13. A Narrative Perspective on Genre-Specific Cultivation

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Genre-specific cultivation deals with the long-term contribution of viewing types of television programs (crime shows or sitcoms, for instance) to viewers' perceptions of social reality. Exposure to specific genres may influence the formation of norms and values as well as overarching world views and ideologies (e.g., Morgan & Shanahan, 2010; Morgan, Shanahan, & Signorielli, 2009). Genres carry specific and typical patterns of cultural indicators, expressed in characteristic plots, character constellations, and story morals. The basic logic of genre-specific cultivation is that viewers internalize messages from the genres they watch. At its origin, cultivation was seen as a force coming from television in general, not individual genres or shows—a force coming from the *system of messages* rather than *specific content* (Morgan & Shanahan, 2010). George Gerbner (2001) argued that television composes a coherent cultural environment, a "seamless web" (p. 5) of meaning that serves as unquestioned background for the lives of a mass audience. Television presents "organically related fact and fiction" (Gerbner & Gross, 1976, p. 175) where basic rules and structures of society are replicated across a variety of different programs and form the consistent ideology of the television world. From the beginning, cultivation scholars have stressed the importance of looking at television as a system and an organic unit: "Despite obvious surface-level differences across genres and programs, deeper analysis often shows that surprisingly similar and complementary images of society, consistent ideologies, and stable accounts

of the 'facts' of life cut across many different types of programs" (Morgan et al., 2009, p. 36).

Some changes in the television environment challenge these early assumptions. Available television channels have multiplied and serve more and more fragmented audiences that are more selective today than in the early years of television (Hawkins & Pingree, 1981; Potter, 1993). One way to capture this specialization on both the content and the audience side is to address genre content and genre use as a cultivation issue. Research on genre-specific cultivation rests on the assumption that, within the realm of television, we can find provinces of meaning defined by genre that create idiosyncratic views of how the social world functions. Often, it is reasonable to assume that cultural indicators are not equally spread over all genres but accumulate in some and are lacking in others. For example, murder is indispensable for most crime dramas but virtually absent in sitcoms. Cosmetic enhancement does not usually appear in crime drama, but is the main theme of cosmetic surgery makeover programs. Some genres do have potential "influence monopolies" over some topics.

This chapter argues that genre is useful as a unit of analysis for cultivation, provided that we have a conceptual grip on "genre." The quality of genre-specific cultivation research depends on our ability to conceptualize and articulate the content of a genre. To advance this goal, our chapter takes a different approach from existing literature on genre-specific cultivation. Rather than summarizing research along content dimensions (e.g., crime, relationships, gender roles, etc.), we will first look at conceptualizations of genre from narrative theory and, based on that, develop a taxonomy of cultivation dimensions emerging from the literature on genre. Along these dimensions, we will then synthesize cultivation research where it exists and point out gaps where it does not. Such a narrative view on genre-specific cultivation should strengthen our theoretical foundation for empirical research—and continue to develop Gerbner's original idea that cultivation originates from the consistent social narrative that society's main storyteller, television, provides.

Genres as Content Units

Genres group content together that shares a "'repertoire of elements' which mainly consists of characters, setting, iconography, narrative and style of a text" (Lacey, 2000, p. 133). A crime series, for example, usually features a crime, victims, witnesses, policemen, and is set in a contemporary story world. A subset of crime series, forensic programs like *CSI*, is additionally characterized by specific iconography (e.g., forensic technology), and specific stylistic elements (e.g., computer-animations and flash-backs to crime scenes).

How genres emerge in social practice and how they can be defined for scholarly purposes has long been debated in film studies. Textual definitions (see Staiger, 2003) use specifics of the text to find similarities and commonalities that define genre. Todorov (1990) argues against text-driven analytic definitions: "it is always possible to discover a property common to two texts, and thus to put them together in a class. Is there any virtue in calling the result of such a combination a 'genre'?" (p. 17). Todorov proposes a historical approach, by which he does not necessarily mean going back in time but rather looking at how the label of a genre has been used in social practice. Simply put: If people use a genre label, the genre exists. This is reflected by other scholars, for example, in what Staiger (2003) identifies as the social convention definition or Tudor's conviction that genre "is what we collectively believe it to be" (Tudor, 1979, p. 122). Once a genre is identified socially, researchers may go back into texts labeled with a genre and analyze their common properties (Todorov, 1990).

Understanding genre as discursive practice goes beyond identifying categories and texts belonging to them: It also implies looking at meanings constructed in genres. Mittell (2004) specifies genre as a construction process, in which authors, critics, audiences, and industries are involved: "anyone who uses generic terms is participating [in] the constitution of genre categories" (p. 13). Lacey (2000) describes a triangle of spheres that need and use genre categories: artists, audiences, and institutions (p. 134). Artists use genre to guide their artistic production; well-known generic conventions can be assumed to be known by audiences and used to generate audience expectations as part of the intended experience. Audiences classify texts with the help of genre labels. Institutions use genres to label and market their products.

Neale (2003) assigns primacy to institutional definitions of genre, arguing that while idiosyncratic definitions may exist, they "play little part, if any, in the public formation and circulation of genres and generic images. In the public sphere, the institutional discourses are of central importance. Testimony to the existence of genres and evidence of their properties is to be found primarily here" (p. 167). One might add that genres created by the industry only come into actual existence when they become somewhat popular. A genre would not form without resonance in the viewership. Success ensures that genre categories are actually known and accepted: "Genre texts, because of their commerciality, are very useful for this [making links to society] because if a particular generic variant does not find an audience, it is usually unlikely that many similar texts will be made" (Lacey, 2000, p. 142).

The argument that institutional categories are most instrumental in finding the communicative common ground between audiences and programs serves to legitimize their use in cultivation research. If genre categories denote

territories of meaning within the realm of narrative texts, and authors/industries produce for genre use, and audiences select and read according to genre conventions, then it makes sense to use genre as a meaningful unit in cultivation. This is in line with Casetti's (2001) notion of genre as a communicative contract between author and audience. The basic idea is that authors produce texts labeled as a specific genre in full awareness that audiences will understand the text as a generic instance and that a specific set of expectations will be evoked as a result of a particular reading. In this sense, authors and audiences negotiate meaning about a text with the help of genre labels. This negotiation may be regarded as a contract: Authors using a genre may expect audiences to understand genre clues. Audiences, reading texts as genre texts, may expect the authors to follow conventions of the genre. Here, the relationship between program and viewer seems especially important. Genre is an instrument for mutual negotiation about the meaning of the narrated plot; for example, the fact that a conflict is presented generates the expectation that the conflict will be solved. This type of agreement is preparatory in that expectations from both sides exist before the actual viewing experience; expectations are generated in repeated exposures and represent, in a sense, hypotheses that are confirmed across different viewing occasions. Jauss (1982) called this the "horizon of expectations"—the set of rules associated with a specific genre. Also, through repeated exposure to genre texts, viewers gain a "generic competence, that is an ability (1) to recognize and interpret the codes typical of a given genre, and (2) to perceive departures from it" (Pyrhönen, 2007, p. 112).

For cultivation, the agreement about the genre label is extended beyond the usual players in the genre game—audiences, authors, and institutions—to the researchers. Thus, researchers should only use genre labels that are established by many instances in the television environment (e.g., commercial descriptions, film criticism, program announcements) and are commonly used as descriptors across several "metadiscursive discourses" (Todorov, 1976, p. 162). It is important to recognize that genre should not be a category forced upon respondents by researchers, but that researchers participate in a discourse that has already been established by those "naturally" involved in production and reception.

On the side of the audience, genre knowledge can be thought of as a generic concept in memory, as schema, representing typical aspects of genres such as objects, situations, and plots (e.g., Ohler, 1994). Incoming information about the story at hand is interpreted with the help of schemas, which guide viewers in making sense of the text more quickly and biases interpretation according to genre schema. A different approach is worth considering for cultivation purposes: Schweinitz (1994) argues that genres are too open, dynamic, and fuzzy to be understood as having a set of describable properties,

as schema theory suggests. Genres are more likely to be defined through prototypes, paradigmatic texts that dominate perceptions and expectations of a genre based on the most representative member of a category. All other members are grouped and linked to this prototype to form a cluster around it. The advantage is that membership in a category is not exclusive but gradual; media texts need not belong to a category according to a definition but may be linked to the prototype through several other media texts.

Whether a text is considered to belong to a category is not determined by general rules but by judging it as a variation of the prototype. This has repercussions for cultivation research. A survey may list one or two films or series that are considered to be at the center of a genre. Respondents need not have a definition of the genre to recognize their media behavior but simply need to evaluate whether what they watch is similar to the prototype.

Relevance for Cultivation

Cultivation is a long-term-process in which it is difficult to trace causal effects (e.g., Morgan & Shanahan, 2010). In fact, the overwhelming majority of cultivation research is correlational and cannot distinguish between romantic comedy viewing leading to positive attitudes about romantic love and positive attitudes about romantic love leading to heavier romantic comedy viewing. As a long-term process, it is likely that both causal directions are involved in cultivation processes. Moreover, genres are linked to both content selection and cultivation effects (Bilandzic & Busselle, 2008).

Genres not only share specific common characteristics in plots and characters but may also predict the type of experience that viewers can expect. Over time, viewers develop preferences for genres with which they have had pleasurable individual experiences. Gehrau (2006) argues that the "basic" genres of comedy, drama, and thriller signify different emotional experiences that viewers come to expect when they choose content: to be happy, sad, or afraid.

Here it is important to recognize the role of narrative processing and engagement in linking genres with cultivation effects. Narrative engagement (or "transportation") is a complex experience of immersion into a narrative, characterized by an intense cognitive focus on the plot as well as intense emotions for the characters (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008; Green & Brock, 2000). It is the experiential product of the smooth construction of mental models of meaning that represent a narrative text (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008). Such immersion experiences have been related to enjoyment and repeated genre use (Bilandzic & Busselle, 2008). Engagement is enjoyable for several reasons: People enjoy experiencing deep emotions which are usually rare in actual life;

for a given time, they are relieved from their own identities and lives—very effectively indeed, because cognitive capacity is consumed in processing the narrative rather than ruminating about one's own problems (Bilandzic & Busselle, 2011). Narrative engagement and enjoyment of a story are highly related (Bilandzic & Busselle, 2011; Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Green, Brock, & Kaufman, 2004); as a result, to the extent that viewers associate specific genres with opportunities to experience higher levels of narrative engagement, and thus higher levels of enjoyment, they are motivated to seek out those genres (Bilandzic & Busselle, 2008).

At the same time, narrative engagement is important for effects: If a perceiver's mental systems are occupied with constructing mental models of the story's characters, events, locations, and its progression in time, little cognitive energy is left for critical examination of or counterarguing with the story's assertions (Green & Brock, 2002). In turn, reduced counterarguing generally increases the likelihood of persuasion (Green & Brock, 2002; Petty, Tormala, & Rucker, 2004). At the same time, watching stories in an intensive narrative engagement mode facilitates encoding the message as well as inferences and elaboration, increasing the likelihood of adopting story-consistent beliefs. In cultivation processes, with each exposure, genre-consistent beliefs should be adjusted a little towards the general lines of the genre. Over time, knowledge and attitudes should shift towards genre-consistent levels. We need to emphasize that cultivation through high-level engagement exposures is not the only way for cultivation effects to emerge. Repeated exposures in low-involvement modes should also result in cultivation effects. Single low-involvement exposures should result in smaller effects than high-involvement exposures. It seems reasonable to assume that low-involvement exposures cumulate over time but have a smaller impact than cumulated high-involvement exposures (Bilandzic & Busselle, 2008). Nonetheless, low-involvement exposures may be the more common case in television viewing and be responsible for most of the cultivation effects we know today.

In addition to learning genre-consistent messages, viewers acquire more and more competence in understanding a genre. They extract rules about typical plots of the genre, typical themes as well as typical characters. With refined genre conventions, viewers can process new genre texts more easily, decode significant symbols and generate expectations as well as extract meaning from an individual story. Knowing the rules of a genre not only facilitates the interpretation of a new text in that genre but also helps to instantiate a story-world model with a genre-adequate story-world logic. For example, in science fiction, it is normal to see advanced technology which does not exist (yet) in the actual world. For a regular viewer of science fiction, this is normal. In contrast, a novice may spend some time thinking about how unrealistic the story is,

which may disrupt narrative engagement and initiate counterarguing. Thus, being familiar with genre conventions helps viewers focus on the actual plots without having to think about the prerequisites of the genre; ultimately, this will (1) increase effects, and (2) encourage more exposure to the genre, because processing is easy (Bilandzic & Busselle, 2008).

This model of cultivation deviates from the traditional approach by considering processes leading to effects and motivations for selective exposure over time. Specifically, regarding selective exposure as a part of the cultivation process runs counter to the claim that television viewing is relatively non-selective (e.g., Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli, & Jackson-Beeck, 1979). Clearly, viewing is less likely to be non-selective in the modern television age, with countless programs available (e.g., Potter, 1993). We carry this argument further: While Gerbner et al. downplayed the role of selectivity, the model presented here explicitly uses selective exposure to explain how cultivation works as a process over time.

Insights Derived from a Genre-Theoretic View: A Taxonomy of Dimensions in Genre-Specific Cultivation

Cultivation scholars need to have a clear picture of the content in order to determine how much viewers share the definition of social reality presented in television. This is why, in Gerbner's original research paradigm, a content analysis ("message system analysis") was integral, feeding into the cultivation survey and being contrasted with actual-world data (e.g., Gerbner & Gross, 1976). The cultural indicators collected in these content analyses were mostly simple facts of the television world—simple, but revealing of power relations, social roles, and demographic structure—for example, violence, occupational roles, gender roles, or the justice system. While the message system analysis serves a good purpose in describing facts and indicating possible influences on the frequency and risk estimates of viewers, no equivalent method exists to anchor cultivation attitudes (or second-order-beliefs; see Shrum & Lee, Chapter 8 this volume, for a fuller discussion) in the television content. Second-order cultivation measures are mostly derivatives of television facts, not found directly in television content. Often, the facts of television allow quite different consequences for attitudes. For example, romantic comedies highlight betrayals and lies as central plot elements. What viewers should learn as "fact" is that betrayals and lies often occur in romantic relationships and may conclude that these behaviors are norm violations and detrimental to relationships (see Ewoldsen & Rhodes, Chapter 10, this volume, for a discussion

of the cultivation of beliefs about romance). Alternatively, they may conclude that deception is everyday business in relationships and that one is forgiven as long as one shows remorse. Depending on the interpretation, betrayals and lies may be considered unforgivable norm violations or as a relationship's normal and remediable troubles.

  Thus, two aspects merit closer theoretical and methodological attention: First, how do we select which facts to analyze as facts of the television world? While systematic content analyses exist, of course, the theoretical view on the content is often rather unsystematic and leaves open to eclecticism and intuition the question of which aspects of the genre or show should be analyzed in a content analysis. Second, how we select and analyze more abstract conclusions that may manifest as attitudes in regular viewers is unclear. For both questions, genre considerations may help. The following section presents a taxonomy of cultivation dimensions based on elements defined in the genre literature. To some extent, these dimensions have been dealt with in cultivation research already. However, a systematic approach based on conceptual considerations derived from the genre literature has the advantage that new uncharted fields can be discovered and gaps in the research landscape can be identified. For the taxonomy, we distinguish among (1) elements and conventions of a genre, (2) complex plot messages, and (3) cross-genre perspectives.

Genre Elements and Conventions

Lacey (2000) identifies elements that comprise the basic schema of a genre: characters, setting, iconography, narrative, and style. This schema will serve as a systematic backbone to structure research fields that refer to single elements within a genre.

Characters

In many accounts of narrative meaning construction, characters are the key to understanding (Bordwell, 1989; M. Smith, 1995; Tan, 1996). When assuming the point of view of a character and emoting with and for them, viewers come to understand basic motivations (and hence reasons for actions), the relation between characters in the story, as well as narrative evaluations (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008). Moreover, emotional reactions to a story always involve characters and reflect the connection between viewer and agents of a story. Thus, viewers have to pay attention to characters in order to understand a story, and their narrative engagement will to some extent be determined by and depend upon their emotional connection with the characters.

Characters in any given genre often follow certain patterns in behavior and traits. Lacey (2000) distinguishes stereotypes, which exist in reality and fiction, from generic types, which are typical of persons appearing in a genre story, but have no referent in the actual world (for example, the good cowboy, the heroine in the domestic context, the villain; p. 137). Lacey's notion of generic types resonates with more general types extracted by Campbell (1949) as the common ground from myths and tales, for example, the hero, the helper, the goddess, the temptress, or the father. Stories make use of both types of characters: Generic types generate expectations in the viewer which can be satisfied or played with; and stereotypes (e.g., about minorities, gender, occupation) drive the process of sense making by the viewer. Not only does the media text contain and play with stereotypes, but viewers also use stereotypes and other knowledge from everyday interactions to construct their model of the characters in a story (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008; M. Smith, 1995). This interaction between textual cues and viewers' person schemata has several consequences for cultivation. First, recognizing generic types helps viewers process stories with ease—they develop generic competence. Second, repeated exposure to specific person schemata may consolidate and intensify stereotypes of social groups.

A growing body of research on the relationship between television viewing and stereotyping follows a cultivation paradigm and looks at the specific contribution of genre exposure to gender stereotypes (Signorielli, 2001; Smith & Granados, 2009). While the cultivation of gender stereotypes is predominantly attributed to overall television exposure, there are a number of studies that turn to specific genre influences (see also Scharrer, Chapter 5, this volume).

Soap opera viewing, for example, is related to holding stereotypical beliefs about occupational roles (Buerkel-Rothfuss & Mayes, 1981; Carveth & Alexander, 1985). Perceptions of the percentage of women working were higher for those with more exposure to action adventure programs in a study by Potter and Chang (1990); in the same study, attitudes about working women were positively related to some genres (sitcoms, news, movies, talk shows, and game shows), and negatively to others (action adventure, sports). No relationships to any of these indicators were found with overall television exposure. Rivadeneyra and Ward (2005) found relationships between some genres (Spanish-language prime time television, English talk shows) and traditional gender roles among Latina adolescents (for conflicting evidence, see Ward & Rivadeneyra, 1999). Among African American high school students, Ward, Hansbrough, and Walker (2005) found a positive correlation between music video consumption and gender roles. Counter-stereotypical portrayals in specific television shows such as *The Cosby Show* relate to counter-stereo-

typical gender role attitudes (Rosenwasser, Lingenfelter, & Harrington, 1989). This matters all the more since longitudinal content analyses show that gender role portrayals are less consistent today than they were some decades ago (Signorielli & Bacue, 1999).

Similarly, stereotypes of ethnic minorities have been under intense investigation in a cultivation paradigm (Mastro, 2009; Mastro & Tukachinsky, Chapter 3, this volume), less so, however, with a differentiation among genres. For example, attitudes towards the socio-economic success of Blacks and Whites differentially relate to exposure to television entertainment and news (Armstrong, Neuendorf, & Brentar, 1992) as well as drama and sitcom exposure (Busselle & Crandall, 2002). Local television news exposure (Dixon, 2008) and reality-based crime shows (Oliver & Armstrong, 1995) are related to racial stereotypes. Other social groups have also been the focus of genre-specific investigation, albeit studies are less frequent here. For example, in a study by Calzo and Ward (2009), exposure to daytime talk shows and soap operas was related to more accepting attitudes towards homosexuality, and talk show exposure was related to less restrictive attitudes about lesbian or gay relationships in a study by Rössler and Brosius (2001). Other examples are attitudes towards occupational groups, for example, doctors (Chory-Assad & Tamborini, 2003; Pfau, Mullen, & Garrow, 1995; Quick, 2009) or attorneys (Pfau, Mullen, Deidrich, & Garrow, 1995).

Not only are *perceptions* of social groups shaped in this way; these perceptions also have consequences for everyday social interactions (e.g., expectations towards doctors; Quick, 2009), influence the interpretation of social situations (e.g., attributing race to unidentified perpetrators; Dixon, 2007), and may reflect upon one's own self-concept (e.g., self-esteem; Rivadeneyra, Ward, & Gordon, 2007).

Setting

Setting refers to the time and location of a story (Lacey, 2000). A possible cultivation outcome is that viewers learn certain facts about a time period; for example, regular viewers of Westerns may learn "facts" about the American frontier and life at the end of the 19th century. While no studies exist about setting specifically, Woo and Dominick (2001) found that daily talk show viewing was related to estimates and attitudes about American culture more for international students than for American students.

Setting also comprises what is possible in a certain story world and what is not: the story-world logic (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008). For example, one might ask how technological progress is perceived as a fact of today's world, even if it is presented in a science-fiction context and not yet existent in the actual world. A similar effect can be observed with forensic series, which sug-

gest that DNA testing is available within minutes, or that finding usable DNA traces is the rule and not the exception (e.g., Podlas, 2006; Schweitzer & Saks, 2007).

Iconography

Iconography refers to symbols, both visual and auditory, that are common in certain genres (Lacey, 2000, p. 138), for example, police cars and crime scene tape in crime shows, or laser guns and space ships in science fiction. In many cases, iconography will be difficult to translate into cultivation outcomes, because many genre-typical signs are also present in everyday life (horses, police cars). However, some of the typical iconography is divergent from the actual world ("false facts") or comes from a context that is usually unavailable to the common citizen. In these rare cases, we may follow the classic cultivation paradigm and observe whether viewers adopt unique iconography. This type of cultivation outcome is different from first-order effects, which refer to frequency, probability, or risk estimation. Being acquainted with iconography has a different quality. It is not likely that regular Western viewers will overestimate the frequencies of horses in the actual world. It is more likely that viewers will associate horses with certain values and attributes. Another possible form of cultivation outcome is that viewers learn about the existence of a fact—a process Van den Bulck (2010) calls "data setting." Van den Bulck exemplifies this with forensic procedures that determine blood stains and other bodily fluids using a special substance which changes color after contact with blood or ultraviolet light. This type of cultivation outcome is not about estimating the frequency with which a procedure is used in forensics (first-order estimate), but about knowing that a blood stain will turn pink when sprayed with the substance or that the light beam is violet. The only question is whether these effects are cumulative and increase with more exposure, or whether a one-time exposure is enough to learn one fact. While this is an empirical question, speed and accuracy of retrieval from memory may increase in regular viewers. A systematic, cultivation-relevant content analysis for iconography may open up a new field in cultivation research.

Plot

The plot is the event structure of a story, events or actions connected with certain causal relations. Depending on the level of abstraction and the focus, the plot offers several options for cultivation outcomes, some of which are very common in cultivation research, and some of which have received little if any attention.

    Single actions and events. Exposure to single events and actions within the plot gives viewers an impression of their frequency and likelihood, and

manifests in first-order estimates used in cultivation research (e.g., Gerbner & Gross, 1976). Not all first-order measures fall into this plot category but only those that refer to single actions and events. For example, while likelihood of theft and bodily harm are plot oriented and refer to single actions and events, the percentage of violent crimes committed by non-Caucasians is a generalization made from television characters (examples from Grabe & Drew, 2007).

The results of genre-specific cultivation in this category are distributed across a large variety of themes, two of which have received a fair amount of attention: crime and marriage.

Regarding crime, in a study by Goidel, Freeman, and Procopio (2006), perceptions of the incidence of juvenile crime and overall crime were related to exposure to television news and reality crime shows, respectively. Romer, Jamieson, and Aday (2003) found that an index of four risks to family and the American public (drugs, violent crime, hand guns, street drugs) was related to viewing local television news but not to national television news. Exposure to crime drama on the other hand did not correlate with single action/event indicators such as the incidence of violent crime or burglary (Bilandzic & Busselle, 2008; Grabe & Drew, 2007; O'Keefe, 1984). Soap opera exposure, as a non-crime genre, was related to crime perceptions such as estimates of rape incidence, using the services of a private detective, being the victim of a gunshot (Shrum, 1996), or overestimating the percentage of men employed in the police force (Cohen & Weimann, 2000).

For marriage, Buerkel-Rothfuss and Mayes (1981) and Potter and Chang (1990) report positive correlations between soap opera exposure and estimates of marriages that end in divorce. Carveth and Alexander (1985) only replicated this result when "years watching soap operas" was used as an indicator of exposure. Conversely, Perse (1986) did not find any influence of soap opera viewing on the estimate of divorce. Interestingly, soap opera viewing became a significant predictor when the question was phrased slightly differently, relating to *people* and not to the *event* of divorce: Heavy viewers of soap operas overestimate the number of males and females whose marriage ends in divorce. This may be an indication that the reference point (humans versus actions/events) matters. Shrum (1996) used an index of four estimates relating to marriage and relationships: extramarital affairs, divorce, women marrying men who they do not love, and executives having affairs with their secretaries. He found a positive correlation of this index with soap opera viewing. In contrast, Davis and Mares (1998) report that talk show viewing does not influence the estimate of the percentage of husbands and wives who cheat.

Scripts. According to Schank and Abelson (1977), a script is a generalized sequence of actions that shows how actors typically handle and are

expected to handle social situations. Considering that a television genre is characterized by formulaic plots and roles, viewers may, on top of single actions and events, learn genre-specific scripts. An example that may be interpreted as a script (though not called this by the author), is the recent investigation by Van den Bulck (2010) of how Flemish viewers learn the Miranda Rights from American television and acquire knowledge about when Miranda should be read (see Van den Bulck, Chapter 12, this volume, for a fuller discussion of cultivation in international settings). Television viewing increased the likelihood of being able to list at least one part of the Miranda rights.

Apart from such general action scripts, other scripts seem equally worth pursuing. Plantinga (2009) describes a type of script which combines a typical situation with adequate emotional reactions. These scripts are *paradigm scenarios*—"scenarios that are consistently repeated until they become conventional" (p. 82). Paradigm scenarios may be learned through constant repetition in genre television; they connect particular situations to specific emotions, serve as a basis for interpretation in actual world situations, and guide emotional reactions. Viewers may learn which emotional reactions are appropriate at funerals, in a marital argument, or in court trials. Processes of identification and sympathy with the characters facilitate this type of effect: Viewers are led through the emotional structure of a story and feel emotions in a way similar to actual world situations. Repeated exposures provide occasions to rehearse a particular type of emotional reaction and, over time, display it as an automatic and habituated reaction to specific situations. Winterhoff-Spurk, Unz, and Schwab (2001) expressed the idea that emotions, like cognitions, can be cultivated through repeated exposures to emotional television ("cultivation of emotions").

Related to paradigm scenarios, scripts for norm violations may serve the same purpose and present typical sequences of norm violations and appropriate reactions attached to them. The portrayal of norm violations is connected to a narrative context that informs the viewer about the reason for a norm violation, a justification, reactions of the victim, and consequences for the perpetrator as well as appropriate emotional reactions when the norm violation is uncovered (Bilandzic, 2011). These complex scripts may be learned by viewers over a large number of formulaic genre repetitions.

Style

The formal style of media texts is most often neglected in cultivation research (see Bilandzic & Rössler, 2004; Grabe & Drew, 2007). Formal (or structural) features such as cuts and edits, camera perspective, lighting, colors, music, or special effects do not carry meaning per se but influence sense-making and recall in the viewer (Ohler, 1994).

Moreover, generic conventions are not only content related but also tied to formal conventions which aid in understanding the media text at hand. Formal features themselves also have effects outside of understanding a story. They alter the mode of processing and consequently the effects of the content. For example, some formal techniques elicit stronger emotions: Close-ups of a character's face provide a focus on the character's emotions and invite an intimate bonding of the viewer with the character (Katz, 1991). Other formal features are known to produce arousal in viewers (Lang, 2009). Certain genres or individual shows are always accompanied by arousing style features; either formal features such as rapid pacing and special effects or content-related techniques that create extreme suspense and fear (for example, shows like *24* or *Lost*). If repeated exposures always happen under conditions of high bodily arousal, effects may intensify. A cultivation study that compares "high-" and "low-arousal" programs may illuminate this point.

Complex Plot Messages

While individual elements of the plot, as outlined above, may yield cultivation outcomes, there are also more complex messages that viewers extract from a story that cannot be traced back to patterns in single actions/events, characters, setting, or style. Complex messages are deduced from the whole plot line: From the initial event that the protagonist lies to his fiancé to the final event where he is forgiven after a lengthy period of apologies; from the initial event of the murderer killing her victim to the final one where she is led to prison. The first sequence may convey that lying is a severe norm violation but may be remedied by sincere remorse; the second sequence presents a world in which justice prevails. We can distinguish between two types of complex plot messages: *grand lessons* invoked by the typical plot of a genre, and homogeneous world views with typical constellations of norms and values, which weave a texture of *ideology* in the genre text.

Grand Lessons

Grand lessons are messages that emerge as a moral from the story taken as a whole, points made by a narrative. They are mirrored on the respondent's side by the concept of second-order effects (e.g., Hawkins & Pingree, 1981). It makes sense to anchor the attitudes in their corresponding textual counterparts and specifically look at grand lessons that emerge from genres as a whole. For example, Bilandzic and Busselle (2008) systematically derive grand lessons from genre literature. They investigate the influence of romantic comedy viewing on favorable attitudes towards romantic love, the influence of science fiction

films on critical attitudes towards technology, and the influence of crime thrillers on punitiveness and vigilantism. Results show that genre exposure was only related to critical attitudes towards technology.

Apart from genre lessons, general story schemas can apply to several genres or generalize as a pattern to all fictional programming. Appel (2008) argues that fictional programming is often characterized by an ending where justice is achieved, bad characters are punished, and good ones are rewarded. As a consequence, viewers may conclude that the world is just. Appel found a positive relation between fiction exposure and the belief in a just world.

Extracting grand lessons also works with non-fictional stories. For example, Lee and Niederdeppe (2010) argue that local television news coverage focuses on cancer causes without stressing options for prevention; a possible conclusion is that prevention is of little use. Indeed, they report a correlation between exposure to local news and fatalistic beliefs about cancer prevention.

While the examples given so far relate to adopting grand lessons on a general level, other grand lessons may transfer the grand message to one's own life where viewers arrive at judgments that are not contained in the genre message but represent implications for themselves specifically. For example, several studies found relationships between news exposure and fear of crime (e.g., Chiricos, Padgett, & Gertz, 2000; Romer et al., 2003; Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004). In addition, crime drama exposure correlates with fear of crime (e.g., Carlson, 1985; Kort-Butler & Sittner Hartshorn, 2011). Note that fear of crime, although it is a "cultivated" emotion, is different from paradigm scenarios, where people learn to associate situations and emotions. Other examples of such generalization are body dissatisfaction (Nabi, 2009), quality of life (Shrum, Lee, Burroughs, & Rindfleisch, 2011; Yang & Oliver, 2010), or marriage dissatisfaction (Segrin & Nabi, 2002).

Ideology

Cultivation's emphasis on homogeneous, consistent television content that shows the norms and values of a society as well as its underlying power relations has often involved the term "ideology" (e.g., Morgan et al., 2009). Herman and Vervaeck (2007) define ideology as "a body of norms and values that appear natural as a result of their continuous and mostly tacit promotion by the dominant forces in society" (p. 217). Ideology is implicitly contained in television content but not made explicit; it is taken for granted as the background and interpretational frame for experiencing the world (Herman & Vervaeck, 2007). As socially grounded categories, genres always have (confirming, opposing) connections with the dominant ideology (Pyrhönen, 2007). Indeed, early cultivation research had a critical impetus to

uncover power relations and values hidden in the overall pattern of television messages, indicative of a commercial and mass-produced product that needs to be broadly acceptable to the mainstream of society. Ideology was most often indicated by simple facts of the television world. For example, one indicator of power was the demography of victims and perpetrators (e.g., Gerbner & Gross, 1976). Rather than taking an indirect approach to approximate ideology by single actions/events or characters, a small number of studies exists that directly investigate ideological domains. For example, Shrum and colleagues (Shrum, Burroughs, & Rindfleisch, 2005; Shrum et al., 2011) found relationships between materialism and television viewing. Hoffner, Levine, and Toohey (2008) considered work-related values and how identification with favorite characters influences them. Potter (1990) identified values associated with television, for example, "truth wins out in the end," "honesty is the best policy," and "good wins out over evil," and found different relationships with different genres. For example, prime-time soap opera exposure was related to the belief that "Truth wins" and "Luck is important," while sports viewing was related to "Truth wins" and "Hard work yields rewards."

It would be worthwhile to systematically investigate these common ideologies, and find semantic criteria to identify them in television content—for example, by using analyses of ideology from film studies. Wood (2003) identifies thematic fields of ideology common to film, for example, capitalism, the work ethic, marriage, nature as wilderness, or progress/technology/the city, which may serve that purpose.

View Across Genres

So far, the focus has been on single genres. However, analyses across genres may also provide valuable insights into the nature of cultivation. This can be done in three different ways: First, we can look at how the same theme is presented in different genres and how these differences are expressed in regular viewers. Second, we can look at the diversity versus the homogeneity of genre exposure. Third, we can compare exposure to genre fiction versus non-genre fiction.

Same Theme in Different Genres

The same theme (crime, occupations, gender roles, etc.) may cut across genres and be treated differently in the different genres; these differences should be mirrored in the respective genre viewers' beliefs. For example, lying may be an issue in romantic comedies as well as action movies. In romantic comedies, lying is almost always punished in the end; in action films, lying is func-

tional in achieving goals. These two genres may cultivate different attitudes with respect to how justifiable lying is.

While many studies have investigated differences in how attitudes or estimates are related to exposure to different genres (e.g., Hawkins & Pingree, 1981; Potter, 1990; Potter & Chang, 1990), they most often do not have firm knowledge or assumptions of how content differs from genre to genre. Without that, research across genres will remain descriptive.

One example of research that made assumptions about how content in different genres varies is a study by Armstrong, Neuendorf, and Brentar (1992). The researchers derive from previous research that television news presents a negative view of the socioeconomic success of African Americans, while fictional entertainment and sports on television present a more positive view; they found that perceptions of the socioeconomic success of African Americans were cultivated by the genre viewers watched. Busselle and Crandall (2002) conducted a similar study and found a positive relationship between perceptions of the socioeconomic success of African Americans and exposure to situation comedies. Beullens and Van den Bulck (2008) base their argument on content analyses of risky driving portrayals and accidents in different genres. While news consistently shows consequences of risky driving (i.e., accidents), fictional programs as well as music videos rarely show the deadly consequences of risky driving and often even depict it in a positive light (e.g., connected to masculinity). The researchers found that news exposure indeed was connected to perceiving more risks of drunk driving and speeding, while music video consumption negatively correlated with these two indicators.

Diversity vs. Homogeneity of Genre Exposure

Diversity means that a person's overall television budget is spent with varied genre exposures, while homogeneity means that exposure is concentrated in a few genres or just one. Two hours of watching soap operas should have different relevance and impact if this is one's only contact with television, or whether it is only one third of six hours of viewing. Potter and Chang (1990) found that a measure of the proportion of overall viewing time devoted to one genre was a better predictor of cultivation than overall television viewing and in some instances also better than absolute exposure to a genre.

An interesting variation of looking at the mixture of different content and genre viewed was employed by Dahlstrom and Scheufele (2010), where diversity was operationalized by the number of different television channels watched by a person. They found a weak relationship between channel diversity and environmental concern, although it was stronger than the association with overall viewing. It would be a good extension of their work to explore how genres, combined into a measure of diversity, perform as predictors.

Genre versus Non-Genre

As we stated earlier, genre is not only content. It also is a simple schema that is held and expected to be observed by producers and audiences alike. Similarly, preference for genre is not only a preference for specific content but also preference for the security of the strict conventions of a genre, the predictable plots and character types, and the viewing experiences and emotions which viewers may reliably expect. Watching a given genre provides the viewer with the "happiness of repetition" (Casetti, 2001, p. 172). Prior knowledge facilitates the process of sense-making as viewers may concentrate on deviations from the genre schema rather than building their understanding from scratch. Thus, genre relieves the viewer from effortful processing. The genre categorizes newly encountered media programs and stories and makes repeated exposures possible. Thus, on a meta-level, genre exposure may cultivate the states which are typical for ritualistic actions, for example, a sense of security and protection, and the sense that one can handle a less complex and more predictable world. For this type of cultivation outcome, the actual genre of fiction that people watch should matter less than the fact that they prefer genre fiction over non-genre fiction (e.g., independent films).

Conclusions

"In sum, although genre-specific studies have not yet outlined a clear rationale for how they are similar to or different from the more global concept of cultivation, […] it seems clear that they will continue"—this laconic statement is taken from a recent overview by Morgan and Shanahan (2010). Indeed, making a distinction between cultivation and genre-specific cultivation ultimately triggers the need to articulate the advantage of using genre rather than overall television viewing on a theoretical level. On the empirical level, countless studies have explored relationships between genre exposure and world views in a wide range of thematic fields. On the theoretical level, there are still many pieces of the puzzle missing. One piece is finding an angle on the content, and the relationship between content and world view. This chapter is a first step in this direction. We provided a narrative account of how content may be conceptualized beyond thematic categories. Using a scheme from genre theory and narrative literature as a heuristic, we developed a taxonomy of genre-specific cultivation dimensions, which we used to synthesize existing research and identify fields that still need work (see Figure 1).

CROSS-GENRE PERSPECTIVES

- same theme in different genres
- diversity & homogeneity
- genre vs. non-genre

Complex plot messages
- grand lessons
- ideology

↑

Genre elements & conventions
- characters
- setting
- iconography
- plot (single actions/events; scripts)
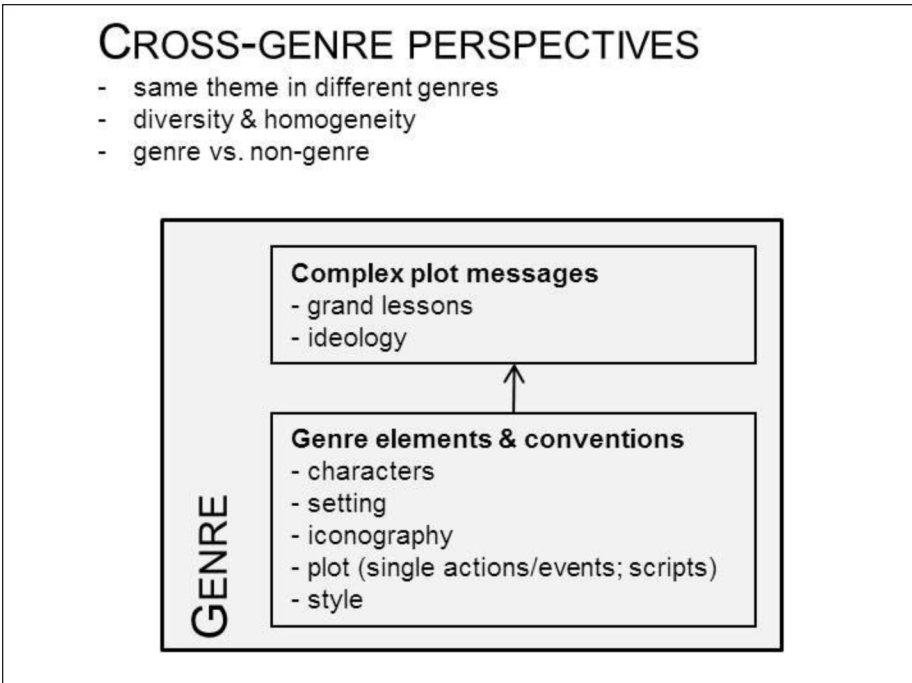- style

GENRE

Figure 1: Taxonomy of genre-specific cultivation dimensions

The genre-theoretic approach presents a methodological challenge: Traditional content analyses have limitations with some of the structures we identified in the taxonomy. For example, ideology or grand messages are not easily accessible through content analysis. Mainly, the problem is that content analysis destroys the narrative nature of a story (Hyvärinen, 2008). The challenge is to make use of more open, qualitative methods (possibly from other disciplines such as film studies) or develop hybrids between content analysis and interpretive procedures specifically for this purpose (Bilandzic, Sukalla, & Kinnebrock, 2008).

The upsurge of genre-specific research has fueled the discussion about the definition and range of cultivation. There is a tendency in the cultivation literature to suggest that genre-specific investigations fall outside of the cultivation paradigm, because the initial reliance on the aggregate message system has been replaced with individual exposure situations as well as messages limited to particular genres (e.g., Morgan & Shanahan, 2010, p. 340). We argue that the basic idea of cultivation is *not* altered by including the assumption of genre-specific effects; however, we do agree with the argument that cultivation needs to be defined more clearly.

Regarding the first issue: Why do genre-specific studies not alter the basic cultivation logic? Any theory of genre-specific cultivation must provide a connection between the content and the audience's world views. It is clear that cultivation is not a simple, unidirectional effect, but an interaction among exposure to content, effects, and repeated exposure fueled by effects. Nonetheless, there *is* an effects component. Considering this, genre-specific investigations only make the logic of research more specific; they do not fall outside of cultivation.

Regarding the second issue: Are all studies that investigate effects of media on world views cultivation studies? We argue that they are not. What is the essence of cultivation then? The essence does not lie in the effects part only, and certainly not in the (selective) exposure part. It is the *combination of both effects and voluntary, habitual exposure* that is unique to cultivation. Researchers study cultivation if they consider both parts—viewing habits and general world views. A forced-exposure situation does not implement a cultivation paradigm; it may, however, illuminate micro-processes going on after or before each exposure, which is equally important. Defining the essence of cultivation in this way is more suitable than insisting on overall television viewing. Moreover, this definition is independent of methods; it is not the experiment per se that excludes a study from being cultivation, and it is not the cross-sectional survey that is a necessary and sufficient condition for cultivation. Such a restriction would impoverish the field. Again, it is the inclusion of *effects and voluntary, habitual exposure,* notwithstanding the method and design. This can be realized in a traditional cross-sectional survey correlating viewing habits with world views, a quasi-experimental design following participants over an extended period of time, or with trend data observing the development of the cultivation relationship over time and combining it with content analyses. Defining cultivation may seem peculiar after 40 years of ongoing research. However, it is indeed the first step towards methodological and theoretical innovation within what can be considered cultivation research.

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