



DIGITAL STORYTELLING AND NARRATIVE EXPERIENCE IN JOURNALISM: A MULTIMODAL ANALYSIS OF SNOW FALL

Fatima Iftikhar

PhD Scholar , SET (Language instructor), Federal Directorate of Education (FDE)

Email: fatimaktk.fi@gmail.com

Umm-e-Rooman Yaqoob

PhD Scholar, Lecturer, Department of English , Fazaia Bilquis College of Education for Women, PAF Nur Khan base, Rawalpindi

Email: manooc93@gmail.com

Abstract

The current research will discuss Snow Fall: The Avalanche at Tunnel Creek (The New York Times, 2012) in the framework of a combined approach based on multimodal discourse analysis, the theory of cinematic journalism, and the research on narrative experience. The research is based on the multimodality theory proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen, cinematic journalism theories developed by Pavlik and Longhi, as well as narrative immersion ideas introduced by Ryan and the transportation theory by Green and Brock. Results indicate that Snow Fall attains systematic multimodal coherence in which the various modes provide different knowledge to work together to form multidimensional knowledge. The work incorporates cinematic elements, including the composition of scenes, regulated rhythm, sequential arrangement of appearances and creation of the atmosphere, which should allow immersing the space, time, and emotion, without losing journalistic objectivity due to the direct labelling of the reconstructions. The theoretical contribution of the study is the suggestion of viewing multimodal composition, cinematic technique, and narrative experience in the role of interdependent and not independent dimensions, as it shows that the transformation of digital journalism is essentially narrative, not technological.

Keywords: Digital Journalism, Multimodal Discourse Analysis, Cinematic Journalism, Narrative Transportation, Snow Fall, Immersive Storytelling

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

Digitalization of journalism has changed the way stories are narrated, lived and read radically. The traditional print journalism, which is tied to the unidirectionality of the text and the inability to invoke action or interaction in the storytelling process, has been replaced by dynamic, interactive, and multimodal storytelling practices that capitalize on the affordances of the digital platform. Long-form interactive narratives have become a unique genre and combine journalist rigour with immersive storytelling methods that appeal to the readers on several senses and thought modalities. Snow Fall: The Avalanche at Tunnel Creek, published by The New York Times in December 2012, is a breaking point in the history of digital journalism. This multimedia narration of a lethal avalanche that claimed the lives of three expert skiers in Washington State incorporated text, photographs, video, audio, interactive graphics, and animated visualizations, into a solid narrative experience. It was not an article with multimedia added to it but a well-coordinated composition where various modes were used to formulate meaning.

Pavlik (2001) had foreseen this development stating that digital journalism would not be confined to the limitations posed by print, since it would be able to tell new stories using computational and networked capabilities. As of 2013, Pavlik noted that some innovations such as Snow Fall demonstrated how the digital platform could fundamentally transform the practice of journalism beyond the mere remediation of print forms by providing completely new experiences of narrative. What is unique about Snow Fall as compared to previous multimedia journalism is the use of cinematic techniques in telling a story in journalism. The work uses visual sequencing, sound design of atmosphere, pacing techniques, and spatial composition

which is based on the elements of cinema and not conventional reportage. This cinematic attribute produces what Manovich (2001) referred to as the cultural language of new media where the meaning of narrative is not created by the individual elements but rather by their systematic association and interaction.

The work is presented by a well-timed leakage of details which approximate the time-space logic of the film and which bring the readers through the story world using the techniques of the visual storytelling tradition. Nevertheless, existing theories of journalism analysis find it difficult to consider the immersiveness, experiential aspects of such a work as *Snow Fall*. Traditional journalistic critique is shaped by the emphasis on text, objectivity, and veracity of information, visual and interactive things are secondary and not part of the meaning. Literary and narrative methods look at structure of stories and rhetoric yet do not pay much attention to the material and modal specificity of digital environments. The perspectives of media studies consider technological affordances but they might not be sufficient to theorize the embodied emotion, the emotional involvement that multimodal narratives could provoke. This theoretic paradox requires the combination of analytical viewpoints in three and more perspectives to be combined interdisciplinarily.

To begin with, multimodal discourse analysis offers the means of analyzing the interaction of various semiotic modes to create meaning in the digital space. Second, the paradigm of cinematic journalism sheds light on the way the methods of storytelling in visual media are transferred to the field of journalism and the way they change the aesthetic and experience aspects of news stories. Third, the theories on narrative experience and transportation describe the ways in which such formal strategies create cognitive and affective immersion in the readers. This paper critically focuses on *Snow Fall* in the light of this combined approach to the examination of how multimodal composition and cinematic narration use are applied to the creation of an immersive narrative experience, which goes beyond the typical journalistic form. As it has been shown in terms of analysis, comprehending digital journalism involves going beyond content analysis to explore the orchestration of modes, adaptation of the principles of cinema and how to construct experience.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Digital journalistic narratives such as *Snow Fall* pose conceptual dilemma to people who produce and consume news. These texts are ambiguous at the borderlines of information and immersion, objective reporting and emotional involvement, journalistic documents and film experience. Readers that experience such narratives traverse between reading that involves analytical practices formed in print journalism and viewing that involves immersion practices in visual media. It is this hybridity that brings about interpretive ambiguity regarding the meaning of journalistic authority against multimodal digital worlds.

The current literature on *Snow Fall* has discussed the artwork either through technological lenses of how it allows an interactive experience and how it generates its productions or through stylistic lenses in which it has been recognized to have pioneered aesthetics without being theoretically anchored. These analyses have failed to offer a common experiential paradigm of the functioning of the piece as a coherent communicative gesture. The difficulty is to create an analysis methodology that can explain at the same time multimodal construction of meaning, cinematic construction of narrative form, and immersive experience of the reader.

1.3 Research Questions

Three integrated research questions are handled in this study:

1. What multimodal and cinematic storytelling strategies are employed in *Snow Fall* to construct meaning in digital journalism?

2. How do these multimodal and cinematic elements work together to shape readers' narrative experience and immersion?
3. Why does the integration of multimodality and cinematic journalism enhance narrative transportation in digital journalistic storytelling?

1.4 Research Objectives

The research has three objectives which are interconnected:

1. To define and group the multimodal and cinematic elements employed in Snow Fall, a study of the text, image, video, sound and interactive elements composition should be identified.
2. To examine the manner in which these features combine to create an immersive narrative experience, one should be interested in the interaction of these features and not in them as discrete parts.
3. To conceptualize Snow Fall as an example of experiential digital journalism by utilizing a combined analytical approach, which incorporates multimodal, cinematic, and narrative approaches.

1.5 Limitations

The scope of the study is influenced by two main limitations. On the one hand, it is an analysis based on a single case, which makes it possible to engage in profound interpretations but restricts the extrapolation of the results to digital journalism in general. Snow Fall represents a specific production situation, and the resources and editorial priorities are unique to The New York Times, and the conclusions of the case might not be relevant to digital journalism under varying circumstances. Secondly, the analysis assumes the audience experience on the basis of narrative theory and textual analysis and not the empirical reader-response information. Though theories of narrative transportation and immersion offer powerful models of how we may think of the possible engagement of the reader, this methodology is not able to elucidate the real interpretive practices or emotional reactions of different audiences who experience the work.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Early History Narrative Studies and Journalism Studies

The interpretation of digital journalistic narratives should be based on the primary research on narrative structure and journalistic stories. Genette (1980) defined the critical terms used to analyze narrative time establishing the difference between story time and discourse time, and how the narrative can play around with time through such devices as analepsis and prolepsis. His framework sheds some light on how storytelling creates a sense of meaning not merely in what is reported but in the order, duration and frequency of such reporting. These ideas still apply to the digital narrative that usually features the non-linear navigation and time overlay. This paper has explored the history of objectivity as a professional value within American journalism, as well as maintained by Schudson (2001), as an argument that objectivity was not a natural journalistic value, but a historically contingent reactive value to specific institutional and cultural circumstances. His work illustrates that journalistic storytelling has constantly been bargaining between reporting the facts and telling a story, being transparent or being interpretive. The historical contextualization of the modern arguments concerning the experiential aspects of digital journalism reveals that the struggle between information and immersion is not new to the journalistic practice.

2.2 Multi-Modality and Meaning-Making

It was social semiotics that gave rise to the analytical framework in studying the interaction of various modes in constructing meaning. Kress and van Leeuwen (2001, 2006) formulated a methodological study of multimodal communication that generalizes the linguistic analysis to visual, spatial and other semiotic means. Their insightful fact is that various modes are not

merely alternative means of communication of the same meaning but are resources produced socially and with specific affordance and constraints. By modes Kress and van Leeuwen refer to the particular possibilities of representing and communicating presented by such modes as language, image, color, and layout and influenced by cultural conventions and material properties. In their way of thinking, modal interaction forms meaning and not before it is expressed.

A photograph does not merely represent a text and text does not merely provide a caption to a photograph. Instead, the two modes engage in relationships that may be complementary, which deepen the meaning of each other, or may produce effective tensions that give rise to new meaning. Their visual design grammar gives the tools of analysis of the way in which images build images and locate the viewer by composition, perspectivity and visual salience. These notions are of essential interest to the study of digital journalism when the meaning is spread and dispersed among several ways of simultaneous expression. Jewitt (2009) also generalized multimodal analysis into empirical research techniques and offered viable models of data gathering and analysis of multiplexed information. In her work, she stresses that multimodal analysis involves the consideration of the organization of modes in particular circumstances and considers not only particular elements but the systematic combination of these elements. This theoretical approach will also inform the approach that the current study takes to Snow Fall as a multimodal composition.

2.3 Cinematic and Digital Journalism

ThPavlik's work traces the evolution of journalism through successive waves of digital transformation. In his earlier writing, Pavlik (2001) identified how digital technologies would enable new forms of journalistic storytelling, enhanced interactivity, and transformed relationships between journalists and audiences. As early as 2013, he explained how these possibilities were being achieved in new digital journalism that was taking advantage of multimedia, database capabilities and immersive presentation. The point that Pavlik is making is that digital journalism is not just a technology change but also a complete rethinking of journalistic discourse and how it can be constructed and lived.

In particular, Longhi (2014) analyzed Snow Fall in terms of cinematic journalism, stating that the given work uses cinematic methods of storytelling in order to achieve atmosphere creation and emotional appeal. Her discussion determines the manner in which Snow Fall makes use of the elements of scene-setting, visual sequence, pacing, and sound design in a manner that is comparable to the cinematic practice. By this, Longhi is trying to imply that journalism is stealing the aesthetic and narrative conventions of visual media, especially cinema, in order to establish experience encounters as opposed to mere informational encounters.

This includes building narrative space in which the readers are immersed and moved through, in which they determine the temporal direction of revelation, and which uses visual composition to guide focus and form a mood. Cinematic journalism is not merely a matter of video additions to the articles. It includes the transfer of the methods of filmic narration into journalism, such as the construction of the narrative using the visual continuity, establishing shots and close-ups to regulate perspective, the establishment of the atmosphere using light and sound, and the pacing regulation to control narrative tension and discharge. These methods make journalism an informational but a much more experiential practice.

2.4 Narrative Experience and Transportation

To explain the impact that stories may have on readers in terms of beliefs and attitudes, Green and Brock (2000) came up with the concept of narrative transportation. By transportation they mean the convergent mental action where the attention, image and the feeling are concentrated on the events of the narrative and it temporarily lowers the critical distance between the reader

and the story. Not passive receiving but an active cognitive and emotional experience, namely, mental simulation of narrative events, emotional identification with characters, and immersion into the story world. Their study reveals that transported readers have higher chances of believing in the story consistent with the story and they have intense emotional reactions even when they come across fictional stories.

The given framework assists in understanding the persuasive and influencing character of journalistic stories, which have been written using immersive methods of storytelling. Although journalism has always been based on rational assessment and the ability to view things objectively, transportation theory implies that the involvement of narratives works in other cognitive mechanisms rather than purely analytical thinking. This does not wear down the credibility of journalism but instead sets out another aspect through which narratives shape knowledge.

Another media-independent theory of narrative immersion is that postulated by Ryan (2001, 2015), focusing on how the various types of narratives produce the illusion of being carried away to story worlds. The point that Ryan puts forward is that immersion happens when narrative form works to decrease the cognitive and perceptual separation between the reader and the represented world in such a way that they get the sense of direct access to experience instead of mediated representation. She singles out spatial, temporal, and emotional levels of immersion, each of which entails distinct cognitive processes and formal techniques. Spatial immersion makes one feel that they are in a simulated setting. Temporal immersion synchronizes reader time with story time, producing forward moving interaction.

Emotional immersion is a process of connecting with the characters and engagement in narrative results. The work of Ryan on digital narrative focuses on the ability of the computational media to introduce a novel immersion experience in the form of interactivity, visuality, and spatial navigation. Online spatial worlds could be built to which readers engaging with the work could navigate instead of merely read about them, allowing different types of interaction with the work compared to linear print. She warns, however, that technological affordances do not necessarily ensure immersion, as it requires the expert coordination of formal material in the establishment of consistent experience spaces.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

This paper constructs a three-layered theoretical model that places multimodal composition, cinematic narration, and narrative experience in a relationship of equality as dimensions of digital journalistic meaning-making. The initial layer is based on the multimodal theory by Kress and van Leeuwen and the way Snow Fall designs various semiotic modes. Within this framework, such modes as text, photography, video, sound, graphic design, and spatial layout are considered to be the separate resources of meaning-making and have certain affordances.

Text is good at abstract reasoning and exact logical interrelation. Photography preserves certain visuality and may formulate the represented subjects using framing and vision. Video is a combination of motion, sound and time span in order to depict processes and produce a sense of atmosphere. Interactive graphics allow the exploration and interaction with the information structures. These elements are arranged through spatial layout in coherent compositional wholes that determine hierarchies of salience. The most important principle of analysis is the fact that the meaning is produced by modal interaction and not by accumulation.

The modes are not merely the delivery of the same information in different channels but rather get into relationships that grow, supplement, or develop productive tensions with one another. Video sequence depicting the conditions of avalanches does not simply represent the written account of the conditions but conveys other types of knowledge that allow readers to see the spatial relationships, the character of movements, and the atmosphere in the environment that cannot be described with the help of text. On the same note, interactive graphics enable the

readers to tweak variables and experiment in the structure of information in a way that generates the forms of understanding that are not available in linear reading.

The second layer is the application of the ideas of the journalism of the cinema to analyze the ways Snow Fall uses the methods of story-telling that are modified by the visual media. After Pavlik and Longhi, it is a view that sees digital journalism to be more and more reliant on the vocabulary of narrative used in cinema to organize temporal movement, build atmospheric action, and direct viewer experience. The film techniques applicable to Snow Fall are visual sequencing that regulates the disclosure of information by composing shots and applying editing logic, scene composition that creates spaces in which the narrative unfolds, pacing techniques that control narrative tension by the flow of information, and sound design that provides an emotional mood and sensory plunge.

The thing that this layer brings to the multimodal analysis is the focus on the time and experience aspects of the storytelling. Whereas the multimodal theory addresses the way in which various modes build meaning, cinematic analysis is concerned with the way in which various modal resources are arranged over time to produce narrative experience. The film approach elucidates how Snow Fall constructs scenes instead of merely relaying information, how it has used visual transition to stabilize the flow of the story, and how it has used the techniques of slow revelation and rhythmic pacing to regulate the attention of readers.

The third layer relies on both narrative transportation and immersion theory in order to investigate the experiential impact of the multimodal and cinematic strategies previously discovered in the former two layers. The narrative immersion framework presented by Ryan offers ideas regarding the analysis of the ways in which formal means minimize the cognitive distance between the reader and the story world. The transportation theory by Green and Brock describes cognitive and affective mechanisms involved in the narrative engagement (such as focused attention, mental imagery and emotional response). This layer brings the analysis to a more experiential outcome, inquiring how the multimodal composition and the cinematic method actually work to produce an immersive experience.

It looks at how visual and spatial modes allow the readers to see and not read about the story world, the temporal pacing which builds forward-moving force and how modes coordination brings emotional and cognitive reaction. The integration of the framework is based in the consideration of these three layers as constitutive of each other, as opposed to being independent. The material basis of multimodal composition is through which the techniques of cinema are actualized within the digital journalism. Cinematic pacing can not be used without cinematic time modes such as video and scrolling controlled. Spatial immersion is impossible without visual modes that depict three-dimensional scenery.

On the other hand, the multimodal resources do not necessarily bring about cinematic or immersive effects. Their narrative functionalities are based on the way they are structured based on storytelling logics. Equally, movie techniques allow certain (narrative) experience. The coherent environments of scene construction generate a spatial immersion. Visual sequencing generates a feeling of time by bringing about a sense of narrative momentum. Sound design in the atmosphere creates emotional immersion due to the sense perception. Through the cinematics interface, therefore, in-between multimodal composition and narrative experience, we observe the deployment of formal resources to produce experiential effects. This synthesized structure allows the analysis of Snow Fall that flows freely between the description as a form of formality, the role as a narration, and the effect as an experience. It does not discuss multimodality, cinematic method, and narrative experience as distinct issues, but rather as aspects of one and the same communicative practice.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

This paper uses a qualitative, interpretive approach based on the case study, which concentrates on Snow Fall: The Avalanche at Tunnel Creek. The case study approach suits well as it allows taking a closer look at a complex multimodal text and conducting a systemic investigation of the interaction between various modes and the ways in which both formal strategies are used to create sense. The interpretive orientation acknowledges the fact that the meaning in narrative texts does not just come out, but is developed by analytical interaction guided by theory frameworks.

The information is comprised of chosen passages of the Snow Fall such as opening passages, significant plot points, and closing passages. The textual passages, photographic images, video segments, interactive graphics, animated visualization, sound elements as well as space composition are analyzed throughout these sections. There is no effort to make a complete coverage of the complete lengthy piece, instead the study concentrates on the exemplary passages that illustrate the variety of multimodal and cinematic strategies used. The analysis examines textual passages, photographic images, video segments, interactive graphics, animated visualizations, sound elements, and spatial composition across these sections. Rather than attempting comprehensive coverage of the entire lengthy piece, the study focuses on exemplary passages that demonstrate the range of multimodal and cinematic strategies employed.

A conventional content analysis based on the linguistic aspects would overlook major aspects of how Snow Fall builds the meaning and facilitates the experience. Multimodal discourse analysis offers mechanisms through which the various modes are involved in, as well as interact in, meaning-making. The analysis process is a process of close reading and watching of chosen passages through repetitive processes, which are guided by the three-layered theoretical framework. In both passages, the analysis determines the existing modes, how these modes are constituted relative to each other, what cinematic means organize their display, and what experience the formal decisions may make possible. It switches between elaborate formal description and theoretical explanation clearly relating observed features with concepts of multimodal theory, cinematic journalism and narrative experience.

Chapter 5: Analytical Framework

The theoretical framework has been operationalized in the analysis in three interrelated dimensions of analysis:

5.1 Dimension 1: Multimodal Composition

This dimension looks at the interaction between text, image, video, sound, and layout at certain passages. The analytical focus encompasses determining which modes exist, how they are somehow materially instantiated, how the spatial arrangement of modes among themselves is made, how modes are complementary, or extending in meaning and how modal salience is constructed in terms of size, position, color, and movement. The theoretical framework relies on the framework of Kress and van Leeuwen in the interpretation of modes as socially constructed resources and modal interaction as a place where the meaning is formed.

5.2 Dimension 2: Cinematic Techniques

The dimension evaluates the use of the cinema-adapted storytelling techniques at Snow Fall. These areas of analysis include scene construction and the establishment of narrative space in visual and textual terms, visual sequencing and transition between various representational terms, pacing and the regulation of the temporal flow of information, and atmospheric construction by using sound, visual tone, and sensory detail. The conceptual foundation is the work by Pavlik about the innovation in digital journalism and the analysis by Longhi about the methods of cinematic journalism.

5.3 Dimension 3: Narrative Experience

This aspect explains the way the formal strategies proposed in the other dimensions work together to establish an immersive experience. The critical elements of analysis are the method of spatial immersion made possible by visual representation and interactive exploration, the method of temporal immersion made by narrative structure and forward action, the method of emotional engagement made by character concentration and atmosphere, and the method of transportation made by the minimized mental distance. The theoretical framework is informed by the Ryan narrative immersion framework and the transportation theory of Green and Brock. Every analysis step is expressly linked to theoretical ideas, without any mere descriptive remarks. The structure organizes the careful consideration of formal construction, narrative purpose, and experiential implication in all the passages examined.

Chapter 6: Data Analysis and Discussion

6.1 Opening Sequence: Establishing Immersive Entry

The introduction to Snow Fall shows that the multimodal, cinematic, and experiential strategies are closely integrated to attract the readers into the world of the story. The article does not start with a traditional headline and byline but with a full-screen cartoonish image. The readers are introduced to a three dimensional topographical image of the Cascades mountain range, which is in white relief on a black background. What occurs as the page loads is that the point of view is slowly panned over the mountain landscape, and finally on Cowboy Mountain and Tunnel Creek. The title is written in large white letters, which gradually emerge and have an announcement effect, floating over the landscape.

In a multimodal sense, the meaning in this opening is shared between visual, spatial and kinetic modalities. The animated topography serves not as a decorative feature but is an important narrative task in that it provides geographic context and a sense of place. Kress and van Leeuwen would stress on the fact that the visual mode in this case provides certain affordances that cannot be reproduced by text. Though the mountain scenery can be explained by text, the graphic depiction allows one to be directly involved in the perception of the space and dimension, as well as the landscape elements. The gradual camera lapse puts the aspect of time in it and turns stagnant geography into a progressive unveiling. The spatial composition is composed of a text and image that goes beyond the print conventions.

Instead of text being placed above or below the images in separate blocks, the title comes out of the visual plane and gives the impression that the words and the landscape are in the same representational space. The formation of a coherent multimodal ensemble with meaning generated by the interaction of simultaneously present components is defined by this modal integration and does not occur by the sequential processing of established components. This opening has the cinematic conventions of establishing shots borrowed to the film. The slowness in crossing the landscape is analogous to the establishing shots that open most movies and introduce the viewer to space before any action starts to take place. Such decision as starting with the landscape instead of people or action is meaningful. It puts more emphasis on the environmental context rather than on individuals, which implies that the narrative will entail the clash of human decisions with the forces of nature.

The timing is also very slow so that it takes a few seconds before the entire sequence completes. This slow pace allows meditative room instead of direct dramatic action, establishing a feel of the atmosphere that the story will proceed in. Mood and atmosphere creation in this opening is what Longhi implies by cinematic journalism. The gloomy palette of colors, the three dimensional depiction of the landscape, the slow velocity, all come together to bring a sense of anticipation. The mountainous terrain is shown as being simultaneously beautiful and threatening, as an ambiguous zone into which tragedy will take place. This structure of the

atmosphere is formalistic, but not explicitly stated and demonstrates instead of telling the readers how to feel about the space.

Narratively speaking this introduction enables what Ryan refers to as spatial immersion. The visual image develops a logical geographic landscape in which the readers can observe and occupy. This space movement gives the impression of entrance, the transition between the real world of the reader and the represented world of the story. The point that Ryan is trying to make is that immersion happens when narrative form minimizes the perceptual distance between reader and the represented world so as to give the impression of direct experience rather than mediated description. The first one is achieved through the introduction of the landscape as something to be felt as opposed to reading about it. The tempo also forms the so-called temporal immersion introduced by Ryan through forward-moving momentum.

The animation proceeds on a real-time basis, and its length is dictated by the story and not the reader. This time restriction divides the reader time and the story time so that they are regarded as a running action as opposed to a fixed piece of information. Although the readers have the option of scrolling through this introductory section, its default temporality creates a viewing mode in contrast to scanning and skimming that occur when reading online. The coinciding working of multimodal composition, cinematic technique and narrative experience is therefore shown through this opening sequence. The multimodal coordination of visual, spatial, textual and kinetic modes gives the material basis. These modes are formed by cinematic means of creating shot, managing rhythmic pace, and constructing atmosphere. The outcome is a sensorial point of entry that initiates the transporting-narrative process that pulls readers off the informational and immersive levels of engagement.

6.2 Character Introduction: Humanizing Through Multimedia

The most peculiar aspect of Snow Fall is the thorough characterization of the skiers that were the participants of the avalanche. Instead of them being treated as a victimless face or a statistic, the story makes them a personality with a background, relationships, and motives. This description is carried out in a multimodal integration in which textual biography, photographic portraits, and video interviews are integrated. One of the best passages is the introduction of Elyse Saugstad, a professional freeskiier who was able to survive the avalanche. The text starts by narrating her background, her achievements in the world of competitive skiing and her appearance at Tunnel Creek on the avalanche day.

This narrative is supported by a huge photographic portrait of Saugstad in outdoor attire with an serious face towards the camera. The image does not just stick out of the text but takes much space on the screen and thus visual importance is raised thus elevating the importance of the character. Under the text and picture, a reader can see an embedded video interview with Saugstad. The video presents her talking straight into the camera and the way she was trapped in the avalanche and how the avalanche airbag saved her life. The video gives us the ability to access her voice, facial expression and body presence in ways that are only not provided by text and still photograph.

Multimodally, the passage illustrates what Kress and van Leeuwen refer to as modal complementarity where different modes do not substitute each other but rather they complement each other so as to create a more complete representation than any of these modes would have made. The text provides biographical information, historical background, and accurate information on the skiing qualifications of Saugstad. The photograph gives visual specificity, to the extent of what she appears like and creates her as a represented participant by means of direct eye contact with the viewers. The video introduces time and corporeal elements, allowing the readers to listen to her voice and see how she speaks and what she feels when narrating the traumatic memories.

These modes are not mere duplication of the same information via other mediums. They bring different knowledge on board. The reading informs the reader of her professional achievements. The photo depicts them who she is and gives an impression of what her personality is based on visual signs. Her contemplative insight is shown in the video and the emotionality of her experience is conveyed by the tone of voice and facial expression. What comes out is a multidimensional expression that is rich and more humanly multifaceted than single mode description could be. The film aspect of this characterization technique is that it is parallel to the documentary film techniques.

Similar to character-driven documentaries, *Snow Fall* incorporates a mixture of narrative voice-over (the written text), archival (photographs) and talking-head interview (the video) to build full-fledged portraits of real individuals. This method bases the abstract journalistic reporting on concrete human experience, and thus, the story becomes reachable emotionally as opposed to strictly informational. As direct to camera video interview form, it produces what documentary theorists term testimonial mode when people are able to speak about their experiences using their own words. This has certain rhetorical consequences, creating the effect of authenticity and emotional immediacy.

When Saugstad recounts the moments when she was thrown around in the avalanche, the emotional interest she shows visibly in retelling her memory, helps to establish what Green and Brock would perceive to be the requirements of narrative transportation. Readers are not informed about the facts about the avalanche but get the feeling of the traumatic experience of a person. This multimodal characterization makes emotional immersion easier in terms of narrative experience. According to Ryan, the emotional immersion is dependent on the identification with characters and an interest in their destinies. The story establishes the necessary environment of empathic involvement by characterizing the skiers as individuals and atypical subjects, instead of depersonalized victims. Their multimodal description makes them more present, truer than single mode description is.

Another aspect that this strategy will fulfill, as regarded by Green and Brock as essential to narrative transportation, is the creation of bright mental images. The photographs and videos are simply a visual data, which are secondary and augment mental representation of characters and events by the readers. Instead of making the readers form these images in their head by purely descriptive text, the visual means give such a detail that can be grounded and used to facilitate imaginations. The combination of these modal, cinematic and experiential elements evidences one major principle that is that digital journalism is capable of creating character and creating emotional involvement in a multimodal manner that goes beyond what standard print journalism could accomplish. The human aspect transcends biographical account; it becomes affective presence that results in allowing the reader to experience the stakes of the story by relating to certain people.

6.3 Avalanche Sequence: Multimodal Reconstruction of Disaster

Snow Fall narrative peak is the avalanche itself and the composition uses the most active multimodal and cinematic techniques to recreate this disaster. The difficulty is to ensure the understanding and the experiential reality of an event, which happened within a few seconds, included several coexisting points of view and was experienced in a state of utter chaos and sensory clutter. The sequence of avalanches combines a number of modes in a short period. The point of breaking cornice and the onset of the avalanche is narrated by text. The geometry of the slope and the snow and skiers motion is graphically represented by an animated image. Video recordings do not capture the exact avalanche but depict similar avalanches to give a visual comparison of the magnitude and velocity of the phenomenon. The animated reconstruction is surrounded by photographs of the event prior to and subsequent to the event.

Sound design brings a sense of tension in the atmosphere with lonely, foreboding sounds. Of particular importance is the multimodal view of the animated graphic. It is a three dimensional visualization of the slope of Cowboy Mountain, the skiers are represented as dots in different colors, the avalanche is instigated, the courses of skiers and snow are followed during the occurrence. By changing the perspective, the readers can see this animation in various angles, which allows them to understand the complex event, in space.

The construction of knowledge that is created through this animation would otherwise be very hard to express using text alone. It is the spatial relations of various skiers, the slope geometry, the direction and velocity of the flowing avalanche, the tracks of the people trapped by it, all this information is transmitted visually and through kinaesthetic means. The animation makes use of the affordances that Kress and van Leeuwen define as the particular affordances of the visual mode to the process of representing spatial relations and concomitant action. Whereas text is superior in the sequential explanation and the analysis in the form of connections, the visual representation allows the perception of the complex spatial arrangements. The interactive aspect is vital. The active exploration of the piece is made possible by giving the audience the chance to control the viewing angle and repeat the sequence, as opposed to passive consumption.

This interactivity is related to Ryan on exploratory immersion, in which one is not necessarily working through a preset path but is exploring and interpreting a represented world through agency. Readers are also involved in the process of creating meaning instead of just absorbing information relayed. This sequence is cinematically composed of techniques of parallel editing, slow-motion reconstruction typical of documentary and dramatic cinema. The graphic animation makes the event slow and seconds are stretched into a prolonged analysis. This time-playing is used both cognitively and emotionally. Mentally, it brings into sight the chronological progression of occurrences that were too fast to be understood at a real time. It builds suspense and fear emotionally because of watching the avalanche come towards skiers who are not able to avoid it.

Combining text narration and visual animation gives rise to what film theorists refer to as multitrack storytelling whereby a verbal and a visual channel is used to transmit complementary information. The reading gives personal views and subjective information: what exactly skiers saw, heard, and even felt. The animation gives the overview view: the position of everyone and the way the whole event occurred. Neither of the two modes was sufficient to give the subjective experience and objective spatial understanding. Sound design, although thin, helps in construction of atmosphere. The piece is not filled with a realistic avalanche sound, which can be overwhelming and distracting, but with low frequency sounds that are sparse and build tension without overwhelming.

This holds back is a sign of exquisite movie taste. That which Longhi is referring to as the atmospheric construction of cinematic journalism can be seen here: the non-diegetic sound usage so that it generates emotional tone and not the mere reflection of noise in the environment. In terms of narrative experience, this sequence illustrates that multimodal digital journalism can have the ability to produce what Ryan terms perceptual immersion, the feeling of observing things, not merely reading about them. This visual representation, animation, interactivity and sound make for a multisensory experience that borders on the experiential impact of a witnessing effect, yet the explanatory power that journalism demands. This simulative reconstruction, however, also poses some crucial questions when it comes to the connection between journalism and simulation.

The animated movie is not documentary film but a created visual representation on the accounts of the survivors, analysis of experts and mathematical models. It poses as reconstruction and not reproduction, but the authority of its visual and its presentation of the film may make the

readers see it as more directly evidential, than it is. This antagonism of experience and epistemological clarity is one of the key problems of immersive digital journalism. What the transportation theory of Green and Brock implies is that highly immersive narratives are able to decrease critical distance, and skepticism towards analytical thinking. When a reader is carried away into a fictional world, he or she will be less inclined to produce counterarguments or challenge representations. This is ethically challenging in journalism.

Maximum immersion is not the aim but an immersion that will contribute to understanding and not the evaluation. Snow Fall handles this tension quite reasonably by making clear reconstructions and explaining the methodology. The article does not conceal the constructed form of the piece but instead foreshadows the reporting and analysis that allowed the reconstruction. Such openness preserves a sense of journalism and yet, in the exploitation of the experiential products of multimodal storytelling.

6.4 Environmental Context: Immersive Spatial Construction

This use of multimodal to build immersive spatial understanding persists throughout Snow Fall through the use of environmental description. Instead of textual description or description selections, the piece adopts high-resolution photography, panoramic photos, embedded video of the weather conditions, and interactive maps to create the geographic and climatic context. A textual explanation of how the Tunnel Creek was approached has a passage that combines a textual explanation of the route, but contains a 360-degree panorama photograph that the reader can move around to see in another direction. This interactive picture lets the reader in the rough view of the skiers, which are heading to the backcountry area to be able to explore the landscape. In terms of multimodal, this combination shows that there is modal division of labor.

The text has an informative aspect as it explains the journey and points of access. The panoramic photograph also gives the informational perceptual data as the reader can view the nature of the terrain, the slope steepness, the density of the tree vegetation, and a size of the mountain setting. What the framework by Kress and van Leeuwen enlightens us is that these modes bring about various types of knowledge that, when combined, bring about complete knowledge that would not have been provided by any of them. The importance of the interactivity lies in the fact that the readers are turned into active explorers of the space as opposed to mere receivers of description.

Instead of having to be described the environment, the readers are free to look at it themselves and focus their attention in the way that best suits their interests. This agency provides the feeling of presence in a represented space as opposed to merely having knowledge of it externally (Ryan). This is a cinematic technique equivalent to either establishing shots or location photography in documentary filmmaking. The piece lays groundwork on place before it gives action, which is a geographic context, which then makes events that follow understandable. The ability to pay close attention to environmental detail has an informational and atmospheric role.

Readers can clearly see the place where anything was happening, as well as experience the enormity, distance, and natural energy of the mountain landscape. The aesthetic dimension of cinematic journalism is constructed in the environmental photography as well, as pointed out by Longhi. The photographs are not functional pictures but well-crafted photographs that put into consideration light, color, composition, and the visual effect. White mountains on a blue sky, thick woodland with clouds, sharp relief mountains--the pictures are not only pleasing to the eye, but also informative. This aestheticism is non-decorative but has the storytelling purpose of desiring readers to gaze, to hang about, to attend closely to the landscape which will later be the scene of tragedy.

In terms of narrative experience, this sort of environmental building plays a role in spatial immersion in that it generates a coherent, detailed story world that the reader can experience in their mind. According to Ryan, the framework indicates the immersion is also reliant on the consistency and richness of world-building. Scattered or inconsistent information interrupts the flow of the story by reminding the reader that there is a story being told. Having elaborate and sustained environmental depiction, readers can ignore the existence of mediation and experience the story as a glimpse into the real world.

There is a significant temporal purpose of the passages on the environment. They produce the variation of pacing, which gives some time to reflect between the narrative action. It is a rhythmic change between action and reflection, between human drama and the environment that keeps the reader interested throughout the length of the piece. The depth of personal drama would no doubt be a wearisome thing without these thoughtful interludes. The passages through the environment give the breathing space without losing the contact with the world of the story.

6.5 Aftermath and Reflection: Multimodal Closure

The final passages of *Snow Fall* change the theme of piling up the avalanche in the past to discussing its consequences and interpretation. This transition entails both modal and tonal shifts, the shift between dramatic action and reflective thought. The article shows pictures of the memorials, video interviews with the survivors struggling with grief and guilt, and text about the effect of the avalanche on the skiing community. In one of the passages, there are pictures of memorial events in honor of the three deceased skiers and the text, which narrates about their legacies and the grieving of the community.

In video interviews, survivors can be seen to be having problems putting words together on what the experience has entailed, their voice breaking occasionally with emotion. An interactive memorial enables the readers to comment and give condolences to the piece making it a one-way communication instead of participation space. These closing parts are multimodally sustained, though they change their emotional register. The pictures of the memorials are gloomy and personal, giving attention to the faces, candles and personal items. The emotional tone of the visual mode in this case is built by composition and content, which leaves the room to think and mourn.

It shifts to reconstruction of the narrative to lamentation meditation, pondering over what is gone and what remains. Interviews recorded in these sections are done in a different manner compared to the interviews made in character building. In this case, it does not matter who people were, but how survivors cope with trauma and loss. It is at such times that the embodied presence that video makes possible is especially strong. The survivors hesitate and fail to get words out or their faces tell the strain of remembering, the video records aspects of experience that cannot be adequately expressed through a text.

The multimodal interpretation of this is that modes are not merely various ways of communicating information, but have varying affective values. The graphic appearance of the suffering faces, the voices that were catching as they were describing the loss- these modalities add meaning that can not be reproduced with a written record of the same information. This point made by Kress and van Leeuwen concerning modes as resources that are socially constructed applies to their emotional and experiential aspect. At the cinematic level these concluding parts use the documentary means of contemplative ending.

Similar to numerous character-based documentaries, the work does not provide the sense of a tidy resolution but instead it is a witness to the constant struggle of coming into terms with tragedy. The tempo is slowed down and it gives ample time to ruminate. The composition of the scene is rather close and does not focus on motion. What the framework of cinematic

journalism presented by Longhi assists in identifying is the way these formal decisions create meaning on a level other than what is directly said. The deliberation, the procrastination of faces and memorial objects, the silence between the words of the video interviews all this provides the room to cope with emotions and contemplate. The article will have faith in the readers to experience and reason instead of them being told what is important in the events happening.

In terms of narrative experience, these final parts show how confusing being immersed in journalistic stories can be. Ryan identifies various types of immersion, emotional immersion of character experience and intellectual immersion of ideas and meanings as outlined in his framework. The concluding paragraphs keep the emotion of the participants involved but allow them to step out and take a wider view on risk, community, loss, and memory. The participatory aspect of the interactivity of the memorial makes it more participatory and not just receiving. The fact that the piece allows readers to add their own answers to the question is the way the piece recognizes that the meaning does not always flow downwards, between the journalist and the audience but rather develops through collective interaction.

This interactivity produces what Ryan can call social immersion, in which readers feel like members of a community who are responding to the common events. This participatory aspect, however, also poses questions of the limits of journalism and memorial, of reporting and enabling collective grief. Conventional journalism ensures that there is a distinction between the story and the reaction of the reader. The fact that Snow Fall incorporates reader participation into the very narrative approaches this boundary making it a hybrid and combining journalism and documentary with participation in the memorial.

Chapter 7: Findings

The Snow Fall analysis brings about some important discoveries regarding digital journalistic story telling. To begin with, the work is systematically multimodally coherent in the sense that various modes of semiotics are not merely assembled together but well coordinated to generate integrated meanings. There are various forms of knowledge and affective involvement produced by text, image, video, sound, animation, and interactive and they appear to be synergistic and not redundant. The multimodal combination helps to get a more multidimensional knowledge as compared to the single mode communication that could have provided.

Second, Snow Fall uses cinematic narrative methods in a fundamental way of reshaping journalistic narrative. Establishing shots are used in the piece to create space context, scene-based structure to create the narrative flow, controlled pacing to regulate the engagement and create dramatic tension, and atmospheric construction, which are achieved by visual composition and sound design. These methods move out of film into journalism not as a stylistic flourish but as narrative techniques that allow the narration through the various methodologies of storytelling and interaction with readers.

Third, multimodal composition and cinematic technique make the process of transporting a narrative and experiencing it greatly easier. The work establishes spatial immersion by vividly depicting the environment and allowing the audience to explore it, temporal immersion by carefully managing the pace and forward story progression, and emotional immersion by growing characters and involving the audience and stimulating their emotions. This experience aspect propels journalism out of the realm of delivering information to a multisensory embodiment of the events being reported.

Fourth, the analysis indicates fruitful immersive digital journalism tensions among the vivacious experience and critical distance, presentation and explication, journalistic transparency and narrative immersion. Snow successfully manages such tensions in a reasonably good manner by using explicit methodological transparency, labeling

reconstructions, and combining elements of analytical and narrative reporting. Nevertheless, these strains are still unavoidable pitfalls of experiential journalism to which further practice has to be exposed.

Fifth, the article shows that digital journalism can build character, place and event as rich and specific as documentary film without compromising journalism. Multimodal opportunities that digital environments offer to journalism allow it to make stories more human, turn abstract information into perceptual experience, and provide emotional and cognitive involvement without compromising the factuality of the information or its critical approach.

Lastly, Snow Fall is one model of digital journalism that takes advantage of the affordances of computational media but exists within the time-tested and traditional values of journalism like accuracy, verification, and transparency. The innovations about the piece are not merely technological but narrative; they show the ways in which journalistic narrative can develop to exploit new forms and methods and to fulfill the fundamental roles of journalism of informing and allowing people to understand.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This paper has discussed Snow Fall using the analytical approach of integrating multimodal discourse analysis with the theory of cinematic journalism and narrative experience research. The discussion shows that to understand the modern digital journalism, one has to go beyond a text-based approach to studying how various modes interrelate, how the experience of the story is mediated, and how the methods of form allow engaging the audience. The theoretical value of the research is that it suggests and proves a unified model on how to analyze digital journalistic stories.

The framework demonstrates the relationships between multimodality, cinematic technique, and narrative experience as well as the interconnection and mutually constitutive nature of these dimensions, as opposed to considering them as distinct areas of analysis. Multimodal composition gives the material basis on which cinematic narration is achieved and cinematic techniques allow the achievement of certain forms of narrative experience. The integration provides a more all-inclusive way of analyzing digital journalism when compared to the views that analyze technological features alone, aesthetic characteristics alone, or content alone. In the case of journalism studies, the research sheds light on how the digital platforms facilitate new types of storytelling that empowers the journalism profession to inform, engage, and make connecting with it possible.

Snow Fall shows that journalism does not have to sacrifice immersion to preserve factual accuracy, can adopt the techniques of movies without becoming less transparent, and can help people connect emotionally and be analytical at the same time. This undermines ideologies that dictate information versus experience, fact versus affect, journalism versus other forms of narration as totally different modes of communication. Regarding the digital storytelling research, the study will make a contribution in terms of detailed analysis of the way in which the multimodal resources can be coordinated into producing coherent and powerful stories within the digital space. The results indicate that modal integration, as opposed to mere combination, offers great value, cinematic pacing and a sense of atmosphere are crucial towards maintaining engagement, and finally, interactivity can be useful in providing the opportunity to read on the exploration side, as opposed to passively.

In the case of narrative theory, the work builds upon knowledge of the mechanisms of immersion and transportation in nonfiction, journalistic, situations. Although a great deal of narrative theory is devoted to fictional works, this discussion reveals how the use of multimodal and cinematic techniques to tell stories in the real world can generate a strong experience of the world. The paper also finds certain conflicts between the narrative transportation and

distance, which are especially sharp in journalism where the task is not merely to plunge the reader but to allow them to understand.

The future of digital journalism is also brought up as important questions during the analysis. With the rise of more sophisticated and widespread multimodal, immersive storytelling, journalism has to learn how to balance its traditional epistemological beliefs of accuracy, verification, and transparency with taking advantage of the experiential possibilities of digital media. This is not about deciding something between information and immersion but about finding ways of integrating them in a productive way. Snow Fall is an early and seminal form of experiential digital journalism but it also indicates particular production conditions of large resource-base, long production duration, and institutional prestige which most news organizations cannot match.

Further studies are required to investigate how the concepts shown in Snow Fall can be extended and applied in other production settings and how multimodal storytelling can be used to fulfill the democratic roles of journalism to empower people to make informed citizens. The unified system of analysis created here provides a basis to such research. This framework can be used to analyze a variety of examples of digital journalism and develop cumulative knowledge about how journalistic narrative telling is changing in digital space through systematic analysis of mode interaction, narrative structuring through cinematic techniques, and the use of formal strategies to make experience. Finally, Snow Fall shows that the digital revolution of journalism is not merely technical but narrational and experiential. This change demands analytical methods that are able to explain the entire complexity of how digital journalistic texts construct meaning and facilitate interaction in the combination of multimodal, cinematic and experiential strategies.

References

- Genette, G. (1980). *Narrative discourse: An essay in method*. Cornell University Press.
- Green, M. C., & Brock, T. C. (2000). The role of transportation in the persuasiveness of public narratives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79(5), 701–721.
- Jewitt, C. (2009). *The Routledge handbook of multimodal analysis*. Routledge.
- Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal discourse: The modes and media of contemporary communication*. Arnold.
- Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Longhi, R. (2014). O turning point de Snow Fall no jornalismo online: Longform e scrollytelling. *Alceu*, 14(28), 195–213.
- Manovich, L. (2001). *The language of new media*. MIT Press.
- Pavlik, J. V. (2001). *Journalism and new media*. Columbia University Press.
- Pavlik, J. V. (2013). Innovation and the future of journalism. *Digital Journalism*, 1(2), 181–193.
- Ryan, M.-L. (2001). *Narrative as virtual reality: Immersion and interactivity in literature and electronic media*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Ryan, M.-L. (2015). Narrative as virtual reality. In D. Herman, M. Jahn, & M.-L. Ryan (Eds.), *Routledge encyclopedia of narrative theory* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Schudson, M. (2001). The objectivity norm in American journalism. *Journalism*, 2(2), 149–170.