope "in real," and the connection to "real life" becomes the vice versa of the vlogs studied here.

Importantly, in my analysis the performativeness of vlogging was an important way to construct the "real life" of the vlogger. This finding suggests that the performance in vlogging and its connection to reality representation needs further research. However, as I suggested, the homemode these vlogs represent may also be a way to expose socially suitable private life and through that to ask for regognition as part of a social group. The performance, reality representation and if and how they are interrelated with regognition seeking activity as part of a social group needs further research as well.

The ways to create the sense of authenticity in DIY cultures have often been understood in connection with economic and structural constraints of these environments. Not underestimating these aspects in the communication of YouTube, the research suggested that these environments need to be understood as aesthetical realms as well. Thus, the construction of authenticity with respect to exposing the real is inherently connected to the aesthetical evolution of these environments. That is, exposing something "real" in early vlogging cultures in webcam communities or in YouTube environments of 2013 may be visually and aesthetically different; however, exposing the "real and authentic" is equally relevant in both environments. Thus, the question of authenticity in respect of exposing one's real life needs to be understood as a concern of both economic and structural constraints of these environments, and in connection with the aesthetical evolution that we witness. The cultural production of real happens in DIY environments is a risky and under researched business.

CHAPTER 5: Performing Me – Confession, Performativity and the Real

In this chapter, I examine the performance in vlogs. I ask under what circumstances a performance may generate confessional self-revealing narration that aims to expose vloggers' real lives and how and why this performance of the real happens. The quest for "real" is posed in contrast with the understanding of DIY environments as performative, but playful and "not so real" environments in which the mediated and performative nature of these environments is understood as a hindrance to expose vloggers' realities. The confessional self-revelation in vlogs was understood as revealing and constructing the vlogger's real self, through the performance. This specification generates a new understanding of the vlogging culture as a place to perform the real self, contrary to the arguments that DIY environments favor inauthentic or slightly fake self-presentations. Thus, the mediated performance of vloggers' real selves can also be conceptualized as a communicational act that opens the participatory process in a particular environment, of which the purpose is to reveal the real of one's self. This real self may take the form of a pregnant teen confessing her unsuspected pregnancy or a cancer patient revealing his case history.

The DIY environments, most famously YouTube, have been understood as participatory environments that are inherently performative and multi-voiced. As Wesch (2009) pointed out:

> *'The plethora of videos on YouTube that typically ranges from ridiculous to shocking, offensive to banal, and outrageous to mundane are also these profoundly introspective, self-reflexive personal narratives and confessionals forming the basis for a profound experience of human connection."(26)*

Researchers (e.g., Marcus 2008) have even associated the Bakhtinian concepts of polyphonia and the carnivalesque culture of these environments as understating a multi-voiced, playful and performative atmosphere. The performative feature in these environments has also been emphasized: "Just as all digital media artifacts are procedural, there is a sense in which they all are performative" (Bolter et al. 2013: 329). The authors understated how identity construction and the construction of the role of the audience and that of the performer take the form of a performance. Specifically, they took their examples from social media services such as YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook (Bolter et al. 2013).

The performative nature has often been connected with play (Ardèvol et al. 2010) and playfulness (Hess 2009) that generates the understanding of these environments as platforms for videos and messages that are "not so real." For example Ardèvol et al. (2010) studied YouTube videos in the context of faking metro hooliganism. They found that the hooliganism took the form of a mediated experience of play in which the main purpose was that it was performed in front of the camera, recorded, and most importantly, displayed for YouTubers.

As they stated, the videos were a "complex performance that involves the audience in completing its narrative circle, expanding the playful experience to the audience`s response" (Ardèvol et al. 2010: 272). Thus, playfulness and performance are constructed (and connected) on two levels. First, at the level of the faking of the hooliganism in front of and because of the camera, as faking is a way to create the performance and the playfulness. Interestingly, the authors connected performance and playfulness to faking, as with the "not so real." Second, the playfulness and performance are created through audience participation, which, of course, needs to be the "right type" (i.e., playfulness). On this second level, the performance is very much similar. As Bolter et al. (2013) suggested, the performance is the construction of the role of the audience.

Hess (2009) further connected playfulness and audience participation in his study on deliberative communication on YouTube. Here, playfulness was due to the audiences' playful responses to serious video content. Because of the parodist and ironic responses of the audience, he concluded that, "For YouTubers, the medium exists primarily as a site of play, not a location to engage in critical dialogue about salient world issues" (Hass, 2009: 428). For him, DIY environments, in general, and YouTube, in particular, are characteristically places/environments that lack seriousness and "underscore a sense of playfulness common to new media environments" (Hess 2009: 427).

However, as noted, these environments are multi-voiced (and the amount and in deed the entire definition of) playfulness depends on the context in which they are studied. To understand vlogging environments of DIY culture as mainly playful and lacking seriousness is to neglect the more serious uses of these environments; for example, the authentic self-disclosure when revealing ones sexual orientation in the context of trans people vlogs (Raun 2011: 2012); individual case stories of the cancer (McCosker 2008); autobiographical vlogs of pain (Fox 2010); self-reflexive confessionals vlogs (Wesch 2009); or the pregnancy vlogs of one's unsuspected pregnancy (see Chapter 4).

Public debate and, even part of the academia, has from time-to-time treated these environments, and particularly YouTube, as environments of pure fun and play. This is just part of the action; no doubt the most apparent one is measured by the attention and participation ratings. However, as said, playfulness is strictly connected to the subcategory in which it is studied. Therefore, for example, the videos faking metro hooliganism and other fun making videos are, of course, rich environments for play and fun, both for the performers and audiences. However, the more serious content is often found in the so-called vlogs, which are important, though not as apparent part of these environments.

The vlogs are a continuum of the webcam communities and home-camming and home-movie style that form the most ancient genre in YouTube communications. The home-movie style is a "spontaneous, untampered form of filmmaking" (Bruzzi 2006: 18; Zimmerman 1995: 146) that documents the "trivial, the personal and the inconsequential" (Bruzzi 2006: 18). In home-camming and vlogging, the performing and videoing of one's own lived reality creates a mixed narration. Individual vloggers share their intimate confessions and reality presentations through a camera-based performance and ask for the audience's attention. Here, narration through a camera-based performance is not provided to generate faking, fun, and playful videos for the delight of the audience; rather, to share the vlogger's "reality" in some respect, be it in the form of an individual case history of cancer or in the form of revealing an unexpected teen pregnancy. Thus, the vlogging environment is one in which the camera-based performance takes place, but is converged with representing the "real." Therefore, contrary to the widely held assumption that the performance in DIY environments, particularly in YouTube, is a way to create playful and slightly fake narratives, this study argues that these performances are also ways to represent something "real" in the meaning of exposing one's own lived reality.

Thus, an important way to conceptualize the DIY environments (and YouTube as a popular example) is to focus to the content along the axis of real/fake (Goode et al. 2011; see also Strangelowe 2010) and to generate new knowledge on the concept of performance in DIY environments. Overall, the performative, playfulness, and fake as not so real, have often been understood as a sister phenomenon in DIY environments. My approach was to connect the performative with the "real" and specify the concept of performance in the context of vlogging in DIY environments. Thus, contrary to the axis of playful/fake/performative, the vlogging genre studied here was understood as on in which the real and performative converged. In

the following, I examine how and why the performance of the real occurs.

The indeterminacy between the axis of real/fake is evident; for example, in the identity construction that takes place on YouTube:

> *'The nature of YouTube means that this kind of identity performance as disclosure (often more radical than other social networking platforms because of the central role of video performance) can happen alongside the aforementioned identity play."(Goode et al. 2011: 610)*

However, the indeterminacy does not necessarily mean that the more serious or "real" becomes lost.

Vlogs as not so Real

It has indeed been claimed that, because of the mediated nature of communication in webcam and webvideo environments, the "real" is hard to get in touch with. Vanderbeeken (2011) noted:

> *"What is special about web video documents is that their credibility depends on the viewer's willingness to accept their authenticity, as there is no guarantee that they are not staged or manipulated. Authenticity, then, become a matter of personal belief."(40)*

He also suggests that webvideos are not transmitting or representing the reality to us but are mediating our understanding and perception of it; the screen functions as a type of truth-procedure. What takes place is the virtualization of truth that, eventually, leads to an erosion of reality (Vanderbeeken 2011). What causes this erosion is the mediated nature and, eventually, the screen that hinders the pure transmitting of the "real." If we would follow this pessimistic point, the more serious contents in webcam-mediated environments would be just a symptom of a virtualization and erosion of authentic and real because of their mediated nature. However, as several studies have shown, these types of videos are

concerned (by the performers themselves) as important and supportive means in identity construction and recovery processes (Fox 2010; Raun 2010; Wesch 2009). For example, the individual case histories of illness and introspective confessional stories are part of the vloggers' realities and of the creation of their realities, even though they are mediated through the webcam.

Vanderbreeken's (2011) argument is in line with the research literature on webcam communities where the understanding of easily exposable individuals "real lives" has been questioned. Specifically, it has been claimed that, because the "realness" or "everyday life" is always mediated and mediatized in these environments, it becomes a construction both from the performers' and the spectators' perspective. Thus, it is a constructed one because of the technical apparatus used to transmit the real. As Senft (2008) pointed out in her ethnographic study on camgirls, the slow refreshment rate of the camera is a feature of these mediated environments that makes it difficult to transmit the "real." Between the scenes and images, and actions and intentions of the performer, is always a disjuncture that causes an incomplete narrative of the "real."

The mechanisms of constructing reality through vlogging are problematized further when vlogging is seen as articulating between the ideal fantasy image of the vlogger's self. Accordingly, the communications that take place in the vlogging environment follow the ritual model of communication, contrary to the transmission model. Hillis (2009) argued about the construction of reality in his study on gay/queer webcam cultures between late 90s and in early millennium. Even though the project sounds like an innocent way "to transmit live images of themselves and their immediate personal home environment" as he puts it (Hillis 2009: 204), the underlying meaning of these webcammers was to render a voice to their gay/queer existence by means of visibility within the heteronormative culture where their existence had been

marginalized. If understood in relation to mediatization theory, it seems that this visibility is a way to ask for social recognition. It may function even more importantly as recognition on the more private and intimate level, as a type of self-recognition (see Honneth 2006).

Personal webcams were used here as spaces for performance to "depict the idealized ways these gay/queer believed or wish the world to be" (Hillis 2009: 207). Therefore, the performers constructed from themselves ideal fantasy images of (and for) themselves; a telefetish "an online, interactive fetish image experienced as the seemingly alive projection of a visualizable and desirable aspect of an individual's identity" (Hillis 2009: 353). Hillis also pointed out that, even though the telefetish suggests "the online transmission of my fantasy self is the real me" (and further that the fantasy is real), the telefetish remains a complex mixture of the operator's web persona and of his body, that of being "here" and "there" at the same time (Hillis 2009: 215-216).

The telefetish is to be understood as kind of a virtual ideal, a digital human (Hillis 2009: 235) that is a work of art born in a process of self-aesthetization (Hillis 2009: 236). This digital self-image is constructed by posing and performing. Importantly, because this telefetish is most of all a commodity to be consumed in an online exchange, it is born only through interactions (which take the form of a ritual) between the webcam operator and his viewers. As this commodity is strongly dependent on the attention it enhances, it becomes important to construct and perform a type of self-image to accepted and consumed (Hillis 2009).

Hillis (2009) further argued that the operator becomes a kind of a fusion between the "original" and the "ready made" (241), between his material being and his telefetish, between his (performed) online personae and the "real me" (249), between the real and the virtual (242), and between the binaries of offline and online. He also suggested that these binaries become fused in a telefetish, of which consumers are as much the intended viewers as the operator

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himself. However, because of these binaries he suggested; that the "realness" or "everyday life" in webcam communications can never be a pure transmission of them (but stays as a kind of in-between). They are necessarily a highly self-conscious performance of one's "reality" and the authenticity of this digital human/self-image being a constructed one.

On the contrary, Vanderbreeken argued that "realness" or "everyday life" were constructed because of the technical apparatus used to transmit the real. The technical apparatus is located here and in between, as a hindrance to get to the real. However, for Hillis (2009), this in-between was the only way how the telefetish was able to take place. The in-between is a complicated image/screen constellation (as suggested by Lacan's (1978) diagram of the gaze) as standing midway between the subject of representation and the gaze. Because the image and screen converge, the subject of representation becomes fused with the screen/image as does the (impersonal) gaze. What this causes is that the (owner of the) gaze and the subject of representation (Hillis points to them as transmitter-receivers) become fused with the messages they send and receive (Hillis 2009).

Hillis (2009) also argued that this type of technology of transmission is typical in webcam settings and leads to the particular networked gaze, which includes "the operator who watches himself watching himself as a telefetish—a display that fuses image to screen and sign to body" (221). This networked gaze seemed to work in some of the studied vlogs; recall Cree's statement (as introduced in Chapter 2): "I see myself more clearly when I see myself through the camera."

Similarly, Raun has argued that the transpeople perform and produce their gender identities by trying them out in front of the camera. This mirror/vlog is understood as a medium on which to master identity and incorporate the ideal reflection of the ego. Finally, this is a way to produce an ideal image both for oneself and

for others (Raun 2010). To me, it seems that even though he does not use the concept of telefetish, the way he argues that the screen functions as a type mirror and the type of ideal image as "becoming" has much in common with Hillis' idea of telefetish.

While for Vanderbreeken, the transmission technology was a hindrance to the real, for Hillis it was the only way to the real. However, because it includes this (eternal) flow between the transmitters and receivers, on the level of image/screen, there is really no way out of this apparatus, and, finally, from the level of this image/screen.

Considering the telefetish as a commodity situated on the level of the image/screen through the communicational act, (including the ritual of participation), between the operator and his/her audience seems to be, for Hillis, the only way to get to the "the real." However, this constructed telefetish always remains caught between the (performed) online personae and the "real me" (Hillis 2009: 250) and between the real and the virtual; therefore, there really is no way to get to this "real",by means of webcamming.

White's (2006) classic study on women webcam operators suggested that the webcam narration cannot be understood as a pure document of a reality, even though the spectator is encouraged to interact with the webcam image as an unmediated reality. However, to understand the webcam as offering a pure presentation of the real would be to denigrate the agency of both the spectator and the operator. Their agency and, specifically, the operator's agency in controlling her own image were of essential importance for White. Also the technical constraints of the webcamming prevent the easy entrance into the reality. Similarly, for Senft (2008) the agency of the operator was central. Now, even though a webcam operator may represent one's reality, she meanwhile aims to construct of herself as an appealing product to reach her audiences.

In webcam-mediated environments, the camera and the mediated nature of communication are not only hindrances but are the only means through which to communicate and perform, even in one's own reality. The question of exposing the "real life" is connected to Bruzzi's (2006) theory on performative documentary, which challenges the separation between "real" and the performing of it, and to van de Port's (2011) argument on the cultural production of the real. These researchers both seem to be in strict contrast to Vanderbreeken's idea that the mediated nature of web videos ultimately causes the erosion of the real, and partly also with Hillis (2009) understanding of the operator creating himself a telefetish that fuses the distinction between the real and the virtual between the operator's material being and his idealized image.

Performance as Constructing the Real

Anthropologist, van de Port, suggested that the real comes into being only in the act of revealing the mediation process. He called this "Plexiglass aesthetics," a concept that aims to prescribe the transparency of the mediation achieved by understanding the medium as a technology of make belief, which takes rhetorical, aesthetical, and performative modes. He wrote:

> *"Rather than to hide, deny or naturalize the medium, the medium is here revealed for what it is, in all of its human-made, technically-put-together manner. The Plexiglass aesthetics, in a rather screaming way, calls attention to the technology of the mediation process; and thus to the inescapable human involvement in all forms of mediation." (2011: 84).*

What this "Plexiglass aesthetics" produces is a real of the media technology and a "real real," a term he refers to as the reality that is produced because of the mediation and the revealing of that process (van de Port 2011: 84-85). For van de Port, the real (he refers to) is not an essentialist claim, but an (anthropological) question of how the sensation of real comes into being. What is interesting to me is

his argument that the mediation that takes place in vlogging cultures does not necessarily cause the erosion of reality. On the contrary, the performative, aesthetics, and rhetorical ways of the mediation can be understood as the ultimate and only means to produce the "real real," the sensation of the real.

What this means in the contexts of vlogging and for my argument is that the problematics of the "real real," screen as a mediator and as a hindrance (Vanderbreeken 2011), and the vloggers self-conscious performance (Senft 2008, Hillis 2009) proves to be central and, to a certain extent, the only way to the "real real" (van de Port 2011). Thus, the vlogger's performance in a particular vlog is not necessarily a way to hide the "real" (her "reality") but the only, though a mediated way, to produce it.

The DIY environments, YouTube as an example, are environments that make both the viewers and producers extremely aware of the constraints of the particular environment, the technological and the performative, aesthetics, and rhetorical constraints, as studied in earlier chapters. This is not to say that the institutional monitoring has become transparent or nonexistent; rather, users are aware of that as reported, for example, by Hess (2009) and van Dijk (2007). Thus, YouTube is a place where the "real" may be, to a certain extent, screened just because of these constraints and their transparency.

For example, to confess one's unsuspected pregnancy in an edited pregnancy vlog on YouTube is an act of reality making, both for the audience and the particular vlogger. In Van de Port's theory, this confession of a pregnancy can be understood as the "real real." What is important is that the "real real" occurs in an environment where the rhetorical, aesthetical, technical, and performative features of the messages are strictly regulated, mostly by the YouTubers themselves, but also by the company. That the YouTubers themselves control the features of these vlogs is, at its best, manifested by the attention economy of the YouTube

environment (Burgess & Green 2009; Lange 2008; Strangelove 2010), where the right type of vlog enhances attention and attracts participation. Thus, for an individual vlogger, it makes sense to frame the message according the unwritten rhetorical, aesthetical, technical, and performative constraints. However, just because of these constraints and the community's and (established) vlogger's inherent knowledge about them, "the cultural production of the real" is possible and the "real real" may be screened and, most notably, performed.[22]

Additionally, for van de Port, performing is a way to create the real, which is connected to Bruzzi's understanding of performative documentary that challenges, much in the same tone, the separation between "real" and the performing of it.

Bruzzi argued how, in documentary theory, the pursuit to real and truth has been the central aim. The notion of performance in this context has traditionally been understood as creating falsifications and a narration that is not to be trusted (Bruzzi 2006); the not so real. Contrary to this, she argued that documentaries need to be understood, essentially, as performative acts, "whose truth comes into being only at the moment of filming" (10). This understanding is achieved by unmasking the documentary process in the act of filming. The notion of unmasking and the type of "truth" it produces is closely related to van de Ports' (84-85) argument on the construction of "real real," which is produced by the mediation and the revealing of that process.

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[22] The notion that the real comes into being in the act of revealing the mediation process helps explain why the Bruzzis notion of "acting out for the camera" of performative documentaries proved so important in the vlogs analyzed in Chapter 4. As we remember, this acting out was evident by the use of direct address toward the viewer and intimate close-up, which both constructed the reality of the vlogger and her narrations; in Bruzzis term, "honesty." To my understanding, this was possible because the performing through the camera was foregrounded and made visible.

By arguing that documentaries are performative acts, Bruzzi similarly understated that the documentary can never purely transmit the real. However, the claim of reality representation is not invalidated altogether. As she stated

> *'The pact between documentary, reality and the documentary spectator is far more straightforward than many theorists have made out; that a documentary will never be reality nor will it erase or invalidate that reality by being representational." (Bruzzi 2006: 6).*

Bruzzi (2006) also explained that the constitutive elements of the performance in documentary, which are acting out for the camera and dramatization. These factors have been understood as alienating factors in relation to representing the real. However, according to Bruzzi, these elements create the documentary "honesty," which is in contrast to the truth that she claimed is a defeat utopian. As she stated:

> *"Alternatively the use of performance tactics could be viewed as a means of suggesting that perhaps documentaries should admit the defeat of their utopian aim and elects instead to present an alternative 'honesty' that does not seek to mask their inherent instability but rather to acknowledge that performance—the enactment of the documentary specifically for the camera—will always be the heart of the non-fiction film. Documentaries, like Austins's performatives, perform the actions they name." (187)*

Bruzzi also noted that documentaries perform the actions they name, just as Austin's speech acts perform the action at the same time of naming it. [23] This seems to occur quite literally in pregnancy vlogs studied earlier (see Chapter 4). To make an announcement

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[23] Bruzzi refers here to Austin's (1975) theory of performative versus constative speech acts. These are words in a certain contexts are to be understood as actions; utterances that both describe and perform an action. By saying what a person does, he also performs the action at the same time. Austin's much-cited line is as follows "In saying what I do, I actually perform that action. He stakes as an example the naming of a ship; uttering the words "I name the ship as XX" is to perform the action, the naming of the ship, at the same time.

(that is to name) of one's pregnancy is to perform the action (that of being pregnant), at the same time. In other words, naming the pregnancy is to perform that pregnancy, which, at the same time, constructs the "real" of that pregnancy.

As studied, these namings and performances of the realities of the pregnancies were constructed by several ways; the most obvious of these being the live pregnancy test, which some vloggers took in front of the camera and the bellyshots showing visual evidence of the pregnancy by means of revealing one's growing belly. Here, the naming and performing converged and created the honesty in relation to one's pregnancy. Thus, the performance was not a way to mask the real but the only way to construct it. Interestingly, some vloggers underlined the effect that the launch of a pregnancy vlog had; by launching the vlog, the pregnancy was claimed as being for real.

This notion is supported by Bruzzi's (2006) conclusion that the performance does not mask the reality presentation in documentaries, rather is actually the only way to pursue it. The central question of this study was how (and why) is it that the performance in a vlog seems to not destroy the sense of the real of the narration. In vlogs, the vloggers are "acting out" for the camera, posing to the viewers, fullly aware of the shooting process (naturally because the vlogger is doing it by herself), and asking for in clearly articulated ways the viewers' attention. Traditionally, these features can be understood as alienating when documenting one's reality. Conversely, they can be understood as "performance tactics" as well, building documentary honesty (as Bruzzi claimed).

These performance tactics can also be understood to be in use when the vlogger presents her reality; for example, by announcing her pregnancy. Naturally, as viewers, we have no trespassing behind this announcement and no ways to validate whether it is the absolute truth. However, Bruzzi (2006) claimed that in documentaries, the real does not equal the absolute "truth." In that

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sense, documentaries are always incomplete. Here, the concept of honesty is used as a relativist type of real and reality presentation, which is in contrast to the essentialists objective truth claim.

That the performed real does not equal the absolute "truth" and produces incompleteness is characteristics for vlogs in a twofold sense. First, they are typically series and designed to evolve over time. The "reality" or truth of the vlog series is transformed after each vlog posting. Second, vlogs are incomplete because they call for audience attention and participatory feedback. The "reality" in a vlog is constructed when the audience takes part in that "reality," Bruzzi (2006) argued that the documentary is a negotiation between the filmmaker and reality and this negotiation makes for a documentary a performance. This is what happens in vlogs as well; they create the reality of the vlog, but only if all the meaning makers (the vlogger herself and her audience) take part to the process. In this sense, the vlog can be understood as a performance—specified this far as a participatory process where the acting out for the camera is central using the vlog-specific performance tactics. In effect, this resembles the understanding of performance in DIY environments, as suggested; the DIY environments are places for participation between the audience and the original "performer." Thus, this participatory act takes the form of performance (Bolter et al. 2013: 329).

Ardèvol et al. (2010) proposed that the performance is created through audience participation. What these arguments suggest and what makes sense in this study is that, because several agencies exists in in DIY environments that take part in the meaning-making process of an originally single "text," the process is, at best, described as performance. Thus, the performance here is a type of participatory play of meaning making. What these arguments, however, do not explain carefully enough is what the performance refers to and what it produces outside the notion of sheer performance itself. This is the point at which Bruzzi's theory is

central as it focuses on the content of the performance and what it produces and enhances. Her theory helps explain how performance is a way to construct the reality representation in a vlog because of the acting out for the camera—not despite it.

This far, I have discussed the performance in DIY environments as an acting out for the camera, which is a participatory process between a vlogger and her audience. By this performance, together, they construct the real of the vlog. This real would not happen without the mediation process between the vlogger, her audiences, and the sociocultural, aesthetical, and technical constraints of YouTube.

The Real of the Vlog

That the construction of the real happens through mediated performance does not explain the real that seems to be characteristics of vlogs. So, what does the real mean in the first place? Because vlogs are essentially confessional self-revelations, Gofmann's theory of the presentation of self by performance helps us open the "real" that is constructed in vlogs (in a conceptual sense). The real of the vlog can be understood as centering on the "self" of the vlogger. As Goffmann (1959) proposed, the aim of the performance is to create an appearance of reality of oneself. It is important to note that we do not use "self" here in psychological terms, rather as a concept that refers to the confessional I-centered messages (Livingstone 2008; Lundby, 2008).

Goffman's theory was much used in the early; and is still used in current research on DIY culture (Griffith & Papacharissi 2010; Turkle 1995), and is clearly valid for my argumentation. Specifically, this theory has often been used to support the claim of the artificiality of performance. However, my aim was on the contrary: To make an argument that the performance may also reveal the "real." Given that the theory focuses on a performance taking place

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in interactive situations, it also further conceptualizes the essential participatory feature of the performance studied so far.

The Performance as Constructing the Real of the Self

We may conceptualize how the performance of the real is capable of revealing, in certain contexts, a confessional self-revelation of an individual's true self, which is granted as real. As Griffith and Papacarissi (2010) suggested, vloggers aim to present themselves very often in a way that generates the desired impression; that of "revealing a specific vlogger's true self" (Griffith & Papacarissi 2010: 6). They further argued that, even though this true self is the impression that the vloggers aim to foster, the vlog always remains as a performance. The performance is understood as an interactional act or practice in which the audience has no entrance into the backstage; the space which, according to Goffman (1959), is reserved for the non-performing, relaxation, and collusive intimacies.[24] The authors did not explicitly deny the possibility of

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[24] The performance is acted out by three different roles that are usually acted out by three different actors; the roles of performer(s), audiences, and outsiders. These different roles possess different types of information about the performance. The performer has knowledge of the impression that he wants to foster his audience and, subsequently, the audience is aware of the situation and what they are expected and allowed to perceive in it. The outsiders do not know the so-called 'secrets of the performance' nor the appearance of the reality that the performance aims to create (Goffman 1959). These different role players have access to different regions on the stage; performers(s) appear in the front and backstage, the audience is in the front stage, and outsiders are excluded from both of these (Goffmann 1959). For Goffmann (1959: 206), the presentation of ourselves that we are forced to present when interacting in all social situations is possible only through the staged performance. However, this motivation is not understood negatively because it is at the core of the performance that the "human want for social contact and for companionship" (Goffmann 1959: 206). This want is articulated by two basic components; the need for an audience for "which to try out one's vaunted selves" and the need for teammates with whom to "enter into collusive intimacies and backstage relaxation" (1959: 206). As noted, the aim of the entire performance is to create an appearance of reality of oneself (Goffman 1959).

the true self and the performance as a non-true, but their emphasis on the performance as merely as an impression making act of a true self is in contrast to my argument so far. Thus, it is necessary to specify how the mechanism of reality construction, as the real of oneself, is constructed in vlogs and why this real self may be performed both at the front and backstage at the same time.

For Goffman, 'real reality' is possible; thus the vlogger's performance may be understood as a way to construct her "real reality," and she may perform her real self and believe to realness. Two extremes exist in how the performer understands her performance in relation with real. On the one extreme, the performer believes that "the impression of reality which he stages is the real reality," the performer is then taken by his own act and it is granted as sincere (Goffmann 1959: 17, 18). The performer starts to believe her own performance and its realness. As Goffmann wrote:

> *"Performer may be taken in by his own act, convinced at the moment that the impression of reality which he fosters is the one and only reality. In such cases the performer comes to be his own audience, he comes to be the performer and observer of the same show" (Goffman 1959:80)*

On the other extreme is the person does not believe his own performance and is, thus, claimed as a cynical performer (Goffmann 1959:18). In the vlogs I studied so far, most notably in pregnancy vlogs, the impression of one's own reality and real self (constructed during the vlogging) is the one that the vlogger herself also wants to support and believe in. This manifested is most evident with the vlogger, GabeandJesss (see Chapter 4), who wanted to persuade the viewers about the realness of her vlog, of her pregnancy, and most

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Therefore, the performance takes two active teams [24], those of the performers and of the audience. Normally, members tend to keep their roles, "to stay in character," a term Goffman used (1959:167). However, there are certain occasions when these roles become blurred, and the distance between the teams changes (either increases or decreases). These are situations for a communication "out of character" and these are the situations of interested in this study.

of all of the realness of herself, in a talking head format aimed to give evidence of her realness and sincerity. In a vlog posting titled "My Thoughts - The Truth" the vlogger emphasized her aim for truth and used such phrases as "true side of the story" and "my side of the story." She stated the follows:

> *But I know the truth and this is the truth and everything you see is the truth. Like I have absolutely no reason no motivation to lie a bunch of people that I don´t know on YouTube."*

She also used words such as "real," "real person," "real life," and "my life," which are understood in relation with the truth she aimed to reveal. This is the point at which the performance of the vlogger can be understood as a way to share the real of herself with the audience. The fact that the vlogger performs this real self, using visuals, written, and spoken word, does not invalidate her claim of the real self. Also, the majority of the comments she received supported the claim that YouTubers believe in the appearance of her real self. Thus, it is interesting that, with performing of the real self, the self is also constantly constructed in a way that the vlogger and the audience take as a real. This idea seems to be an occasion in which Goffman's notion of the performer becoming performer and observer of the same show and, thus, his own audience, explains. Here, the vlogger is both the performer and audience because she herself also participates in the messaging and, thus, on the construction of her realness. Thus, the performed real self needs not be conceptualized as fake, but as one that is constructed during the "show." Here, the show takes the form of messaging, meaning the particular video as well as the video and text comments sent related to the video, which supports the performance of the "real self" of the vlogger.

Overall in the studied vlogs the vloggers' claims of their real selves was not questioned. Importantly, are the much used requests for the audience to share and send comments, which can be understood as

a way to ask the audience's assistance to construct the performed real self.

To understand this impression as one's real self becomes more complex if the vlog is understood as an arena to try out an ideal image of oneself. Interestingly, Raun (2010) reported the phenomena of the so-called screen-births in the context of transpeople vlogs telling about their becoming, where the camera "witnesses the birth and growing up" of individuals' transformation processes. In these vloggings, the actual shot of hormones, enabling the gender transformation process, is represented, as Raun calls it a kind of double shot; pulling the hypodermic needle and the camera. Thus, the camera is not only documenting, but also enabling the transformation process. Similarly it seems that in the studied vlogs of "live pregnancy-tests" and "bellyshots" (Chapter 4), the camera acted not only as a witness, but also as the object that makes these pregnancies "true."

In transpeople screen-birth vlogs, the becoming is a central feature, which seems to be present in my studied screen-pregnancies as well. The pregnancy is not a stabile state of the art, rather a linear and progressive project, of which evolvement needs to be documented, shared, and, most importantly, performed; and only through these are ll made real. However, between screen-births and screen-pregnancies, there seems to be one crucial difference. Raun pointed out that, in screen-births, the vlogger also reflects the ideal image of ego by performing certain identities and trying them out in front of an audience. This way there is a "constant evaluation of oneself as an attractive image and trying out different styles of the flesh" (Raun 2010:120). Here, the screen functions as a mirror to try out and, eventually, master one's identity.

Conversely, in screen-pregnancies, it seems there is not going on such as trying out identities and, as I have argued, it seems that the vloggers perform their realities in relation to their real selves yet not in the sense of trying out. The difference is connected to the essence

of the projects that vlogs represent; screen-births perform the process of final becoming, of which outcome remains unknown. Screen-pregnancies perform a process that has an end and, whereby an individual more or less returns (visually) to the way she was before the transformation project. Thus, it may be that in the limited project, of which the outcome is known, that the trying out of the ideal image and through that identity is not worth of the effort. Thus, screen-pregnancies reflect vloggers more or less as they are, for a limited period of time by performing their real self.

Participatory Feature of the Performance: From Apartness to Intimacy

The confessional self-revelation has often been granted as a solitude activity that gets lost in a cyberspace and fails to generate attention and participation (Navarro 2012; Zoonen et al. 2012). The "out of character" situations emblematic in confessional communication (Goffmann 1959: 205) are closely linked to a question of participation in vlogs. This generates the understanding of why mediated performance in vlogging environments and intimate revelation of ones lived reality performed to other YouTubers in public and not only in private, might be performed in the first place as suggested by the notion of the cult of confession (Goffmann 1959). This, why can they be understood theoretically as places where the sharing of one's confessions becomes a participatory activity that is capable of leading to group solidarity and the so-called supportive communication among peers (see more on supportive communication Burleson 2009; Vangelisti 2009).

For Goffman (1959), the human want for social contact takes two forms; the need to perform as the self for an audience, and the need to share intimacies with peers, with the so-called teammates [25].

[25] For Goffman, performance always takes two active teams, those of the performers and those of the audiences. The teams may consist of one or several persons, but are always understood as teams. In normal situations,

From time-to-time these functions become intertwined (Goffmann 1959)[26].

This happened in my study of the vlogs in that the self performed to other YouTubers (understood as audience) by sharing intimate revelations with "fellow YouTubers" (understood as peers). Now, how is it possible that the same confessional vlogging may be understood both as a public performance and as an intimate revelation, and how does it explain the participatory aspect of vlogs?

According to Goffmann (1959) this is a question of "out of character situation" in which the roles of the audience and the teammates become blurred, and the distance between the teams changes, either increases or decreases. What happens here is a "shift from apartness to intimacy" between the teams. In these exceptional situations with interacting teams, those of the performers and of the audiences, give up their roles. The audience to which one performs might also serves as a teammate with whom to relax and share intimate matters.

On occasions like this, Goffmann (1959) names the open confession in evangelical social movements, group therapy situations, and attendant/patient relationships. Here, the "sinner" tells (i.e., confesses) the audience things that rationally would be concealed from the others. As he writes "He sacrifices his secrets and his self-protective distance from others, and this sacrifice tends to induce a backstage solidarity among all present" (Goffmann 1959: 204). This revelation enhances group solidarity and produces social support. Additionally, these situations are a central part of an "anti-dramaturgical social movement, a cult of confession" (1959: 205). Characteristics of these confessional situations include the decreased distance between the audiences and performer, from

members tend to keep their roles, "to stay in character" (Goffmann 1995:167)

[26] "There are no doubt times when both functions are performed almost simultaneously by the same others" (Goffman 1995: 206)

apartness to intimacy, which enhances group solidarity and social support. These characteristics help explain why the confessional self-revelation can serve as a participatory act in the confessional vlogs.

Vloggers (performers) also share their intimate revelations in a confessional style for fellow YouTubers (audience); intimate matters that traditionally would not be shared with a large audience. This revelation enhances participatory activity in the form of supportive messaging (Vangelisti 2009), and following Goffmann, as a symptom of group solidarity that the confession enhances.

Confessional vlogs that enhance participatory activity were constructed only through this; the group solidarity and the supportive messaging in these vlogs can, at its best, be observed in the so-called confessional game (see Chapters 2 and 4; Brooks 2005; deMan 1979; Keskinen 2006; Paasonen 2007) in which vloggers' original self-revelations generate counter confessions and support the original confession. Thus, the out of character situation emblematic in the confessional communication that Goffman argued and the social support it enhances, it may be understood in relation to notions of confessional messaging as generating and enhancing further confessional communication as a participatory activity (see Chapter 2; Brooks 2005; deMan 1979; Paasonen 2007). In other words, confessional videos enhance reciprocal activities among confessors and confessants (see Chapter 4; Renov 1996: 95) and operate as a form of social, co-productive confessional narrative (Strangelove 2010; 77).

To understand confessional communication in vlogs as an "out of character situations" helps explain how and why the confessional self-revelation may serve as a means for participation in vlogging environments. This idea is in line with recent research on the participatory aspects of DIY environments, but it also generates new understanding on the effects that the confessional act has when generating participation in these environments.

For example, in his study on nonfictional performance, Navarro (2012) argued that, in the vlogging culture, the aim of the performance of the self is to serve as a form of engagement with others and not so much as a disclosure (of a self-presentation). He emphasized the performance as a dialogical act, of which main purpose is the performance itself (Navarro 2012). However, even though the aim is to turn the exposure of a self into a dialogue, it does not always succeed. Thus, even though the performance of the self is emphasized here as a dialogical and participatory act, the difficulty of having one's message heard eventually leads to a situation in which the performance of the self remains an end in itself. Thus, the performance of the self is best understood as incomplete, lacking the finality, leading not to an engagement with others nor to a fulfilled presentation of the self. He concluded, "What remains in the picture is the performance itself, revived as a form of media intervention in ordinary life" (Navarro 2012: 141). My study revealed that the confessional self-revelation in a vlog may work the other way around and lead to a situation in which the performance of the self leads to a participatory and supportive messaging and enhances further self-revelation. Thus, the performance of oneself needs not to be an end in itself but a way to socialize and construct the self with the help of the others.

Performance of the Self as a Form of Mediatization

Thus far, I generated an understanding of a confessional communication that takes place in vlogs as a confessional and self-revealing performance of the "real" self, which is essentially a participatory and co-productive process between the fellow vloggers. It seems that the construction of a confessional and real self in DIY environments needs the recognition of others. This finding is interestingly connected to Hjarvard's (2013) argument of the new individualism that the mediatization process produces. This frames the performer, a confessional individual in quest for

attention and social contact, in a wider picture. Hjarvard used the concept of social character, which builds on the similarly named theory by Fromm (1941) and Riesman (1950) and produces an understanding of social habitus that is characteristic in a mediatized society.

I briefly note these central aspects of the new type of habitus because it resonates with the figure of a confessional vlogger and her performed real self as I found. The habitus of a mediatized individual is a type of other directed character (Hjarvard 2013; see Riesman 1950) whose characteristic is her "highly developed sensibility toward an extended network of both persons and media" (Hjarvard 2013: 144). Effectively, this habitus is shaped through the wider society and an intensified monitoring of the social environment.

Finally, recognition serves as a regulatory mechanism for the individual. In consequence, the formation of an individual is closely connected to the larger society. Here, the media serves as a place for recognition, which further produces individual's self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem (Hjarvard 2012). Thus, the attention and participation aimed for becomes a much more nuanced and critical factor when constructing the vlogger's real self.

That the vlogger's confessional self-revelation is recognized becomes the crucial way to build her social being in a mediatized society. As noted in Chapters 2 and 3, the social environment (micro and macro levels) influences the type of a vlogger as a social habitus/being. Building on Beck (1992), Hjarvard argued that the individual's dependence of these constraints when constructing herself as an individual produces an institutionalized biography. Here, media, including interactive media networks, provides the essential framework for this construction (Hjarvard 2012; see more on Kaare & Lundby 2008).

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to conceptualize the performance of vlogs in vlogging environments and determine the circumstances under which the performance may generate confessional self-revealing storytelling that aims to expose vloggers' real lives. I asked how and why this performance of the real happens. The quest for "real" was posed in contrast to the understanding of DIY environments as performative, but playful and "not so real" environments, where the mediated and performative nature of these environments is understood as a hindrance to expose the vloggers' realities. However, these environments are multi-voiced and the amount of playfulness depends on the context in which it is studied. To understand DIY environments mainly as playful ones that lack seriousness is to neglect the more serious uses of these environments.

Thus, my approach was to connect the performative with the "real" and specify the concept of performance in the context of vlogging in DIY environments. Contrary to the axis playfull/fake/performative, the vlogging environment studied was understood as one in which the real and performative converge. I conceptualized the performance in DIY environments as an acting out for the camera (Bruzzi 2006), which is essentially a participatory process between a vlogger and her audience (Ardèvol et al. 2010; Bolter et al. 2013). Together, through this performance, they construct the real of the vlog (Ardèvol et al. 2010; Bolter et al. 2013; Bruzzi 2006). This real would not take place without the mediation process between the vlogger, her audiences (Bruzzi, 2006; Van de Port 2011); and the sociocultural, aesthetical, and technical constraints of YouTube (Hess 2009; Van Dijk 2012).

That the real was constructed by the mediated performance led to pose a question of what does this real mean. Building on Goffman's (1959) notion of performance taking place in interactive situations,

the real that was constructed in the vlog was understood as centering on the "self" of the vlogger. Thus, performance involved constructing the appearance of the real of the self (Goffmann 1959). Goffman's notion of "sincere performer," taken by his own act (who believed himself in the reality he staged and becomes his own audience), explains why the confessional self-revelation of oneself in a vlog may be granted as real both by the performer and by the audience. The vlogger was understood as both the performer and the audience, and participated in the messaging; therefore, the construction and performance of her real self. The "self" was not used here in psychological terms, rather as a concept that referred to the confessional me-centered messages, so-called I-narratives, as a characteristic for communications in DIY environments.

The participatory feature of the performance in vlogs was further understood in connection with "the out of character situation" characteristics for the confessional communication (Goffman 1959: 205). Additionally, vlogs were understood theoretically as places where the sharing of one's confession may become a participatory activity that is capable of leading to group solidarity and supportive communications among peers. Earlier research on confessional messaging as generating and enhancing further confessional communication as a participatory (Paasonen, 2007; deMan 1979, Brooks 2005), reciprocal (Renov 1996: 95) and as a form of social, co-productive confessional narrative (Strangelove 2010; 77) support this notion. Further, this notion generated a new understanding on the effect that, specifically the confessional act, has when generating participation in vlogging environments.

Finally because the performance of the self was conceptualized essentially as a participatory and co-productive process, it was understood as a symptom of the mediatization process (Hjarvard 2013); the notion of recognition proved to be central in this process. The vlogger's aim for attention and social contact was understood as a quest for recognition, which served as a way to build up her social

being as an individual in a mediatized society, and the media provided a place for such a recognition (Hjarvard 2012: 149-150). This idea was understood in line with the notions I made through the study that both the micro-level of a particular DIY environment (and the site specific constraints of technological, aesthetical, rhetorical, and performative in nature) and the macro-level (e.g., the confessional culture) influence what kind of vlogger, as a social habitus/being, is constructed. This study argued that, despite, or better, because of these constraints, the vlogger may also perform her real self, which is a direct and positive consequence of a constraining DIY environment.

CHAPTER 6: Discussion and Conclusions

In this dissertation, I studied confessional me-centered communications of vlogs in the context of DIY cultures. Confession was conceptualized as a communicative strategy that aimed to reveal intimate matters of an individual and that served as a way to socialize with others. In this study, I asked "How and why does confession operate in communication and interaction in social media environments?"

The participatory act of confession in DIY environments was understood as a process of constructing the individual as a social being, the so-called social self. This social self was connected with a new type of individual as suggested by mediatization theory—an individual as a social being dependent on the recognition she received in and through the media. Because this recognition occurs in and through the media, by means of mediated representations, I framed the question of how to confess and represent oneself as crucial. Thus, the confession was conceptualized as a recognition-seeking activity. To understand this activity more profoundly, I focused on how a confessional I-narrative was constructed in and through the representation.

This study generated new understanding into the particular communicational means by which the confessional I-message

generates cultural participation in vlogging environments, as is it widened by the analytical findings on the representational level of vlogging environments. The findings proved that confessions need to be performed context-wise and strictly follow the sociocultural, aesthetical, and technical constraints of a particular environment. However, even though the confession was understood as a regulatory mechanism, it also proved to be a way to reveal authentic self-disclosure by performing as one's real self. This occurred not despite but because of the regulative constraints of the researched DIY environments. Through this notion, the study generated knowledge of the (camera enacted) performance in constructing reality representation also on a more theoretical level. This finding modifies the figure of a mediatized and confessional individual as disciplined, but also as an actor with free will who is able to construct her real self through (DIY) mediated I-messaging and within social and constructive relationships with others.

The confessional act was conceptualized as inherently a participatory mode of speech that forces the confession maker and the interlocutor into an interactional relationship which each other using the I-You structure claimed characteristics of confession. Thus, confession was used as a specific tool to understand the interactive and participatory potential in social media.

By focusing on the four interconnected aspects of confessional communication (representation, discipline, authenticity, and performance), I aimed not only to answer how the confession operates as a motivation for communication and interaction, but also to understand more profoundly why it does so. However, the confession as an act in which the interlocutor, the virtual other, has authority over the confession maker, seemed uncharacteristic. This finding suggests that the understanding of a confessional operating in neoliberal society, increasingly through virtual environments, needs adjustment.

Outcomes of the Study

In Chapter 2, I concentrated on the representational aspects of confessional videos in the YouTube vlogging environment and analyzed the visual means by which a confessional message received attention and enhances participation (Chapter 2). The processes of recognition-seeking and the visual representation of oneself were understood as inherently interconnected aspects of confession making in DIY environments. Thus, I analyzed visual parameters and constraints inside which the vlogger may confess about herself and ask for recognition. The confessional messaging generated participation on the site, but not always. Vlogs that enhanced participation included video characteristics for the YouTube environment in general including light, playful, televisually styled, and centered on the performance of the vlogger (Burgess & Green 2008; Hess 2009). These vlogs also produced a type of "inauthentic authenticity" understood as typical for this environment (Burgess & Green 2008). The fact that confessions enhancing attention and participation followed the narrational conventions of the environment by being the right type of messages; is important as it proves that the context defines both the form and the content of these confessions. Thus, the recognition the vlogger receives depends primarily on whether she understands how to reveal herself in a context-specific manner.

The study of visual representation and the subquestion of "How is the (visual) confession represented and how does the (represented) confessional operate in interaction?" that I posed in Chapter 2, proved important in answering my original research question of why and how the confessional communication motivates communication and interaction. I found visual parameters that proved important in enhancing communication and interaction and, thus, played a central role in search for recognition.

The videos that were successful in enhancing interaction in the YouTube environment followed the generic aesthetical conventions of this particular vlogging environment. They were televisually styled, good looking, focused on the performance of the vlogger, and used at least some post production and editing techniques. The raw aesthetics claimed as characteristic for DIY culture in general and in particular for vlogging cultures, was not present in these videos. Videos following the raw, unedited aesthetics of older webcam cultures did not enhance attention and, thus, failed to gain recognition for the vlogger. Because asking for audience feedback and supportive messaging was clearly stated in these non-participatory videos, it seems that they were in quest for attention and, partly due to the "wrong" type of visual representation, failed to gain that.

The need to perform inside these aesthetical constraints proved highly regulative, which raised further questions. The first concerns the regulative mechanisms that operate in vlogging environments in general, and the ways in which it affects the confessional messaging. Because the DIY environments and their popularity have been understood as one symptom of a mediatized society and the ways it regulates individuals, the dilemma was connected with the question of how an individual may be disciplined in a mediatized world through DIY cultures (Andrejevic 2007; Hjarvard 2012; Magnus & Fejer 2013).

The Panopticon proved to be a widely used concept for disciplinary technology in DIY environments. However, most of the reconceptualizations of panopticon operate at the macro level and notify the regulative mechanisms that operating at the societal level through the DIY environments. To take an analytical approach on the micro level, I focused on the question of how the structural properties of a particular DIY environment regulate confessional messaging in vlogs. For Foucault (1995), the essence of disciplining power is in its ability to produce individuals (Foucault 1995);

therefore, I became interested on whether the particular DIY environment "produces" the right type of confession maker, as suggested in Chapter 2. I asked "Is there a mechanism that disciplines the confession maker and regulates the confessions she is able to produce?" (Chapter 3). As a conceptual model of discipline, I used the model of Panopticon (Foucault 1995).

The logic of panopticon had strong explanatory power in the studied context of the particular webcam community. Control emerged from the individuals of themselves in the form of self-control. To participate in a rightly manner, one needed to be visually present, under the conscious and monitoring gaze of the co-participants, follow normative rules (on the body), and avoid wrong behaviors. The sanctions of not following this panopticon discipline were being excluded from the community and failing to gain recognition. Co-participants of the community exercised disciplinary control of the right type of messaging. The understanding of the regulative mechanism was achieved only when one participated long enough in the community. In effect, this produced both the right type of confessions and the right type of confession maker; a confessional individual who confesses the context defined—the right type of messages.

The environment regulated and "produced" a right type of confession maker and, thus, the confessional me-centered messages were understood as acts of a disciplined subject made to confess the context-defined messages. This factor supported previous findings in the context of confessional media research on television (Dovey 2000; White 2002) and on blogging (Matthews 2007). Interestingly, the disciplined confessions and confession makers were products of longtime participation in a community that claimed to offer "free social networking." This finding suggests that participation in these sites and the type of confessional self-revelation an individual is able to produce may indeed be regulated

both from above and, inherently, from within by the individual in a form of self-control.

However, to understand the confessional DIY environments as highly regulated environments that produce strictly disciplined confessions proved one-sided and did not explain the popularity of these places. Equally one-sided was the notion of the "inauthentic authenticity" and the light playfulness of the self-revelations and confessions, as concluded in Chapter 2. The confessional individual was understood as participating in an environment that, even though was disciplined, may have also served as a place for free-will and "authentic" self-revelation (Strangelove 2010: 79). Thus, I asked what actually was the authentic in relation to confession performed on YouTube and in DIY environments, in general.

In Chapter 4, I concentrated on this assumed authenticity, particularly, considering the webcam aesthetics and documentary aesthetics. I grounded my interest of authenticity in DIY environments on studies that understood the authenticity and reality representations as emblematic for DIY cultures (Bruns 2008; Jenkins 2006; Lister et al. 2009; Miller 2011) and, particularly, for YouTube and its vlogging cultures (Strangelove 2010; Wesh 2009). A few studies have focused on the visual means of producing a sense of authenticity in webcam narrations (Aymar 2011; Creeber 2011; Newman 2008). For this reason, I became interested in how it was that a confessional vlog message would be understood as an authentic confession, and what narrative ways existed to produce the authentic. The authentic was understood here as a relational term (Montgomery 2001; Tulson 2010); therefore, my interest was not the authenticity in itself but the representation of it.

On the grounds of the analysis, vloggers made some use of the intimate aesthetics of webcam narration and, through that, constructed authenticity of both their vlogs and themselves. Overall, authenticity was achieved in these vlogs partly according to the intimate aesthetics of vlogging and to the more modern way of

making the vlog a good looking serial with good technical quality and skilled use of post-production and editing. However, these features did not destroy the understanding of a vlog as an authentic, real life presentation about the vlogger's real life. What they did was propose a new understanding of good looking still with a sincere confessional vlog in the versatile environment of YouTube.

The construction of authenticity in respect to exposing the real was inherently connected to the aesthetical evolution of these environments. That is, exposing "real" in early vlogging cultures in webcam communities or in YouTube environments may appear aesthetically and visually different; however, the need to represent the "real and authentic" may be equally relevant. This finding was in contrast to the notion that YouTube is mainly a playful environment where messaging centers on the performer faking authenticity (Ardèvol et al. 2010).

Thus the confession proved to operate as a motivation for communication and interaction in social media environments and in relation to the authenticity that the videos represented. Thus, videos that were perceived as authentic and confessional revelations of one's reality were those that also enhanced interaction and, thus, were successful in recognition-seeking activity.

The concept of performance, in relation to the special type of sincerity, (Bruzzi 2006) and the ways it enhances representations of reality (van de Port 2011) proved important in the studied vlogs. This finding suggests further research on the authenticity and performance in respect to exposing "real life" in DIY environments and YouTube and, especially, the aesthetical means of creating this authentic and real.

In the Chapter 5, I offered a theoretical treatment of the performance of vlogs in vlogging environments and discussed the circumstances under which the performance may generate confessional self-revealing storytelling that aimed to expose the

vlogger's real life. I asked how and why the performance of the real happens. The quest for "real" was posed in contrast to the understanding of DIY environments as performative but playful and "not so real" environments (Ardèvol et al. 2010; Hess 2009) where the mediated and performative nature of these environments complicates the idea of representing vloggers' realities (Hillis 2009; Senft 2008; White 2006).

The vlogging environment studied was understood one in which the real and performative converge. I conceptualized the performance in DIY environments as an acting out for the camera (Bruzzi 2006), which is essentially a participatory process between the vlogger and her audience (Ardèvol et al. 2010; Bolter et al. 2013). Through this performance, the performers proved to construct together the realness of the vlog (Ardèvol et al. 2010; Bolter al. 2013; Bruzzi 2006). This real would not happen or be constructed without the mediation process between the vlogger and her audiences, and due to the sociocultural, aesthetical, and technical constraints of YouTube (Bruzzi, 2006; Hess 2009; Van de Port 2011; Van Dijk 2012).

That the real was constructed by the mediated performance raised further questions what comes to the meaning of this 'real.' Building on Goffman's notion of performance taking place in interactional situations, the real constructed in the vlog centered on the "self" of the vlogger. Therefore, performance was understood as constructing the appearance of the real self (Goffmann 1959), which was analyzed with the help of the notion of the "sincere performer" (Goffman 1959). This explained why the confessional self-revelation of oneself in a vlog may be granted as real, both by the performer and by the audience, which was in contrast with the understanding of performance in vlog environments as creating the 'slightly fake' (Ardèvol et al. 2010; Hess 2009).

Thus, the confession was understood in relation to the real. The confessional messaging was not only understood as following the

aesthetical and disciplinary constraints of a particular environment and as a way to regulate the agency of the confession maker, but also as a place to reveal the real and construct the one's real of oneself by means of performance simultaneously.

The participatory feature of performance in vlogs was also further understood in connection with "the out of character situation" characteristics of confessional communications (Goffman 1959). Vlogs were understood, theoretically, as places where the sharing of one's confession may become a participatory activity. This understanding supported earlier research on confessional messaging as generating and enhancing further confessional communications as a participatory (Brooks 2005; deMan 1979; Paasonen 2007), social, and co-productive confessional narratives (Renov 1996; Strangelove 2010).

The study generated new understanding on the particular communicational means by which the confessional I-message generates participation in the vlogging environments. Specifically, the understanding of cultural participation in vlogging environments was deepened by the analytical findings on the representational level. As such, these findings modified the figure of a mediatized and confessional individual as disciplined, but also as an actor with free will who is able to construct her real self, through DIY mediated I-messaging and in social and constructive relationships with others. In effect, this finding deepened the understanding of the confessional as operating in a neoliberal society. As noted,

> *"It is an important premise for research that the differentiation and distanciation of communicative interaction via computers do not make either interaction or the social context less real. By imagining other people, in face-to-face as well as technologically mediated communication, we become virtual partners in real social activity." (Jensen 2007: 189)*

This was what happened in the studied contexts as well; the vloggers performed their real selves, not despite but because of the mediation and mediatization processes that takes place in and through DIY environments.

To conclude, it is important to understand the position of the confessional vloggers as performing their real selves within social media environments. At the outset, it may seem that the way I used Foucault's Panopticon, and particularly how it defines the constraining parameters for individuals' existences (as introduced in *Discipline and Punish*) and Goffman's argument about the true self as taking place through the performative act, (as introduced in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*) are incompatible and define a very different type of subject position. On one extreme, is the individual as an object and his agency is defined by the disciplinary technology, which manifests itself through the architecture of the space. One the other extreme is the subject as taking the different roles in each circumstance to the extent that he or her may become an integral part of the individual self, and make up, through versatile acts of self-presentation, in the presence of another person

However, the way these theories construct the subject position may also be understood, not as opposing each other but as complimentary in the understanding of a subject within social media environments. To read these theories together and locate their subjects along the same axis is rare, but not unexceptional. Goffman and Foucault have been used together in research of the 'making up people' (Hacking 2004) on a more theoretical level, but also for more specific settings such as social care giving institutions (see Nunkoosing & Haydon-Laurelut 2012).

The general interest here has been on how the 'making up people' is achieved by classifying individuals. Classification defines the ways people understand themselves and the ways they are able to act within an environment where these classifications take place. I do

not argue that we should understand individual vloggers as "made up peoples" by classification. However, to a certain extent, understanding a confessional vlogger and her constructing herself can be viewed as taking part in a communicative environment, which defines how the vlogger should act.

Hacking (2004) provided a thoughtful analysis of how the early works of Foucault and Goffmann have much in common and in which ways they complement each other. Hacking found parallels particularly between Goffman's *Asylum* and the *Presentation of Self* and Foucault´s "archeological period" (Hacking 2004) to which he accounts Panopticon. They offer different but complimentary ways to understand the subject position and level of individual agency it causes; as top-down (Foucault) and as a bottom-up (Goffman) processes (Hacking 2004).

Goffman's theoretization centers on the level of individuals in face-to-face interactions. He explains how people construct and define themselves in interactional relationship with others and "how such exchanges constitute lives" (Hacking 2004: 278), which I define as a performance of the real of oneself. Thus, I agree that Goffman's argumentation helps "to understand how people are made up day by day, within an existing institutional and cultural structure" (Hacking 2004: 299).

However, Goffmann is not keen on explaining how institutions come into being. Because these institutions, as I understood them as communicative practices, are the places for an individual to construct herself through performance, it becomes essential to also understand the constraints and surroundings of these practices. Foucault, and particularly Panopticon in this context, offers a way to understand how the surroundings construct and make an individual; the right type of an individual in a particular social media setting. As Hacking proposed:

> *"Foucault gave us ways in which to understand what is said, can be said, what is possible, what is meaningful – as well as how it*

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lies apart from the unthinkable and indecipherable. He gave us no idea of how, in everyday life, one comes to incorporate those possibilities and impossibilities as part of oneself. We have to go to Goffman to begin to think about that." (Hacking 2004: 299)

Contrary to Hacking's statement, and in relation to the type of individual both Foucault and Goffmann argued, Foucault argues that what can be said, what is possible, what is meaningful, and "how, in everyday life, one comes to incorporate those possibilities and impossibilities as part of oneself" (Hacking 2004: 299). This notion implies a certain type of an individual position. As stated, in *Discipline and Punish*, the individual is constructed as a top-down approach, a controllable object. This is the subject position that is offered through the technology of power and domination.

The self is objectified and shaped through the disciplinary (and dividing) practices (Foucault 2003). However, in his later writings (particularly in the *History of Sexuality* and in *The Technologies of the Self*), he focused on the technologies of self where the self constitutes itself as a subject to be governed, not as an object to be disciplined by domination (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982; Fejes & Dahlstedt 2013; Foucault 2003).

For Foucault, confession was the primary technology of the self; the individual produces truth through (verbal) confession and makes herself visible to others and to herself by means of confession. The disclosure of the confession is one way to produce truth about the self. However, more importantly, in confession, the individual is made to confess the right type of truth of her. Through this legitimate confession, a right type of individual is shaped, the one whom can be fitted into the existing regime. This way, disclosure of oneself also becomes a way to control oneself, which is why it can be understood as technologies of self; self constitutes itself as a subject, through verbalization, and becomes governed by himself (Fejes & Dahlstedt 2013; Foucault 2003). Because the confession needs to be uttered in the presence of the other or at least virtual other(s), it is

not as much a way to produce one's inner truth in relation with oneself, but a way to perform the appropriate kind of truth in public and to be healed through that (Fejes & Dahlstedt 2013 :19). Many theories on confession operating in our recent society take as their starting point this subject position: The individual governed by herself through her confessional speech which takes place publicly in and through media. As already noted, this idea has been understood as a way to form the right type of citizens in recent mediated society (see Andrejevic 2007; Fejes & Dahlstedt 2013; Furedi 2004; Pecora 2002).

This type of "confessing animal" position is certainly not the subject position of vloggers that I have argued. Certainly, as I have showed, the vloggers do act inside the parameters of the particular communicational environment to some extent. In this sense they adjust themselves to the existing structure of that particular environment. That is, offering the right types of confessions following the aesthetical and societal norms of the environment in an expected manner. However, to adjust one's confessional to these existing parameters was done basically along three different types of subject positions, and I would argue that these are the positions that one would inhabit when entering vlogging environments of social media.

The first position was most apparent in the studied WCN (Chapter 3), where much of the "right type of" performance seemed to be constituted because of the disciplining technology. This finding implies that the subject position was partly that of a controllable object, disciplined by domination and power. The domination was inherent in that particular community in the form of peers who formed a type of a synopticon. I would also argue that, when entering a vlogging environment, one should apply, to a certain extent, the position of an objectified subject to keep the communicational apparatus functioning and make oneself visible in that apparatus.

The second position one should apply, to a certain extent, is that of a "confessing animal;" subject position produced through the technologies of the self as Foucault theorized and the position applied in the theories of the neoliberal confessing society. Along this axis, the individual actively (but not freely) creates herself through self-formation. Thus, one needs to perform the right type of confessions in public to make oneself visible. By doing that, the preformer produces disclosures (even partial ones) of oneself and, thus, is a means to produce truth about the self. Through this confessional act, the individual is formed, not as an object, but as a subject (of the communication) who is still disciplined by herself inherently.

However, even though, to some extent, the individual can be understood as being governed by herself in the form of producing the right type of confession (in vlogs analyzed in this study), the question still remains in what ways the studied vlogs can be understood as manifesting the more profound technologies of the self, and what is the modus operandi that ultimately leads to the formation of the right type of citizens by means of vlogging. I would argue that vloggers inhabit this subject position in so far as they are able to produce a confession that is notified by the audience in that particular communicational environment. However, I am not sure whether there is a reason to draw a parallel between these vloggers and their individual vlogpostings to the project of becoming the right type of citizen; this process is suggested widely as operating in our mediatized society (Fejes & Dahlstedt: 2013).

The third type of subject position applies to vlogging environments and adjusts the understanding how the confessionals operate in and through the DIY culture of vlogging environments. As noted, this position follows Goffman's analysis (Chapter 5). Thus, the subject may take a more active position and perform her confession not because it is imposed, as the above two subject positions suggest, but because the underlying reason for all performances in everyday

life can be understood as a "human want for social contact and for companionship" (Goffmann 1959: 206). Because of this ultimate reasoning behind performance, the confessing subject becomes more of an active subject performing a confession of herself to build social contacts. At the same time, this confessional performance becomes a way to build one's own reality (Goffman 1959), not in spite but because of the performance that takes place in and through screens in DIY environments and creates an honesty of oneself (Bruzzi 2006; Van de Port 2011).

Further Research

The findings of this study suggest further research on two levels. First, disciplinary tendencies in social networking environments should be considered at the practical and theoretical levels given that the regulative mechanisms that are proven to operate in highly nuanced ways and are in need for further analytical interpretation. Of importance would be developing a better understanding of the extent to which DIY environments actually frame what can and should be communicated. This framework needs to be understood in connection with the question: "What types of 'voices' do mediated environments tolerate?" This leads to the question: "Which kind of a social being is favored in recent mediatized society?"

Further research should also focus on the intimate aesthetics of vlogging cultures; particularly the visual evolution is characteristics of this environment. The theoretical and practical understanding I generated here would help to understand how confessional self-revelation constructs vloggers' realities as a means to be recognized in the process of becoming a social being. This understanding would, in effect, generate new knowledge on how mediated environments and their influence on individual's confessional self-revelation can be understood more positively; for example, as a place for supportive messaging to construct the individual as a real

and social self at the same time and in cooperation with the co-participants. Further research should also concentrate on the DIY environments to further understand the visual evolution of intimate aesthetics in different settings, in order to understand what maybe a confessional enunciation centering on the real of oneself. In other words, what should be considered "real" in mediated environments - and because of that, what type of an individual these environments favour?

Limitations of the Study

The limitations and strengths of this study are due to the "ethnographic eye" through which I observed the fieldwork settings. Understanding these fields and the existing confessional communication was a product of my interpretational activities during the fieldwork, analysis, and theorizing of the findings. Thus, the account of confessional communication I suggest here is the product of my visitation and subjective observation in researched fieldwork settings in a given time. These observations should lead to a somewhat different version of confessional communication if completed in other place or time, or by another researcher. Nonetheless, the understanding of confessional communications I have generated here is a truthful account within the parameters of this research through the ethnographic eye.

RESEARCH MATERIAL

List of Vlogs Analyzed in Chapter 4.

Performer	Title	Address	Views
1. lindseygabrielle	My Teenage Pregnancy Vlog.	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6rBX3e4TL64	19,808
2. lindseygabrielle	Weeks Pregnant!	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMuVWZCG7ks	941
3. allharr	7 Weeks Pregnant!	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_BnA8_VMDWg	1,282
4. 11lisag	5 Weeks Pregnant!	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfbYGHwo-DM	2,197
5. JPSUESS	5 weeks 4 days pregnant! Baby # 5 :)	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdTPKQW-	24,022
6. DearTaylerTragedy	6 weeks Pregnant vlog And Belly shot	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8PfL_6FuDc	8,734
7. HuneyAngeLove	teen pregnancy week 10	Retreived from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U43rh10wvus	10,729
8. HayleesATeenMom	Teen Pregnancy: 14 weeks	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WST2bPZKNGo	12,081
9. tolerablekaylee	How i told my parents and my boyfriend(:	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3uiNgreBREk	23,907
10. xxsaraah49	my first trimester !	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DPyl6aPS17g	445
11 xxsaraah49	Intro 1/2: About Me/Favorites	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckctG00ugnI	1,316
12. onmaimind	Reflections On My First Trimester of Pregnancy...	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lS2-H2_ZI6o	1,033
13. bibiandbaby12	First Pregnancy Vlog : 1-4 Weeks.	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=En5Yjmoy8fc	1,486
14.	I'm	Retrieved from	52,408

TheCurrentCustom	Pregnant!!	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDFYgz6yO8I	
15. EagerlyExpecting	Weeks 1-5 Pregnancy Vlog!	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJU0GKEYWDs	12,595
16. EagerlyExpecting	Where On EARTH Have I Been?!	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ad-8Icx2uGs	4,243
17. Surprise09baby	5 Weeks Pregnant	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z95V9QvzXpM	93,273
18. MrsMacNaughton	5 Weeks Pregnant	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QYRVlDvhKh4	4,646
19. MrsMacNaughton	4 Weeks Pregnant	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yaV2mWBt568	5,592
20. Sprinkleofglitter	I'm Pregnant with Baby Glitter	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ItYEJG_9GyY	169,301
21. MissMommyMaddiLarie	Pregnant Teen. Week 8 & How i told my boyfriend and Parents	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fnH4pg9K1p0	4,868
22. Teen pregnancy vlog	Weeks 18-21	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8R796Di_EnI	1,681
23. Favorite	Youtube Teen Mommies	Retrieved fromhttp://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JfFtCNijGSA	518
24. TeenMummy94	how i told my parents and boyfriend i was pregnant	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1j38lNOWGfE	90,646
25. MeganAndBabyXOXOXO	November 4th 2012 Update!	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvGC3MQDKZU	870
26. MeganAndBabyXOXOXO	5-6 Weeks Pregnant & Belly Shot	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arCWe0lFltM	2,046
27. 2011TeenageMom	4 week VLOG!	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixVWSdktHFE	3,950
28. Teen	5 Weeks Pregnant!	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k466nSuLObA	8,864
29. Teen	Strong Moms Need Help Too.	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=viKY4QNkG60	2,508
30. MandeeTheGreat	Guess what?............	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?	15,995

	.... I'm pregnant!!	v=h_qA-fPyyTY	
31. Jade G	5-6 weeks pregnant vlog!!! Surprise I'm pregnant?!?	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZHXJcR2wGBc	4,395
32. Jade G	Our BIG family announcement!!	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHkb3LVd9EU	689
33. Jade G	Guess who's back!!!!	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8_s6b6ynmM	383
34. NotJustSuperfly	Introduction!: Teen Pregnancy Vlog	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_gYOKQj9a4c	15,645
35. GabeandJesss	My Thoughts - The Truth	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hfDwyPJaWNA	78,504
36. GabeandJess	SURPRISE?!?!?!	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-hIDhklIZk	135,445
37. GabeandJess	5 Weeks Pregnant (Part 1)	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRUw00TQ8dM	34.114
38. abbyb0416	4 Weeks 1 Day Pregnant	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-d-BQIIwtVA	2,438
39. NewMommyJess	Teen Pregnancy: 25 Weeks + Belly shot!	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hsv08iV2Pv8	3,569
40. NewMommyJess	Teen Pregnancy: 16 Weeks!	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmr2y2t-lfA	2,818
41. doots17	Telling Ryan that I'm Pregnant!	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQTP0IeSuUM	68,531
42. TheStyleDiet	I'm Pregnant! ~ 8 Week Pregnancy Vlog	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rbI1xo2iNA	123,818
43. britneyandbaby	A Day In The Life Of A Teen/Stay At Home Mom! (Part 3)	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HkSuOwiUH5I	8,250
44. britneyandbaby	9 Weeks Pregnant & Belly Shot!	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fblUIa4f_nA&list=UUwz1tb3jasT2LrQEq_vIg0A&index=249	10,557
45. xxxjoelpolexxx	WE'RE PREGNANT!	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?	39,079

	-The day we found out :)	v=-jldeim0GH4	
46. Baby #4	Pregnancy Week 4 (Part 1)	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCi4PvABwao	11,727
47. TheCurrentFamily	Pregnancy : Gender Test (At-Home) Plus. First Purchase for Baby!	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJRX4Y7X9_4	21,545
48. TweedleTee	TTC Vlog #4: I think I'm Pregnant	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=we0FdDTDLmE	6,343
49. TweedleTee	Live Pregnancy Test 10DPO	retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SMF7UOH8Zfk	17,051
50. Mcubed	Pregnancy Vlog #1- 4 weeks	Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqdJL5LdlNM	15,078

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