Thanks for invitation
Thanks to Jad for hosting me

❝ Who am I (Steffen Moestrup)?

- Senior associate professor at Danish School of Media and Journalism
- Teaches in the Master programme Erasmus Mundus in Journalism, Media and Globalisation
- Freelance journalist and critic
- Tv host
- Documentary producer

One of the reporters turned academics…
However, still do journalism, can't help it

> ## " What does Steffen research?
>
> - Digital storytelling
> - Persona-driven journalism
> - The use of XR tech in documentary and journalism
>
> Journalism is not a solid, stable thing to point to, but a constantly shifting denotation applied differently depending on context. Whatever is distinct about journalism must be continuously constructed. (Carlson and Lewis, 2015: 2).
>
> Journalism is not a tag that may be attributed to some texts and images. Instead, it is a momentary process that takes place while specific associations are maintained. In other words, nothing is journalism per se. Journalism happens. Journalism becomes. (Primo & Zago, 2015: 42)

2 quotes that speak to my approach to study journalism and especially different disruptions to journalism such as technological or the use of the journalist as a character → something that affect and perhaps alters the excisting notions of journalism and the journalistic landscape as such
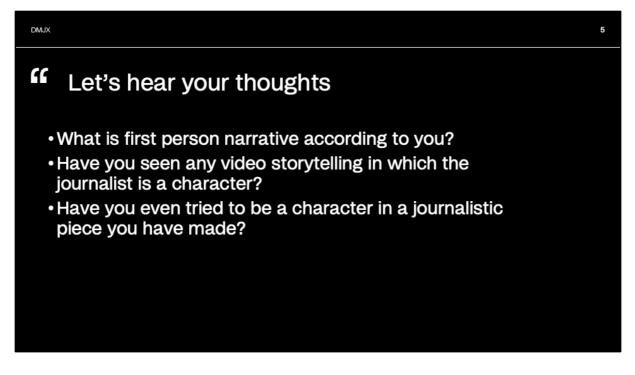
Now I will just give you some theoretical background before we dig into the video storytelling and the idea of using yourself as a character

" What I want to do today

- Share some thoughts on using yourself as a character in different types of video storytelling
- Suggest some sort of typology
- Showcase examples
- Discuss some reasons to and not to use yourself as a character
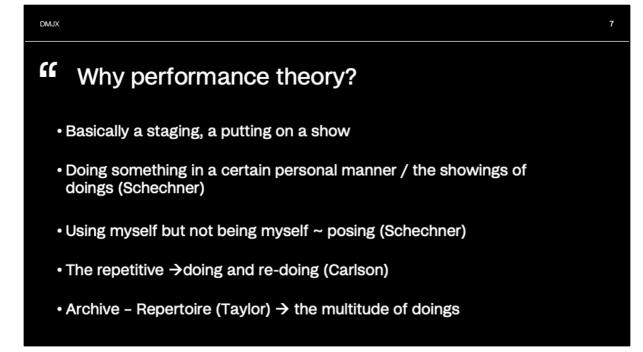- Hear your thoughts

" Let's hear your thoughts

- What is first person narrative according to you?
- Have you seen any video storytelling in which the journalist is a character?
- Have you even tried to be a character in a journalistic piece you have made?

Ok, now I want to briefly give you some theoretical background to my work before we dig into some video examples
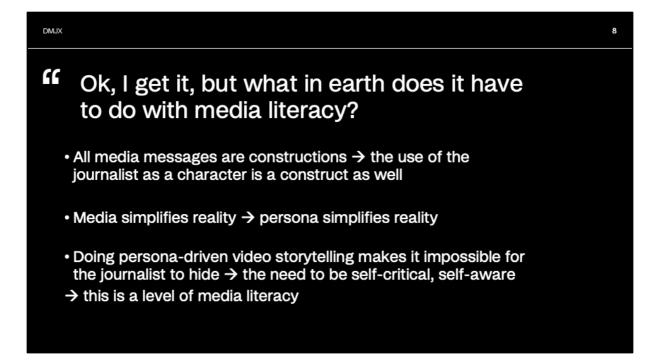
" Ok, so what is it with all that persona?

- A decisive cultural trait of our times → persona studies (David Marshall)

- A context-dependent construct adapted to a specific performance (Philip Auslander):

"A persona, in the sense that I am using the term, is a **performed identity** that is not a fictional character such as those portrayed by actors. It is presentational rather than representational (or at least is perceived that way) and often takes the form of a self-presentation on the part of the performer. Although the audience may believe this self-presentation to constitute the performer's identity as a human being it is crucially important to understand that it is a **construct** designed to allow the performer to work within specific aesthetic, genre, social, and cultural **frames** and **discourses**."
(Auslander 2015: 76)

1) The persona understood as the public presentation of the self, self staging, social media branding – also connects to changes in working life, we sell our personality more and more and perhaps lesser so our talents / experience
 - also something that students of journalism probably need to relate to now and in the future (no one get "jobs" anymore)
3) Here we have a usage of the persona term as a tool in use to creating a performance (both a tool and something we can interpretate) → a strategic way of communicating, the persona has a purpose in the given context
→ BUT **I will ague** that The performances also feeds back on the persona and is part of the maintaining and ongoing manifestations of the persona. Previous performance of a persona will affect present and future manifestations of the persona performances

" Why performance theory?

- Basically a staging, a putting on a show

- Doing something in a certain personal manner / the showings of doings (Schechner)

- Using myself but not being myself ~ posing (Schechner)

- The repetitive →doing and re-doing (Carlson)

- Archive – Repertoire (Taylor) → the multitude of doings

1) One basic understanding of the word is as **staging**, to enter a context where there is a need to do something and this doing allows for showing yourself and use yourself in various ways. 2) This understanding highlights the importance of the **agent**. Emphazising parts of ones self while leaving other parts out. That is has some distinctness to it (cannot just change the agent and end up with the same product…) → it points to the doing itself, the way something is being done → the showing of the doing
3) "it is a matter of the performer's not being himself but also not not being himself" (Schechner) → to practice **a version of one's self within a given context,** try out stuff – jf Auslander take on the persona concept- 4) Connects to the **repetetive in media** → genres that appear again and again, weekly formats, distribution cycles, the institutionalized and medialised setup
5) Archive: enduring materials / steady shapes such as a tv show, a documentary, an Instagram Story → the container in which the repertoire gather into a solid shape . Repertoire: pratices / doings → all the ways the self can be use to become a character → particapte, confess, be playful, be present (on screen / off screen), behave, feel, think, argue, fight etc.
→ Different media materialities attached to each repertoire and to each archive + to the mixing of the 2.

" Ok, I get it, but what in earth does it have to do with media literacy?

- All media messages are constructions → the use of the journalist as a character is a construct as well

- Media simplifies reality → persona simplifies reality

- Doing persona-driven video storytelling makes it impossible for the journalist to hide → the need to be self-critical, self-aware
→ this is a level of media literacy

1: (jad qoute) think of what I just said about persona and performance
2: (another jad qoute) only parts of a human can be mediated in the specific context, certain aspects are emphasized and other aspects downscaled
3: in the pieces where the journalist is hidden, it can become this mysterious, arbitrary, invisible force that creates a story but once the journalist is a character; it becomes evident who is making the piece, perhaps also how it is being done and perhaps even why -→ this calls for the need to be very self-critical and perhaps even demonstrate the self-critical in the piece.
Now; lets see some videos…

❝ Example 1: Taliban Land (tv documentary, TV2 Denmark)

The Reporting Self
- to draw on yourself and perhaps your expectations / dreams / prejudices towards the topic you report on
- to position yourself on behalf of the viewer
- to position yourself in relation to the material and to use the positioning (could be an affective position, a satirical position, a constructive position, a sarcastic position etc.)

Naghieb Khaja positions himself as a reporter who wants to understand. Who wants to stay after the other journalists left. But also as a reporter who is emotional and allows reality to have an affect on him and to show us this effect → intimacy, humanness

1a: declares he is a character going on a journey, a classic narrative structure but here in use not with the source as main character but with the journalist as main character

1b: here we have a layer of meta-communication about the whole concept of journalist → to enter conflict zones, describe it and leave again

1c: here we see the affective position, and because he feels, he perhaps also feels on behalf of the viewer

" Example 2: Stray Dogs of Cairo (youtube, Al-Jazeera)

The Participatory Self

• the journalist tries something in connection to the material and the topic - more directly involved than the "reporting first person"

• use curiosity, perhaps use the of being an outsider quality

• can also be used in more investigative pieces (the detective journalist / the explorer) —> ethnographic approach - show transparency and let the viewer in on the method

Uses "I" in the opening voice over --> situates the story with him as part of his story, personally involved

Also later on in the film he gets more practically involved in the capture of the dogs → tries it on his own. Participates. And by doing so it also becomes clear how the method and investigation takes place. This is often an advantage of doing investigation where you also put yourself in the middle. → here it adds transparency to the method with which the story is done

→ This resonates with the idea of ethnographic journalism (participant observation, try what the story is about on your own body and mind)

" Example 3: First Person (snapchat) & Hind Hassan (Instagram, Vice)

The Playful Self

• Often in use when different aesthetics choices becomes rooted in the first person use such as the use of GoPro footage or other types of point of view techniques

• Often a good way to add humour, drama, emotion etc. to a piece
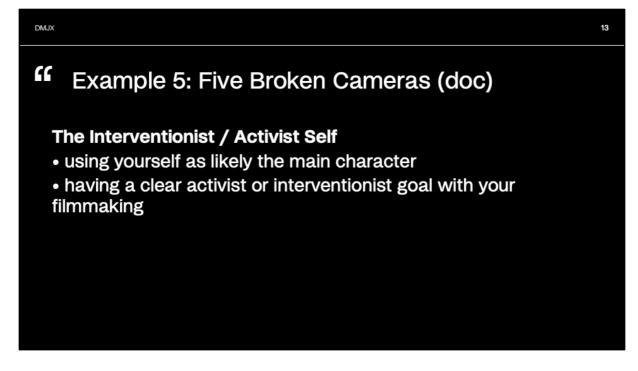
Perhaps playful is a bad word here actually

3A: here we see an example of the first person POV adding humour and tempo to the piece. It is less about the host as character but he does as a certain mood to the piece by for instance having his specific voice over style.

3B: she is not just fly on the wall, she is in the midst of the action and by for instance shooting in first person pov and declaring "we are journalist" and pointing the camera towards the soldiers rather than the other journalists, she emphazies her character in the piece (being a courageous and stubborn war and conflict reporter who will not yield)

Next: example is "My Uncle Tudor" (personal, confessional, sharing secrets, giving yourself to the world,

" Example 4: My Uncle Tudor (doc)

The Personal Self
- draw on personal experiences, attitudes
- confessional, intimate
- essayistic, autobiographical • memory and recollection
- Past-presence-future

After 20 years of silence, the filmmaker returns to the house of her great-grandparents, where, at the age of nine, she faced the abusive sexual behaviour of her uncle. The long-awaited family gathering contrasts with the filmmaker's off-screen conversation with her uncle about the harmful events from her childhood.(Scenen hvor hun konfronterer onklen, off-screen men stadig meget intimt og confeesionalt

This is not so common in traditional news reporting or journalism per se but more often seen in documentaries and hybrid formats. However, we do see more journalists share their own experiences when digging into topics.
Recently we had an example about being addicted to your phone and here the journalist very much use her own addiction to her phone and how it was the first thing she did in the morning and the last before going to sleep (don't we all know this…?) ☺

❝ Example 5: Five Broken Cameras (doc)

The Interventionist / Activist Self
• using yourself as likely the main character
• having a clear activist or interventionist goal with your filmmaking

Similar to the personal self but with a more declared goal of being activist, creating interventions, often again involving yourself but not necessarily by being personal, intimate, confessional, more in terms of a political mission, a desire to intervene and change things

" A draft for a typology

- The Reporting Self
- The Participatory Self
- The Playful Self
- The Portraying Self
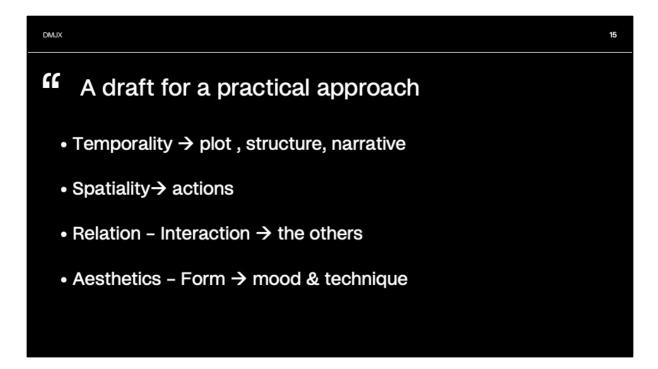- The Personal Self
- The Interventionist Self

I have shown examples from most types today. However, not the portraying self:
- particularly useful when portraying another person
- use relations - what the person does to you, how does the person make you feel, think, behave, etc
- interactions and relations as driving forces

Often the types overlap but it is still worthwhile to consider what type(s) is most suitable for the material and what you want to do with the piece

" **A draft for a practical approach**

- Temporality → plot , structure, narrative

- Spatiality→ actions

- Relation – Interaction → the others

- Aesthetics – Form → mood & technique

1: what kind of development will the journalist character go through? What is the self narrative

2: What kind of spaces will the journalist character occupy and what kind of actions will the character do there?

3: how will the journalist character interact and relate to the other sources in the piece?

4: what kind of style will the piece have, for instance First Person POV, will the journalist character be on screen / off screen

This is a model you can use in the early phases. When you research your story and when you start storyboarding it.

" Before (and while) embarking on first person narratives

- Why do I feel like using myself? Does it add (journalistic) value to the piece?

- What kind of first person approach is beneficial to the aim of my piece / what does the material need?

- Remember to also be critical towards yourself (the same way as you are to your sources)

- Bear in mind that using yourself can have many "side-effects"

These are things to consider even earlier. When you start considering whether or not this is a first person story – or if it is better told as something else.

" ## What can be gained from using yourself?

- Intimacy
- Trustworthiness and confidentiality
- Transparency
- Humanness, empathy, ambiguity
- Narrative dynamic

Some of the advantages in using yourself in the story
1: getting closer
2: building trust by letting the viewer know a little bit more about you, friendship?
3: letting the viewer know about the method in use in the journalism being made (front stage / back stage)
4: let them feel you, let them see you as a human (could you help improve the problem with lack of trust of the media?)
5: a tool just like any other such as editing, sounds, light, camera work etc. BUT a tool that allows for more complex narratives

> ❝ **What can be lost / risked from using yourself?**

- Authority
- It can become self-loving
- The critical can be lost
- Why should others care? (Personal vs private)

1: What happens with objectivity, neutrality, fairness etc → and is that a problem that it is replaced by subjectivity, emotion, perhaps opinion? Is it just another kind of authority that is created when the journalist is a character?
2: One more take care not to become to focused on telling your own story and for instance not letting the sources voice themselves extensiveily.
3: here I believe it is of utmost importance to also be self-critical. To actually do to yourself what you would normally do to other sources; assess them critically, check facts etc. → because it is still journalism we do albeit a different kind of journalism (hybridity, convergence not only of technologies but of fields as well)
4: this distinction can be useful → private only for you to care (diary) personal as a means to speak about something tha is likely universal or at least resonates with being human
Bear in mind that it is not a one size fits all solution, often it is perhaps better not to become a character and let the other characters have their stories to themselves. Not pollute the story.

" Any thoughts, questions, ideas?

Always feel free to reach out:

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I will perhaps see some of you this afternoon when I do a coaching session and respond to the different story ideas you may have