

CHAPTER 9

A Nation Betrayed – The Dramatic Coverage of a Doping Case

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This chapter is a study of the coverage of a doping case concerning one of Norway's most renowned athletes, the female cross-country skier Therese Johaug. The case gained massive attention in the media of a country where cross-country skiing is considered the number one national sport. The chapter is a critical discourse analysis of a news story based on the press conference where the case first became public. The story that followed in the country's largest print newspaper, Aftenposten, on 14 October 2016, is a genre hybrid that is becoming increasingly prevalent in news media today. It includes elements from both the news report, the feature story and the commentary. In my analysis, I discuss how the individual exposure of this case has a highly dramatic character. Deep emotions and agony almost on a religious level are evoked by the represented verbal expressions and visual images. A role gallery of victims and opponents is created. I argue that this role gallery conforms to traditional gender roles in a way that may unintentionally influence the interpretations of the message in the text. The role gallery also includes the journalist's positioning of himself as part of a victimized unity: the Norwegian people. I discuss how the coverage elevates cross-country skiing as an expression (and creation) of national identity. Thus, a crisis for one of Norway's cross-country skiers is portrayed as a crisis for all Norwegians.

Keywords: emotionality, narrativity, doping in sports, national identity, critical discourse analysis

Introduction

On 13 October 2016, the news was out: The leading Norwegian female cross-country skier, Therese Johaug, had tested positive for a banned substance in a routine urine sample.

The announcement was made at a press conference hosted by the Norwegian Ski Federation (NSF, *my abbreviation*). Here, Johaug and her physician, Fredrik S. Bendiksen, explained the circumstances leading to the treatment of cold sores and the use of *Trofodermin*, a cream containing closterbol – a synthetic anabolic steroid that is on the World Anti-Doping Agency’s (WADA) list of banned substances.

The day after, on 14 October, a portrait of Johaug in tears covered the front page of *Aftenposten*, an Oslo-based national newspaper, and Norway’s largest printed paper by circulation. The headline was “A Google search could have uncovered the doping ointment”, and the coverage of the Johaug case filled nine consecutive pages of the print edition of *Aftenposten*. In this chapter, I will examine how *Aftenposten* exposed Johaug and other key actors. I concentrate on a news story produced by the journalist Robert Veiåker Johansen (Appendix, *my translation*), including photos by Stein Bjørge. The headline is: “When there is nothing left to believe in.” Although the title is open to different interpretations, it indicates that the text covers more than the concrete information that emerged during the press conference held on 13 October. The text subsequently presents an interpretation of what had happened in this case. A key issue raised by the journalist is: “What can we believe in?” Part of my analysis and discussion concerns *whom* this question of belief encompasses. This part revolves around who is presented, how, and through which means. Other parts of the analysis discuss what may have influenced the perspectives expressed in the news story, as well as the possible interpretations of the news story. I argue that certain ideological perspectives are articulated through how the journalist positions himself as part of a victimized unity, as well as through the way aspects of national identity and gender roles are constructed in the text.

Theory and analytical approach

I will do a critical discourse analysis (CDA) in order to interpret the construction of meaning in the coverage in *Aftenposten*. According to Fairclough and Wodak (1997), CDA sees discourse – language use in speech and writing – as a form of social practice:

Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s), and social structure, which frame it: The discursive event is shaped by them, but also shapes them (p. 258).

I take into consideration different semiotic resources – different modes of expression, both verbal and visual – in a multimodal analysis of verbal text and visualization, including the front page and the following three pages in *Aftenposten* (see Figure 9.1 below). I base the analysis on the social semiotics of M.A.K. Halliday (2004), and the visual grammar of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), i.e. theories of how meaning is created by language and other forms of expression in a social context. I also draw on theory and analytic approaches as presented by Hågvar (2007), Skovholt & Veum (2015), and Jørgensen & Phillips (1999), who partly build on the theories of Fairclough, Halliday, Kress and van Leeuwen.

In the analysis, I will look particularly at *genre*, *voices* and *roles*. The text consists of narrative elements and thus I will use tools of narrative analysis, including A. J. Greimas' actantial model, illustrating how stories are made up of, or structured by, certain roles in a specific relation to each other (Hågvar, 2007). Even though Greimas is more of a structuralist than a social semiotician or a discourse analyst, I find the actantial model useful in analyzing how the actors are presented in this news story.

Knowledge of context is crucial to understand and assess how meaning is created and interpreted (Skovholt and Veum, 2015). Fairclough (1992) distinguishes between three dimensions in critical discourse analysis, namely *social practice*, *discursive practice* and *text*. The last dimension concerns the text itself. Discursive practice includes the processes of production, distribution and consumption of the text (Hågvar, 2007; Jørgensen and Phillips, 1999). Social practice includes the cultural contexts of the text, i.e. social, historical, situational, institutional and societal contexts. The analysis attempts to place the text in contexts that I consider relevant in order to give a plausible interpretation of the news story.

Contextual analysis

Social practice: Doping in sports

Doping as a widespread form of cheating in all sports causes major concern, and may be considered a consequence of the increased commercialization of

Doping cases frequently get major news coverage in international media. News value may influence the prominence that a particular news story gets within the overall composition of selected news (Hjarvard, 2012). Decisive factors in cases of doping in sports may be linked to, for instance, *whom* it concerns (e.g. celebrity status), *how* the doping was done (e.g. intentionally or not) and the *closeness* or *familiarity* of the situation (e.g. popularity of the sport). In this news story (see appendix), interactions of these factors help to explain why the Johaug-case got and continues to get extensive media coverage in the Norwegian press.

Social practice: Norway and cross-country skiing

A popular saying in Norway goes like this: “We are born with skis on our feet”, and illustrates the significant position of cross-country skiing in Norwegian culture. Skiing has a long history, dating back to the era of the Vikings. The polar explorer and “national hero” Fridtjof Nansen named cross-country skiing *the sport of all sports* in 1890 (Bergsland, 1946). In Norway, cross-country skiing is still seen as *the sport of all sports*. Paradoxically, this form of skiing is not particularly celebrated outside the Nordic countries.

Broadcasts of cross-country competitions with leading skiers maintain high viewing and visiting rates in Norway. It is one of few sports where Norwegians get top ranking. Cross-country skiing is also a favoured sport and interest of Norwegians on a hobby basis. Enthusiasm for cross-country skiing can be considered an expression of national sentiment and an arena that unites the country in an *imagined community* (Anderson, 1983). The royal family and the people come together to cheer a shared Norwegian concept.

In recent times, many Norwegian skiers at the top level have attained higher status as national celebrities, thanks to the media and highly priced sponsorships. Case studies of sports news in selected Norwegian newspapers from 1950 to 2015, point to an increase in the individual exposure of athletes (Roksvold, 2015). The commercialization of sports, and a growing celebrity idolization culture, interact. This leads to the adoration of sports heroes in general, and Norwegian cross-country skiing stars in particular. They are highly visible in the media, and get attention far beyond how they perform in sports. Therese Johaug especially, has become a popular, famous and very exposed skiing-celebrity in recent years.

Situational context: The press conference and a related case

The fact that Johaug tested positive for a banned substance in a routine urine sample, became public during the press conference hosted by the NSF, October 13. This setting, or the situational context, as we may call it (Skovholt & Veum, 2015), constitutes the concrete frame for the text in the appendix. The key persons appearing at the press conference were Therese Johaug, the physician Fredrik S. Bendiksen, and The Norwegian skiing president, Eirik Røste. The coverage focuses on the explanations given. According to the quoted speakers, the doping test result was caused by the use of an ointment, purchased by Bendiksen, for the treatment of mouth sores.

Earlier in 2016, another Norwegian cross-country skiing scandal attracted a lot of attention, namely the doping case concerning Martin Johnsrud Sundby, a leading *male* skier. In July 2016, the NSF announced that he tested positive for banned substances caused by the use of asthma medication. Subsequently, Sundby was suspended for two months, and was deprived of his medals from the World Cup and Tour de Ski in 2015. Thus, two doping cases hit the Norwegian cross-country skiing elite, which until now had been regarded as “clean and sober”.

Textual context

The Johaug case was enthroned as the most important news in *Aftenposten* on 14 October, as it was in most of the leading national newspapers on this day. *Aftenposten*'s coverage fills most of the newspaper's first part, the news section. A portrait of Johaug also fills most of the front page. The coverage is classified as “sports”, however, there is no such marking inside the paper, indicating that the case is of significant newsworthiness, expanding what would usually be in the sports section.

Nine pages are marked and devoted to “The doping case” inside the paper. The text in the appendix, is marked “The tears”, in addition to the overall marking. The *cotext*, the surrounding text within the newspaper (Hågvar, 2007), includes other news stories covering the same case. One of these is the commentary on the preceding page entitled “When high self-esteem ends in apathy” (p. 3). Subsequently, on page 7, is a description of the circumstances in which the ointment was used, under the headline: “When everything went wrong in Livigno”.

This is followed by a discussion from a medical perspective. Here the Director of the Norwegian Medicines Agency is quoted as saying: “Incomprehensible that an ointment labelled with a doping warning was used.” A list of other athletes, who have tested positive for use of the same substance, is presented on pages 8-9. One news story (p. 10) looks back at Johaug’s career, “7 moments that made her the Ski Queen”. Finally, there is a reportage from Johaug’s home village, entitled “Tears in Dalsbygda”. A note on the same page describes reactions in the foreign press, under the title “This is a disaster for Norway as a skiing nation” (p. 11).

Together the news stories constitute a whole. The various news stories see the case from different angles, each one indicating that the other perspectives may have been decisive for the focus and form of the specific news story by Johansen (see appendix). Each news story strives to have a separate and unique approach, also in terms of *genre*.

Genre hybridity

On page 3 in the newspaper, we find an expression of opinion, written by a sports commentator in *Aftenposten*, Ola Bernhus. The news story is marked as a commentary, and the journalist is presented with an image byline, typical of the genre. On the next pages follows the news story by Johansen, also presented with an image byline. This is marked as a commentary in the online version of the newspaper, but not in the printed edition. Possibly, because the text draws on different genres.

Roksvold (1997) defines three main genres of journalistic texts as follows: *News journalism* provides information about what has happened, or will happen. *Opinion journalism* discusses how we should relate to what has happened or will happen. *Feature journalism* portrays what has happened, in an engaging way. The text (the appendix), adapts key elements from the news report, the commentary and the feature story, indicating that there are interactions between various text norms and genres. Johansen expresses his subjective opinion on the matter. He also includes descriptions and an informative approach linked to the press conference itself, which is typical for reportage. At the same time, elements of narration are prominent. The text includes detailed descriptions, creating an engaging story.

The Language Council of Norway presented “kommentasje” – in English: “commentage” (*my translation*) – as a newly coined word in 2007, meaning:

A type of reportage that is coloured by the journalist's opinion, where the distinction between commentary and reportage is indistinguishable (Hornmoen, 2015). Mathisen et al. (2016) point out that commentage is an example of a genre mix of commentary and feature. Commentage can be seen as a relatively new phenomenon, and is not a well-established journalistic genre. It may contain elements from all three main genres, presented above, which this text does. Readers may identify the text as belonging to a type of genre, which can influence *how* they read and interpret it. The norm interaction we find here may therefore invite a variety of interpretations for different readers, as I will argue in the following analysis.

Multimodal analysis

The front page: Johaug in agony

The information that emerged during the press conference the day before constitutes the core of the coverage, meaning that the news had already reached massive media coverage online and on television when this paper edition arrived. Since a paper edition cannot bring the news first, it must strive to offer something different, something unique for readers who are already informed. *Aftenposten* highlights something of significance by fronting the statement in Bernhus' commentary: "The price for Norwegian arrogance is now paid by Martin Johnsrud Sundby and Therese Johaug". *Aftenposten* signals that the matter will be discussed in a specific perspective, a point of view that intends to create curiosity, provoke or appeal to readers.

The striking feature of the visualization on the front page is the explicit exposure of *emotions*. A close up photo of Johaug dominates the front page. It exposes her desperation as displayed at the press conference. Above the photo is a smaller and contrasting photo of Bob Dylan, who was announced the winner of the Nobel Literature Prize on 13 October. Both are framed somewhat to the right in the layout, with text on their left. Dylan's gaze is directed downwards, and Johaug's upwards. Dylan, the winner, is at the top, and Johaug, who is anything but a winner at this particular moment, is below – creating an interaction between the two cases, and expressing a certain symbolism of today's *winner* and *loser*.

The headline on the front page concerning Johaug's case is directly linked to the content of the story by Johansen (appendix), highlighting elements

A-magasinet 



Figure 9.2. Front page, *Aftenposten* 14.10.16. Facsimile reproduced in accordance with the Norwegian Copyright Act.

from the text: “A Google search could have uncovered the doping ointment”. The following sentence underlines Johaug’s emotional expression: “When Therese Johaug was caught for the use of illegal substances, the world around

her fell apart”. In the photo, Johaug is decontextualized, meaning there is no situation surrounding her in the picture (Skovholt & Veum, 2015). In that way, Johaug and her raw emotions become the main theme.

Kress & van Leeuwen (2006) have introduced a distinction between structures of representation, which include *narrative* and *conceptual* representations. A narrative representation structure expresses something that is happening, an act or a process of change. The photo captures Johaug, as she seemingly drags her hands down her cheeks, a posture many will identify with, as something one tends to do in a hopeless or frustrated situation. Johaug’s posture alludes to the iconic painting by the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch, “The Scream”. The painting is famous for its powerful expression of agony. Narratives may be so embedded in the way we experience the world that they help us define what we see (Simonsen, 2016). Icons which may be incorporated into our imagination, can create a story in images, and more or less unconsciously affect the interpretations and emotional reactions of the beholder.

Vectors can also express action, often in the shape of imaginary diagonal lines in the image. A vector connects the participants as doing something to or for each other, expressing narrative patterns (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). In the photo of Johaug, a vector is derived by the direction of her glance, which is upwards and slightly to the right (to the beholder). This perspective indicates what she may be looking at. It also serves as an expression of how she feels. Johaug is looking at the ceiling, however, the posture may be



Figure 9.3. The photo of Johaug on the front page, *Aftenposten* 14.10.16 (see fig. 9.2 above), and the iconic painting by Edvard Munch, “The Scream” (1893). Photo: © Munchmuseet. Reproduced with permission; no reuse without rights holder permission.

interpreted as a glance directed towards the sky. We tend to associate this gaze with deeply religious motives, as an expression of hope or hopelessness, or in images of someone who prays to God. The depiction is thus an indicator of the intensity of feelings that *Aftenposten* tries to create in this presentation. There are striking similarities between Johaug's expression and postures that prevail in religious motifs and variations of "The Suffering Madonna", an icon that is common in Catholic and Orthodox Church decorations:



Figure 9.4. The photo of Johaug on the front page, *Aftenposten* 14.10.16 (see fig. 9.2 above), and a depiction of "The Suffering Madonna". Illustration by Endre Barstad, reproduced with permission; no reuse without rightsholder permission.

Kress & van Leeuwen distinguish between four coding orientations (*naturalistic*, *sensory*, *technological* and *abstract*). Coding orientations are sets of abstract principles that communicate how texts are coded by specific social groups, or within specific institutional contexts (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 165). In the photo of Johaug, naturalistic coding is salient. The colors are naturalistic and the photo appears unpolished, creating authenticity and realism. The photo is likely to be perceived as depicting reality. We get the impression of seeing Johaug unvarnished, as she in fact was when the picture was taken. The close-up of her face creates an impression of proximity, establishing an intimate and personal relationship between the viewer and the viewed. Interactions of different semiotic resources thereby create a dramatic and realistic expression.

truth, and that the time perspective is extended or eternal. The photos are rather telling a story, which is established and interacts with the verbal text.

On page six, there are two photos:

Both are in black and white, which makes them part of a cohesive narrative in the story about the tears. The upper and largest image shows Johaug surrounded by a majority of men. To the left is a solid bunch of press photographers, and on the right a man stands looking at her. Behind her, a few more men are entering the room, including the Communications Manager of the

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DOPINGSAKEN TÅRENE



Veien var lang fra baklederen i pressekonferansenrommet til stolen hun skulle sitte på. Therese Johaug var meget preget da hun møtte pressen på Lillevald i går.

Forbettele
fra forrige side.

Ski forbundet da det var hun som var Jøhaugs skis. Han skrev: «Den mulige straff for anklager jeg står overfor, har potensial til å ødelegge meg, min familie og min fremtid. Hvis jeg blir diskvalifisert fra disse rennene, risikerer jeg å bli sett på som en jukset, uansett forklaring. Jeg ber dere vennligsom å forstå at jeg har fulgt reglene og vært i god tro.»

Den gang tok legen Knut Gabrielson skylden for Sandbyoakens utbrudd, og senere takk han seg.

Det ble raskt klart at rasismen skulle gjenta seg i går. Fredrik S. Bendiksen mente på Hamar skidomstolen etter at han hadde svart på spørsmålene han fikk, var at det som det finnes rettsikkerhet for idrettsutøvere, bør ikke Therese Jøhaug straffes for hans feil.

Hva kan vi tro på?
Kjennetegnene er fall av doping. Den er utvilsomt ikke fall av merkelige dopingforklaringer. En salve mot muskler er ikke nærheten av og på toppen.

Vihar humret når uterlandske utøvere har fortalt sine historier: Sprinteren LaShawn Merritt, som forklarte den positive prøven sin med at han hadde tatt et penslelignende middel. Ben Johnson, som hverden noen hadde lurt noe i sportsdrikk hans. Spikeren Tyler Hamilton, som skyldte på at han hadde en utført trykling.

Men denne gangen utspiller dramaet seg i vår egen halvkant. Landet med ølen, laksen og skisporten. Den eneste idretten i verden der vi alltid er best i

verden. Det handler ikke om en finne, en østerriker eller en østrurpoper. Det handler om Therese Jøhaug. Og det skjer noen måneder etter at det handler om Martin Johnsrud Sundby. De to er verdens beste skiskipere.

Håndteringen av Sandbyoaken var røppe med på å bygge opp det norske folkes tillit til norsk skisport. Med Jøhaug-saken på toppen er det ikke rart at mange tvivler til å tenke: Hva kan vi egentlig tro på? Trafikken på svenske nettsteder fra norske podcaster var stor i går for hva trodde de det. De som ser på norske skiskipere med litt andre øyne?

Svenske Expressen: «Skidvärldens snyggast last, öhen ser ut som Miliblogg och öbnaljen som nu kan följa Jøhaug. Kollen ga Aftonbladet-«skämt ut Norge og hele

sports- og Jøhaug blåst av konkurranse.

Denne konkurrenten som i årets er blitt partiet, fragilt, etterlatt og yndmykt av Jøhaug og Sundby og en brude andre medlemmer i motbakke etter motbakke der skiskiskuser har forflyttet seg. De har blitt hørt: Døve med nye hendene og muntere. Døve må bli bedre utstyr, bedre skis, mer gull og en smertevurderer at stor at den trenger en Jøhaug for å bli partiet. Nyheten om Jøhaug var som en pakke for flere av dem.

Regi: Norges Skiforbund
Politik Jostyna Kowalczyk, som i mange år har kritisert norsk skisports bruk av medisin. I ret og sløtt ut et bilde av den forholdsaken med dopingarbeiden på sin Twitter-profil.

Det skulle egentlig ha vært en fredag. Norges Skiforbunds-plan var å arrangere sitt årlige skick «off» på Lillevald stadion for å markere at vinteren snart er her. 65 utøvere fra seks grenser var heniet til Oslo for å kate glans. Invitasjonene var sendt ut for flere uker siden.

Men noen få i Norges Skiforbund visste hvilken dag det ville bli. De innvidde holdt munnen. For som ingenting. Vi snakket troas all om en gang som klarte å holde Martin Johnsrud Sandbyoaken hemmelig i 18 måneder. Bare noen timer før det store treflet skulle starte, trodde fortsatt hun som var vert, han som skulle styre skidrettsarrangere, han som til daglig jobber med informasjon og utøvere som skulle møte opp, at all gikk som planlagt.

Så begynte skiforbundsmaskineriet å muler de skitive ble opprettet og fortalt om avlysningen. Pressekonferansenrommet på Lillevald ble ryddet. De fem som skulle sitte på podiet ble drillet. Norsk flagg og utstyr ble måtet med informasjon, først som den korte midlertidige renningsminsjen Therese Jøhaug har testet positive på et forbudt middel, deretter den lange som fortalte om menneskene.

Men den effektive krisehåndteringen tok på ingen måte skikk oppover kombeten fra budskapet. Skispreidert Erla Røne skit ut som han hadde blitt i år eller over natten da han tok ordet.

«Det er en sørgens dag. På mange måter lit utvilsomt. Jeg tror alle her forstår at det som ikke skal hige, det som ikke er mulig at skjer, har skjedd.

Men det har det. Og nå er spørsmålet: Hva skjer nå?»

14.10.2016/100010



Skiøvegen 2016/17 inneholder blant annet verdensmesterskapet i Løst. Om Therese Jøhaug får dette, er fortsatt svært usikkert.

Hva kan vi tro på?
Jøhaug-saken viser at det kan være nyanser også i doping. De som tidligere har frontet livstidsutestengelse, bør tenke seg om en gang til.

Hver gang vi ser en norsk skiløper heretter, vil vi tenke vårt

Thor Øystein Endjige, tidligere idrettslege
Joachim Wallin, forbundsleder NSO
Trond Blindheim, vater Høyasolen Kristiansund

Figure 9.6. Page 6, Aftenposten 14.10.16 Facsimile reproduced in accordance with the Norwegian Copyright Act.

NSF, Espen Graff. Yet, Johaug is the only one mentioned in the caption. In this photo she is contextualized, visually captured as a part of more extensive surroundings. She “moves” in the picture, more specifically, she is on the way to the podium. “The distance was far, from the backdoor of the press conference room to the chair she was sitting on”, as the caption says. The caption also highlights that she was “[...] very emotional when she met the press”.

The second photo on the same page, a smaller one, is placed in the middle. On the wall behind her is a sort of shadow play. Two shadows appear. One of them is hers. The other belongs to a man outside the frame. This is a vague contextualization, creating a kind of eerie feeling that something is smoldering in the background, behind Johaug.

Overall, the visuals have one focus: Therese Johaug. The pictures and captions in combination highlight her feelings. What may seem most striking is that none of the photos inside the paper include Bendiksen, even though he is central in the verbal text. Another key actor in the text, the NSF, only appears by virtue of the context in the first photo showing the surroundings at the press conference and in the shape of a shadow in the second photo.

Verbal text: Two levels of story

The first part of the verbal text is based on what emerged during the press conference (appendix). The opening lines establish a kind of plot:

The story they want us to believe is as follows: In September this year, a sports physician with 36 years of experience walked into a pharmacy in a small alpine resort at 1800 meters altitude in northern Italy.

The text then presents descriptions of the events that led to the present. There is a chronological sequence, leading to a kind of *point of no return*, as in classic storytelling. The turning point is when Bendiksen tells Johaug that she can start treatment with the ointment. This story ends with the scene where Johaug declares her innocence.

Then, a related matter is introduced and included as part of the context, namely the doping case concerning Sundby. The journalist makes a point of the fact that “we” have laughed at others (foreigners) who have been convicted of doping, and now it is our turn. Then the text presents reactions to the Johaug case in the foreign press, mainly Swedish newspapers. The final part of

the text takes the readers back to the press conference (here and now), with the NSF as the central actor. The text ends with the rhetorical question: *What happens now?*

We find two levels of story in the text: 1) A story dealing with the doping-ointment and the explanations given by Johaug and Bendiksen. 2) A story that highlights the issue in a larger context, with the NSF in the leading role.

Actors in the text: Painting portraits

Johaug is naturally the main character in the real situation, as in the text. She is established as the emotional character, and definitely the most visible. She is characterized not only as “the world’s leading female cross-country skier” but also as “The furious woman”. Descriptions of her personal feelings, as well as of her appearance, are key elements in the text: She is “full of sorrow”; “Her face and eyes were red, she sobbed, sniffled and wept”; “Every half minute a deep sob welled up from Johaug” “struggling to breathe”; “small and frail”. She is also described as very needy in the situation that led to the treatment: “[...] Therese Johaug’s lips were so sore that they were bleeding. She looked as if she had crossed the desert without water”. On a previous occasion, however, she was “so excited that without notice she jumped into the arms of King Harald on the grandstand of the Holmenkollen ski arena”. The function of the exposition underpins her emotional nature. At the same time a contrast is created between the winner that readers are used to seeing (and want to see), compared to Johaug here and now.

Bendiksen is established as highly rational and cautious. He was dedicated to his work and conscientious in his profession as a physician. According to the text he was even nicknamed “The Pedant”. His characteristics of being careful and vigilant are linked to descriptions of his work routines:

This was a sports physician who, like all other sports doctors could have sleepless nights fearing that some of his athletes would end up in a doping case. A doctor who cross-examined athletes about their dietary supplements. A doctor who never left a bottle of water unattended.

These descriptions are in stark contrast to the story of the purchase that led to the situation in which they now find themselves: At that time “Norwegian sports doctors were on red alert”. People in Bendiksen’s position were, or should have been, on high alert due to Sundby’s doping case.

Inadequate action to prevent the use of this specific treatment for mouth sores is repeatedly pointed out in the text: “But this September day in Livigno, Italy, Fredrik S. Bendiksen did not even read the ointment’s leaflet”, and: “Nor did he type the name of the ointment’s active ingredient, clostebol, into the Google search field”. The lack of expected action in this situation is underlined by words like *not even* and *nor*. It also implies a possible defect of character.

The NSF is directly linked to words expressing its powerful and leading position, mainly by the use of metaphors: “Direction: The Norwegian Ski Federation”, “Then the Ski Federation machinery started grinding”, “The Norwegian News Agency (NTB) was fed with information”. NSF is the actor who rules and maintains all that goes on: “After all, we are talking about a gang that managed to keep the Martin Johnsrud Sundby case a secret for 18 months.” This part of the text points out that the NSF managed to keep *both* cases secret until the last moment. The image created is that the NSF is a calculating, resourceful and powerful organization.

Voices in the text

The journalist makes limited use of direct quotations, and the central voice in the text is the journalist’s own voice. Only Johaug and Røste (the President of the NSF) are cited directly. Bendiksen, however, is only quoted in terms of a few incomplete sentences baked into the journalist’s renderings, such as: “*He* has studied this night and day over the past week”. *He made* “a mistake”. *It is* “his responsibility”. In one paragraph Johaug is quoted directly in this way: “I will fight and show everybody that I am so (*here she banged hard on the table in front of her*) innocent in this case.” Within her statement, the journalist includes his own observation, pointing out how she banged on the table. This way of putting Johaug directly on stage makes the situation appear close to the reader. The journalist creates an engaging text, and functions as both a storyteller, reporter and someone who expresses opinion.

At one point in the text, the journalist exposes how *he* felt about the situation he witnessed:

Reading the words in hindsight is one thing. But to experience them “live” from the addled, crying and at times desperate voice was something entirely different.

It was “listen to me, look at me, believe me”, and if it was not true, it was Hollywood.

The journalist strengthens the pathos appeal of the text, as well as his own ethos and trustworthiness as a reporter. This specific part of the text may be interpreted in different ways. The Hollywood reference can be understood as support for Johaug’s declaration of innocence, in the sense that this is *not* Hollywood (after all, Therese Johaug is a cross-country skier – not an actor). The link to Hollywood in this context may also be interpreted as a way of suggesting that she *is* acting, a way to express that the story presented may not be something we can believe in. It makes the reader aware that it is the *story* that is presented, not necessarily the reality.

Other parts of the text question the story presented about the treatment. The doubt is mainly expressed regarding Bendiksen’s role, for instance here: And the most remarkable thing about this story is that he fails to explain why he did not. (*read the ointment’s leaflet, or Google the ointment. My comment*). He remembers everything else from those days in painstaking detail.” The journalist implicitly suggests that the action, more precisely the lack of action, by the doctor does not make sense. The text also raises the question: “But how could a man who is paid to be so awake, sleep so heavily?” This obviously does not match the doctor’s personal characteristics as “The Pedant” and so on, indicating that the journalist doubts the explanations given.

Role gallery: Victims and opponents

In Greimas’ actantial model a story always has a *subject*, struggling to reach a goal or to achieve an *object*. On the way towards achieving the goal, the subject meets *helpers* and *opponents*. There is also a *sender*, someone who has to give something away, and a *receiver*. I include the actors Johaug, Bendiksen and the NSF in the model, because they are presented in a kind of narrative based on Johaug’s and Bendiksen’s explanations:

Johaug is the *subject*. She appears both as a victim and as someone with heroic qualities. Her goal is to exonerate herself, to prove her *innocence* and to be believed. Johaug is then also the receiver. Bendiksen is an opponent in terms of being a destructive part. He failed in his job as the protecting doctor. He can also be considered her helper, because he takes on responsibility and the blame.

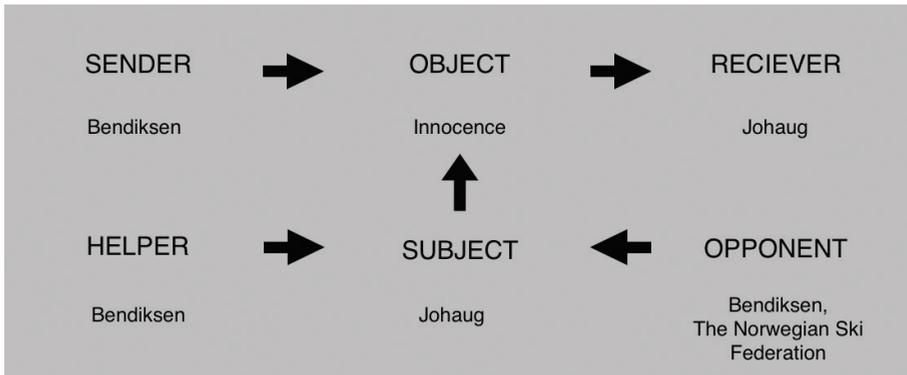


Figure 9.7: Roles according to Greimas' actantial model.

This makes Johaug appear *more* innocent. Bendiksen is the *sender* – he must give up something (his job), for Johaug to achieve her goal. Another opponent is the overall responsible party: the NSF. To underpin the roles presented, I find it necessary to look at *how* these roles emerge in the text.

As I have already pointed out, Johaug's emotions are constantly in focus. To some extent, this is natural, considering her very emotional appearance during the press conference. In contrast, however, men are given other personal qualities throughout the text. The contrast contributes to the construction of Johaug as the weaker part, and as a victim. For instance, in the citation here: "Small and frail, surrounded by serious men". The men in the text appear to be rational and professional, and physically larger. The criminologist Nils Christie (1986), amongst others, has described the characteristics of a society's *ideal victim*, as the weaker part, preferably a woman facing an opponent, often a man who is larger and stronger. At the same time, Johaug as victim has heroic qualities: she is "the world's leading female cross-country skier". An ideal victim has a good errand. Her project is respectable and she encounters resistance from bigger and apparently stronger men (even though she may in fact be physically stronger than any of them).

In the text, Johaug is held accountable for the situation she is in, but only to some extent. In a quote picked up from another context, Johaug said: "I never take anything I am offered without checking it first. Whether it is an ointment or a tea. I check one, two and three times." There is a mismatch between what she has claimed she does, and what she actually does. Her respectable project is questioned. However, responsibility in the situation is mainly linked to Bendiksen, who had the last word in the story of the

ointment: “Now she asked the doctor if the ointment was on the doping list. That way she put her career and her reputation as a skier in his hands. He replied that she could start the treatment”. The only time Johaug is explicitly held accountable is not with the journalist’s own words, but in a principled statement from a professor and physician, Inggard Lereim. He is quoted as follows (p. 4): “It is good that the team doctor takes on responsibility, but the athlete is always the one responsible”.

Still, Bendiksen is framed as the one who should have acted differently. His ability to take precautions is at the same time established as one of his foremost qualities. However, he performed one last decisive action (in the absence of other actions), namely the final one, which eventually resulted in the situation: “Rather than seeking more information about an ointment he knew little about, Bendiksen put it in Therese Johaug’s hand”. The journalist quotes the physician’s final message during the press conference: “[...] if there is justice under the law for athletes, Therese Johaug should not be punished for his mistake”. In this manner, Bendiksen takes on the blame and his presence in the text terminates here. The text then leans perspective towards another guilty part, the NSF, as an opponent to Johaug by virtue of not having lived up to their general and superordinate responsibility.

The text presents a narrative based on the explanations of Johaug and Bendiksen. Thereby a role gallery is created. However, this is not a classic story with a coherent narrative, even though it may contain fragments of narrative, the text is composed and complex – as is the role gallery.

Roles on a superior level: Another victim

On a superior level, the text presents another and unfinished story, which constitutes a more complex role gallery. This story extends beyond the questions of guilt that include Johaug and Bendiksen. The story on a superior level is derived from the first story based on statements from the press conference. The text takes a new twist from the point where Sundby’s case is drawn into the context. The journalist thereby connects the two doping cases, and emphasizes the similarities of Johaug’s declaration of innocence during the press conference, and the expressions Sundby used in a letter to the International Sports Federation. Both situations resulted in the resignation of their sports physician. Thus, the story about Johaug and Bendiksen is part of a bigger picture.

The journalist highlights incidents of doping associated with three foreign athletes to illustrate that Johaug's and Sundby's doping cases are of a more innocent kind. This brings in another point of view. These were cases that affected athletes from other countries. Now, everything is different:

But this time the drama is unfolding in our own backyard, in the country with the oil, the salmon and skiing – in the only sport where we are always the best in the world.

The country itself, Norway, is affected. Thus in the text, Johaug is not the only one to be considered a victim.

A personal approach that includes the reader is introduced in the opening line: "The story they want us to believe is as follows [...]" Form of address is included as an analytic category to make sense of the interpersonal metafunction in a text. The use of pronouns has consequences for the structure of the relationship between reader and creator of the text (Skovholt & Veum, 2015). A journalist who includes himself in a larger "us" and "we", signifies that we – the journalist and the readers – are one. It is a direct and personal form of address, which can have powerful effects. "We" can be used to illustrate an ideologically uniform entity (ibid.). The journalist is teaming up with the readers, that is to say the *Norwegian people*.

Johaug's doping case thus involves a correlation with the Norwegian people, and those responsible for Norwegian cross-country skiing on a professional level. As expressed here:

The way the Sundby case had been handled hardly increased the Norwegian people's confidence in Norwegian skiing. Now with Johaug's case in addition, no wonder many are forced to think: "What can we actually believe in?"

In this part of the text, the journalist presents the assumption that the readers are familiar with how Sundby's case was handled, and that many share the opinion that this treatment was not optimal. The statement accommodates the claim that the Norwegian people have had confidence and trust in Norwegian skiing up to this point. The headline is also interesting in this respect; "When there is nothing left to believe in". This sentence lacks a subject, which makes it appear somewhat unclear as to who believes or does not believe. My interpretation is that it is the journalist – on behalf of the Norwegian people – who cannot believe. The question of what to believe or not implies that until now someone must have had faith in Norwegian cross-country skiing. The headline

is an expression of a broken trust between the Norwegian people and Norwegian cross-country skiing. The NSF is presented as the overall responsible actor in the text. Thus, the NSF is appointed a guilty party, facing a second victim, the Norwegian people.

The text in context: Expressed ideology

The first part of the text adds up to a kind of *plot* in which the question of guilt is central. Which plot is chosen and which roles the actors are assigned, will of course depend on the information available, but also on the society's and the narrator's values and ideologies, as emphasized by Alnæs (2015). In this text, Johaug's own declaration of innocence during the press conference may have affected the plot. She is the protagonist and her message becomes central. Johaug portrays herself as a victim of someone else's mistake. Bendiksen underpins her role and accepts his own role as a scapegoat. The beginning of the text, "The story they want us to believe [...]", in light of the question raised at the end, "What happens now?" tells us that the story is unfinished. More is to come. However, the fact that Johaug in the end will be held responsible, and the fact that she probably will receive some form of penalty, is not a matter of discussion in the verbal text. Whether the adjudicating authority accepts Johaug's and Bendiksen's explanations will be decisive for the penalty. The assumption is that it was Bendiksen who bought and gave Johaug the ointment. But she is still the responsible one. However, the outcome of the case is still uncertain (at the moment of writing).

The text is saturated with a kind of distrust in Bendiksen's explanations. Questions such as "But how could a man who is paid to be so awake, sleep so heavily?" indicate the journalist's lack of confidence related to the story presented. In the text, the qualities of the males and the female conform to traditional gender roles. The woman is emotional and to some extent even appears as uncontrolled in her emotional outbursts. The men are portrayed as serious and rational. They also appear as encircling and powerful. Such characteristics may contribute to creating an understanding of – and sympathy with – Johaug as a victim. Because of this, the readers will not necessarily interpret the text according to the journalist's apparent intentions, if the journalist's actual purpose is to sow doubt about the explanations given, and accordingly, about Johaug's *innocence*. Why this is not expressed more explicitly in the text, may

be related to the journalist's own doubt. The journalist does not have a secure basis for definite conclusions. The information he has access to is limited. The news story has been written within a few hours after the press conference. Therefore, the insinuations are vague. Thus, from a moral standpoint, the text mainly expresses a lack of confidence in those responsible for Norwegian skiing, the NSF.

We find two levels of victim-villain-stories in the text. The overall story includes the Norwegian people and the Norwegian Ski Federation on a professional level. This victim-villain variant can be seen in the context of one form of journalistic ideology, first presented by political scientist Olof Petersson (1994). In the ideology of journalism, news stories tend to portray ordinary people in the role of victims, while those in powerful positions represent the villain role. The journalist usually becomes the hero who solves the conflict – or at least puts it on the agenda (Hågvar, 2007). In this context, depending on how one interprets the text, the critical gaze directed at the NSF may be justified or not. My point here is rather to emphasize that this is a form of professionalized journalistic tradition, linked to the idea of journalism's role as the fourth estate and the community watchdog. The text lives up to this discourse by placing the Norwegian people in the position of the victim and the NSF as the villain.

The journalist positions himself as part of a “we” and “us” and thereby creates an intimate relationship with the reader. The salutation form can thus be used intentionally to engage the readers. The reader is drawn into the text as a co-victim. As emphasized by Wahl-Jørgensen: “[...] personalized story-telling enables empathy, or the identification with and understanding of another's situation, feelings, and motives.” (2013, p. 132). An expression of opinion in that context is that the “we”, the Norwegian people, now have less trust and confidence in Norwegian cross-country skiing, or at least *we* should have. Many readers will probably identify with this. However, many Norwegians may feel neither trust nor distrust in this matter. Some simply do not care about cross-country skiing (or about Therese Johaug as a celebrity). Their existence is excluded from the text. The generalization must necessarily be understood in light of cross-country skiing's strong position and long tradition in Norway, and in light of the increasing and widespread individual exposure and commercialization of sports. Nevertheless, the text reproduces and activates a national discourse, i.e. structures an image of the nation (Jørgensen and

Phillips, 1999), and in this way serves to define cross-country skiing as part of the national identity.

Conclusion

In the text, the subjective interpretation of the journalist is prominent. This breaks with the objectivity ideals of news reporting and must be understood in light of the genre as a kind of comment or commentage. Interactions of text norms and genres, however, may contribute to different interpretations of the text, as I have suggested.

The various role assignments in the text have created a kind of two-parted story, or victim-villain story on two levels. The verbal text involves actors who barely appear in the photos, and amongst them are representatives of the overall responsible actor (NSF). When they appear, they serve to stage a context, for instance in the shape of a *shadow*, as something encircling if not directly threatening, not only to Johaug but also to the *Norwegian people*. These framings are supported in the verbal text.

The coverage not only plays on Johaug's but also on the readers' emotions. The pathos appeal is prominent in both text and visualization. In that respect, this specific news story complies with the idea of emotionality as a central strategic ritual in journalism (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2013). The extensive coverage of the case in *Aftenposten* (and other Norwegian newspapers) is striking. In addition to the extent of the coverage, the minute details reported also give it a very dramatic character. Further, textual and visual elements used in the story actively create allusions to emotions on a religious level in terms of belief and faith. This, and the assertion that the Norwegian people are affected by the case, serve to establish cross-country skiing as a kind of secular religion for the whole nation. Thus, the analysis in this chapter illustrates how journalistic representations based on a doping case can create a form of collective catharsis in society.

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APPENDIX

When There is Nothing Left to Believe in.

Pages 5-6 of *Aftenposten*, 14 October 2016, author's translation.

The darkest day. Mouth sores will pass. The Johaug-case will not.

When There Is Nothing Left to Believe in

About cross-country skiing:

Robert Veiåker Johansen

Journalist in *Aftenposten*

The story they want us to believe is as follows: In September this year, a sports physician with 36 years of experience walked into a pharmacy in a small alpine resort at 1800 meters altitude in northern Italy. Fredrik S. Bendiksen, a medium tall, baldheaded man with glasses, a fixed gaze and clear voice, had an important errand for the world's leading female cross-country skier.

After far too many days in far too strong sun, Therese Johaug's lips were so sore that they were bleeding. She looked as if she had crossed the desert without water. She needed treatment. The ointment Trofodermin ended up in the doctor's shopping bag.

This was a sports physician who, like all other sports doctors, could have sleepless nights fearing that some of his athletes would end up in a doping case. A doctor who cross-examined athletes about their dietary supplements. A doctor who never left a bottle of water unattended.

Someone could sneak something into it.

Everyone on duty

Besides, only two months had passed since the world's leading *male cross-country skier*, Martin Johnsrud Sundby, had to announce that he was deprived

of victories, prize money and was banned for two months for violating anti-doping rules. The Norwegian Ski Federation could not tolerate more. Norwegian sports doctors were on red alert.

But this September day in Livigno, Italy, Fredrik S. Bendiksen did not even read the ointment's leaflet.

Nor did he type the name of the ointment's active ingredient, clostebol, into the Google search field.

And the most remarkable thing about this story is that he fails to explain why he did not. He remembers everything else from those days in painstaking detail. "The Pedant," they called him. But this he cannot remember. He "has studied this night and day over the past week". He made "a mistake". It is "his responsibility". But how could a man who is paid to be so awake, sleep so heavily?

Those who "googled" Trofodermin and clostebol yesterday, quickly found that the drug is on WADA's prohibited list; that it is not permitted in Norway; that it tends to be mentioned in connection with bodybuilding in Brazil. The Italian pharmacy where the ointment was purchased even says that it comes with a doping warning on the label.

Rather than seeking more information about an ointment he knew little about, Bendiksen put it into Therese Johaug's hand.

She has previously explained her routines: "I never take anything I am offered without checking it first, whether it is an ointment or a tea. I check one, two and three times."

Now she asked the doctor if the ointment was on the doping list. That way she put her career and her reputation as a skier in his hands. He replied that she could start the treatment.

On Friday, 16 September she provided a routine urine sample at home in Oslo. On 4 October cross-country skiing manager Vidar Løfshus phoned her, and life as Therese Johaug once knew it, would not be the same for a while. Such cases are not like mouth sores that finally will heal.

The furious woman

One time Therese Johaug was so excited that without notice she jumped into the arms of King Harald on the grandstand of the Holmenkollen ski arena. On that occasion, in March 2011, she had just won the World Cup's 30 kilometer distance at home.

Yesterday, 2,050 days after she had earned tens of millions in advertising and prize money, she was full of sorrow – but mostly enraged.

Most of the people in the room heard her when the back door to the press conference at Ullevaal Stadium was opened. Her face and eyes were red, she sobbed, sniffled and wept. She walked the 25-30 long steps forward to the podium – small and frail, surrounded by serious men.

Advertising posters were cleared away to the sides of the room. She was dressed in neutral civilian clothes. Not a sponsor in the world would want to be associated with substances on the prohibited list.

Communication Manager Espen Graff explained what was going to happen. Every half minute a deep sob welled up from Johaug on his right side. It was as if she was struggling to breathe. She rubbed her eyes. Hid her face in her hands. When she got the floor, she looked at sentences on a sheet in front of her. “Completely broken.” “Insanely devastated.” “Totally indescribable.” And not least: “I will sit here with my back straight and tell everything. I have *zero guilt* in this matter.”

Reading the words in hindsight is one thing. But to experience them “live” from the addled, crying, and at times desperate voice was something entirely different. It was “listen to me, look at me, believe me,” and if it was not true, it was Hollywood.

Johaug told about the sores on her lips, about the ointment. She had first tried one ointment during the gathering in Livigno, but it did not work. Then she went over to Trofodermin, again after asking the doctor if the product was on the doping list.

She finished her eight minute long speech as follows: “To get a guiltless (positive) doping test (result)¹, is every athlete’s worst nightmare. But I will fight and show everybody that I am so (*here she banged hard on the table in front of her*) innocent in this case.”

The words had some similarity to those Martin Johnsrud wrote in a letter to the International Ski Federation when he was in Johaug’s situation. He wrote: “The possible penalty for the charges I face, has the potential to destroy me, my family and my future. If I am to be disqualified from these races, I risk being seen as a cheater, regardless of any explanation. I kindly ask you to understand that I have complied with the rules and acted in good faith.”

¹ My words added in parenthesis.

At that time doctor Knut Gabrielsen took the blame for Sundby's asthma medication, and subsequently resigned.

It quickly became clear that this routine was to be repeated yesterday. Fredrik S. Bendiksen had to go. His farewell message after answering the questions, was that if there is justice under the law for athletes, Therese Johaug should not be punished for his mistake.

What can we believe in?

Sports history is full of doping. It is also full of strange doping explanations. An ointment for mouth ulcers is not near the top 50 on the list.

We have chuckled when foreign athletes have told their stories: Sprinter LaShawn Merritt explained his positive test by saying that he had taken a penis extension medication. Ben Johnson claimed someone had smuggled something into his sports drink. Cyclist Tyler Hamilton put the blame on an unborn twin.

But this time the drama is unfolding in our own backyard, in the country with the oil, the salmon and skiing – in the only sport where we are always the best in the world. It is not about a Finn, an Austrian or an East-European. It is about Therese Johaug. And it happens a few months after the Martin Johnsrud Sundby case. These two are the best cross-country skiers on the planet.

The way the Sundby case had been handled, hardly increased the Norwegian people's confidence in Norwegian skisports. Now, with Johaug's case in addition, no wonder many are forced to think: "What can we actually believe in?" Traffic on Swedish websites from Norwegian IP addresses were massive yesterday. What did they believe, those who see Norwegian skiers with slightly different eyes?

The Swedish newspaper *Expressen*: "Ski World Beauty Caught", "She looks like Mühlegg" and "The detail that may now dethrone Johaug." From *Aftonbladet*: "Embarrassing for Norway and the Sport" and "Johaug Taunted by the Competitors."

These are competitors who for years have been left behind in the races, abandoned and humiliated by Johaug and Sundby and other Norwegians uphill after uphill wherever the Skiing Circus has moved. They have been told: *You have to train harder and smarter. You need better equipment, better skis,*

better glide and a waxing trailer so large that it needs an aircraft hangar to park. The news about Johaug was a gift package to several of them.

Direction: The Norwegian Ski Federation

Polish Justyna Kowalczyk, who for many years had criticized the use of medications in Norwegian skiing, simply posted an image on her Twitter profile of the forbidden ointment with the doping warning.

It was intended to be a day of celebration. The Norwegian Ski Federation's plan was to arrange their annual "kick off" for the winter season at Ullevaal Stadium. 65 athletes from six different forms of winter sports were brought to Oslo for the event. The invitations had been sent several weeks ago.

But a few people in the Norwegian Ski Federation knew what this day would be like. The insiders kept quiet, behaving as if nothing had happened. After all, we are talking about a gang that managed to keep the Martin Johnsrud Sundby case a secret for 18 months. Until a few hours before the big event was supposed to start, the host to be, the person in charge of image streaming, those responsible for communications and the athletes that would attend, all of them still believed that everything would happen as planned.

Then the Ski Federation machinery started grinding: The athletes were phoned and told about the cancellation. The press conference room at Ullevaal was cleared. The five who were going to sit on the podium were drilled. The Norwegian News Agency (NTB) was fed with information, first came the brief message "Cross-country skiing star Therese Johaug tested positive for a prohibited substance", then came the long story about the mouth sore ointment.

But efficient crisis management by no means diverted attention from the message. The Norwegian Ski Federation's President Erik Røste looked like he had become ten years older overnight when he took the floor.

"This is a day of sorrow. In many ways, a bit unreal. I think everyone here understands that what should not happen, has happened."

But it has. And now the question is: What happens now?