

Jukka Kanerva

Character, Intimacy, and Issues
in a Presidential Campaign

A Rhetorical Analysis of the
PresiTentti Interview Series, Finland



UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

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ABSTRACT

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The study explores oral politics via a TV interview series in the midst of the Finnish presidential campaign in 1994. The **PresiTentti** series, in which each of the eleven candidates was interviewed, provides the material for the political and conversational analysis.

The study concentrates on three issues. First, it discusses the concept of political face and the intimate conditions of political interviews. Secondly, the study describes the nature of political narratives under the conditions of political conversations. In addition, the study examines the way in which the political character is founded on political narratives given by politicians.

Finally, the issues raised by the candidates will be discussed. Of these, the analysis deals with the main line of the agenda building, namely questions of national and we-identifications. Such identifications are closely linked with politicians' political characters.

The analysis is based on a case study of a single interview series. Apart from other reasons, this solution is motivated by a firm assurance that politics basically consists of oral utterances in conversation. Therefore, an important oral event not only represents the campaign as a whole but also provides valuable material for theoretical considerations as well.

Keywords: political character, intimacy, presidential campaign, rhetoric, political interview, political face, conversation strategy

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Jukka Kanerva

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I THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND ITS CONTEXT

PresiTentti - interview series as the subject of the study

In the contemporary Western context, interviews constitute a special forum for political utterances. Involving a mixture of consent and competition, they partly follow preconsidered plans, partly take capricious turns beyond anyone's control.

Control is one of the key terms characterizing political interviews on television. Broadcasted on complex conditions, pressed by strict time limits and guided by certain inherent rules, interviews are subject to several different control structures and aims.

The control devices can be treated from intentional, technical and interactive points of view. Interaction is the key concept, implying that the issue consists of two parties and their reciprocal activities. However, the other two elements of control are crucial, too. Interviews are structured, among other things, by time and intentions. The former factor, time, mostly belongs to the technical category. In practice, however, when running an interview on the spot, the time limit is also a matter of professional and political decision-making. An interviewer (hereafter IR) has the opportunity to deal with the limit according to his/her taste.

In this respect, interviews are intentional acts by all the participants. Both the interviewer and the interviewee (hereafter IE) pursue their policies. These intentions, neither totally converging nor totally contradictory, form the narrative structure of the event.

Only after studying the practical formation of the narrative structures and the subtle turns can the analysis focus on the nature of the narrative structures. Their intentionality and their political contributions can be understood better after exploring the process in which the utterances are created. Chapter Two concentrates on the process and rules of their emergence, and Chapter Three deals with the outcome.

Usually, given a short lapse of time, the structure of the event can be reduced to a few themes, or the plot simplified into a few clear-cut topics. This is the case when interviews are considered to provide information or facts about larger contexts. They simply cannot contain much information. Thus, the emphasis of the analysis is not on the facticity of the utterances.

In addition, the IRs and, especially, the IEs are not present in order to provide cumulative information. "... often what talkers undertake to do is not to provide information to a recipient but to present dramas to an audience" (Goffman 1981, 508). Even when concentrating on factual issues, the IRs seek essential and limited problems for interpretation by the IEs. These issues usually contain elements that arouse disagreement or dispute between the IR and the IE. Dramas emerge when the IRs and the IEs arrange, raise, solve or put aside these disagreements.

Interpretations demand personal commitments from both IEs and IRs. In political events, IEs are to show the audience why it should favour precisely them. The task calls for integrity, coherence, and character on the part of IEs. The role of the IE is to create an appropriate image of him/herself as the candidate to be elected. In other words, the IE is displaying his or her political face.

Naturally, the competitive element is emphasized when interviews are directly linked with the future election. This is why the **PresiTentti** series was arranged. It was aimed to be the main test for the Finnish presidential candidates in the 1994 election.

The series was produced by the Finnish Broadcasting Company, a state-owned company, which until this election had enjoyed a monopoly in political programmes, such as the candidate debates, in Finland. The series was presented as a closing section of the main prime-time news broadcast, which traditionally gets a nationwide audience. It was thus given the best possible setting for testing the candidates on television.

The scheme was somewhat unusual. The FBC news used two IRs¹, experienced male anchors, to interview each candidate². Each session lasted 10 to 11 minutes. The arrangement with two IRs against one IE gave a special tone of interrogation to the events. The tenor of the events varied to some extent, while the structure remained the same. The interview consisted of roughly two parts, the first shedding light on the IE's political face, the other concentrating on issues of foreign policy.³

In some cases, the atmosphere was relaxed, with no impression of pressing. On the other hand, some of the interviews turned into examples of police rather than of policy. Compared with the role of ordinary moderators in man-to-man contests, IRs in these kind of programmes possess more appearance and voice. They even take part in the conversation as equal partners, not as mere

1 Hannu Lehtilä (IR1) and Jorma Melleri (IR2).

2 The candidates were Martti Ahtisaari, Sulo Aittoniemi, Claes Andersson, Raimo Ilaskivi, Toimi Kankaanniemi, Keijo Korhonen, Eeva Kuuskoski, Elisabeth Rehn, Pekka Tiainen, Pertti Virtanen, and Paavo Väyrynen.

3 On the television coverage in the 1994 presidential campaign, see Lindberg, Johan, *Presidentivaalitutkimus 1994. Televisiokampanjan yhteenveto (1994)*. Jääsaari & Savinen (1995) discusses the audience reaction on the television debates in the Finnish context.

commentators. Thus, whatever other qualities may be included in these IRs' activity, their role is strongly political as well.

The study concentrates on these ten-minute **novellas**, analyzing them at several levels. Before giving a detailed description of the study task and the methods applied, a short overview of the political context is required. This is partly to show why certain themes appear delicate while others, in principle natural in such a contest, remain in the shadow. Besides, an overview is needed due to the nature of the subject. No political gesture is apprehensible *per se*.

Although the emphasis is on the methodological problems of studying political utterances, a glimpse of the political context may be useful. The study mostly relies on rhetorical, conversational and narrative conceptions, but, basically,

Three remarks on the political context

... persuasion, as already Aristotle remarked, is a practical act, aimed at purposed results. This act cannot be executed in a void.

Three moving elements in the political background should be mentioned as essential in the rhetorical interpretation. These are the new election system, the changing role of the president, and new conditions of intimacy in the election. A brief glance at these issues is required for a detailed rhetorical analysis of the Finnish presidential campaign in 1994.

A new election system

In the Finnish presidential election of 1994, the major issue setting the tone for the campaigns was a new election system, one that had never been used in Finland. It differs radically from the previous system, which in practice maintained and guaranteed power to the party elites.

The former system was based on the 301-member electoral college, whose task was to decide on the person of the president. This college was chosen directly from candidates suggested by parties. A voter had two ballots, one for a college member, another directly for a presidential candidate. If none of the candidates got more than 50 % of the votes, the college met and made its choice. It was not obliged to find the new president among the official candidates. (For details and history, see Sänkiaho 1991)

The electoral college was abolished in a reform in 1991, which adopted the French model with a direct vote only for the candidates. The election contains two rounds, because getting the majority of the votes given in the first round normally appears too hard a task. As a rule, the Finnish presidential election would thus

contain three phases: primaries, the first round, and the second round between the two most successful first-round candidates.⁴

Any person interested enough may take part in any party's pre-election. Without much exaggeration, this right may be regarded as astonishing. Evidently, it strongly diminishes the party elites' possibilities to manipulate the results of pre-elections. On the contrary, this right gives much room for wider speculation, even for political 'gold-rushes', more or less spontaneous movements for (and sometimes against) a candidate.

Consequently, the rules of the Finnish presidential election strongly favour strategic voting. In practice, when citizens have a right to participate in any pre-election, the opportunities of strategic voting are versatile. The rules make it possible to vote for and against candidates three times.

Each choice is successive and can be independently considered at a time. This right was utilized by citizens in the 1994 election. The pre-election round dropped out two eminent candidates, widely regarded as would-be candidates in the final round. These politicians, Mr. Pertti Salolainen, the leader of the National Coalition Party, and Mr. Kalevi Sorsa of the Social Democrats, a former long-term party leader, were replaced by other candidates by a clear margin.

Both of the above-mentioned big parties experienced a rush of strategic voters. The results were not a surprise, but the margins were high above expectations. The old regime was beaten by a crushing margin, about 3 to 1 in both parties. The winners, Mr. Raimo Ilaskivi of the National Coalition Party, a retired Mayor of Helsinki, and Mr. Martti Ahtisaari of the Social Democrats, a high officer at the UN, got a good start for the decisive rounds.

There were five female challengers in the pre-election round. Two of them managed to survive the first test. They were Ms. Eeva Kuuskoski of the Finnish Centre, a former minister for social affairs, and Ms. Elisabeth Rehn of the Swedish People's Party, the defense minister.⁵

As the election system was completely new, a general attitude of wait-and-see prevailed in the electorate. This made the campaign capricious, hard to predict and impossible to patronize.

The old system tended to favour high-level speculation and political horse trading. More than once, an evident favourite had been left without the office. In 1925, a "dark horse", L.Kr.Relander who had not campaigned at all, was elected president.

4 This is what happened in 1994. The primary round has a few unique features worth mentioning. For a would-be candidate, there are two alternative ways to reach candidacy. A candidate will either be nominated by his/her party in a nomination congress or a would-be candidate may gather signatures from 20 000 supporters (around 0,5 % of the whole electorate) and thus found his/her voter's association, which is entitled to nominate its own candidate for the first round. The former way to candidacy includes an important detail. The party congress only ratifies the result of the ballot election. However, not only are the party members entitled to give their ballots and thus influence the name of the candidate, but any person of full age, after some minor formalities, can contribute to the election.

5 These two female candidates had a different route to their candidacy. Ms. Kuuskoski, avoiding her party pre-election round, chose to found her own association with 20 000 supporters. Ms. Rehn, after hesitance by her party's elite, was nominated as a candidate, ultimately with formal unanimity.

The new system, however, rejected speculation at that level, replacing it by strategic choices by all citizens. With no domestic experiences of the new system, and the pre-election surprises still fresh in the memory, no candidate or party felt confident of victory.

Formally, one year was spent in the campaigns. In practice, the campaigns had been prepared at least from 1992 on. As a media process, the presidential election in its different phases assumed a topic position with no par. Consequently, the candidates as characters⁶ became familiar to the citizens to an unprecedented extent.

The role of the president

Finland is a country where the institution of Presidency has a large share of political power. The president is the leader of foreign policy, nominates the cabinet and several high officials, and has remarkable unofficial influence in national issues.

Jyränki (1978) distinguishes five roles of the president. According to him, the Finnish president, as an institution, has the roles of:

- 1) a symbol of the state of Finland
- 2) an executor of official power
- 3) a conciliator
- 4) a political decision-maker
- 5) a political opinion leader.

Jyränki notes that these five roles overlap to some extent.

Of these aspects, only 2) and 4) are directly based on the Constitution. The president's symbolical values evidently cannot be regulated by any legislative norms, and the same applies to the president's position as an opinion leader. Point 3) lies somewhere between official and unofficial spheres. The president, with a general right to control public administration, may act as a moderator in certain species of disputes. Yet, in practice, the Finnish president lacks the executive management to carry out such a task.

Traditionally, eminent old men were elected presidents. The tradition is masculine, patronizing and includes a strong inclination towards the mood of the "Father of the Nation". This feature, operating both consciously and subconsciously, had cut female candidates out of the election, except for Ms Helvi Sipilä, a Liberal candidate in 1982.

Ms Sipilä got only 2 % support in 1982. By the 1990s, the trend had changed. Female political activity is no more an exception; women demand their share of

⁶ When considering the actual process of interaction, the notion **political face** refers to a candidate as a politician. The concept is discussed in Chapter II. In Chapter IV, devoted to contextual analysis, politicians are characterized by the concept of **political character**. This concept refers to a politician's familiarity and its contents in a larger context than in an interview. Here, the emphasis is on the historical formation of the political face.

political power. This activity was shown both in public discussion and in the election ratings. Up to 1987 men had been the more active party in elections.

In the 1991 parliamentary election, the female electorate was more active (73,2 % of women and 71,0 % of men voted). As a result, women got 77 seats of the 200 available. The proportion of women in the newly elected parliament was one of the highest in the world (see Presidential Election 1994). A strong female boom thus materialized in the 1991 election.

With the new election system favouring popular figures rather than the party elites' choices, the appearance of women on the political scene was a major trend in the 1994 presidential election. The big question was: Can a female candidate break the masculine rule and invade the last remaining bastion of male power?

A new intimacy

These two major trends, the direct vote system and the female challenge, partly reinforced each other. Faced with a direct solution, a citizen was to decide, among other issues, whether gender mattered in choosing the president. The question appeared crucial, because no special electorate was any more to decide on the president's person. Voters were on their own in the issue.

Thus, the person of the president became an intimate choice in a new manner, with no intervening elements. Evidently, this new intimacy involves many elements of choice, not only the gender issue. The candidate's personal qualities, including her/his political character as it manifested itself to a citizen, persuaded – or did not persuade – a citizen to vote.

Gender no doubt is a prominent feature in the candidate's character. Yet candidates stress this feature in different ways. So does the electorate. For some individuals, this issue is the decisive factor in the choice; for others, it is relatively unimportant.

Differences in candidates' strategies and the variation in the electorate's opinion leads to a complicated situation where no candidate alone can decide her/his gender position, including its relative importance. In the Finnish election, the only thing common to every candidate was the need to notice the issue as a major topic in the campaign.

The analysis shows how the challenge was treated and accepted by the candidates. In this respect, the role of the IRs is crucial. Had they left the issue aside in the conversation, the IEs would have found it more difficult to discuss the matter. As it turned out, there was no shortage of such opportunities.

A new intimacy in the election was strongly reinforced by television ads, too. In Finland, the presidential film tradition began as early as the 1930s, when president Svinhufvud appeared as a leading figure in the parliamentary election advertisement film made by his party, the National Coalition Party. After that, most presidential campaigns in Finland have delivered campaign films promoting their candidates (on the history of the Finnish political visual advertisement, see Kanerva 1994a; on the beginning of Finnish political television advertising, see Moring-Himmelstein 1993).

II INTERVIEWS AS POLITICAL CONSENT AND CONTEST

Introductory remarks

This treatise will follow two main lines of analysis. It first shapes the structure of a political interview, its limits, intentions, and mechanisms at a general level. The empirical analysis is based on this section and also tests the ideas presented in it. Methodologically, this chapter utilizes conversation analysis and its conceptions.

However, as the approach in this chapter offers perspectives on questions like **how**, a more substantial approach is required to suggest alternative solutions to questions like **what (next)**. The rhetorical analysis in Chapter III concentrates on the political substances of the interviews, not candidate by candidate but by analyzing certain important themes. The most essential of these are processes of identification from political face to political character and political modalities. In addition, permanent topics of the discussions are analyzed. Consequently, interaction, rhetoric, and substantial issues are discussed, in this order.

Fabrication and surplus capacity

In politics, interactive relations always imply tension between the parties concerned. This tension may concern either the substance of conversation or the way in which the event is organized, or both.

One may get a superficial impression of a complete harmony between the IR and the IE in political debates. In such cases, the parties have united their efforts to face a third party, an invisible but real actor in the game. The third party may be an eminent opponent in the area, only occasionally absent from the debate. Or – and this is theoretically a more interesting case – the nature of the third party may be kept hidden.

In such cases, the debates assume the mode of fabrication (on the original concept, see Goffman, 1981, 84–123)⁷. Goffman typologizes fabrication into benign and exploitative fabrication. This division is congruent with the basic idea behind the conception, which is deception. My approach is somewhat more structural, encompassing the rules of conversation, assumption of these rules, as well as following and experiencing them in practice. Deception, as a conscious act of leading others astray, is not denoted by the term as used here. This should be kept in mind in the following analysis, in which the verb “fabricate” lacks its pejorative tone. Here, the conversation follows paths chosen in advance, even in cases where disputes arise. A basic agreement on the intentions behind the conversation has been made by the parties.

Nevertheless, normally political conversations⁸ include elements of both consent and contest. Both the rules and the issues of discussion have to be agreed on to some minimum extent in order for a plausible event to take place. On the other hand, the ultimate reason for organizing any political conversation lies in a disagreement over a political issue. The following analysis explores political conversations, concentrating on the nature of consent and contest.

First, the conception of fabrication deserves attention. In a sense, fabrication always requires a surplus capacity on the part of fabricators. This capacity may consist of better information or a better command of the situation, or both. While no claims to a general upper-hand position are implied, the very situation of fabrication eventually demands the utilization of temporary opportunities. Whether such opportunities can be created or not depends on one’s command of the situation.

Apparently, the IR’s position is based on an implicit expectation of ruling the event. “Well, perhaps you’d like to tell something to us” is not a strategy that the IR chooses. On the contrary, the IR’s position, compared with that of the IE, is structurally based on leading the conversation. In extreme cases, the IR may not only lead the conversation but also pose questions in a way that clearly hinders the IE from giving any reasonable contribution.

For example:

- IR: How can you be the responsible head of the company when **all** these things happen. hh And you think by some **fake** deal with Quincey Walker (.) four thousand pounds (.) on June twenty-third
 IE: [You have already assume::d] You have already assumed [a fake deal]
 IR: How d’you get of **moral** responsibility
 Aud: Yeah

7 Goffman typologizes fabrication into benign and exploitative fabrication. This division is congruent with the basic idea behind the conception. My approach is somewhat more structural, encompassing the rules of conversation, assumption of these rules, as well as following and experiencing them in practice. Deception, as a conscious act of leading others astray, is not denoted by the term as used here. This should be kept in mind in the following analysis, in which the verb “fabricate” lacks its pejorative tone.

8 Referring to public discussions, televised events. A note on the terminology. According to Ritter and Helweg (1986), televised debates are events where the television camera is covering the event rather than creating it. A television event, in turn, is an event created by and for television. Political interviews evidently belong to the category of television events.

Aud: You can't
 Aud: You can't
 IE: How – you have already assumed (0,6) you've – one thing: the fake deal
 IR: Well forget the fake deal. How do you sign a bit
 IE: [Right]
 IR: of paper, hh that gets rid of past moral
 IE: [Yes]
 IR: responsibility. = Tell me that
 IE: By i- ==
 IR: = Cause we all love to know.⁹
 (1)

Another example is taken from the **PresiTentti** series. At the beginning of each interview the IRs concentrated on imago-related issues. The IE – an MP and a former police officer¹⁰ – was known as a supporter of conservative values. The opening question was:

IR1: You have stated that the man is the head of the family. Quite a one-track and chauvinist stand.
 (2)

After recovering from the initial surprise, the IE explains his views on the relations between the genders. The IRs interrupt the IE's monologue, pointing to the issue at stake in the candidate race:

IR1: But your way of thinking begins with the idea that a woman can't be the head of the country–
 IE: [How does it]...
 IR1: It leads to the conclusion –
 IE: [Oh my goodness], in every interview, on every occasion around provinces I praise our two good candidates, Eeva and Elisabeth, and I have always remembered to mention that a woman may be the head of the country as well as a man.¹¹
 (3)

The IE notices the trap and simply refuses to follow the line suggested by the IRs, who assumed coherence between private and public attitudes in the gender issue. The IR tries to show the lack of coherence in the IE's attitude:

9 The IR is David Frost and the IE is businessman Emil Savundra, who sold his insurance company and left many claims outstanding. The IR leaves no opportunity to the IE to give solid answers. The audience, intervening in the debate, consisted of individuals who had claims outstanding against the company. The transcript is in Heritage and Roth (1995, 46–47).

10 Mr. Sulo Aittoniemi, a candidate of his independent supporters' association.

11 The use of the first names of the candidates is a gesture open to many interpretations. Mostly, they are female politicians who are known and discussed by their first names. Here, the IE denied completely that there is any relation between his traditional division of roles in private spheres and his ideas about equality in public posts.

- IR: But in your opinion a woman is the most suitable homemaker –
 IE: Er it is a natural order that a woman is completely dominating at home, at least when children are at a certain age. There's no escaping this.
 IR: All right. Let's continue at the level of attitudes.
 (4)

The IR announces that the track is closed. He goes on to the next problem:

- IR: Do you approve of extramarital relations?
 IE: Am I...my brother's keeper?
 IR: Do you have –
 IE: I've never committed adultery.
 IR: You have no personal experiences?
 IE: Er...about adultery?
 IR: Yes ... or one or the other. In the family such a thing...adultery –
 IE: No no no.
 (5)

This exchange, too, contains rich material for analysing the limitations to the IE's answers. First, the IE tries to avoid the problem altogether by allowing any behaviour, or, at least, by refusing to condemn extramarital relations. A logical continuation is to inquire into the IE's personal record in the issue. Here, the IE is aware of the continuation before its verbal appearance and begins to answer negatively to the assumed question.

The whole section (3–5) relies on reciprocal intuitive understanding between the IRs and the IE. The IE simply 'reads' the IR's intentions before he has uttered his next question. The IR does not deny these assumptions, which suggests that the IE's intuition was correct. In scientific research, however, such an assumption should not be accepted too eagerly.

However, it is safe to say that while such things as intuition can hardly be confirmed, fluent reactions by the IRs and the IE in the above conversation (5), in its flow of words, reveal the existence of traffic rules in the conversation. Both parties follow and accept a silent code, including the possibility of prefabricated answers to assumed questions.

Yet such a strategy of questioning poses a difficult problem to the IE. While it is permissible to rely on one's intuition and give answers to questions not yet uttered, the IE runs the risk of erring. The IRs always have the opportunity to deny and correct such assumptions. At least, there are plenty of indirect ways to cancel the IE's position.

In the exchange cited above (5), the IE's last contribution was an emotional "no no no", rejecting his participation in adultery in any role, again responding at an intuitive level to the assumed question. The interview went on:

- IR: When was the last time you lied?
 IE: My aim is that I, er, always answer to questions honestly, no matter how difficult they are. But it is clear that when a person tells a lot of jokes, such jokes always have a true side and a false side, there is nobody who doesn't lie

sometimes. But, if one lies on purpose, to cheat another person, that is a different matter. That is certainly something I don't aim at.¹²

IR: And this was an honest answer?

IE: Well, as honest as I can give.

IR: Let's move on to foreign policy. In your opinion, what is the core of the new Russian military doctrine?

(6)

The characterological phase is over and other issues dominate the rest of the interview. The IE is allowed to tell his life story, a short monologue presenting his career from Lapland's forests into a police officer and a MP, but most of what follows concentrates on foreign affairs.

The opening section of the interview lasted for 3 minutes. In the opening section, both the IRs and the IE aimed to show their surplus capacity of fabricating stands favouring one's own party. These strategies can be summarized as follows. The IRs concentrated on characterological issues, or on the political face of the candidate, especially on the IE's gender attitudes and honesty. The IE struggled to show his surplus capacity of accepting most of the IRs' claims concerning his attitudes in isolation, but rejecting their conclusions about their contexts and broader political implications.

The characterological issue focused on the IE's reputation as a down-to-earth man supported by plain folks, the men in the street. The theme of political correctness appeared to be essential. The IE himself brought grist to the IRs' mill:

IR: Do you have international contacts...with other politicians and parties?

IE: No, none whatsoever, except with an ambassador from Denmark, accredited there by Uganda. She pays a visit to me once a year. A very beautiful negro. Up to this time, I didn't know why she visits me, but now there is a suspicion that they are trying to make me play the main role in a biography series on Idi Amin.

IR1: You try –

IR2: Does the role fit you?

IE: Perhaps it does, judging by my look.

IR1: [You try] to crack jokes and skip this issue, that [you don't have]–

IE: But I am –

IR1: ...any international contacts.

IE: I don't. I already said so.

(7)

The topic, living international contacts, was a vital one in the series; every candidate had to face it. Here the IE allows himself to enjoy and play with this constant theme in Finnish presidential campaigns, clearly overstepping the limits of ordinary political correctness. On the other hand, the IE can demonstrate his trademark – joking – and thus satisfy his supporters.

12 The IE follows Goffman's division of fabrication and accepts benign fabrications as normal behaviour, implicitly even favouring a joyous mood of joking. Here, the IE tries to show his surplus capacity by not sticking to a requirement of strictly honest utterances. Again, the IE's intuition may have told him that the opening section, dedicated to personal and characterological features of the candidate, is coming to an end. On the other hand, had the IE showed remarkable slips in this respect, the IRs could have continued with the same intimate topic.

A glimpse at the word "negro" may illustrate the IE's strategy. Such uses of ethnic labels are not among the political vocabularies used in public events. No main candidate could phrase it in a denotative meaning. But in the case of a candidate who claims that he has "fingers and even toes deep in Finnish society" and "take chaps and chicks into my apartment" such uses of words only reflect his natural world view.

To the IE the word "negro", in connection with the mention of Idi Amin, represented humour with which to attack a theme he felt too canonized. In addition, the joke served as a means of obscuring the fact that the candidate actually did not have many international contacts.

This burlesque theme, a beautiful woman inviting the IE to play the role of Idi Amin, includes several levels of political and psycho-political implications. Among them one can hear echoes of the earlier discussion of gender relations.

Now, in the IE's own terms, this theme appears as a by-plot, not as an academic argument about the politically correct conditions of equality. Telling a story is more important than the technical terms it contains. Paralinguistic signs show how the IE relaxes when being able to tell stories instead of participating in conceptual analyses.¹³

Due to its strategic nature as an important move in the conversation, this act is considered here as a move of fabrication, while other such rhetorical figures containing narratives are analyzed mainly in the next chapter.

This vision clearly involves some ambivalence on the part of the IE toward presidency and his candidacy. A ridiculous vision of the massive, grey-bearded candidate acting as Idi Amin may be seen as containing a hint of a suspicious attitude towards the Finnish presidency, not only towards the presidency of Uganda.

On the other hand, the theme of **foreign element** is present as well. Taken literally, the story refers to someone who is known as a blood-thirsty, mad ruler, who should hardly be respected as an "international contact". This is the surface level of the story. To the IE, Idi Amin is also an example of "negroes" and a representative of their civilization.

At another, more politically and historically contextual level, talk about "international contacts" in Finnish politics typically referred to Russian contacts, the mastery of which was vitally important to any major politician¹⁴.

Introducing Idi Amin into this scheme, the IE appeals to hidden, but real anti-Russian sentiments in the audience, for whom the very term "contacts" in Finnish political jargon always strongly referred to Finno-Russian relations.

13 However, I largely leave paralinguistic features out of the analyses, because such considerations require information not available when reading the study. In addition, in many cases paralinguistic signs may have several interpretations that are incompatible with each other. The first observation is the more important one: a reader has no access to the video recordings and should not therefore be invited to just take the author's word for it. However, in a few cases such references are clearly necessary in the analysis. Therefore, the rejection is not systematic; what is important is that interpretations should not be stretched too much in that direction due to the reasons mentioned above.

14 The theme appears many times in the interview series. See e.g. citation (30), where the IE laments the rumours about his bad relations with the east.

Ridiculing the theme of “contacts” and playing with people’s subconscious fear¹⁵ of foreign elements, the IE managed to get clear his position to his own potential audience even when actual questions did not include such areas. This was the IE’s main contribution in fabricating the interview.

Fabricating means “position building” in terms of different themes, such as character building and agenda building. Fabricating can be considered a term describing aims to manage in the competition of the conversation. On the other hand, fabrication always relies on a certain consent on the basic rules of interaction. The balance between these two aims will be sought and reached case by case.

A prerequisite of fabrication is one person’s surplus capacity over another. The topics of conversation, open to dispute in themselves, tend to belong to the IRs rather than the IEs, even if the latter may challenge this arrangement at any time. Contextual information, like actors’ motives and histories, are bound to fall within the IE’s capacities due to the simple fact that they are part of the IEs’ everyday activities. While this may serve as a rule of thumb, each ongoing political interview will create its own logic of rules.

A surplus capacity is subjective and experienced. Fabrication is the process of its presentation and realization in interaction. Surplus capacity should not be interpreted as a personal quality, varying from person to person. Instead, the notion displays a common trend to assume that one’s own resources are greater than those of others. Fabrication is the concrete process realizing this inclination in interactive situations.

Two figures, cited from Krippendorff (1994, 82), may clarify this:

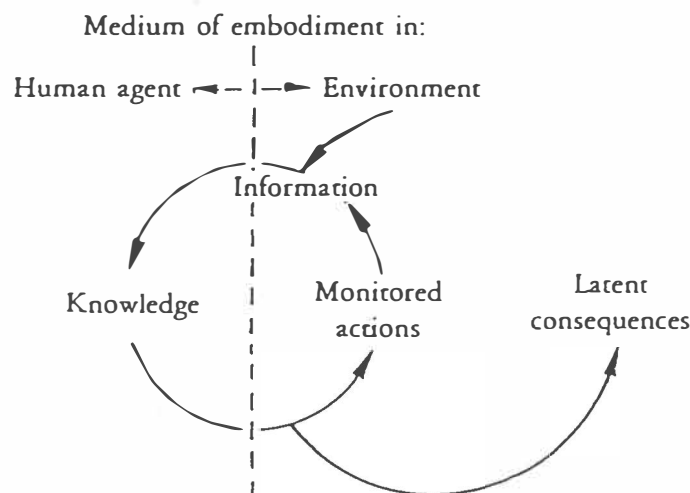


FIGURE 1

15 Interestingly, two of the eleven candidates are professionals in the area of psychology: Claes Andersson, a psychiatrist, and Pertti Virtanen, a therapist. Both of them utilized their background in the interview, Andersson in discussing the Russian politician Vladimir Zhirinovski and Virtanen in criticizing the IRs’ themes of seriousness and humour. The latter incident can be found in citation (27).

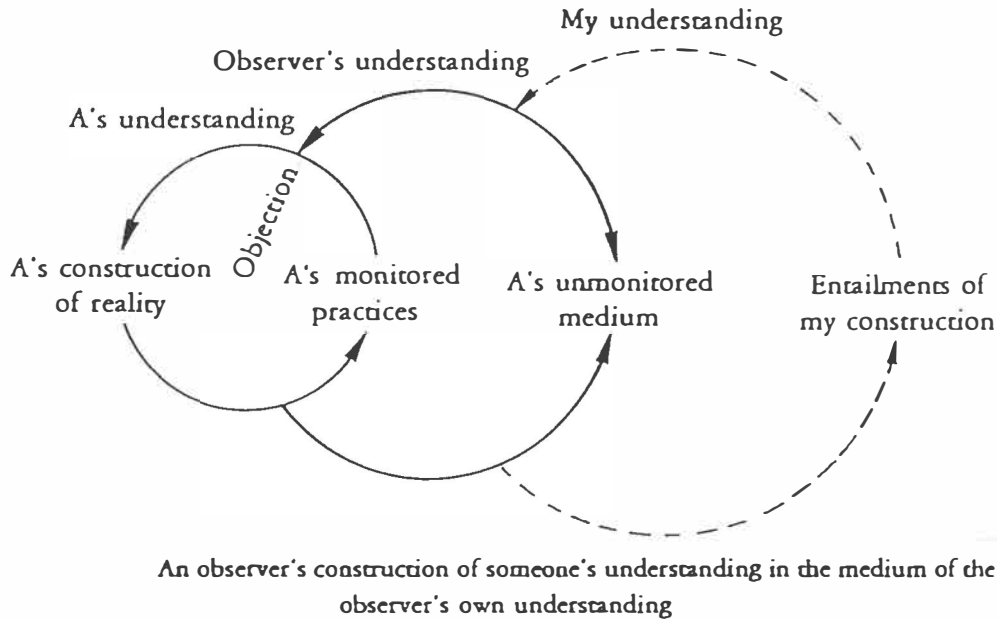


FIGURE 2

Krippendorff's analysis emphasizes the reflexivity of interaction. He begins with Giddens' scheme of a knowledgeable agent. Agents are continuously monitoring what they do, turning certain consequences of their actions into information which in turn challenges and revises the knowledge guiding future activities.

Krippendorff argues that the scheme leaves the observer himself outside the picture. The term 'latent consequences' refers to an area unknown to the subjects of research. Krippendorff simply adds the observer's conditions to Figure 1, assuming that the same structure coordinates every participant's activities. The researcher's understanding, too, relies on the construction of social subjects, their monitored actions, the environment, etc.

This is a crucial step for two reasons. First, the revision brings the observers back to the same reality that their subjects of observation inhabit. This revision elegantly solves several epistemological problems arising from observers' assumed asymmetrical position in the research situation.¹⁶ The "ontological landscape", if such a word is allowed here, appears to be the same for everybody, irrespective of their positions.

Second, and more important from the viewpoint of this study, the scheme can be interpreted in isolation from its original reference to the researchers' situation. Any interactive situation includes the same surplus capacity, here called "my understanding". "My understanding" is the vehicle that always brings about the same result: commanding the situation in a manner that relativizes others' position and makes them elements of "my understanding".

16 No doubt this move also creates a number of new problems. While giving a firm ground to observers, eventually the same ontological ground for everybody, the scheme highlights the problems of what actually can be expected from scientific research in the area of communication. In my opinion, the scheme would suggest an endless circle of monitoring contexts. The problem, however, is too complicated to be handled in detail here.

Figure 2. shows graphically the most important feature of “my understanding”, depicting its circle as the biggest. “My understanding” is the largest area, to which all other areas are related. This intuitively clear idea turns out to be difficult to explicate in words.

However, one essential remark should be made. “Understanding” may be compared with “comprehension” to clarify its nature as far as knowledge is concerned. Comprehension is always of something, invoking comparisons of the subject. For example, a correct interpretation of the text may arouse dispute, but there are always reasonable grounds on which to make different arguments on the subject. Understanding, by contrast, does not contain the element of mutual argumentation on the subject of understanding. Understanding simply is. “I understand (you)” does not mean comprehending what somebody had in mind when saying something. This assertion may also indicate other aims than publicly expressed in the above phrase.

Essentially, it indicates one’s internal reflexive discussion of a topic in and through one’s understanding. Uttering it aloud means that one has reached a conclusion or at least a readiness to proceed with the topic in the conversation. “I understand (you)” presents an independent standpoint in interaction. It is the basic way of uttering one’s surplus capacity aloud.

Understanding does not mean comprehension of the situation, its facts, etc. Nor does it imply any empathic relation to the issues or persons involved. In practice, both kind of elements – cognitive and emotional – are engaged in the utterance. Yet the phrase is basically an expression of an independent standpoint, a sign of the existence of one’s surplus capacity.

This problem will be treated later in the empirical analyses of the **PresiTentti** series in the context of political practice.¹⁷

In a political interview, fabricating one’s own stance requires a basic consent on the rules of interaction, but at the same time it is a device of competition. Interviews are asymmetrical competitions due to the different tasks and aims of IRs and IEs, but the asymmetry does not exist as regards deciding on the topics and especially views on them. In this respect, both IRs and IEs are faced with the same problem.

The element of competition may be overemphasized to the extent that the basic rules of conversation are not respected. The nature of the rules will be discussed in the next sections in detail. An example of an IE breaking these rules is given in the following. Here the IE insists on talking directly to spectators, largely bypassing the IRs’ questions.

IR: You are a communist, aren’t you?
 IE: [May I] read an old social democrat’s...
 IR: [Answer the question] –
 IR: Are you a communist or not?

17 One immediately notices that while “understanding” as a concept is at the core of the surplus capacity, practical utterances may be formulated in several other ways as well. In a political interview, “understanding” also often takes on an ironic tone. For examples, see citations (27–29).

- IE: I'll answer after reading this text of an old social democrat, in which the 83-year-old...social democrat –
- IR: [You can] answer without reading. Are you a communist or not?
- IE: ...writes in this way... Is this so civilized a conversation that I can also have my turn?
- IR: Please.
- IR: But we hope you don't read the whole paper. This is a ten-minute conversation.
- IE: [This is]...This will take half a minute. (begins reading)
// ...Of the candidates Pekka Tiainen is clearly the best socialist and democrat...
- IR: [Alright], thank you. This is not a lecture series, Pekka Tiainen.
- IE: ... thus a social democrat in the best meaning of the word and an insistent defender of democracy ...
- IR: [Who is] the communist leader you admire?
- IE: He says that one should not mix the words democrat and...
- IR: Now you don't follow the rules of our game.
- IE: ... communist. They are the same thing in the spirit of the old workers' movement.
(8)

With no clear turns and mostly two, sometimes three persons talking over each other, the event produces a lot of unintended noise. The IRs try to interrupt the IE, who stares at the camera and keeps on reading his evidence to the audience. This excerpt shows what happens if somebody refuses to follow the basic rules of conversation and concentrates solely on the competitive element. The IR who points out the breaking of the rules cannot help laughing.

Most of the interview went on in this way, the IE staring at the audience, reading evidence and giving statements, while the IRs were trying to invite the IE to an interactive process. The interview ended as follows:

- IR: Unfortunately, the time has run out. Employment was left largely unconsidered due to these long lessons and other tricks. Thank you and good–
- IR: Thank you.
- IE: As regards employment, we shall return...
(the voice-track is faded out first, then the visual connection to the news studio is cut off)
(9)

The IE was left to explain his views in a void, because he did not recognize the IRs' right to direct the conversation, a right of basic nature in such events. It is unlikely that the IE furthered his cause in this interview. One cannot fabricate in isolation.

Face-work as a basis of the interaction traffic rules

"... the proper study of interaction is not the individual and his psychology, but rather the syntactical relations among the acts of different persons mutually present to one another" (Goffman 1972, 2). The basic unit is not an individual, or even a number of individuals, but rather rules according to which conversation functions as a process of spreading meaningful suggestions for future actions.¹⁸ However, the approach does not mean the elimination of individuals: "None the less, since it is individual actors who contribute the ultimate materials, it will always be reasonable to ask what general properties they must have if this sort of contribution is to be expected of them" (ibid.).

The term 'traffic rules' is illuminating. The notion refers both to the contractual nature of conversation and the motion the process presupposes. Traffic rules, open to changes but valid once accepted¹⁹, regulate only some basic aspects of movement. The aims, destinations, styles and vehicles remain matters of contingent decisions. Openness in these two senses is linked with rigidity when experimenting with limits. That rules are valid implies the presence of a correcting element. Validity cannot be assumed without the possibility to control practical breaks of rules.

In political interviews²⁰, these two elements largely compete with each other. While relying on the backbone of rules, the process also suggests and seeks new interpretations both in the topics of conversation and in the following of the rules. The rules, mainly silent and even external to any verbalization, remain a solid ground for interaction, to be discussed only in the case of breaking the rules. Motion, consisting of the flow of conversation, at least potentially challenges the basic structure every time its practical validity is tested. Essentially, politics is to be understood as an activity in conflict situations.²¹

Human actors carry the rules as well as gestures, such as fabrication, in their activities. Regarded as personal activities, carried out by human beings, face and face work are the key concepts. The following analysis discusses this approach, keeping the research material – political interviews – in the background.

18 Politics, since Aristotle, has been defined as an activity oriented to the future.

19 This implies no suggestion of any contractual theory à la Rousseau or Rawls. Rather, it only states that some mode of acceptance of the situation is required. Mostly, such an acceptance is silent and is realized as a relatively fluent flow of conversation. In addition, while accepting a certain structure for a political conversation, the IE often tries to test whether the rules can be stretched to his or her advantage.

20 The same applies, of course, to all public conversations. That they are public exactly means their regulation according to certain rules. Publicity here means that the event is televised.

21 Of course, this definition, or rather, element of definition, is openly normative. It stresses the difference between such terms as **policy** and **politics**, largely identifying the former with administrative activities, i.e. activities to maintain structures in society. The latter, politics, in turn refers to an aspect in human relations, namely, to its conflict aspect. The conflict results from the primary lack of resources, or rarity, to use Sartre's term.

The familiarity of faces

A distinctive feature of politics is the familiarity of its actors to citizens. This familiarity, however, is not of the same quality as that of the girl next door. The familiar face of a politician is born and continuously exercised on television. A mediated familiarity of politicians' faces create the scene of modern²² politics. This electronic scene is the main stage of politics in modern times.

The familiarity of faces has several consequences in the area of politics. First, each politician gradually creates a face of his/her own. This process is slow and while it may include radical changes and leaps, leading to reshaping of the face, cohesion usually prevails in the process to the extent that faces are even developed into trademarks. The interpretation of the nature of such trademarks varies, but familiarity is the fundamental condition of their interpretation.

Conceptually, familiarity resembles understanding. In the same way, both of these concepts are relations between an actor and his activity. They are isolated in a sense that they cannot be completely ruled or explained externally. However, these familiarities should have a common ground in order to become politicized.

If these experiences of a politician's face have only a marginal similarity with each other, no interactive familiarity can be expected. Take the slogan "Kohl bleibt Kohl"²³. Suggesting coherence and stability in the actor's behaviour, it by no means supposes any consensus on the value of these virtues. On the contrary, the joke includes two seemingly contradictory claims in the same phrase.

Mocking its object, it hints at unintelligible politics on his part. In German, the word 'Kohl' not only refers to a familiar vegetable but also involves other, pejorative connotations. It implies that something is obsolete, or nonsensical, or will not improve things. On the other hand, the joke also assumes some preunderstanding from its consumers concerning Kohl's political face.

If not assuming the first, pejorative interpretation of the phrase, one alternatively may emphasize the solid and permanent nature of Kohl's political face. In this respect, the interpretation may be neutral, or even positive, contrary to the first case.

This area of preunderstanding, diffuse and difficult to define, is the common area of familiarity in society. It is a kind of *Gestalt* whose exact boundaries can be drawn only at the cost of lost agreement on the qualities of the face. Naturally, argumentative processes may also narrow the gaps of understanding, but most often argumentation tends to increase the number of nuances, create new paths of interpretation and thus broaden the variety of interpretations.

22 'Modern' is here synonymous with 'the age of television'. However, this use of the term does not imply wider arguments concerning e.g. the uses of concepts like 'postmodern'.

23 "Kohl remains a cabbage (Kohl)". This play on words asserts familiarity without any consent on its political and substantial value or even nature.

In sum, politicians' faces gradually grow familiar to spectators.²⁴ No politician is entitled to demand a fresh start, because, paradoxically, a politician by definition must be familiar to spectators. From time to time new stars are born, but the honeymoon is bound to be short. The basis of familiarity has soon been established. Only a new role may cause new evaluations, especially if the rules of reaching important posts are novel as well. This problem will be discussed in detail in Chapter III.

In this respect, the previous Finnish presidential campaign was a unique exception in the history of the country. As in the new republics of Eastern Europe, the election process lifted up new candidates and rejected well-known politicians. The process and its conditions were explained shortly in Chapter I. Suffice it to say here that new rules of the game met a strong need of new faces aspiring to the high office of president.

Maintaining one's face and regulating distance

In a political interview, all participants normally 'know each other', i.e. are familiar with each other's face, at least at the level of political faces, as spectators. This familiarity creates a double surface of rules. Basically, the rules of face-work as such are valid. Practically, the IRs and the IEs are known to have tendencies to stretch these rules in this or that way. **Maintaining face** refers to processes in which the IRs and the IEs repeat such expectation values.

Maintaining face may be based on active strategies, like fabricating the interview in an aggressive manner (see citation (8)). It may also express defensive devices on the brink of collapse (for a detailed analysis of such a conversation, see Kanerva 1994b (Persuasion vs. keeping one's word. A case study)). Coherence, experienced by participants and spectators, is a key value to be kept alive by a political actor.

"One's own face and the face of others are constructs of the same order" (Goffman 1972, 6). Thus, individuals never maintain their faces in isolation but in interaction processes: maintaining face is a pursuit common to all concerned. To an extent, this pursuit is a necessary precondition for maintaining **anybody's** face in the conversation. Revoking one's face completely will damage the other party's face. Therefore, the common pursuit of maintaining minimum rules for the participants' sake characterizes conversations.

Goffman notices how future orientations are crucial in assuming a strategy to maintain one's face. If it is probable that one's partners in the conversation will be met constantly, the profile of maintaining face would be lower than in cases

24 After some hesitation, I omitted the term 'citizen' and decided to use 'spectator' instead. It would manifest a sort of Hegelian arrogance to suggest that while every citizen is a spectator, every spectator is by no means a citizen. The dark side of the normative treatment of the concept 'citizen' is that it easily leads to cheap politicking in the name of discipline, an undertaking admired neither by politicians nor scientists. The straw-man heroes, 'citizens', introduced by self-appointed nominators, may serve politicians' aims in a justified manner. But a scientist's role is much more problematic here.

where no future contacts are in sight (Goffman 1972, 7). Consequently, IRs and IEs who are likely to meet from time to time risk more in breaking basic traffic rules.

Familiarization on the part of spectators, and regulation of distance on the part of the politician, serve as strategies of maintaining face in the long run. Maintaining face in a televised situation, fabricating conversations, defending and attacking positions, persuading participants, rejecting facts, etc. constitute a long process, in which the IEs (and the IRs too) regulate the distance between themselves and others.

- IR2: Well, Elisabeth Rehn, according a fresh Gallup your support is still slightly increasing. Does it help ... you smile beautifully also at the moment ... does open public flirting help you in politics?
- IE: Hardly any flirting helps, but open...openness certainly helps. I've always been able to adhere to it in my life and there is no reason to stop doing that.
- IR2: But you have such a glint in your eye all the time...
- IE: Is it a negative issue?
- IR2: No. But are you credible in your own opinion?
- (10)

The opening section in the interview of Elisabeth Rehn suddenly penetrates deep into the conceptions of familiarity and regulation of distance. The first question addresses a well-known quality of the IE's behaviour, her smile. Smiling is identified and defined as a strategy of regulating distance, as the IE's appeal to voters to come closer.

The IE, not incidentally, rejects this interpretation and restructures the question as a quest of openness. She admits this and explains openness as a permanent quality of her face. Given an opportunity to explain her distinctive quality of face, the IE goes on:

- IE: That one is joyful ... and sees the positive issues in life, that can hardly take away one's credibility. I (laughing) for my part believe that now if ever we need some positive attitude towards life. This doesn't mean that I'd danced on rosy ... clouds all my life.
- IR2: Does the smile hide a woman greedy for power?
- (11)

Now the strategy of the IRs is revealed. They take two distinctive features held more or less common to all politicians, smiling and over-ambitiousness, and ask whether the IE can identify herself with these archetypical qualities of politicians.

Adopting this line of interrogation, the IRs hit a point where several crucial themes connect. Intimacy, the gender issue, familiarity and regulation of distance are strongly present in the exchange. The choice most probably was a conscious one, based on consideration of the context of the campaign and the IE's role in it as a female challenger, surprisingly with some possibilities to reach the office.

The issue of typical conventions connected with a female politician's face rules the following conversation. The IRs stick to the archetypical theme of ambition, trying to profile the IE's face as a greedy woman. The IE, minister of defense, repeats her strategy of restructuring the questions in her favour.

- IE: Er, this is, er, an interesting issue, too – if...ff a man strives for the highest office in the country, for example, he is honourable in all respects and and it is all right but a woman who aims at the office, she is certainly a bit greedy.
- IR1: Are you?
- IE: Er, I would like to influence in a positive way and this is actually...in my opinion a good quality
- IR2: [That] one is greedy for power?
- IE: No, but that one wants to influence things in a positive manner, in the way one believes in them
- IR2: [But] are you greedy for power?
- IE: I am ambitious, which ... in Finland is considered a negative matter, elsewhere it is, by the way, quite a good quality.
- (12)

The IE has to work all the time to maintain her face, accused of being greedy by the two male interrogators. Maintaining face requires regulation of distance in intimate areas, regulating one's distance to some qualities claimed to be typical of politicians.

Character can be defined as consisting of the history of one's political face. In a politician's character, innumerable processes of maintaining face have crystallized in familiar and typical gestures and qualities. Consequently, maintaining face is gradually transformed into character. This relationship will be discussed at length later. Here the stress is on the immediate process of maintaining face.

The IE responds to the IR's claims by stating that there is a general difference in attitudes towards men and women over the issue of ambition. Men's ambition is accepted, while women's is not. Both genders are equal in their political pursuits, only the rules of accepting the pursuits differ, disfavoured women. In other words, the limits of familiarity accept openly ambitious men but reject similarly ambitious women.

This argument can be analyzed at three levels. First, it is the IE's strategy of maintaining her face in a difficult situation²⁵. Second, the IE's way of rejecting the question also contains the indirect suggestion that the IRs are in favour of the conditions advantageous to men and unfair to women. Third, the IE's argument is a contribution to grasping the conditions prevailing in society, a contextual claim with the suggestion that the state of affairs in the interview only reflects a larger reality.

The IRs' continuation may be interpreted as giving an indirect answer to the contextual argument:

- IR: Well, it (the quality of ambition) is certainly appreciated here too.
- IE: H'm...
- (13)

25 The situation is difficult for the IE, because she is openly accused of carrying a less favoured quality. Paralinguistic gestures, also present in the transcription in the form of incomplete words and "er" utterances manifest anxiety and discomfort in the situation, and yet the IE advances her restructuring of the qualities of face in a consistent manner. Perhaps it should be noted that while the IE is completely fluent in Finnish, Swedish is her first language.

The IR's conciliatory gesture can be interpreted as a move to end **all** discussion about the contextual conditions of gender differences. The IRs were to concentrate on the IE herself, on her face, not on large arguments about gender differences in Finnish society. In addition, the assurance that ambition is valued "here" as well is a response to the IE's second implication, according to which the IRs favour asymmetric gender rules. Indirectly the IR rejects the suggestion, assuring equal treatment in another issue, that of ambition.

The third wave of questions focuses on the IE's self-understanding²⁶.

IR1: You certainly have heard a question like ... are you a woman or a human being?

IE: **Quite certainly** I am a human being ... I happen to be a female human being.

IR1: They say that this is the way how feminists measure femininity. How do you position yourself in the scale?

IE: [I wouldn't] like to measure people in **any** way, women or men ... by any scale. A human being has to be able to influence another human being directly, without erecting any scale.

(14)

The occasionally faint voice of the IR makes the opening phrase **You certainly have heard a question like** almost inaudible, which gives his question an even more straightforward tone. Most spectators probably understood the question in the mode: "Are you a woman or a human being?" But even if the spectators had heard the introductory part of the question as well, most of them would still not have been able to identify the question correctly as a contribution to a feminist definition of roles.

When linked with the preceding flow of conversation around the questions about the IE's smile and ambition, the "shortened" form of the IR's question ("Are you ...") sounds like a brutal intervention in the IE's attempts to maintain face. The IRs, too, are to regulate their distance to the IE's face in a way that leaves enough room for the IE to operate. Clearly, while it is completely correct to challenge the IE in words, **some** exit should be left open. Normally, topics of conversation do not include implications which, if interpreted negatively, can be understood as questioning one's humanity.

When the IR continues to pose the question explicitly in the feminist context, the IE makes use of the negative impression created by the opening. She rejects **all** scales, replacing them with traditional humanist views. Different views of a human being will be analyzed in Chapter V. Here another issue demands attention.

It is the changes in the IE's treatment of the gender issue. In the preceding citation (12) the IE states that there are different rules for men's and women's

26 The translation of the following section is unlikely to repeat all the nuances of the conversation. This is due to the fact that Finnish lacks some of the characteristics of English. Finnish makes no sex differentiation in third person and other pronouns: the Finnish "hän" is completely neutral and covers both "she" and "he". In addition, Finnish has no articles either. The result is a neutrality of expressions in relation to gender; without additional references, like names or terms like "man" and "woman", Finnish texts do not distinguish between the sexes.

ambition. In the following citation the IE denies that **any** scale exists for her in considering differences between the genders. She refuses to 'erect' any scale. While a fully understandable formulation in Finnish, 'erecting a scale' is not a standard expression when referring to setting standards for estimating things.

At one moment, maintaining one's face makes the IE emphasize differences in attitudes towards men and women. At another moment, when the situation has changed, the IE embraces a traditional humanistic ideology, stressing that she refuses to make any gender differentiations. The shift in emphasis might, among other things, be due to a change in the evaluation of the situation. The IE notices that after the IR's question she can follow lines evidently appealing to the attitudes of the majority of spectators, ridiculing the IR's 'feminist dogmatism'.

The turn also means trifling with gender positions in practice. In the IE's opinion, it is her privilege to treat gender issues, especially when women's position is under discussion. Challenging this right, the IR risks dropping out of face in an unfamiliar position of defending the feminist critique against a leading female candidate. The IE may have aimed to contribute to the IR's dropping out of face by assuming a mainstream attitude in contrast to IR's 'questionable' and more extremist view.

In fact, the IR assumes a wrong face. Instead of dropping out of face, the IR shows a wrong face after the IE's correction of her position. Here, one has to appeal to auditory elements transcending textual analysis. The video recording of the interview shows how the IR begins his question with a less clear manner, and how the IE assumes a new frame in her utterances, measured by intonation and paralinguistic gestures.

In general, it can be argued that leading the IR to a wrong face is a more valuable objective than keeping a logical line in argumentation. In a limited time, logical considerations, not to mention correcting them, are hardly available to the IRs, and this makes it possible for the IEs to assume positions that may even be incompatible with each other. However, it is likely that such a strategy succeeds only if the discussion of the topic is already getting to an end.

Before asking the question, the IR tried to avoid a wrong face with his introduction "You certainly have heard a question like ...". The precautionary measure, necessary in connection with such a question, failed for two reasons. The primary one is that its message was too obscure to delineate the IR's position clearly enough. The correction in the next question came too late to save the situation. In addition, the faintness of his utterance voice misled part of the audience. The IR indirectly admits dropping to a wrong face when he immediately changes the topic of the conversation:

IR: All right. Let's go on measuring your attitudes. Are you ... a liberal?
(15)

Questions: promoting the interview

In a political interview, as in interviews in general, questioning is the method on which the interaction is based. Obviously, the role of the IRs is crucial in questioning. It is a commonplace to say that IRs must maintain a neutral position

in interviews (Heritage and Greatbatch, 1991). Questioning is a main resource maintaining the stance of neutrality.

While neutrality ideally is followed, even a short glance at the concept would suggest several possible ways to grasp the idea. Neutrality, due to the IR's task of clearing stances, for example, cannot mean a passive *laissez-faire* attitude. The IR's method of questioning relies on their active involvement in the issue and situation. Where active involvement is demanded, neutrality becomes problematic. This problem will be discussed after examining the modes of IR's activities.

The neutrality assumption is typical of the approach utilizing conversation analysis, in which politics is largely relegated to the IEs, the 'real' politicians, and professional action to the IRs, journalists. The assumption described in this formulation may be an over-simplified straw man. However, its decisive weakness is that it analyzes the IR's role in isolation.

The situation, a political interview, and its nature as a contest and consent, a thoroughly political event, strongly limits and directs other pursuits, such as neutrality. "Not ... men and their moments. Rather moments and their men" (Goffmann 1972, 3). Consequently, pursuit of neutrality should be considered in the context of this political situation, in which a professional demand of neutralism is an important element but only one aspect in a complex situation.

Questioning, as the vehicle of advancing the interview process, can be executed in several ways. The following phase concentrates on the modes of questioning as such, mainly regardless of the IE's contribution. Thereafter, the IE will get his or her turn to answer. How this is realized is of vital importance in the interview. The nature of the turn-transfer is the core of the interview, and the IR-IE turn-transfer mechanism will be explored in detail at the end.

The grammatical nucleus

Questioning includes many devices, of which simple questions, based on grammatical rules, form a part. Grammatical categories are considered useful or even necessary, because especially interrogative sentence types are seen as the "prima facie basis for determining whether an utterance accomplishes questioning" (Heritage and Roth, 1995).

Simple questions are an essential device for an IR. **Yes/no-**, **either/or-** (alternatives in general), and **wh-questions** (why, where, who, when, which, how) provide a solid basis for asking questions. However, the problem is not whether the IR's utterance is a question in a technical or grammatical sense. According to an essential rule, the IE is nevertheless forced to give **some** contribution, in the form of a reply, to the IR's utterance. In this respect, the IR's every utterance is, broadly speaking, a question to be answered.

From the viewpoint of political analysis, each mode of questions and less direct utterances creates conditions, limitations and suggestions typical of just the mode in question. Their substance (the topics of conversation, limitations to the topics) and processes (the tone of discussion, turn transfer mechanisms) are

dependent on the IR's questions and less direct contributions, which are open moves in the conversation and its phases.

Yes/no questions often try to establish the IE's basic principles. It is most natural that such questions are asked in political interviews, where a political comparison between candidates is immediately available, i.e. in situations where at least two candidates are present. But many times this model precedes the IR's actual point. The following example illustrates this process:

- IR: Do you believe in miracles, Toimi Kankaanniemi?
 IE: Yes I do.
 IR: What sort of?
 IE: Well, there are many kinds of miracles.
 IR: Well, give us an example.
 IE: Er... I can't for the moment give any example, but for instance the Bible tells us a lot about miracles in which I believe.
 IR: But are there miracles of the sort – your support is around one percent, if you were elected president, wouldn't it be a miracle?
 (16)

Clearly this opening of the interview with a yes/no question concerning miracles only fabricates the implication, the indirect claim that it is impossible for the IE to be elected president. In the question, a simple opening also nicely links the IRs' several themes together. In addition to this implication, the opening also serves to mix religious and political jargon, thus emphasizing the IE's religious face. Belief in miracles can hardly be considered a basic issue in politics; in religion the problem is much more central.

Such simple questions are always connected with a deeper, often silent context, which serves as a criterion for drawing conclusions about the proper meaning of the question. **WH**-questions (who, what, which, when, where, why, how) also belong to this category. The next example is again taken from an opening of an interview, adding a section after one minute's conversation.

- IR2: Martti Ahtisaari, could you give a list of your literary production.
 IE: Very well, in the 60s I contributed to a compendium which was produced at the University of Turku.
 IR2: It seems your production is quite limited. Can't you, er, write or are you simply indolent?
 IE: Well, actually, I have never puss...²⁷ pursued a literary career, I have written a few good poems during the years – and a well-known author considered them good enough. Perhaps I should publish them.

—

- IR1: Well let's go on with the same theme, now concerning your campaign. How many speeches have you written yourself?

27 The translation cannot reproduce the Freudian aspect of the answer. The IE first begins to tell how he actually was never able to... replacing the first syllable, suggesting a lacking competence (*pys-*), with a lacking interest (*pyr-kinyt*). The respective Finnish verbs are *pystyä* (to be able to) and *pyrkiä* (to aim at). No doubt this interruption and the difference of one letter may be given other interpretations, or be left aside as an occasional slip of the tongue.

- IE: Er, every speech delivered after preparation... I always finish them myself.
 IR1: So, how many speeches have you written yourself from beginning to end?
 IE: Er... around ninety percent...if considered that I'm delivering ninety speeches ninety percent, well, er, with stick words.
 IR1: And who writes the basis?
 IE: Well ... it –
 IR1: Lasse Lehtinen?
 IE: No
 IR1: Erkki Tuomioja?
 IE: No
 IR1: Risto Kuisma?
 IE: No, no. I believe Risto Kuisma is somewhat similar to me in that he is rather an operative person and I don't believe he has time enough, er, to produce texts. Backgrounds are surely written by a big crowd of people so that before the speech is final I... er... have a meeting with these people. Thereafter we go through at least two or three versions... it depends a little on time.
 IR1: [All] right.
 IR2: Good. Now let's go into your person. What is the state of your health?
 (17)

The citation is long and rich in wh-questions. Taken together, as a complex of questions, they all aim in a certain direction, suggesting that the IE has a limited capacity to produce literary texts. This line of interview is rooted in at least two sources. According to the tradition, the Finnish presidents, even when not men of letters, had nevertheless mostly passed the Ph.D degree, while this IE had not even an M.A. degree. In addition, most of candidates had published one or more books during the last few years.

These examples show how simple questions only serve as material for other, more essential purposes in a political interview. As such, these questions are mostly innocent and correct. Only when chained, they show their implications. If cunningly presented, this line of questioning never directly suggests conclusions. A gradually emerging topic speaks for itself.

In the **PresiTentti** interview series, a comparison of the opening sections shows how the IRs confront the IEs, one by one, with series of simple questions indirectly addressing a presumed weakness in their political face. A characteristic weak feature in each candidate's face is posited by this line of implication.

The result is a notable list of qualities: greedy (Elisabeth Rehn), chauvinist (Sulo Aittoniemi), narrow-minded (Toimi Kankaanniemi), megalomaniac (Pekka Tiainen), fanatic (Keijo Korhonen), a fake bohemian (Claes Andersson), fastidious (Eeva Kuuskoski), clown (Pertti Virtanen), narcissist (Raimo Ilaskivi), intriguer (Paavo Väyrynen), illiterate (Martti Ahtisaari). Most of these qualities are literally present in the conversation as more or less direct propositions about the candidate's face. Even when the term itself (fastidious, illiterate) is not uttered aloud, the implication does not leave much doubt about what the IRs' are aiming at.

The above list of qualities is complete. Each candidate has his or her own quality, around which the conversation is maintained in the opening section dedicated to personal issues. Other qualities, too, are discussed in certain interviews, but an overwhelming majority of the channel time is devoted to these qualities. The process of character building will be discussed later, in Chapter IV, but here the question of neutrality suggests itself. Does this list of candidates'

qualities represent a neutral position on the part of the IRs? Most probably not, for evident reasons. And still, when equal rudeness towards candidates dominates the interviews, the IEs are treated in an equal way. In this sense, the IRs' attitude really is neutral but, as mentioned, there are many ways to realize the notion of neutrality.

The process of implication

In the examples analyzed above, simple questions directed conversation to areas which reveal a new vision or topic in and for the conversation. This process, leading a conversation to conclusions not presented openly in utterances, is known as the use of implicative relations (Wilson 1990, 25).

The following example centers on the IE's physical condition. The IE, a man weighing around 130 kilograms, was asked a few questions about his health condition. The IE found his condition good, after which the following discussion ensued:

- IR2: Citizens have really expressed their concern about your condition. Is that concern justified or not?
 IE: Now, as I said, it would be very strange if these fifteen thousand kilometres by bus wouldn't give some kind of impression to citizens.
 IR1: Will your feet hold?
 IE: Yes, and I'd suppose that a president, after all, needs more, er, his head than his feet.
 (18)

This is a plain example of implication techniques. Using the phrase **after all** the IE suggests that there is something wrong in the IRs' approach to the issue under discussion. The last statement deserves closer examination. After answering to several questions concerning his health, the IE realizes that it is time to close this topic for both subjective and objective reasons.

Time pressure clearly shows that enough has been spent on the issue and the improvised manner in which IR1 throws his additional question about the IE's feet reveal that the IRs had no further prefabricated questions on the topic. Consequently, the IE's opportunity to change the topic had come. Uttering "Yes, and ..." the IE suddenly closes the topic and relativizes it, giving it a context that accords with his interests.

After all serves several purposes for the IE. First, it recognizes the partial legitimacy of the corporeal topic. The corporeal theme, familiar to the IE's political face, was still open, but it needed to be closed. Second, the ending of the topic is carried out by using corporeal concepts, comparing the use of the members of the body. Formally, the discussion is still directed to the corporeal theme, but it is evident that a new level has been reached, a level which minimizes the significance of the preceding treatment of the topic. Besides, **after all** is a persuading gesture to the third party – the spectators – leaving conclusions to them. Given with reservations and in the conditional mode, it also directs the spectators' attention to the role of the IRs, indirectly criticizing it.

The implication that the IE gives makes the IRs immediately “change their footing” (Goffman 1981, 128). The frame of the corporeal topic was broken; thus, another approach was to be adopted. In this respect, the IE’s implication appeared to take effect immediately, and a turn of talk occurs. Yet the IRs continue the main theme around the IE’s body from another viewpoint, by discussing his daily manners.

- IR2: Now, according to your own words, you are an indolent man. Would you remain indolent as president also?
- IE: Well, I mean that when I come home I immediately change into, er, a flannel shirt and velvet trousers and sit down on a comfortable chair. And hope that my wife has prepared some tea, and I eat the pasties given by my cousin that I brought with me from Hämeenlinna, and enjoy a good book and good music.
- IR1: Very well. But ... er... besides these home comforts, what other personal qualities are your trumps for the presidential office?
- IE: Well, I got a letter today fro... that was delivered to my campaign office after the event at the Hyrylä Cottage, and that letter made me feel very good, as the person said that she²⁸ found me ... honest and just, and capable, and many people also stated that they are satisfied that I’ve taken part, thanks to this international experience.
- (19)

After the earlier reframing, from a strategic point of view it is somewhat astonishing that the IE interprets the next question, here the first in the citation (19), in a concrete way, referring to his personal manner rather than to his manner as a ruler. The IR’s question is ambiguous, leaving both interpretations open for the IE. The path is open for the IE to choose some of the topics available, which, roughly speaking, are either intimate or official topics. The IR guides the discussion to more official topics by asking: “**Besides** these home comforts, what **other** ... qualities ...”.

Keeping alive the intimate theme, the IE merely realizes his political face. The IRs and the IE seem to share the presupposition that the topic, in one way or another, is crucial for the IE’s political face. After reframing the too corporeal a treatment of the subject, the IE returns to it, implying that **he** has nothing against the theme. However, the IRs are ready to quit it, leaving the tea cups and pasties on the IE’s table. The topic emerges later on once more in the concluding part of the interview. The analyses returns to this in Chapter III, where the topic of intimacy is considered in a wider political context.

In some cases, the IRs give a short and dramatic interpretation of their implications aloud. The opening section of the interview of Pekka Tiainen went as follows:

- IR1: Er...Do you remember how many votes you got in the last communal election?
- IE: 494.
- IR1: And despite that you now aim at the presidency – although you didn’t make it to the Vantaa’s communal council or city council?

28 Or he. Here the Finnish language again prevents one from deciding whether the person was female or male. The context gives no hint about it.

- IE: My share of the votes was two times that of the chairman of the city government in Vantaa. In Länsimäki I got ten percent.
 IR2: But dear presidential candidate, if you allow me to say so, aren't you a bit megalomaniac?
 (20)

When the IE did not accept the implication included in the first question and its continuation, the IR offered a rapid interpretation of it. Perhaps less astonishingly, after this opening the interview never took the ordinary shape of interviews. The rest of the event went on in rivalry between the IE and the IRS to get the turn to speak. One sign of the chaotic nature of the process is that the IE says "By the way, good evening, dear spectators" 70 seconds after the beginning of the interview.

However, in most cases implications are much less evident and guide the conversation in a subtle manner. Compared with the basic strategy of fabrication, which is an intentional effort to lead the conversation, choose specific topics and omit others, implication manifests itself at the micro level of argumentation. Furthermore, while fabrication always is a conscious act, in the case of implication the issue is not at all so clear.

Implications are reference relations, which can be explored by logical devices but which, due to their hidden nature, many times are left out of the explicit conversation. The IRs' questions may include material which the IEs can handle without explicitly treating implicative relations. Also, the IEs may fail to see disadvantageous implications in the questions. Finally, they may be uncertain as to how to treat such a situation. Evidently, in the case of presidential candidates, any reasonable treatment of the issue by the IE requires outward fluency.

- IR1: Why are you wearing a hat here, inside the studio?
 IE: (uncovering his head) Because when I created this waker's spirit in Southern Ostrobothnia I felt it was a good device. But now just for the sake of mother Anna-Kaisa and others, now you see how beautiful it is (stroking his mostly bald head with both hands)
 IR1: When and in what other places do you not wear a hat besides...
 IE: Er ... an old saying in the plains of Ostrobothnia was that only in front of Lord and Mannerheim does one take off one's cap, and one does not completely trust to the other.
 IR2: Now, let's go to the point. The main task of the president is to lead foreign policy. What are your merits in foreign policy?
 IE: Well, all my life I've read Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy...
 IR2: And with those one gets on?
 IE: ... and Chekhov.
 (21)

Another critical opening by the IRs, who now penetrate into the IE's physical appearance. Immediately, realizing what was asked, the IE uncovers his head while the IR is still speaking. As soon as "a hat" was mentioned, the IE had it in his hand. Uttering "...how beautiful it is", IE defines the topic as aesthetic. While there may be different opinions on whether the IE's appearance without a hat is aesthetically pleasing, one may wonder if the beauty of the top of the IE's head has something to do with his presidential campaign. Moreover, as we all know, Lombrosian approaches to cognitive skills have lost much of their appeal.

The IE offered another, more social explanation of why he was wearing a hat. In it, he utilized a contextual claim familiar to most spectators. People in Southern Ostrobothnia have been traditionally regarded as proud and obstinate folks. Only Lord and general Mannerheim are honoured by uncovering one's head, of whom only one is genuinely trusted in by the IE. And this one is most likely the general, who led the 'White' forces, which were largely formed in Southern Ostrobothnia, to a win in the 1918 Civil War²⁹.

This short tale is full of implicative references. Telling it, the IE again covers his head with his large black hat and wears it for the rest of the interview. Of the implicative references, some are political and more objective, while some are more personal. This very short tale resembles notable narratives in that it contains several levels of references.

First, talk about Mannerheim is a cunning move on the part of the IE. Mannerheim, later also a president, a unanimously honoured figure in the circles of well-to-do people in Finland, hardly is a close figure to the IE, a rock musician and psychologist, once also accused of drug use. Hinting at Mannerheim's superior position, the IE indirectly refers to one of the fundamental symbols of White Finland. Yet this is done in a humorous manner that also leaves the possibility of less honourable intentions open for more critically minded - spectators.

Second, talking about the top of one's head certainly does not represent epideictic rhetoric³⁰ expected in the situation, not even the deliberative rhetoric of everyday politics. Evidently, the opening question belongs to the IRs' fabrications. But when the IE gives a determined response, it is time to change the topic. However, the topic is also an implication, similar to the questions posed to Ahtisaari about his health and feet (18). In the series, the IRs largely concentrate on the presidential candidates' political face in a fairly corporeal manner, many times hovering on the brink of rejecting the bourgeois manners of politeness. What this has to do with the interaction traffic rules will be discussed later.

The IE's reaction to the question of **why** may be said to be implicative at two levels. Strictly speaking, implicative relations are of grammatical nature. They are relations presented in utterances by omitting something or by making arguments which rely on some silent grounds. Such relations should be shown in the text by grammatical devices. However, this example is somewhat problematic, because it only indirectly refers to the IE's action of uncovering his head: **But ... now you see how beautiful it is.**

The continuation, the IR's "When and **in what other places** you do not wear a hat **besides ...**", also strongly suggests that at the moment the IE is not wearing a hat, despite the explicit contrary statement of the previous question. Taken together, these two statements give reasonable grounds to suppose that the IE is

29 However, the narrative typically offers two contradictory interpretations. Among those who were more religious and more inclined to favour originally Finnish influences, general Mannerheim have appeared as a suspect foreigner despite of his role of the leader of the White forces. For such people, the general naturally was not the first one in comparison.

30 Aristotelian concepts of rhetoric will be discussed in Chapter III, which opens the rhetorical level of analysis.

not wearing a hat at the moment. In sum, the underlying assumption of the exchange seems to be that the IE has uncovered his head.

This, however, is not explicitly revealed by the text, which only refers to the action. Now, suppose a researcher has the interview only in the textual form, with no access to video archives, and that he has not seen the interview on television. Then, the researcher supposes that the IE takes off his hat, at least for a moment. This hypothesis can be made with a certain degree of probability, relying on the idea of a mutual logic in conversation.

But the researcher cannot *verify* the assumption, only regard it as probable. This is because the implication refers to real, physical activity by a person. Normally, the theory of implicative relations studies grammatological implications, i.e. relations whose material is completely present in a text. Such analysis will argue **nothing** about conditions external to the text.

Consequently, the implication analysis in its traditional form has narrow limits in analysing conversations. It treats the conversation partners as pure abstractions, whose gestures and paralinguistic signs do not matter. In cases where such gestures penetrate into utterances, appearing as obscure references or as uncoherent, seemingly meaningless (from a literary point of view) statements, a broader approach should be accepted.

A prerequisite of understanding what is going on in the exchange cited earlier is to know that the IE takes his hat off. The ensuing conversation proves meaningless without this essential knowledge.³¹ Only if one knows that the IE uncovers his head do the IE's utterances become understandable.

Assuming that the implication relation here can be accepted in the mode of referring to outward gestures, one can make the following conclusions about the event. First, "**But now just for the sake of mother Anna-Kaisa and others ...**" gives no direct answer to the question *why*. In addition, the first part of the utterance above suggests that according to the IE's experience a) the IRs have claimed that the IE has no right to wear a hat in the interview; b) the IE should take off his hat; and c) the IRs are not in a position to ask the IE to take off his hat.

Accordingly, **mother Anna-Kaisa and others** emerge in the conversation as partners honoured enough to see how beautiful the IE's crown, after all, is. The corporeal opening is turned into a short tale about uncovering one's head in Southern Ostrobothnia. The first level, aesthetic in the IE's statement, is intimate and concerns his person in several ways. The second level is political, containing both evident and hidden implications.

A political aspect of the tale maintains that journalists are below politicians. Journalists cannot demand the IE to uncover his head if those living in Southern Ostrobothnia never do that, with the exception of honouring the Lord and an eminent military-political figure, Mannerheim. In contrast to the private sphere, where aesthetical scales rule and where relations are intimately personal between relatives and other close persons, the political sphere, largely consisting of vertical power relationships, is based on keeping one's head (and hat).

31 How to gain this knowledge is also a worthwhile question. However, any reliable way (seeing it personally, hearing it from a reliable source, etc.) in practice makes it possible to understand with a fair degree of accuracy what is happening.

Intimate questions

The subtitle is not completely satisfactory; it should be limited in various ways. First, while intimate questions often address issues of erotic nature, such issues form only part of the approach. The characteristic feature of the category is that the IE, and only the IE, has primary access to topics treated with these questions. Such questions consider the IE's experiences and opinions, and include comments on the IE's earlier actions and future-oriented statements on the IE's possible actions.

In a sense, these questions are concerned with the IE's doings and the IE's way of explicating these in the interview. The IRs may try to interpret the IE's actions or give them a certain tone, but primarily the IEs have a privileged understanding of them. However, the focus in the interviews normally is not on the IEs' understanding itself, but on the way it is expressed and on the limits where the interrogation should be stopped.

The IEs' understanding relies on itself. As already pointed out, it simply is. In this sense, its justification or validity cannot be questioned. One's understanding is always authentic, yet it is regularly suspect in political interviews. Where does this incongruity come from?

When assuming that one's understanding is always authentic, one gives a statement which is immediately convincing intuitively, but which is hard to explicate or prove. The problem lies in the presentation of understanding. And, in addition, while the IE's understanding may be assumed to be authentic, its competence can be called in question by the IRs. The demarcation line between authenticity and competence is a complicated matter where the burden of proof is on the IE.

IR2: ... Now, let's go on to your person. Is eroticism a happy issue to you?

IE: In life, eroticism is a happy issue.³²

(22)

This clearly belongs to the questions of this category. The IE is challenged to think aloud her relation to eroticism. An intimate question, which also directly calls for the IE's self-understanding. Typically, the question arouses the problem of showing one's self-understanding, an area to which the IE has primary access, and an area to which only the IE has authentic access.

In a politician's face, showing one's self-understanding is a crucial moment. Here, several elements of one's political face can be explored with relative openness. While authenticity cannot be denied, a pursuit of estimating the IE's competence, orientation and regulation of distance is just what the IRs are experimenting with in interviews like this.

The problem of competence is a contextual one, always referring to the realities external to the situation. Therefore, the problem will be discussed in the next chapter. Orientation, also a mode of competence, reflects the IE's capacity to

32 The IE, Eeva Kuuskoski, MP and a former Minister of Social and Medical Affairs, was an independent candidate with her own election organization.

handle the present situation with its intricate turns. Regulation of distance, in turn, is a politician's basic method of creating his or her political face.

In the citation above, the IE easily treats the intimate question both at the level of text and at the level of paralinguistic gestures. Her strategy is to keep some distance: "**In life, ...**". The question addressed the IE's personal relation to eroticism: "**Let's go on to your person. Is eroticism a happy issue to you?**" Textually, the answer creates a considerable distance to the issue. **In life, ...** represents a conclusion following a chain of more personal experiences. Here, the chain only includes the conclusion.

The conversation continues:

- IR2: Yet you often declare that life has lost its meaning and people feel bad. Do you personally feel bad in this society?
- IE: Well, no, not at the moment. I have lived through very difficult times in my life and in this respect I can say that I speak from experience, but when I move among people I see that many really feel bad and that the joy of life has disappeared. Not only among those people who haven't got a job but also among many who are employed. Unfortunately.
- IR1: Still, from your writings one gets the impression that you are uncertain, reserved and timid. What are you afraid of?
- IE: But I don't feel that I fear ... anything. Oh well, I can say that of course there are such things, but I have learned in my life, through hard experiences, to also have confidence in life and encounter quite difficult matters.
- IR1: [But right now you don't-]
- IE: Sometimes, yes, I am quite reserved when journalists bombard me heavily. Like now.
(23)

IR2's next question has intimate elements. It is the IE who often declares something, and it is also only the IE who can tell if she feels bad. With the limitation "**... in this society**" the IR indirectly links his question to a context, that of the presidential campaign. The issue is not the IE's personal feelings as such³³; it is whether the ill feelings assumed by the IE have impersonal roots in society. In such a way, the IR links personal bad feelings (the level of self-understanding) with social phenomena.

The IE grasps the question in the same way. Quickly rejecting bad personal feelings, she goes on to explain her views about social problems. The emphasis is on the IE's **opinion** on experiencing society and its problems, not on the experience of bad feelings itself. However, the next question of IR1 returns the conversation to the level of the IE's understanding: "**... you are uncertain, reserved and timid**".

Maintaining that the IE is uncertain, reserved and timid, the IR also contributes to the political face of the IE. The qualities as suggestions of one's political face are not used at random but are elements of more extensive assumptions of character structures. In addition, normally the claims concerning the qualities of one's political face are supposed to be based on some arguments.

33 One may also suffer from bad feelings in many other contexts than "in this society", which here, in the IR's language, refers to the socio-political space.

Here, the claim is presented openly. It is justified with IR1's personal impression, which he has got from reading the IE's writings.

Evidently, the level of justification is not argumentative, but relies strictly on IR1's understanding, based on an authentic experience by the IR. As stated earlier, authentic experiences cannot be cancelled. The following figure may illustrate the conversation strategies in such situations.

Level I

Basic understanding

IR1: ...you are uncertain,
reserved and timid

IE: - no response -

Self-referential understanding

IR1: What do you fear

IE: I don't feel that I fear ...
anything

Level II

Argumentative conversation

IR2: Now you, for example,
didn't wa...want to...to
take part in light quizzes
and other tests arranged
for the candidates. Why so?

IE: Sometimes, yes, I'm quite
reserved when journalists
bombard me heavily. Like now.

IE: Well, I consider the presidential
election a very serious matter.
And then, if things connected
with health are taken lightly, then
in my opinion one is turning
serious matters into a joke. Or if
an impression is given that such
tests could be used to choose the
president, I don't want to be part
of such things. But...

Level I

Self-referential understanding

I regard myself as a character with
with quite a good sense of humour.
One can play a joke on me, too

IR1: Are you afraid of putting your foot in it?

IE: No (with a laugh), I've put my foot in it so many times in my life. I just am
not afraid of that.
(24)

The IR's impression of the IE's qualities is based on the IR's understanding, and operates in an area where no argumentative rejection is possible. The question, however, is based on a quasi-logical argument in that it refers to the IR's activities as a reader of the IE's texts. Nevertheless, the conclusion is completely based on the IR's impression.

Such a level of **understanding–understanding** between the IR and the IE in the conversation cannot be counted among the most common relations between the parties in political interviews. This is not disadvantageous to an IE who, when facing such strategies on the part of the IRs, should take on completely different roles of interaction.

The need of exchanging roles comes from an asymmetry in the basic traffic rules of political interviews. Understanding, at a level defined above, is essentially the task of the IE, not of the IR. The asymmetry comes from the different tasks expected of the parties. Self-referential relations within the IE's understanding are among the basic topics of political interviews. The focus is on the IE's understanding at the IE's self-referential level.

Assuming an unargumentative strategy of impressions, the IR in the above exchange cunningly breaks the rule which determines the focus of political interviews. The only reasonable strategy for the IE in such cases is to turn the conversation to the IR's impression. The two alternatives, disregarding silently the IR's impression or rejecting it, would not work. Rejection is impossible simply due to the nature of understanding as existing beyond true and false statements. Disregarding the statement in silence would most probably also have failed due to the IR's striving to stick to a promising topic. The only strategy for the IE is to accept the change of focus, assume the IR's role for a while, and to try to reveal the logic of the impression.

As noted earlier, **my understanding** is always superior to other modes of understanding. Openly stated, such strategies turn out to be imperialistic and unargumentative – and, consequently, difficult to meet. Asking questions may often prove to be the vehicle of promoting neutrality on the part of IRs, but certainly not when they use the strategy of **my understanding**.

In asking intimate questions, the IR can make use of implication techniques. In the **PresiTentti** series, each interview includes an opening section, where the IE's political face and its qualities are the topic of the conversation. In this section intimate questions, i.e. questions which concern the IE's (self-referential) understanding, assume a primary role. In most cases the **understanding-understanding** level is not utilized by the IRs.

More often, another mode of questioning is utilized in dealing with intimate topics. The mode is called "third-party attribution" (Heritage and Roth, 1995, 26). Again, the IR's question includes propositions about the IE's political face and its qualities, yet in this case the source of the propositions is not the IR's understanding but a third source.

IR2: A researcher has reviewed the writings of the candidates and of president Koivisto. He says that while Koivisto is characterized by modesty, Ilaskivi is adorned with lack of modesty. Do you agree?

IE: Now this is a researcher's opinion. I have generally tried to write objectively and also argue strongly when needed. So I don't completely agree with that.
(25)

Having briefly defined the tasks of political interviews in general, evaluation of the characters takes on a new form in the interview. Seemingly, certain concepts relating to personal qualities are present and await definition. However, the implication does not leave much in doubt.

IR1: All right. Let's go on. These concern the exercise of power, which, of course, is a matter of utmost important to the president. Are you a narcissist, an ego-centric person?
IE: No, I am not.
IR1: ... You don't identify such a feature in yourself?
IE: [No, not at all.]
IR1: But you know what I mean?
IE: Yeees.
IR1: Good.
IE: [I've come to] pick up a few learned words sometimes.
IR1: [Good.]
(26)

The introductory section before the question of narcissism evidently prepares the question. A third party opinion, justified through scientific expertise, is discussed, preparing the forthcoming, more direct approaches to the IE's personal qualities. The IR's question: "**Are you a narcissist, ...**", once rejected, goes on to shift the issue to the area of the IE's understanding: "**You don't identify such a feature in yourself**".

In contrast to example (22), the IR does not create a mutual understanding-understanding relation. A neutral continuation: "You don't identify ..." does not suggest any personal commitment by the IR to the issue at the level of the IR's understanding. Here, an ideal of neutrality is followed. Facing such questions, the IE, not very surprisingly, does not give affirmative answers. This leads the IR to try his third method, that of attaching narcissism to the IE.

The third question is seemingly of cognitive nature: "But you know what I mean". However, it cannot be taken as a sign of the IR's serious doubt about the IE's knowledge about the meaning of "narcissism". For evident reasons, a negative answer cannot be expected, and by forcing the IE to give an affirmative one the IR can, after all, establish **some** connection between the IE and the quality under discussion. The connection, of course, is a narrow one, since the IE only admits what is evident for every educated spectator. The point is not whether the IE knows what the concept denotes; it is to give **any** affirmative answer in the context of a less desirable topic. In this respect, a simple cognitive question, to which only an affirmative answer is available, works very well.

While mainly rejecting the suggestions offered by the IR, the IE nevertheless indicates that he has **something** to do with the issue. Only one little step further, and one might get an impression that the IE somehow does not completely reject the IR's line of questioning. In practice, this step is easily taken by a spectator who is neither bound to any strict orientation to the situation nor obliged to follow any rules of formal logic.

This 'illogical' step is a striking example of what Machiavelli meant when characterizing people's qualities in respect to each other, i.e. in interactive processes: "In general people are ungratituous, volubile, simulating and dissimulating, scaring and greedy" (Il Principe XVII, 10). Leaving aside other qualities, the present analysis concentrates on a quality of volubility. Here the term is interpreted through its Latin origin, *volvere*, to round. What 'rounds' is a person's attentiveness. A spectator's object of concentration varies all the time.

"Volubility" characterizes a weakness of orientation in a human being. Strictly speaking, *volubilità* can be considered a weakness only from the viewpoint of certain persuasive processes. From the viewpoint of a 'volubile' person, *Volubilità* may mean strict concentration, while such conduct may show grave absent-mindedness from the point of view of someone assessing the other's behaviour. There is no guarantee of a neutral orientation, proper conclusions or even adherence to the rules of formal logic on the part of the spectator.

The problem of reception cannot be treated here; the discussion will be limited to the point of view of questioning. In this respect, the IR's strategy of questioning mixes two levels of conversation. First of all, there is the topic as such, narcissism and the IE's relation to it. At another level the IR, posing questions which are related to the main topic but which seemingly do not challenge the main standpoint assumed, tries to undermine the IE's position, offering some connections to the main theme.

This strategy is a mode of implication which may be called the strategy of dissemination. Again, this mode of implication does not rely on grammatical relations but on a quite practical pursuit to find the rejected connections between the IE and the topic. The present analysis does not suggest anything about the reception interpretations in practice; it only aims to indicate what sort of strategy is implied in the IR's activity. Nor does the analysis maintain that the IR fabricates such an implication. No casual interpretations of the IRs' intentions are offered; the discussion only thematizes the possibilities opened up by the IRs' activities.

Intimate questions concern areas where the IE has a primary access. They touch on the IE's experiences, future orientations, personal history, and opinions; shortly, the issues which only the IE can explain. Yet this primacy over one's 'own' issues is only a starting-point for further discussion of the IE's political face.

The logic of **my understanding** begins to rule in the IR's and the spectators' actions. Consequently, the IE's (self-referential) understanding is transformed into material for the others' evaluation of the situation, including the political face of the IE. Since "One's own face and the face of others are constructs of the same order" (Goffman 1972, 6), the IE's contribution to the IE's political face is only one aspect of the totality.

The demand of neutrality would limit the IR's strategy to stay outside of the **my understanding** statements and to take other measures. These contain several possibilities for the IR to promote the implied aims. The IEs normally enjoy, or suffer from, relatively rigid political faces at the level of presidential candidacy. The constant features assumed in the IE's faces strongly guide the IE's strategies, which are dominated by the need of cohesion.

Only the spectators are not obliged to recognize any limit in the process of **my understanding**. Therefore, heated debates may offer an enjoyable fiesta for those interested in such entertainment.

Turns at talk

A decisive moment in a political interview comes when the IE starts his or her contribution as a response to the IR's contribution. In each turn, the IR rules the situation, providing it with a framework, guiding the conversation, creating implications, fabricating positions, limiting topics, etc. The IE begins to prepare his or her contribution immediately when the IR begins his or her turn.

A credible reference to the preceding contribution has to be found. The mechanism of this turn transference is called a turn construction unit (hereafter TCU). Often, TCUs serve as departures to other topics favoured and lifted up by the IEs. However, for the IE it is always essential to build a fluent TCU.

TCUs may consist of a series of questions, simple questions, statements, or of substantial elements, and even of gestures and other paralinguistic signs. Ideally, the logic of question–answer–question etc. is followed, but in practice such processes occur only from time to time.

The moment of turn transference is always a contingent event, more or less intentionally decided by both the IRs and the IEs. The role of the IE is more important than linguistic literature may suggest. At least, in political interviews, deciding the moment of turn transference is often of vital importance in maintaining the IE's political face.

- IR2: All right. Let's begin. The main task of the president is to lead foreign policy. What are your merits in foreign policy?
 IE: Well, all my life I've read Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy...
 IR2: [And with those] one gets on?
 IE: ... [and] Chekhov.
 IE: Nicely because this fellow of ours who they say is currently the best in foreign policy has read the works of Dostoyevsky in three days, so I think that such a carnivalism also represented by Zhirinovski deserves just the kind of therapy education I have.
 IR2: [But Pertti Virtanen] you try to dodge this question with humour. What-
 IE: [Er] Humour, humour. I said this seriously, but with humour.
 IR2: What are your ... merits in foreign policy?
 IR1: Do you have connections with Western literature?
 (27)

At first sight, it may appear that the IE is not responding to the question at all. Reading Russian classics, however, involves several implications concerning the Finno-Russian relations. As in example (21), mentioning Russian authors may be interpreted as a presidential gesture; two of the three post-WWII presidents are known to have mastered Russian. However, this implication seems a bit far-fetched.

As a more evident implication, the IE refers to a rivalling candidate when mentioning "this fellow of ours" whose heroic effort had allowed him to read Dostoyevsky's works in three days. When taking this as an example, the IE

continues suddenly with the Russian presidential candidate Vladimir Zhirinovski, a right-wing alarmist propagating Great-Russian chauvinism.

The point comes at the end of the contribution, where the IE refers to his position as a therapist. The IR intervenes, trying to steer the conversation to the chosen tracks. This goal is finally thwarted not by the IE but by the fellow IR, who leads the discussion in another direction.

Citation (27) includes several aspects of the turn transfer process. The example shows how an IE may assume an active role in the creation of TCUs. The IE produces his own TCUs at his own pleasure, challenging the leading role of the IRs. Topics chosen by the IE are his specialities, and by sticking insistently to them the IE to some extent guarantees their emergence as topics of conversation. However, after a short subpath, the IE has to comment on his lacking experience in foreign policy.

The following figure may illustrate the construction of TCUs:

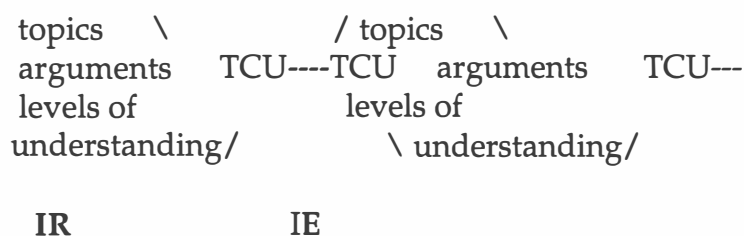


FIGURE 3

The way in which the IR crystallizes his or her point constitutes the TCU of the IR. The manner in which the IE makes his or her contribution, responding to the IR's TCU, largely influences the tone of the conversation. In principle, the whole scale of approaches is available, from cold rejection to warm affirmation of the implications included in the IR's TCU.

Returning to citation (27), one may now see how the opening is constructed. "**All right. Let's begin**" constitutes the IR's opening TCU, immediately leading to the level of argumentation: "**The main task of the president is to lead foreign policy**". After the statement, the IR goes on to the TCU with which to transfer the turn: "**What are your merits in foreign policy?**" – a simple question which aims to attach the main task of a president to the IE's political character.

TCUs are important in defining the topics of the ensuing conversation. In the following citation, the IRs and the IE quarrel about a messy affair in which the IE was accused of advocating, with the help of a representative of the Soviet Union, a candidate in the previous presidential election.

- IR1: Paavo Väyrynen, could you as president nominate such a man as the foreign minister, who has intrigued in the presidential election with a representative of a foreign power in the Finnish presidential election?
 IE: ... And what does that question mean?
 IR1: You did not understand?
 IE: No.
 (28)

First, the IE tries to neutralize the question, stating that he does not understand the whole issue. The IE's TCU suggests thus another topic for the conversation. The IE aims to make the IR define more precisely the implication of the question. The conversation goes on:

IR1: And you didn't recognize yourself in it?

IE: No, because I haven't done the thing implied in the question. I have explained this issue in detail in my books and ...
(29)

The IR offers the IE an opportunity to identify himself with the short tale of the opening utterance. After rejecting this offer, the IE nevertheless decides to rush into **this issue** which he has just refused to recognize. The treatment of the affair shows that both the IRs and the IE assume that everyone is familiar with the case.

The IE's pretence not to understand the question serves two purposes. Indicating that the IR's TCU will not reach the IE, the IE makes the IR correct his stand and to be more precise and more open. The IR's next TCU suggests a new level for the topic, because it calls for the IE's understanding to consider whether he can identify himself with the tale, assume a role in it.

Here, a calm reduction of the topic appears implausible, because the affair was a major dispute at a time. Leaving **myself** outside the affair is not possible for a politician who played the leading role in the incident. Such a manoeuvre would assume too great a distance between the IE and the IE's understanding of himself, i.e. would create suspicions about the nature of the IE's understanding.

Consequently, the IE changes his strategy and gives a detailed version of the affair:

IE: ... and could have given documents showing how this witch-hunt once started by Jukka Tarkka was altogether senseless, because he tried to maintain that I had tried to get support for Ahti Karjalainen from the Soviet Union, while the situation was for years quite the opposite. So the Soviet Union tried to press me to support Karjalainen and when I was not so enthusiastic about the matter, people whispered around the city that I have bad relations with the East and ... a lot of similar arguments were made. This is the truth that Jukka Tarkka and others have maintained is a lie.

IR1: Now you presumably understand. Was this the worst gaffe in your career?

IE: What was?

IR1: This, er, Vladimirov affair and the fact that...

IE: [It was not my] gaffe but Jukka Tarkka's gaffe when he blundered himself when trying-

IR2: [Paavo Väy]rynen-

IE: ...to label me guilty of such activities I was not guilty of.

(30)

The TCUs do not meet each other. First, despite his open reluctance to recognize the tale, the IE promotes the story by giving his version of what happened. Second, the IR's TCU does not recognize the IE's TCU but continues on a metalevel referring to the IR's earlier question, interpreting the answer as a contribution to the question which inquired into the IE's understanding of the introductory statement.

- IE: ... to label me guilty of such activities I was not guilty of.
 IR2: [This letter of yours to] Ahti Karjalainen clearly indicates that you entered into discussions with Vladimirov³⁴ in favour of Ahti Karjalainen against other candidates. This (laughing) is a completely clear issue.
 IE: No, this is not the case, but I've written tens of pages about the matter in my book and explained what was at stake.
 (31)

The competitive element of political interviews may be seen most clearly in the arrangement of TCUs. Both the actors aim to fabricate TCUs according to their needs. This often results in sequences where both the IRs and the IEs insist on leading the conversation within their own topics and suggest changes of topics to the other party.

- IR1: Now let's continue with these intimate matters for a moment. Have you ever had marital difficulties?
 IE: Every marriage that has lasted for twenty-five years certainly has faced them, but is there no intention to discuss real issues at all?
 IR1: After a while, yes.
 IE: Well, when there is a ten-minute time limit and we have spoken about everything else but the issues linked with the election...
 IR1: [All right.] Just one question before...
 IE: Yeah.
 IR1: [before] before real issues. Do you – do you – Can a sex scandal overturn a politician in Finland?
 IE: Yes, perhaps in principle.
 IR1: Nipping can't...
 IE: Well, if such a thing happens it will certainly cause damage but I don't believe it overturns anybody.
 IR1: All right. Now let's go...
 IR2: [Paavo Väy] väyrynen. We all know that you command political issues very well. Therefore we concentrate here more on your person...
 IE: [Is it] equal towards me, this...
 IR2: [This] is equal towards ev...everybody...
 IE: Well?
 IR2: Do you enjoy making decisions and exercising power?
 (32)

Here TCUs, especially on the part of the IE, search for interaction traffic rules. Paradoxically, the topic emerges precisely when the IE demands conversation devoted to matters conventionally considered political. The IR, with no visible sign of irony, assures the IE that **the real issues** will follow "after a while". One has to pose just "[O]ne question **before ... the real issues.**"

The IR's utterance signals a remarkable concession. The conversation, dealing with the real issues and other, obviously less central topics, can be claimed to be valid only when it concerns the real issues. In other words, should difficulties arise, the IE could maintain that even the IRs have already admitted that there were the real issues and the less relevant issues in the interrogation. And only "the real issues" would be significant.

34 Viktor Vladimirov, a high KGB officer at the embassy of the Soviet Union in Helsinki. His tasks included advancing relations with top Finnish politicians.

IR2 soon realizes the problem. He justifies the approach by appealing to a constant feature of the IE's political face, his good command of political issues, a quality which "we all know". Unlike IR1, he admits no distinction between "real issues" and "other issues", thus reserving to the IRs a right to continue conversation at the level of intimate issues and defining the IE's political face. The IE's TCU strategy making the distinction did not succeed, after all. The IRs kept what IR2 promised and spent most of the interview on personal matters. The topics, besides the foreign policy issues, covered the IE's personal relation to and experiences of, e.g., religion, ambition and future career plans.

The example may illustrate the scale on which TCUs may be analyzed. According to basic rules, the IRs are responsible for advancing the conversation. Only the IRs know what is included in their script. However, for guaranteeing objective and equal treatment for each IE, the variance of the rules cannot be large. This made it possible for those IEs who were interviewed in the series somewhat later to learn considerably about these rules and strategies.

This interview was the tenth in the **PresiTentti** series, which consisted of eleven interviews. Consequently, the IE, knowing fairly well that the IRs always start with personal matters and also dig into topics that are disadvantageous to the IEs, had had enough time to work out his strategy against the IRs' general scheme. A series always tends to be more regulated than a unique interview.

III THE RHETORIC OF POLITICAL INTERVIEW

Introductory remarks

Chapter II approached the problem of interaction in political interviews mostly from a situational standpoint, discussing, among other things, structures and strategies which allow the IRs and the IEs to keep their political face intact enough. It was assumed that a silent agreement prevails on the ways in which the IRs and the IEs can treat each other verbally. While such agreements almost never exist *expressis verbis*, there are certain limits not to be overstepped without damage to **both** parties' faces.

The **PresiTentti** series does not contain a lot of material on such offences; not, at least, in the mode of open aggression. The next citation is almost unique in the series:

- IR2: Certainly, yes. You are in the elections – you have said you are in the elections with a sense of humour...
- IE: [Serious]ly, but with a sense of humour.
- IR2: Bb .. but isn't this president – this institution of presidency too serious a matter to be a target of mockery?
- IE: MOCKERY ... you're confusing, you are a DOPE ... What I've said is humour, humöör, water, soft, **veltto**³⁵, waterlike ... Alpo Suhonen said that even in ice-hockey flexibility is the best –
- IR1: [From where does **veltto** come?] From where does **veltto** come?
- IE: It comes from this ice-hockey thing. Water is firm, it can step aside ... flow. Humour is precisely – it comes from the word water. Humour is what in the most difficult situations, like in therapy, is triggered, this I learnt from the

35 The Finnish word **veltto** refers to both **relaxed** and **limp**, and also connotes **listless** and **sluggish**. The following discussion plays with this ambiguity. The discussion is important because the IE's nickname happens to be "**Vel**tto". The IE is Pertti "**Vel**tto" Virtanen, semi-officially known as **Vel**tto-Virtanen.

Finnish Swedes in the Vaasa province, it is much more than a joke. Politicians themselves have mocked the Finnish political system. That's the truth.
(33)

The IE feels offended by the IR's question about mocking the institution of presidency. In turn, he calls the IR a dope, clearly overstepping the limits of interaction traffic rules. Labelling the other party insane does not fall within the normal code of conduct, not even in political interviews.

However, the context of the remark is essential. The IE had raised his voice a couple of times even earlier, rejecting the IRs' doubts about the IE's future success in the election. The citation comes directly after such a moment.

On the other hand, considering the context from a literary point of view, the IE's exclamation comes in the middle of his definitions which aim to clarify how the IE does not regard humour and seriousness as incompatible with each other. In addition, the IE at the same time begins to link this topic to his nickname, eventually giving ground for defining the candidate himself.

Finally, no offence to anybody's face actually occurs, because the overall atmosphere in the event has been gradually assuming an increasingly carnevalistic tenor, thus tending to rely on the assumed features of the IE. The IRs laughed at the incident in a relaxed manner and went on with their agenda.

Rather than serving as a moment of losing faces, the incident offered a welcome footing, a change of topic for the IE, who could now explain vital issues directly linked with his political face. The IE, aided by one of the IRs ("From where does *veltto* come?"), analyses the connotations of his nickname, naturally giving it a positive content.

The opportunity of analysing an important element in one's political face on one's own conditions was certainly welcomed by the IE, who immediately seized the opportunity. Example (33) will be considered again when discussing the process of representing political character. Here citation (32) provides material for another topic as well: the problem of argument in such events.

Argumentation in political interviews

Most contributions to the topic of argumentation tend to operate without the element of time, or they at least fail to analyze the vital boundary areas in conversations, namely the moments of turn transfer. The way in which TCUs are related to argumentation will be discussed next.

Figure 3 describes the construction of TCUs at a general level. The figure shows how the IR's and the IE's role is supposed to control TCUs before going on to 'issues' (arguments, topics). The figure displays three levels of conduct in the conversation: topics, i.e. 'issues'; arguments, i.e. how to steer the conversation to one's advantage; and, finally, levels of understanding, referring to the area where self-referential utterances as well as utterances a *là my understanding* may appear.

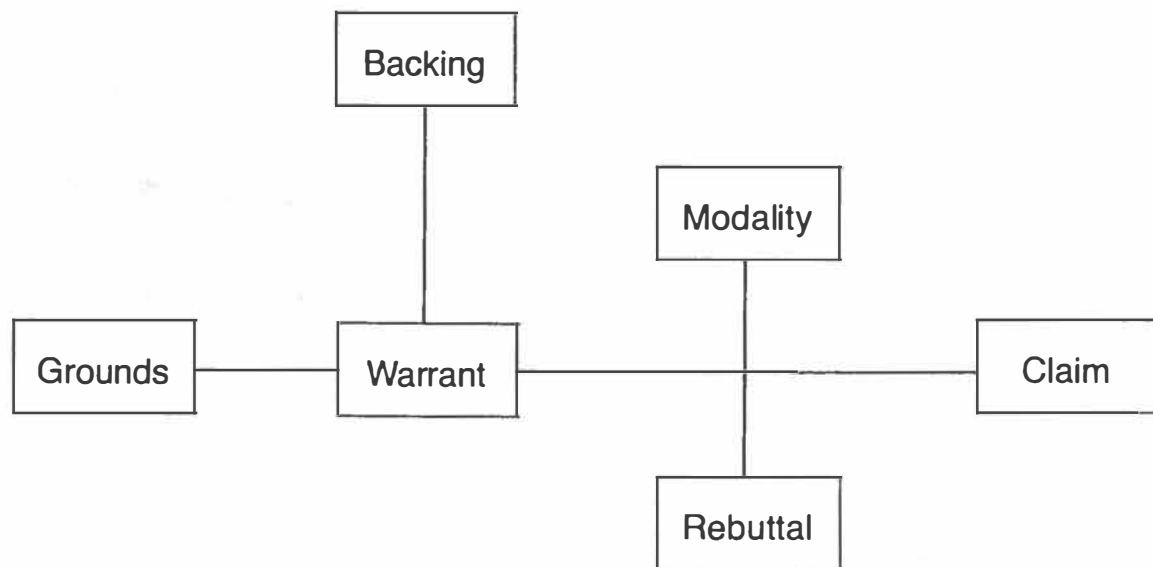
In one respect, the figure is satisfactory. It illustrates the decisive role of TCUs as strategic devices in a conversation. However, when considered from the

viewpoint of argumentation, the figure should be reconstructed. From this perspective, its main weakness lies in its differentiation between TCUs and argumentation. In most cases, TCUs are an essential part of argumentation, guiding and limiting the flow of conversation. They are inherent parts in argumentation, not auxiliary structures built only for the sake of fluency, for example.

It is very important to realize this in actual analysis. In political interviews, all the audible material, everything uttered, is equally valuable in analyzing argumentation as well. Argumentation analysis should not neglect contextual clues included in occasional changes of topics, interrupted expressions, paralinguistic signs, and other material normally considered less central in argumentation. While such material often is difficult to define objectively, it always inherently influences the argumentative structures.

The argumentation model below and the ensuing application of citation (33) provide an illustration. Had one omitted unique contextual connections in analyzing the citation, a completely different outcome would have resulted in the analysis of the argumentation.

Figure 4 displays Toulmin's analysis of an argument. The product, claim, on the extreme right, should serve as a starting point for considering the six-point logic the model offers.



The Toulmin analysis of an argument.

FIGURE 4

The claim is the argument. In citation (33) the argument is: "Politicians [themselves] have mocked the Finnish political system." **Themselves** appears here in brackets, because the differentiation serves here as an introduction into the present discussion.

This difference in the sentences is essential. It may be clarified by comparing the two arguments:

- 1) Politicians **themselves** have mocked the Finnish political system.
- 2) Politicians have mocked the Finnish political system.

The word **themselves** evidently contains information not included in the second formulation. In its context, the word suggests that another opinion about the source of mockers has been offered besides politicians. Isolated as it is, the sentence does not say anything about the other alternatives. Yet the sentence clearly is a limitation, emphasizing politicians' own negative role in the issue, thereby acquitting others of the charge.

In comparison, the second utterance has no such implications. The sentence only includes a claim with no suggestions of its context. No doubt, the state of matters it suggests can be debated from innumerable viewpoints. The point is, however, that the sentence in itself does not contain any contextual reference, unlike sentence 1).

The nature of contextual reference is crucial. In sentence 1), reference is made to the preceding section of the conversation. That section, in which the word **mocking** was triggered, is the key to the logic of the ensuing conversation. Without considering the word and its presentation in detail, it is impossible to understand the argument in a proper light. It diminishes into a piece of plain propaganda.³⁶

This is a typical feature of political interviews on television. The argumentation should be targeted at the situation and the elements it provides. Otherwise, a rhetor, mostly the IE, risks dropping to 'wrong things', and accordingly, to a wrong face. While this link can also be built with elemental gestures (see citation (18), where the IE assures that, after all, the president needs his head more than his feet), denoting topics not yet mentioned, the topic is supposed to be followed in one way or another.

The connection may be a remote one. This is the case in citation (33), where the IE starts his series of definitions. The structure of TCUs is favourable to the IE. After hearing that he is a dope, IR2 gives up the topic, at least for a while, and IR1, intervening in the discussion, asks the IE about the source of his nickname. Offering his partner a moment of recovery, an essential device for saving one's face, and passing by the IE's aggression, IR1 directs the conversation to another, seemingly more objective topic. Unlike his partner, he does not imply any less-than-welcome qualities in the IE's activities but simply asks about the origin of the nickname **Velitto**.

The incident also reveals the accidental nature of argumentation in such events. With three persons available, 8 different modes of promoting the conversation appear³⁷. Evidently, this variety also has its impact on possible continuations in the conversation. IR2's face-saving silence necessarily demanded a couple of seconds of time. As no silence can cover such a moment, spoken

36 Of course, the argument may appear as 'plain propaganda' even after detailed contextual exploration, but at another level, in relation to a factual context.

37 Take x, y, and z. Each of them have four different modes of presence: aloud alone, aloud with another, aloud with two other persons, and keeping silent. Leaving the venue is also possible (this is what happened in a famous Finnish talk-show in 1969 when a conservative MP left the spot as a protest), but this has not been taken into account here. In a three-person debate, silence is probably the most utilized mode of existence for each participant, for evident reasons.

contributions were needed to guide the conversation in another direction.³⁸ Thus, an occasional burst of anger by the IE decisively influenced the conversation, including its argumentation.

This exchange has been treated in detail due to its exemplary nature. While including no scandalous implications – everybody is familiar with the capriciousness of natural languages in taking up and leaving topics – the conclusion would still be alarming to traditional approaches to argumentation. However, giving a more solid statement requires first treating citation (33) more thoroughly in the light of Toulmin's model.

"Politicians [themselves] have mocked the Finnish political system" appears to be the argument, the concluding claim. In this case, the modality is also clear. The continuation which ends the IE's turn: **"That's the truth"** simply serves as the modal element. The modality explicates the degree of certainty claimed. No reservations were made in the argument.

The rebuttal, describing the circumstances under which the claim may be not valid, appears to be void. If the argument includes a claim like **That's the truth**, the chain of argumentation cannot contain any inherent rebuttal. However, the chain also has its rebuttal, namely ... **you are a DOPE ...**, an expression which suggests that such a person may fail to grasp even evident truths. As in the case of **themselves**, we have here an implication strictly bound to the situation and its elemental apprehension.

What is the warrant in the argumentation? According to the model, the warrant is the rule of argumentation that justifies a shift from grounds to claim. In this case, the warrant seems to be a statement which assures that **Humour is what in the most difficult situations, like in therapy, is triggered**. Humour is linked with difficult situations where decisive solutions can be reached only through humour. The utterance is somewhat unfocused but would seem to indicate this aspect of solving difficult situations.

The backing in the argument is **this I learnt from the Finnish Swedes in the Vaasa province**, with which the IE appeals to his own experience. The appeal is uttered at the level of **my understanding**, leaving no ground for suspicion or criticism.

The grounds would be the IE's 'etymological' analysis of water, according to which humour, **veltto**, and water have the same origin, depicting both firm and flexible qualities in the same element. And indeed, humour and humidity are of Latin origin, humour indicating waterlike issues and e.g. tissue fluids.³⁹ Again, the utterance is elliptic, consisting only of a string of words ... **What I've said is humour, humöör, water, soft, veltto, waterlike ...**

38 Silence is an integral part of any television presentation. As already mentioned, estimated by time it is the most used mode of presence in conversations with more than two persons.

39 As we know, premodern ideas of human personalities were largely constructed on the basis of tissue fluids. For example, Machiavelli uses the concept of humour in his *Il Principe* when considering different modes of citizenship (IX,2). He finds two species of umori leading to different political positions: that of ordinary folks who strive for peace and shelter, and that of *grandi* who aim to rule and oppress others. These two intentions, *appetiti*, have one of three political consequences, *effetti*, the power of the ruler, the power of the citizens, or anarchy, *licenzia*. On the interpretation, see Puppo 1969, 98 and Kanerva 1990, 92–93.

The application of Toulmin's model to citation (33) is illustrative even if not very fertile. As a result, two series of conclusions can be drawn. First, the logic the IE follows includes invisible pieces of a chain. For example, see the connection between the warrant and the claim. One immediately notices that such a shift from the warrant to the claim is a very broad one.

No justification emerges to connect these statements. The only logical reasoning would suggest that the IE, now faced with a difficult situation, is joking when maintaining that politicians themselves have mocked the Finnish political system. In this manner, he would try to ease the tension in the situation. Evidently, this logical interpretation does not have much to do with the IE's real situation, where he is, half-angrily and half-ironically, trying to explain the differences between humor and mocking.

The last-mentioned activity, explaining the difference between the two qualities which imply laughter, seems, after all, to be the point of the exchange. The end claim which maintains that politicians have mocked the political system is an auxiliary construction, only transferring the guilt to other parties, thus creating scapegoats.

Logically, **politicians** have nothing to do with the case. They serve in the role of scapegoats. Taking such an auxiliary construction with the case, the IE also composes a short tale, to be analyzed later in section dealing with **political narratives**. Telling a tale is more important for the IE than following the rules of logical analyses.

Nevertheless, the section can be interpreted in the light of the Toulminian model. Then, the argument no longer revolves around politicians' role in mockery but around the short utterance ...**it is much more than a joke**. Here the IE crystallizes his comparison of humour and mockery in favour of the former. Now the chain of arguments triumphs and also maintains the coherence of the topic.

However, a paradoxical result is the disappearance of politics from the chain of argumentation. Politics, almost regardless of its definition, appears here merely as an auxiliary structure, a context justifying meditation of every sort. Politics clearly plays a secondary role in the exchange.

Eventually, what is at stake in the conversation at this stage is the IE's effort to reformulate his character. The IR's opening question is bound up with the conventional context of presidential issues. The IE, after making a radical footing with his DOPE statement, turns the topic to himself, playing with the connotations of his own nickname.

In this respect, **politicians** appear only as pins to be pushed over for characterological reasons. For the IE, it appears important to maintain that **he** is not a politician. He aims to take distance from politicians and, therefore, from ordinary politics. Nevertheless, he sees politics as a task to be reformulated.

IR1: [Excelle] Excellent rhetoric. Are you going to continue in politics, perhaps in the parliamentary election, and in which party?

IE: Although I come seemingly from outside politics, of course we are all inside. We are objects of this, this brainwashing all the time. Perhaps I'll continue,

perhaps I won't. I've stepped into the torrent like Yrjö Kallinen⁴⁰, who said now the torrent carries me. How could I, I'm no fortune-teller, although journalists are.
(34)

The IE aims to consider politics in his own way. While criticizing ordinary politicians, he introduces himself as a politician of the new wave.

To a large extent, the same rejection of ordinary qualities of politics characterizes the whole **PresiTentti** series. While the material of questions is divided into two topics – the character of each candidate and foreign policy issues – the dominant theme essentially revolves around each IE's character, political character and political face.

Even when concentrating on foreign policy, the questions, at least indirectly and often directly, point to the characterological features of each IE. A brief survey is needed to verify this statement. Of the total number of eleven interviews, three were chosen randomly for the survey (candidates Ilaskivi, Korhonen, and Virtanen). The IRs posed 103 questions, of which 59 were connected with each IE's characterological qualities.

This elemental survey was faced with typical methodological difficulties. As noted in Chapter II., the definition of a "question" is anything but clear. Here, the IRs' statements like "But ...", "Could you ...", "H'm ..." were excluded as too incomplete to be given the status of a question. The same applies to a number of situations where at least two of the three persons were speaking at the same time. In addition, the series of questions typically included implicative chains (as in citations (11) (16) (28) (29)).

IR2: Still about your attitudes. What should one do with such persons who are interested in extra-marital relations?

IE: It is everybody's own business. In my opinion they don't belong to my world of ideas.

IR2: Now do leading politicians' relationships belong to the public?

IE: Y:eeeah, they belong to the public if they have a foundation.

IR1: Now, to what extent does a voter have the right to know about these matters, er, matters related to a candidate's morals and so on?

IE: Both the truth and opinions.

IR1: Now you certainly understand that these questions here are related to an issue widely discussed in public, a relation between you and governor Eeva-Riitta Siitonen.

IE: Well, they've tried to warm this up at an opportune moment, a rumour which one by repetition tries to transform into a truth. It has no foundation.

IR1: What is the truth?

IE: No foundation.

(35)

40 Yrjö Kallinen, a pacifist and writer who served as Finland's minister of defense (!) in the murky years of 1946–1948.

Of these questions, only the last two were counted as characterological questions in the survey. All the questions in the exchange could with full justification have been regarded as characterological, because they all aim at one goal: asking the IE's attitude toward his alleged extramarital relationship.

With these and other difficulties⁴¹ in mind, the survey only shows that characterological issues enjoy a major role in the series. The exact proportions are not important due to the ambiguities mentioned. However, the logic of promoting the interviews is clearly grounded in characterological issues.

Due to the characterological nature of the material, the application of Toulminian or other logical models mainly results in assessments of personal qualities, their relations and their contexts. To a lesser extent, political issues and their relations are under discussion. Another survey would suggest that their share is narrow. In the same three interviews, 23 questions of a total of 103 consider political issues in one way or another without linking them to characterological features.

These questions consider the IEs' opinion on e.g. whether Finland should become a member in the European Union; who will represent Finland in the EU; and whether referendums are a legitimate device to decide political issues. More than a half of these questions appear in one interview, that of Keijo Korhonen. The other two interviews only occasionally touch upon these issues.

These figures tend to make one doubt the value of purely logical models of argumentation. Models of argumentation largely omit occasional conditions, crucial in unique interviews where implications and references to situational matters are regular, not rare.

Besides, the logic of **my understanding** is insensitive to logical relations, to say the least. This mode of utterances, presented often when illustrating characterological qualities, may appeal to one's experiences when justifying matters. Then, a shift between the warrant and the claim may seem obscure from a more formal point of view. Yet in many cases it is authenticity that is decisive.

In citation (32) the IE appeals to his experiences of Finnish Swedes in Vaasa province. He tells us how he learned that humour helps in difficult situations and in therapy. Two experiences in one statement: the role of humour in therapy and the role of Finnish Swedes in his learning the role. Both of them represent the IE's authentic experiences at the level of **my understanding**.

Consequently, such statements are essentially beyond conversation, or at least difficult to criticize. However, despite their unargumentative status, such utterances may work well for a rhetor. If a rhetor succeeds in assuring the audience that the stance uttered is emphatic and/or coherent with other impressions offered to the audience, even less probable stories of experiences may be accepted or at least tolerated.

41 Evidently, the concept of 'characterological questions' also requires some limitation. The issue will be discussed in detail later; suffice it to say here that the survey includes those questions which a) are related to the IE's person directly, e.g.: Are you a narcissist, egocentric person? b) ask the IE's opinions and attitudes, e.g., What does family mean to you? c) are not realized in grammatically formulated questions but appear as statements of the mode a) or b). Implicative series were not analyzed.

This topic will be discussed in more detail in the section dealing with character building.

Another problem emerges when considering expressions of more argumentative nature, i.e., 'factual' arguments not based on one's understanding. Citation (29) serves as an example of treating the problem of sufficient grounds for a claim. The preceding problem concerned ways in which to interpret arguments based purely on a rhetor's understanding. Here a converse point of view is discussed: after all, is there any method that would **completely** justify a person's arguments?

The philosopher Ludvig Wittgenstein gives a negative answer to this question. According to him, every justification chain will meet one of the three alternatives: an endless series of explanations; an arbitrary interruption of the chain of justifications; or a closed circle of justifications (Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, 110, 191, 204–205). In addition, he remarks that in the end only practice will serve as the justification of arguments.

Wittgenstein's logic seems indisputable even if, ironically enough, it cannot be justified completely due to difficulties the argument itself refers to. Not yielding to the temptation of continuing this philosophical obscuration, I will concentrate here on sufficient grounds.

Here, the notion of **ostentative politics** suggests itself.⁴² While no objective ground for justifying an argument appears, a practical need for apparent credibility is urgent. Consequently, situational devices are sought to fulfill the need of credibility. 'Sufficiency' means credibility in a situation, not a mode of formal logic.

In a sense, appealing to one's experience is an easy example of ostentation.⁴³ One refers to one's own experience, leaving it to the audience to take or leave the grounds or warrants for the argument. This feature also involves some distance between the rhetor and the audience. Appealing to his/ her experience, the rhetor is close to his/her own experience but necessarily leaves the audience farther away, if considered from a logical point of view. In formal logic, each participant is equally close to (or distant from) the ground.

Another mode of ostentation is engaged when the claim is grounded in factual reasoning. Citation (30) went as follows:

42 The term is discussed at length in my *Diagnosis and Action. A study of the Political Rhetoric of Machiavelli's Il Principe* (Jyväskylä 1990). The study explores *Il Principe's* concepts and aim to show how, in the political triad of the ruler, a **few** (*pochi*), and **many** (*molti*), a balance between the ruler and the **many** is founded on what is called ostentative politics. The concept implies the leading role of the eye in understanding and supporting politics. In the scheme of *Il Principe*, the **many** can be satisfied with ostentative politics on the part of the ruler who, arranging permanent and unsurprising series of political exhibitions, will keep his power. The third party, the **few** (*pochi*) stays in opposition, unable to shake the balance.

43 The term 'ostentation' has no pejorative tone here. While the concept implies a necessary need to show something in an attractive light, it refers here to a politician's elementary device to ground his/her statements. In this respect, the Greek origin of *osteon* is as important as the Latin origin *obs- + tendere*. The Greek version refers to bone, evidently a basic structure in most creatures. The Latin version can be traced back to the expressions **in front of** and **to stretch**, intuitively a very precise formulation of what politicians are doing in public. *Osteon* (bone) makes it possible to stretch issues in front of the audience. Finally, the necessity of ostensive activities by no means rejects the actors' voluntarism or joy of acting.

- IE: ... and could have given documents showing how this witch-hunt once started by Jukka Tarkka was altogether senseless, because he tried to maintain that I had tried to get support to Ahti Karjalainen from the Soviet Union, while the situation was for years quite the opposite. So the Soviet Union tried to press me to support Karjalainen and when I was not so enthusiastic about the matter, people whispered around the city that I have bad relations with the East and ... a lot of similar arguments were made. This is the truth that Jukka Tarkka and others have maintained is a lie.
- IR1: Now you presumably understand. Was this the worst gaffe in your career?
- IE: What was?
- IR1: This, er, Vladimirov affair and the fact that...
- IE: [It was not my] gaffe but Jukka Tarkka's gaffe when he blundered himself when trying-
- IR2: [Paavo Väyrynen-
- IE: ...to label me guilty of such activities I was not guilty of.
(30)

The IE refers to documents which, according to him, would show how groundless the accusations of betrayal are. In citation (31) the IE says that he has written tens of pages about the incident in his books. Ostentation is made to documents which serve here as the grounds. The backing consists in the IE's books discussing the subject.

Here, a shift from the warrant to the claim is interesting. In citation (31) the warrant is the announcement that the IE has written about the case. In citation (30), the warrant is **...could have given documents....** This statement serves as a vehicle connecting the grounds and the claim.

The warrant refers to a conditional activity, the IE's possibility to provide documents on the case. The activity itself is the warrant, not the materials the activity refers to. The conditional formulation is essential, because it shows how no direct rejection by reading large documents together was possible on the spot, within the time limit of ten minutes. Again, the IE's ostentative gesture shows some distance – there are documents, but they cannot be considered in detail right now.

- IE: ... to label me guilty of such activities I was not guilty of.
- IR2: [This letter of yours to] Ahti Karjalainen clearly indicates that you entered into discussions with Vladimirov in favour of Ahti Karjalainen against other candidates. This (laughing) is a completely clear issue.
- IE: No, this is not the case, but I've written tens of pages about the matter in my book and explained what was at stake
(31)

The IRs stick to the warrant rejecting 'documents' in favour of the IE's letter to Ahti Karjalainen. According to the IRs, the claim is untrue (**...clearly indicates...**) due to the proof of the letter. The IE denies the conclusion, appealing again to his books' message. The stances remained completely incompatible.

Both the IE and the IRs referred to invisible documentary materials, only interpreting documents from different viewpoints. Both of the parties made ostensible gestures in trying to verify their claims. A difference, possibly favouring the IRs' case, was the IRs' reliance on one single source, a letter. The letter was not discussed in detail but was assumed to be well-known. In

comparison, the IE was unable to appeal to any single source that would have relieved him from the charge.

Consider the argument ... **clearly indicates** ... Relying on the audience's political judgement and memory, IR2 gives no evidence in support of the assumed clearance. IR2 not only relies on the audience's political interests but also appeals to them via his assumption of the audience's expertise.

In this manner, the IR provides a classic example of persuasion. Persuasion, according to Perelman (1982, 17–18), is a mode of rhetoric addressed to the few who command the issues under discussion – in other words, experts. Thus, persuasion is not “addressed to the imagination, sentiment, or a person's unthinkable reactions” (Perelman 1982, 18) but rather appeals to reason.

However, persuasion should not be taken as a subspecies of reasoning in accordance with formal logic. On the contrary, formal argumentation rules are among the devices persuasion utilizes. Thus, formal rules of argumentation have their role in conversation, but they do not create any superstructure to be strictly followed in practical argumentation.

Consider citation (31). Here, IR2 gives an example that is worth exploring in detail. The topic of betrayal is to be concluded in this section. By applying Toulmin's model, one gets an idea of how far logical rules can be followed and, on the other hand, where the area of persuasion in practice begins.

...you entered into discussions with Vladimirov in favour of Ahti Karjalainen against other candidates seems to be the claim. The claim in itself consists of two parts: a) entrance into discussions with Vladimirov; and b) that this was done for one candidate and against others.

The grounds consist in the letter sent by the IE to Vladimirov. The warrant is invisible and only ostentated in the argument: ... **clearly indicates** In classical rhetoric, such an argument including unspecified arguments in the chain is called an **enthymeme**. Such argumentation strongly relies on the audience's presuppositions. Failing to follow the audience's basic common sense,⁴⁴ the rhetor risks dropping out of any reasonable face and sounding unapprehensible.

Here the backing and the warrant are built on a silent assumption, according to which every spectator is familiar enough with the case to be able to create his/her own stand. Broadly speaking, the assumption should be correct, since the case was discussed on television and in newspapers for weeks.

Familiarity with a case is typically an imprecise expression. It is impossible to verify how the universal audience treats the issue. While the cognitive part of the audience's approach could be explored (with questions like who, what, when, how, with what result), the same cannot be said about interpretations of the case. The messy affair can be treated at very different levels and from diverse viewpoints, resulting in interpretations which do not have much in common.

44 The term 'common sense' raises some suspicion. Evidently impossible to define, the term rests on everybody's personal intuition, consisting of a number of typical assumptions about the relations between matters but not suggesting much about the contents of such relations. In my intuition, 'common sense' also serves to mostly negate and limit, typically stating something like “I don't know how the things are/should be, but I know how they are not/should not be”. Vague reasoning, but perhaps it may give an excuse for accepting notions like 'common sense'.

...clearly indicates... refers to this general familiarity. The maintained clearance appeals both to exact reading of the letter and to the familiarity of the case. These are not at all the same thing. Reading the letter may lead to a meeting of specialists who, according to their methods, may agree about the contents and its logic to some extent. Familiarity, in turn, consists of several segments and details of information, received more or less, and often with less concentration, by the members of the audience.

In addition, the verb **enter** only partially covers the connotations suggested by the original verb "antautua" in Finnish. The verb also refers to surrender, clearly hinting at suspect or unwelcome features in the activity referred to by IR2. The connotation of devotion, also evident in the phrase, in turn suggests the IE's passion, or at least voluntariness in acting the way he did. By using this term, IR2 makes a strong persuasive gesture, implying the IE's infidelity in the eyes of the audience.

Consequently, IR2's statement ... clearly indicates... includes several different rhetorical moves in the same phrase. First, appealing to the expertise of the audience, it shares an experience of reading and interpreting the letter in question. Second, by uttering ...you entered into discussions..., IR2 aims to convince the audience that the indication of **the existence of the letter itself** is a sufficient evidence that **something** was wrong in the affair.⁴⁵

It is important to notice that the something-wrong-in-the-affair is left to the imagination, reasoning and sentiments of the audience. By showing that the IE indeed entered into discussions with Vladimirov, IR2 builds the basement of the implication. The IR's strategy of dissemination is fragile and risky, because in the case of a failure the strategy would considerably strengthen the position of the IE and/or damage the face of the IR.

Finally, one should remark that IR2's argument relies explicitly and strictly on the reading of the letter. While including other vehicles of rhetoric as well, like the techniques of implication and the aim of convincing the universal audience, it retains its persuasive nature. The strategy of dissemination only forms a bypath in this citation.

The other mode of Perelmanian rhetoric is targeted at the universal audience and is convincing by its very nature. This mode of utterance does not aim to change any basic attitudes, but rather aims at specific conclusions and behaviour in the audience. One could also say that convincing rhetoric assumes a certain basic common sense on which its argumentation is said to be based. (Perelman 1982, 16–18)

According to Perelman, all sorts of specialists constitute the audience in the case of persuasion. The interaction is advanced between a specialist and a learned audience competent enough to assess the specialist's message. In the case of convincing, the rhetor is a philosopher and the audience is a universal to which, in principle, everyone has access.

The case of political interviews is somewhat complicated. The IEs and the IRs do not follow the same paths due to the differences in their roles. The IRs

45 Cf. citation (26), which is based on the strategy of dissemination as well.

represent experts whose task is to establish the IE's position in politics. The task is twofold. First, the IRs are supposed to treat topics and the conversation situation in the way that allows the IE's stands to become apprehensible. This is the affirmative element of the task. On the other hand, a negative task is to doubt, revise and criticize the IEs' opinions, which, if merely affirmed, would give the IEs too much room to operate according to their own will.

The IEs' role seems to be a simpler one. The IEs should 'only' assure the audience of their competence, credibility and appeal: in short, of their relevance as the leading candidate. However, in executing this task, the IEs are discussing with the IRs, not directly with the audience. Examples (8) and (9) show how fabricating one's message cannot be directed directly to the audience. The result is an awkward event, where the IE damages his face due to a disregard for the limits and possibilities of the situation.

Consequently, the face-work of the IEs is crucially important, because it displays the extent to which the IE feels confident in the interview. It also implies a strong clue to the IE's political character, showing the IE's manners in interaction in a broader sense. All in all, the IE's task is to convince the audience, and this aim can be reached only by concentrating on the situation and its rules of interaction, which only to a lesser extent are logical in character.

The IRs' role in posing persuasive chains of implicative questions strongly limits the IEs' possibilities to choose strategies. Among these, the IEs would be well advised to test the rules of interaction by giving contextual remarks on the conditions of the discussion and thus breaking the IRs' persuasive implications.

This statement obviously seems to be thin in substance. The thinness comes from the unique nature of each conversation. Political interviews are not created until they are in the making. In a radical manner, politics and the set of meanings, in short, the substance of interviews, are spoken from syllable to syllable, word for word, from TCU to TCU on the spot. In person-to-person contests, as in political interviews, this nominalist feature of politics is only reinforced.

In sum, the conversations in the **PresiTentti** series appear difficult to treat with classical models of logical argumentation. In such models, a typical chain of contention-explanation-warrant-backing-modalities-evidence is most probably broken into bypaths and gathered around clusters unfamiliar to the ordinary running of the chain. Tending to appeal to situational elements, and tending to exist at the level of **my understanding**, the logical structures of arguments are incomplete, capricious and intuitive in political interviews.

How should one analyze the substantial content of a conversation? The question is important because the series under consideration was among the leading events in the whole campaign, strongly contributing to and limiting topics, and creating the tones and moods of the campaign. Therefore, the series moulded the candidates' political character in a decisive manner.

Answering this question, the section entitled **Argumentation** offers a restrictive answer, emphasizing occasional elements and the importance of the level of **my understanding**. Models of logical reasoning appear as useful points of departure in revealing how strongly context-bound the discussions are. Not only based on wider political contexts, conversations are strictly guided by interpretations of detailed conditions. The result of these interpretations appear

mainly in both partners' TCUs.

Moreover, the contents of the conversations include strongly characterological material. The next section concentrates on the strategies of building substantial statements. So far, the interest has mainly focused on the traffic rules of interaction and on the role of logical reasoning in the **PresiTentti** series. Considering the major role of characterological questions in the series, it is natural that the substantial material also largely consists of person-related issues.

Narrative analysis suggests itself as a method for treating such topics. It offers a division of roles for participants, not treating anyone in isolation but as a participant in a tale that connects everyone involved.

Political narratives

The difficulty of logical argumentation in politics can be traced back to the ancient tradition and its distinction between **logos** and **mythos**. The former, covering both oral and written communication, is regarded as wider than the latter, which refers to oral communication only (Fisher 1985, 76). At issue in the two concepts is "which form of discourse – philosophy (technical discourse), rhetoric, or poetry – ensures the discovery and validation of truth, knowledge, and reality, and thereby deserves to be the legislator of human decision making and action" (ibid.).

To apply the statement to the case under consideration: the first alternative (philosophy, or technical discourse) appears to suit the analysis in a narrow sense, essentially only as a departure for deeper analyses. Consequently, the other two approaches should be considered for a deeper exploration. The following treatment will reflect on questions like: What is the nature of mythos in political interviews, and political oral utterances in general? Will short conversational units include such narratives at all? If yes, what do they consist of and what is their role in political conversations?

Rhetoric and poetry, combined in narratives, is the topic of this section. The aim is to analyze whether narratives serve as a seminal vehicle as regards the substance of the interviews.

Fisher's eloquence offers a clue to considering the cognitive nature of narratives. While "the discovery and validation of truth, knowledge, and reality" may appear too demanding a task to carry out, the relationship between truth and narratives is crucial. Assuming that it is not accidental that the term 'narration' is etymologically rooted in verbs indicating one's knowledge,⁴⁶ one may preliminarily assume that narratives, as stories, constitute a species of knowledge, especially typical of conversations, which consist of oral utterances.

46 The Latin *gnarus*: knowing, and *gnoscerere*: to know, as sources of 'to narrate': to recite the details (of a story).

- Humour and joking

Several times in the *PresiTentti* interview series, the IRs criticize the IEs for offering jokes instead of concentrating on 'the issues'. These moments are mostly tense, with the possibility of offences and inconvenience in the air. It is not only the IEs' role to relieve such situations by joking, sometimes also the IRs offer similar devices, such as TCUs, to introduce new topics.⁴⁷ Before exploring the role of joking in the *PresiTentti* series in detail, its role at a more general level needs to be discussed.

The next section will show how narratives, tales, and stories are regularly connected with joking and the display of humour in the interview series. Therefore, a glance at the conception of joking in general is in order.

As already mentioned, premodern thinking interpreted **humour** as tissue fluids. This definition, seemingly distant to the present uses of the term, still makes sense if considered in terms of a stylistic relation between a person and his/her utterance. Different tissue fluids produce different temperaments that, in turn, produce different senses of humour.

Of course, today this generalization only illustrates an ideal-typical connection between empirical incidents and modes of political characters. Intuitively, one should assume that when the temperament is active and warm, as in the case of a sanguine person, **humour**, in a modern sense, is more readily recognizable. However, a brief glance at the etymology of the term **sanguine** would suggest another approach to the issue as well.

The term, referring to blood and its colour, includes also connotations like being bloodthirsty and murderous (sanguinary), or being connected with capital punishment. Besides the joking element, the term 'sanguine' clearly includes a vertical dimension of power. A function of joking, thus, is to show the joker's power more or less directly.

That joking is something significant enough to be treated in linguistic-oriented approaches is by no means unanimously accepted. On the contrary, some theorists claim that the phenomenon is "clearly of minor importance" (Leech 1983, 145) or "doesn't belong to the normal processes of assessing or providing the meanings" (Schütte 1987, 239). Wilson (1990) passes by the subject quietly. In the case of political interviews, these statements appear baseless.

In his article, Fill (1992) refers to this double function of joking (*Scherz*). Taking examples from very different kinds of materials from Hamlet to MPs' interruptions, he demonstrates how joking and seriousness are intertwined in both everyday and political speeches. Fill found that of 50 conversations included in *Corpus of English Conversation* (Quirk & Svartvik 1980), only two did not include joking.

Fill concludes: "A conversation that engages no joking is not normal, and the

47 This is what happened e.g. in the citation (13), where the IR appeases the IE after meeting criticism for their lines of questioning. However, as one may intuitively understand, the task of conciliatory gestures by the IR cannot be fulfilled by joking, if there is even a remote possibility that the gesture can be understood as irony. The material of *PresiTentti* offers no example of conciliatory humour by the IRs but, instead, several examples of irony indirectly aimed to criticize the IE's stands.

participants certainly feel it" ((Fill, 1992, 23) the translations from German are mine). Thus, joking appears to be an elemental part of any conversation, providing, among other things, stylistic variance in emotional utterances.

Even more can be expected of the role of joking. For some, playing in general – the ludicrous impulse – is an essential ingredient of human civilization and human relations. Thus, playing, including joking, is deemed as a characteristically human and civilized phenomenon. In Schiller's word: "Man only plays when he is in the fullest sense of the word a human being, and he is only fully a human being when he plays" (cited in Fisher 1985, 81).

In this respect, the whole category of politics seemingly belongs to the activities of **Untermenschen** due to its seriousness and lack of play. Fortunately for politicians, the responsibility for the impression at least partly relies on those interpreting politics, namely on the shoulders of journalists and political scientists who, for once almost unanimously, exclude playing and humour from the political agenda as irrelevant phenomena.

Supposedly, politicians would follow more eagerly the Schillerian and Huizingian paths if given a chance by the interpreters. On the other hand, the ensuing analysis of the role of joking in political utterances does not depend on any metalevel assumption of the human condition. Appealing to Schiller's or Huizinga's conceptions operates at a different level of generalization, and, moreover, may cause uninvited results if applied in a more systematic way.⁴⁸

Fill makes a distinction between the ordinary functions of joking and the metamessage it implies. The two sets of meanings may reveal incongruous interpretations of the significance of what happened when somebody cracked a joke. The incongruence is due to the definition of the metamessage, which, according to Fill, always implies that "everything is all right" (Fill 1992, 23).

The phrase "**everything is all right**" obviously remains mostly unexpressed or is indicated by joking on the part of some participant or all participants. This phrase may serve as a general device of relieving a strained atmosphere in an interview. It may also serve as the IE's TCU to introduce other topics for discussion. However, due to the competitive nature of political interviews, the metamessages tend to turn into expressions of the type "**I am all right**".

Joking may dissolve strained situations and thus work as a device of saving the faces of everybody concerned: "**we are all right**". The participants should take this function into account to some extent, because all the participants may suffer from a radical breakdown of the interaction traffic rules. Consequently, joking, at the level of metamessages, may imply **I'm all right** but not **I'm all right, unlike you bastards**.

In this respect, the metamessage "**everything is all right**" is only one of several possibilities. In most cases joking implies an order of things and persons. Fill's version of the metamessage – "**I'm joking so everything is in order**" (1992, 19) – eventually unites precisely the two levels mentioned: the ordinary functions of joking and metamessages oriented to relieving the situation.

To prove the unification, the phrase **I'm joking so everything is in order**

48 Elias Canetti crystallizes the point: "You see ideas stretching their arms in the water. Just try to draw one of them separately out of water, you'll see how notoriously difficult it is."

should be treated in detail. First, the utterance typically belongs to utterances of the type **my understanding**. While never explicitly uttered in this mode, references to personal experiences are always present. See, for example, citation (7), where the IE appeals to his sudden insight into why the ambassador of Uganda pays visits to him; or citation (27), where the IE not only answers the question in a less conventional manner but also aims to introduce the topic of humour and seriousness in the event. The examples show deep involvement at the level of **my understanding** to issues considered irrelevant jokes by the IRs.

That **everything is in order** implies a certain vertical system of power executed on the spot. Verticality may be low, but taken as whole, the phrase no doubt is of vertical nature as far as power is concerned. It consists of two parts; first, it depicts **my understanding**, always assumed to be superior to others' understanding in certain respects. By joking, **my understanding** revels in the situation. By such a revelry, a person captures scarce time from others' jokes and hence rules the situation by placing **my understanding** above the understanding of the others.

This is exactly what one means by implying that **I'm joking so everything is in order**. Vertical relations are created by sparing time to such activities, strongly related in the presentation of one's more or less self-referential understanding. As always, the area is in principle free from prefabricated limitations and inclinations, because the conversation is completed only at the end of the interview.

Joking also seems to be evidence of an upper position in a hierarchy. Those in higher posts in organizations openly tend to joke more at the expense of those in lower positions than vice versa (Fill 1992, 18, citing Coser 1960). In addition, some scholars interpret joking as a sign of dominance over matters and persons (on the sources, see Fill, 1992, 18–19). However, no such generalizations are used in this analysis.

To conclude what has been said so far about joking in political conversations: it serves to relieve strained situations⁴⁹ and, at the same time, always implicitly builds vertical structures between the participants. However, political interviews have their own special rules and functions for joking. Of these, their role as devices of footing and suitable TCUs has already been mentioned.

Joking seems to play a decisive part as far as the substance of conversations, their topics – in short, their **politics** – is concerned. It forms an essential vehicle of narratives included in the conversations. Narratives, in turn, contribute decisively to the building of the IEs' political character. The latter process remains to be treated at length in later sections. Before that, the relationship between joking and narratives needs to be analyzed.

49 Evidently, efforts of joking vary in their success. I've told a story of a less successful incident of joking in my "The bright side of getting soiled...". Finnish politics and politician on television" (in Finnish), Jyväskylä 1994. The story covers a party congress event where the candidates for the party chair were interviewed. One candidate, forced to begin the series under unwelcome conditions (the ex-chair was just being celebrated), tried to direct people's attention to the ongoing event by joking, but failed to focus the audience's concentration on himself.

- Joking and narratives

To introduce the theme, let us consider citation (7). The story included in it has been treated from the points of view of its nature as a TCU and its role as the IE's counter-device to the IRs' embarrassing questions. Here, the citation offers an example of narratives in the series.

- IR: Do you have international contacts...with other politicians and parties?
 IE: No, none whatsoever except with an ambassador from Denmark, accredited there by Uganda. She pays a visit to me once a year. A very beautiful negro. Up to this time, I didn't know why she visits me, but now there is a suspicion that they are trying to make me play the main role in a biography series on Idi Amin.
 IR1: You try –
 IR2: Does the role fit you?
 IE: Perhaps it does, judging by my look
 IR1: [You try] to crack jokes and skip this issue, that you don't have –
 IE: But I am –
 IR1: ...any international contacts.
 IE: I don't. I already said so.
 (7)

The above conversation, in addition to what had been said earlier, contributed to the criticism of the topic of 'international contacts', in addition to offering the IE an opportunity to create a narrative for narrative's sake.

Besides being a narrative, this tale is no doubt a joke.⁵⁰ Also, its role as a cache of racist and chauvinist stances could be analyzed with justification. One notices that the IRs' reaction to the tale is twofold. One of them goes on to ask whether the role of Idi Amin would fit the IE; the other blames the IE for his refusal to deviate from the topic and crack jokes instead.

IR2, who lead this part of the conversation, recognizes the IE's answer as a joke. By joking, says IR2, the IE tries to nullify the issue of not having international contacts. However, the IE denies this interpretation and repeats his lack of contacts, a remark which opened the narrative.

IR1 accepts the IE's narrative by making a specifying question about it. The question IR1 poses offers the IE an opportunity to give a self-referential appendix to the tale. When provided by the IE himself, the physical comparison of Idi Amin and the IE also represents the IE's ability to maintain distance on the spot from his assumed political character as a right-wing militant fiercely opposing 'foreign elements'.

IR1's additive question gives the narrative this surplus quality, a valuable possibility for the IE, who now can both tell his story with all its connotations and at the same time relativize its significance by comparing his appearance to that of Idi Amin.

50 Both the narrator and the audience have their share of responsibility for the quality of the joke.

In order to present the essential self-referentialism in a more technical and exact way, a few new notions should be introduced. These are the actor's view (AV), the narrator's view (NV) and the third view (TV) in a narrative. When the IE is telling his story without commenting on the actor's behaviour, the view offered is that of the actor. In citation (7) this phase ends when the IE begins the words "Up to this time ...".

The IE simply tells a story without commenting on it or giving it a context. When he comes to the words "Up to this time ...", he introduces a self-referential view on the tale, giving it a context in time and space. The very phrase indicates that the IE has reached something not available so far, and also gives an explanation of his new level of information. Apparently, the level is no longer that of the AV but that of the NV reflecting on the conditions of the story told from the AV.

The third element, already suggested in the IE's ... **they say** ..., naturally consists of the IRs' contributions to the tale. In interviews, the IEs are never alone with their stories; the IRs and the audience control, limit and mould the utterances indirectly and/or directly, even when they are silent or physically absent, as is the case with the television audience.

The third view (TV) consists of the IRs' contribution in the event. This TV plays an active role, moulding the conditions and introducing the topics, thus regulating to some extent the possibilities to create narratives.

Sometimes the IRs affirm the IEs' role as narrators; at other times they aim to prevent narratives. The intricacies of the IRs' role regarding the IE's narratives will be discussed at some length in the following. Before that, however, a few remarks on the role of the larger audience are required.

The audience watching their television also belongs to the TV, and while their role on the spot is not that of a controller or a catalyst, unlike the role of the IRs, their contribution finally unchains the narratives, gives these a life of their own in the minds of the audience.

Here, it suffices to just draw attention to the crucial role the larger audience. The audience is the Supreme Court in judging the narratives, in assuming and rejecting their implications. But, as mentioned earlier, the audience not just passively accepts or rejects, but essentially creates the narratives, one by one, with the aid of the political and cultural background prevailing in society.

Regarding the interview series of **PresiTentti**, the empirical treatment of the dyad joking–narratives can be started with the following citation:

- IR1: Now, let's continue with the basic values. What does family mean to you?
 IE: Family is for a human being a very important ... very difficult and very demanding sphere of life. First of all, family is important for raising the children.
 IR1: You are a divorced man.
 IE: Yes I am.
 IR1: You–
 IR2: [Was] it a difficult matter?
 IE: Yes, it was.

IR2: What did it teach to you?

IE: I don't think you can act as my confessor, but at least it taught me humility.
(36)⁵¹

The citation offers a lot of material for discussing the mechanism of creating narratives for political purposes. Here, the strategy of the IE in treating personal and intimate issues is reserved. He tries to clear the questions with as few words as possible, concentrating on basic issues. However, by giving his first answer, he already implies the ensuing complications by uttering the words **very difficult**.

While not a rare expression in the context of family life, it evidently serves here as a manifestation of the IE's precautionary device. The IE simply knows that the IRs will touch on his divorce and allows himself to openly refer to difficulties at two levels: in family life and in the ongoing conversation.

The topic of family life offers the IE an ideal opportunity to create a narrative for his purposes. In its variety of emotions, filled with *Viskningar och Rop* ('Shouts and Whispers', Ingmar Bergman), including a complicated set of human relations, such a topic always serves as a basic model of dramas. For politicians, the treatment of such a topic may also be supposed to include impersonal and societal aspects. Above all, of course, the topic offers an opportunity for intimate revelations.

Evidently, it is no accident that the topic emerges in almost every interview. The IRs' strategy seems to be one of stressing the theme when any characterological reason concerning the IE would suggest opening the topic. Divorces and claims of extra-marital relations typically trigger such a topic. Thus, a relatively disadvantageous point of departure was awaiting some of the IEs.

Of the eleven IEs, no fewer than eight had to face this topic in one way or another. The list of those avoiding the topic is shorter to type: Ahtisaari, Kankaanniemi, Tiainen. Besides divorces and extra-marital relations, the family topic also includes subthemes like reasons for remaining unmarried (Virtanen), eroticism (Kuuskoski), sexual harassment (Väyrynen), incest (Rehn) and adultery (Aittoniemi). Insistently keeping the topic on the agenda, the IRs openly indicated to each IE long in advance that they had better check their record regarding these matters and prepare lines for discussing the topic.

Labelling the topic a 'family topic' does not give a full account of the situation. Actually, the IRs are discussing gender differentiation and the IEs' attitudes and records in the matter. The latter feature is stressed, since no conversation about concepts could replace the exploration of the IEs' personal history in issues under discussion. In this respect, family is an important theme, but only in that it serves as a conventional device to make it possible to treat politico-sexual issues more thoroughly. In addition, 'family' serves as a standard topic when discussing morals at personal and societal levels.

The IRs' strategy seems to point in two directions. First, in choosing the subthemes they touch on subtle areas in the history of the political character of each IE. Such hints, explicit enough not to be passed by in silence but yet unuttered and thus hard to meet openly at the level of personal experience, will

51 The IE is Dr. Keijo Korhonen, an independent candidate.

constitute a severe test of credibility for any IE.

The awkwardness of the situation was intensified by the fact that the IRs, choosing family as their point of departure, seemed to favour conservative values – a gesture seldom made by political journalists. Astonishingly enough, those IEs haunted by the issue unanimously followed a liberal attitude. The question “Am I my brother’s keeper”⁵² by one IE crystallizes the attitude (see citation 5). The IEs refused to fulfill the expectations by not praising or promoting conventional family structures and values.

Second, the IRs were testing each IE’s opinion about the relations between such intimate topics and political power. In one case, a personal question was posed about the role of the candidate’s wife:

- IR2: Good. You are the only candidate with his wife in the election posters. Don’t you rely on your own appeal?
- IE: Yes I do, but, er, she has, first of all, helped me very much and in my opinion the role of women is increasingly emphasized in today’s society. I’m a supporter of this and also see that the Finns want to know what the presidential couple would look like.
- IR2: Now what kind of a role will your wife have if you become president?
- IE: She won’t be Hillary. But certainly she will...
- IR2: (But) almost...
- IE: Not at all. She will certainly be engaged in voluntary activities, social activities, she has been very active with old people. And then I’m grateful that she has listened to much of what I’ve been thinking aloud and sometimes given such good feminine advice that has helped a lot.
- (37)

The common theme in citations (36) and (37) is the wasted opportunities of delivering narratives. Both of them contain ideal departures for short narratives depicting the IE’s potentials of intimacy, credibility and appeal. In both cases, the opportunity is neglected. Before a more detailed analysis of the two citations, an example of a well utilized opportunity is given next to clarify the mechanism of accepting an opportunity to deliver a narrative.

- IR2: But don’t you know that many people are even terrified about such a situation and such people who always declare themselves to be right?
- IE: Now y::eah that’s the point. I had a supporter’s meeting at an early phase of the campaign and a supporter said that people despise you when you are always right and you never admit you are wrong. That would you now for once admit you are wrong. And I answered to him that one should first err so that one could admit to have erred. Thereafter everybody laughed. There are ... of course if spoken seriously so of course I also err and make mistakes and I admit it if mistakes occur, but now I think that it would be unfair if I’d start whipping myself in public when I’ve been whipped so much by all others during these years.
- (38)

52 In this case, one may assume a conscious use of a gender-specific phrase, relieving only men from guardianship.

The preceding conversation is essential to understanding the context of the citation. The IE⁵³, known as an insistent man never giving way voluntarily, is faced with this reputation and asked about his alleged unerringness. He immediately admits to have made a mistake during the campaign. He admitted to have missed the timetable, been late for a campaign event, and therefore behaved irritably and been responded to accordingly.

The IRs even mentioned a statement claimed to have been given by the IE, according to which the IE is once destined to become the president of Finland. Partly affirming this, the IE pointed out that he had actually said that the road chose him, that tasks opened for him without effort. The part of the interview assumes partly religious tones when the IE uses the terms 'lead' and 'revelation'.

Thereafter, the IR poses his question about people's reaction to unerringness. In response, the IE gives a classic example of uniting joking and a narrative. Delivering a story about an incident with his campaign staff, the IE appeals to the audience's sense of humour. In addition, he at the same time keeps his reputation as a man who does not make mistakes.

The AV's contribution to the narrative continues till the words **There are ...**, where the NV's contribution begins. The core of the narrative is told after noticing how **everybody laughed**. Then comes a self-referential section where the IE explains the narrative, relativizes its message, and, finally, partly dilutes its message by complaining about the chase against him.

As in citation (7), the IE completes a short narrative by utilizing the two levels of expression, those of the AV and the NV. And, unlike in citations (36) and (37), the examples (7) and (38) show a high level of conscious strategy in openly operating at the two levels of expression.

In this respect, citations (36) and (37) assume dissimilar strategies. In citation (36), the IE simply refuses to give **any** narrative, although the IR explicitly asks for it. The IE's one-worded answers to the topic reveal his tactics of passing by the topic with minimum remarks – a strategy that is risky, if not completely hopeless.

The IE's own attitude is revealed in his last contribution **I don't think you can act as my confessor**, which openly rejects the possibility to construct emotionally appealing narratives around the topic, or around **any** topic in the conditions prevailing in the interview. Yet the IRs implicitly suggest the possibility in every turn in their questions, of which the last two were explicit suggestions to launch a narrative of the IE's family life and its varying fortunes.

By his rude comment the IE expresses a metalevel comment. The statement (re)formulates the traffic rules of the conversation. This move, voluntarily chosen by the IE, nevertheless gives an impression of a distant person who instead of confessing his triumphs and tribulations concentrates on the rules of conversation. This coolness, no matter how smart it may be as such, cannot replace an intimate narrative.

The narrative in its twofold structure offers a way to relativize the basic story told in the AV. The NV, intervening in the story, has all the opportunities to shed counter-light on the narrative core. The only rule to be faithfully followed is to

53 Dr. Paavo Väyrynen, the candidate of the Center of Finland -party.

avoid inconsistencies at the same level. The NV on the story may be critical, humorous, distance-creating – almost anything if the two positions are explicitly distinguished from each other and are both uttered *expressis verbis*.

The strategy chosen by the IE in citation (36) is most probably hopeless in television conversations due its active resistance to narratives. That the strategy was the IE's overall choice can be easily shown when comparing the relative predominance of different topics. In this case, impersonal issues are discussed to an exceptional degree during the conversation. Accordingly, the share of characterological issues is very low.

Nonetheless, the strategy is conscious of the crucial importance of the two levels in the conversation. The IE chooses to invest in the traffic rules of conversation as a second level of discussion rather than at the narrative level. The choice, a natural one in certain circumstances, now breaks a very basic rule of political expressions for the IEs, which goes as follows: If given a chance, always tell a story; the more personal and intimate one, the better.

A crucial condition is, however, that the IE should find a way to show both the level of the AV and the level of the NV. Failing to do this, one runs the risk of looking naive in prattling on about one's experiences without internal criticism, without an apparent distance to one's own expressions. This is largely what happens in citation (37).

The IE delivers a short narrative as a response to IR2's suggestion to deliver one. IR2 cunningly provides his suggestion in a negative manner: **Don't you rely on your own appeal** sets a trap which the IE fails to notice clearly enough. The point is to separate the couple by recourse to gender issues, if possible. At issue are the candidate's gender differentiations, of which the IE also provides an illustrative picture.

The IE constructs a very traditional scene of the political differentiation of genders. The man stays in the center of the stage; it is he who speaks or fills the space with his voice in **thinking aloud**. It is also the man who possesses spiritual resources, actively producing intellectual contributions, of which the flow of oral expressions is a sign.

In turn, the woman assumes an auxiliary role. The IE voluntarily rejects any identification with **Hillary**, apparently referring to president Bill Clinton's wife Hillary Rodham Clinton, not, for example, Sir Edmund Hillary. The reason of rejection is left to be deduced negatively, by looking at the qualities the IE's wife would realize as the partner of the president.

The president's wife would act in the margin, taking part in voluntary activities, caring for old people, etc. In addition, she should assume the role of ears, listening to the IE's flow of consciousness and **sometimes giving such good feminine advice** which, according to tradition, has helped the IE.

Every component of a rich political narrative is present here – except for the NV's view. Without a self-referential contribution, one tends to assume that the IE uncritically relies on his narrative. Thus, the IE will be charged with his lack of judgement, or, more precisely, with his lacking expressions of judgement. These two issues can by no means be equated.

The self-referential frame uttered by the NV cannot be replaced by other devices. A political narrative, once delivered, urgently deserves a balancing factor

displaying the IE's political judgement, the virtues of which certainly include an ability to relativize one's own utterances on the spot.

This element is completely lacking in citation (37), which only repeats traditional attitudes to the point of a cliché. It is important to notice that traditionalism as such does not constitute a cliché. It is the one-level mode of expression that does it. To clarify the point, let us have a glance at citation (19), which also assumes a traditionalist view in its narrative:

- IR2: Now, according to your own words, you are an indolent man. Would you remain indolent also as president?
- IE: Well, I mean that when I come home I immediately change into, er, a flannel shirt and velvet trousers and sit down on a comfortable chair. And hope that my wife has prepared some tea, and I eat the pasties given by my cousin that I brought with me from Hämeenlinna, and enjoy a good book and good music.
(19, a part)

The citation above appears to resemble the example (37). It creates a pastoral view of petty-bourgeois comforts, narrating the story only from the AV. However, the narrative includes an important shift to the level of the NV, although the shift may not be immediately visible.

Consider the word **hope**. From that word on, the narrative unfolds within the NV. **And hope that** is a conditional expression, not any indicative device of telling a story. While the pasties are, no doubt, really a gift from the IE's cousin and have once been materially in the hand of the IE, the gastronomic pleasures are conditional; they represent the NV's view of the situation. The AV has changed into a comfortable dress; time stops when the IE has succeeded in jumping into his velvet trousers; the pleasures of the evening are awaiting.

Here, the word **hope** does not imply exploitation of the candidate's wife. Rather, in an optimum case the wife has prepared the tea to be served with the pasties. If not, the pasties may have to wait for a moment. After all, good music and books are still available.

In comparison with citation (37), several differences become visible. Citation (19) deals with a unique situation – or, at any rate, let us suppose it does. The pasties from Hämeenlinna! While the word **hope** actually reveals another plane of consideration, the anticipation of gastronomic pleasures keeps one attentive to a unique empirical case where the IE, now in his velvet trousers, can be seen approaching the kitchen.

Citation (37) lacks such a power of expression in its stereotypical mode. Essentially, the example manifests a species of ideology familiar to most but in this case lacking any intimate feature to be identified to. A picture about the subject of the AV also differs in these two cases. In (37), a ready-made constellation prevails: a man **thinking aloud**, the wife listening and commenting from time to time. In (19), the man's superiority is not at all so clear. He is approaching the kitchen in the hope of gastronomic pleasures, but it is only a hope, not an apodeictic certainty.

There are two essential differences between the substances in (19) and (37). First, (19) exists at the level of privacy while the domain of (37) is public. In the

latter case, giving and asking for advice – an essential activity in the situation – falls within the sphere of public affairs. In an implicit manner, the IE contrasts the **feminine advice** with the public sphere of his activities, but, again, due to the lacking level of the NV, one gets an impression that the relation is not very conscious at all.

So, the private sphere exists but is only vaguely reflected through the unconscious remarks of the IE. On the other hand, the argument of advising is unsuccessful and makes a mess of the levels of private and public spheres. Had the IE praised his wife's reasoning in a more objective way, without appealing to her feminine nature, the argument would have been sound in the public context.⁵⁴ Now, the argument may arouse suspicion about the IE's stand on equality in both public and personal spheres.

In contrast, citation (19) above offers no contribution to the level of public affairs. Of course, favouring a certain way of life, the narrative also contains implications and suggestions of a less turbulent politics, for which private enjoyment of books and music is essential. In a sense, the narrative strongly implies the mood that **everything is in order**.

The theme of homecoming is linked with the phrase. Shutting the door behind him, the IE seems to be assured that he can afford to take off his uniform after fulfilling the tasks of day. The narrative, elemental as it is, concentrates on the final scene of a larger potential narrative which appears only in the form of implicit references.

The pastuality in itself contains a hint about the societal conditions. That the IE voluntarily and somewhat astonishingly delivers the narrative would suggest that societal conditions indeed are not very turbulent. What should one think about a presidential candidate delivering such a story under conditions of, say, a civil war? Evidently, it would indicate profound insolence on the part of the narrator. Because such attitudes are not to be expected of the candidates, the conclusion is: everything is basically all right.

In this way pastuality connects cognitive and ideological elements in the same narrative. The presuppositions that the narrative implies regarding the state of public affairs are of cognitive nature. On the other hand, the attitude also suggests a way of life. That the narrative may be realized presupposes relatively tranquil conditions (a cognitive supposition), and, living in the way the narrative suggests is in turn conducive to tranquillity in society (an ideological⁵⁵ assumption). Circular reasoning, the validity of which may arouse suspicion.

However, the point is not logical in character. A narrative's practical credibility and appeal cannot be nullified by testing their logic, with the exception of what has been said about the two levels of the AV and the NV. Even in this

54 The IE is trapped by his reputation as a conservative patronalistic politician. The expressions he uses could be allowed to some other person, but not to one from whom they are expected. Paradoxically, liberal persons can occasionally afford to display more conservative attitudes than the conservatives themselves!

55 I use the term 'ideological' hesitantly due to the long and and colourful tail the term carries. However, an example may suffice to show the ideological nature of the narrative. If one replaces 'tranquillity' with 'oppression' in the interpretation of the narrative, one gets a genuine Althusserian approach to the issue.

case, logic is not enough; expressing the two levels is required to display a necessary distance by the IE to his own narratives, or, basically, to his own person.

Another important difference in the substances of the two narratives is their relation to uniqueness. In this respect, narrative (37) operates at a more general level. It lacks any decisive nuance with which it could be separated from any typical candidate's narrative. Citation (19) is unique due to factors already mentioned. Paradoxically, such a uniqueness seems to offer a better device for identification. Although most Finns do not have a cousin in Hämeenlinna, similar relations in the audience's mind are activated when creating such figures in the narrative. The question will be discussed more thoroughly in the section on political characterology.

Second, when the context of the narratives is taken into consideration, the differences assume slightly new forms. As already mentioned, citation (19) is somewhat surprising if considered in its context because it repeats a topic already closed. That the narrative comes as an astonishment to the IRs may be seen in the continuation of the citation (see p. 43). The solution represents the IE's authentic will to express the narrative, not an unmistakable choice in the situation.

Accused of his arrogance in the opening phase of the interview, the IE should have re-evaluated his case (37). A cunning move by the IR to make the IE once again assure his self-confidence brought success when the IE mixed the themes of his self-assurance and gender roles in a less modern manner. On the other hand, one notices with the example of (19) that simple, traditional visions of life are not taboos if the narrative can also create the NV's potentially critical and relativizing view of the issue.

Returning to the theme of jokes and narratives, one notices that citation (37) does not contain any jokes but includes a lot of silent smile. Citation (36) is filled with sarcasm, while citation (38) carries a truly joking narrative.

Not accidentally at all, the jokes and the narratives emerge together. While assuming different relationships, narratives and humour both have a dual structure. Narratives are eventually formed with the NV's contribution to the narrative core of the AV. Similarly, joking implies metamessages to be taken seriously while offering substantial tales as well.

Irony is perhaps the clearest example of the dual structure. The dual structure appears at the level of reception. The text (or the expression; the expressions are oral here) remains the same, but the way it can be interpreted should include at least two radically different possibilities. The following example may clarify the point.

A Finnish writer Origo once presented the following citation: "That event contains a shine of the kind Franz Kafka has so cleverly reached in his aphorism: Nothing in the world matches the first bite of warm beer" (1984, cited from Tammi 1992, 128). As we know, the original aphorism comes from another author of a very different sort. The irony is created when we assume that Origo has assumed a subaudience which innocently affirms the statement.

Politics, as an activity for universal audiences due to its democratic ideals, does not encourage a lot of irony. Politicians' speeches are mostly targeted at universal audiences, not distinguishing subaudiences too sharply for evident reasons. The law of large numbers looms in the background of politicians' actions.

However, when such a need occurs, irony serves elegantly to distinguish audiences. While not offending others, irony makes it possible to pretend that the audience is cohesive and at the same deliver different messages to different audiences. The value of assuming the cohesion of the audience is evident, to take only one aspect, for economic reasons: giving one speech for everybody is a lot easier than giving each one a personal speech.

Consider the 'Kafka story'. For one audience, it depicts a nice metaphor of biting regardless of its origin. For another, the story implies Origo's mood of humour due to the false citation. For a third one, Origo is suspect for his lacking judgement as to the appropriate service temperatures of beer. And so on – possible interpretations are innumerable.

Irony creates a door visible to only those who see it. This paradoxical statement maintains that for those who do not see the door, no scarcity actually occurs. When no door is seen, no door is expected, either. What makes irony problematic in political utterances is that ironical statements may be interpreted literally, without an understanding that there is a multitude of doors.

In the **PresiTentti** interview series, ironical TCUs on the part of the IRs are a rule rather than an exception. See, for example, examples (6) (the issue of honesty), (16) (the discussion of the role of miracles), and (18) (on the role of the head and feet). It is mostly the role of the IRs to promote ironical statements to advance the discussion. The role of such statements as TCUs is important due to the ambiguities they often contain. They aid the IRs in leaving a topic and introducing another.

Citation (36) exemplifies a sarcastic situation. The IE refuses with a sarcastic comment to accept the question whether he has learnt from his divorce, criticizing the role taken on by the IRs. **I don't think you can act as my confessor** first proposes a role for the IRs and then rejects the validity of the proposition. However, the latter part of the answer still responds to the basic question: **...but at least it taught humility**. The statement as a whole does not fall within the category of irony. Thinking about a phrase like **dear confessors, it at least taught me humility**, one notices how incompatible the tone of irony would be with the question here. Clearly, irony is a difficult species of style in politics.

One of the IEs⁵⁶ wanted to test this idea personally. The following citation is the unique case of explicit discussion of irony in the series.

IR1: Do you accept paid love, or brothels?

IE: No.

IR2: In an earlier debate you said you accepted them precisely in the name of liberalism –

IE: (I've) –

IR2: (Have) you changed your opinion?

IE: I have not changed my opinion, but it seems that in Finland far-going sarcasm and irony don't bite. I attributed everything to a double standard of morality, sexual harassment in jobs, rape in marriages, and laughing at those who don't accept sex bars, and in my opinion, if this is the case – and I think I said so – if this is what the Finns want, go ahead, I am a liberal. But the

56 The IE is Elisabeth Rehn, the candidate of the Swedish People's Party.

sarcasm went too far. This probably is one of those spontaneous statements that I sometimes should avoid.
(39)

We can constitute the IE's original statement about paid love on the basis of what the IE says about it here. Most probably the IRs had the record of what she had said earlier and they would certainly have intervened in case the IE had modified her original statement. The IE keeps her statement but gives it a specific interpretation: it was sarcasm and irony that, unfortunately, does not work in Finland.

The word **Finland** is essential here. Saying that sarcasm and irony do not work in **Finland**, the IE implicitly suggests that there are countries where such expressions are more welcome. The theme is not developed further but remains open for the evaluation of the audience. The same IE, in citation (12), uses the same device, stating that in Finland, unlike elsewhere, ambition is considered a negative quality.

Citation (12) not only implicitly criticizes the cultural climate in Finland but explicitly maintains that the disadvantageous state of affairs does not prevail elsewhere. This arouses the IRs' interest in resisting the interpretation. The discussion (13) goes on as follows:

IR1: Well, it is certainly appreciated here, too.
IE: H'mmm.
(13)

No agreement was reached on the subject. The IR's correction of the IE's statement is a rarely used device in the IRs' arsenal. As an issue of interpreting cultural trends, the statement belongs to a group of generalizations to be debated permanently without much hope of 'solving' the matter. In this respect, the IR's move may have been, among other things, a patronizing or a conciliatory gesture in a process of saving the faces of the participants.

The topic of **Finland** is essential in the character building for each candidate. Consequently, it is discussed in the chapter V. Suffice it to say here that a combination of irony and **Finland** is also a rarely seen phenomenon. While not unique in the data under consideration, the combination by no means forms a rule, either.

Returning to example (38), one realizes the dangers of political irony. If the audience simply does not have enough capacity to open the less evident doors of interpretation, only the most evident ones remain. In this case, those doors lead the Finns directly to sex bars and brothels – a destination still preferably to be avoided, according to the IE.

- **Between Proppian structures and soundbites**

The preceding section introduced political narratives and their relationship with humour and joking. However, the actual nature of narratives was left aside. The issue is crucial, because one should know how to limit the concept in order to know what to treat in the analyses as a narrative. The very conception, as we

know, tends to belong to those that are used in a versatile manner. Not a negative issue in itself, but as definitions are negations, precision, as well, should be appreciated.

In addition, the material under consideration limits the scope of the concept. In a ten-minute interview, large tales cannot be expected. The conversation consists of short sections of oral expressions, including the TCUs, to be delivered by the IRs and the IEs, one by one, each in turn. Estimated in time, the utterances in the **PresiTentti** series had a variance between one and forty seconds. In any case, mostly they are short. Still, they must contain all the narrative elements if these are to emerge in the events.

“The crucial political issues turn on complex or initial causes, motives, and future consequences of alternative courses of action, none of which can be known for certain” (Bennett & Edelman 1985, 158). Thus, the totality of politics will not appear to be under anybody’s control, either conceptually or empirically. The citation also crystallizes an urgent need for narratives to clarify and focus on essential messages.

Structurally, narratives may be conceived in various ways. Typically, and honouring the history of political science, one may explore a narrative’s structure by means of a classic series of questions **who, what, where, why, how, when**. When added by **with what result**, the series is completed. Another approach would start with requesting **the origin** of an event, setting its **space and time**, and continuing to consider **the consequences** for actors and spectators involved in the narrative.

Supplying these features, which are most often unfalsifiable and unverifiable, the narratives create a particular kind of social and political world with heroes and villains, deserving and undeserving people, and a set of public policies that are modified with the problems to which they are offered as solutions. When interpreting narratives in this manner (see, e.g., Bennett & Edelman 1985), one tends to emphasize their role in reinforcing the prefabricated values and attitudes of the audience.

Empirically, the statement has received support ever since Lazarsfeldt’s studies. Repeating a familiar story, the early campaign studies found that, first, changes in the audience’s attitudes were typically not changes in voting behaviour but rather, on the contrary, changes that reinforced the prevailing attitudes, and, second, changes in the intensity of attitudes (Devlin 1987, 138).

However, the problem of narratives’ supposed influences on the audience’s opinions is notoriously difficult to study empirically. There are several reasons for this. First, narratives never occur as isolated statements but are expressed as parts of larger totalities. A researcher’s problem is to decide how to assess the influence of precisely **this** narrative on the audience.

Second, audiences normally cannot be explored in their ordinary settings. Laboratory conditions, as exceptions from normal living-room-conditions, almost certainly may be assumed to cause differences in attitudes as well. Even if one is unwilling to assume that much, at least one should not take for granted the opposite claim, according to which laboratory conditions may be paralleled to the ordinary conditions of spectators, and, consequently, the behavior in laboratories to that in living rooms. When the impact of expressed statements on the audiences

is hard to demonstrate, much cannot be expected from estimations of the empirical role of narratives.

Therefore, no general claims are made here concerning the audiences' empirical attitudes toward narratives. Instead, narratives are treated in the context of political logic, and the focus is on their rhetorical dimensions. In this respect, the treatment of narratives is congruent with that of Bennett and Edelman (1985). However, there is one noticeable difference. Bennett and Edelman's approach is openly normative. Their suppositions may be summarized as follows:

- 1) Political narratives are to a large extent used to stabilize the existing order of things. Although not rejecting all opposition, such uses of narration reinforce themselves, voluntarily choosing their themes and documents among those which favour their basic plots of stabilization;
- 2) In mass political discourse, it is novelty, uncertainty and ambiguity that are least tolerable. Certain modes of narratives serve such needs, resolving "possible points of new understanding into black and white replays of the political dramas of the past" (Bennett & Edelman 1985, 158);
- 3) There are "more useful" modes of narratives; a narrative as such is "among the most creative intellectual forms because it can achieve sudden breaks with expectation while introducing new sensory experience" (1985, 162).

Attaching oneself to such normativism implies certain risks in research. For instance, a justified question is whether novelty, uncertainty and ambiguity really are "least tolerable in mass political discourse". Does the statement refer to reception? Or does it only describe the ordinary flow of everyday politics on television? Does 'ambiguity' really belong to the list?

More questions to be answered before the process of examination: How strongly should such implications guide and limit actual and empirical research of narratives? Should a researcher insist in paying attention to the modes of narration that seem to confirm the statement, i.e. to narratives staging firm and unsurprising black-and-white dramas about yesterday's battles? And, finally, crystallizing novelty, uncertainty and ambiguity in the notion of surprise, who actually knows what will surprise the public at large?

The last question is essential. In their statement Bennett and Edelman seem to rely on audiences' conservatism. While such an assumption may be applied to the American audience in the first half of the 1980s, there are no sufficient grounds to universalize the assumption.

The data considered so far in this study seem to suggest another approach to the problem of surprise. Surprise, like ambiguity, is a more or less assumed strategy for the IEs and the IRs. They are striving for initiatives in the conversation, and surprises are a welcome device. Any discussion of surprise that omits the competitive nature of conversations fails to realize the complex structure of the event.

The IRs and the IEs not only try to surprise each other; they also have to take into account the more distant audience's presence and reaction. To illustrate the complexity of the problem, let us take another example.

- IR1: Good. You tole...tolerate gays and lesbian couples, I suppose you do this, but would you allow sexual relationships between parents and grown-up children?
- IE: No. ... In my opinion it is –
- IR1: [It has] been proposed –
- IE: It has been proposed and this is –
- IR1: [The idea –]
- IE: where my limit goes.
- IR1: The idea starts from the assumption that a person of full age is competent to decide what he or she is doing.
- IE: [This]
- IR1: It goes beyond your liberalism.
- IE: It goes beyond it. Here I've a sort of mechanism that finds this completely impossible, perhaps because I'm myself strongly a mother figure. Er...my relationship with my children is such that the idea feels completely impossible. We all have our brakes somewhere and this is without question where my limit goes.
- IR2: Good. Let's go on to foreign policy. You're an eager supporter of the Eu...European Union.
(40)⁵⁷

The topic, a possibility of sexual relationships between parents and their adult children, may be regarded as a surprise in a presidential debate. The citation is related to a larger totality aimed to test the IE's maintained liberal attitudes. In this respect, the IRs' decision to ask the IE's opinions at the level of liberal attitudes is less astonishing. The question, however, is whether the public at large found the topic surprising.

First of all, the IE's attitude toward the question is unsurprising when rejecting such personal applications of liberalism. In this interview – the first in the series – the IRs seem to assume liberties to be abandoned later. While no proof can be given, I'm inclined to suppose that, for some reason or another, a conscious decision to omit the topic of the less conventional manners in human sexual behaviour was made after this event. In turn, putting an end to the topic could not be deemed astonishing.

However, no evidence can be shown about the audience's reaction to such a topic. The category of surprise - and similar emotions on the part of the audience - is hard to measure in empirical explorations. How could it be operationalized? According to a person's feeling of being surprised? And then, taking a sample of a thousand persons and simply asking each of them whether he or she felt surprised? And what if a fair share should have felt surprised? Was their surprise due to the IRs' failure to ask about animals next?

Another possibility, again considering the complete logic of event, would regard surprises as a result of an intention to surpass expectation values. "I was surprised that there was no surprise" (Wittgenstein). Each of the three parties has equal opportunities to surprise and to be surprised. Without a careful analysis of

57 The IE is Elisabeth Rehn. The citation is a direct continuation of citation (39).

these relations, no statements of actual surprises should be made. And, as already mentioned, in the case of the audience such results are difficult to verify or falsify.

Expectation values may partly concern interaction traffic rules, partly cover substantial issues and their treatment. In any case, it is reasonable to recognize their subjective nature: they are always **someone's** expectation values, no 'general' axioms in the situation. This subjectivity emphasizes their strategic nature, the opportunity to define one's position vis-à-vis them.

Returning to citation (40), one may wonder whether a genuine surprise would emerge, not from the topic itself, but rather from its cool treatment by the IE. However, this is only an assumption based on the contextual knowledge about the preceding presidential debates, in which such topics could not be expected to appear. Consequently, the assumption would suggest more angry and rejective answers, and the surprise emerges when the IE's tolerance for the theme is revealed.

However, all such assumptions should be based openly on one's own spectator experience, not on any sweeping generalizations about 'the conditions of society'. Such assumptions, appealing and intuitively correct as they may appear, risk implicitly influencing empirical analyses, without which no further endorsement can be offered to the hypotheses.

In addition to their supposition of the audience's universal conservatism, Bennet and Edelman put forward another, presumably more promising view on the audience's relation to political narratives. They give three conditions of the credibility of a narrative.

First, narratives accomplish a sense of realism by introducing selective grounds for supporting a particular plot and discouraging others. Second, storytellers often introduce plots in a fragmentary manner. When audiences are familiar with standard plots, they complete the stories provided by the narrators. Third, the satisfaction and acceptance of the audience is achieved by shaping the familiar features (i.e., ideologies and social norms) of emerging narratives. (Bennett & Edelman 1985, 162–163)

The fragmentary nature of narratives is important for at least two reasons. First, interviews cannot contain long narratives but have to stick with 30 second narratives or even shorter ones. Possibly, narratives may make a chain of 30-second turns. The topics change rapidly, and it is only reasonable to expect that after 2 or 3 such turns the time has come to change the topic.

Second, the active role of the audience would seem logical in terms of credibility, a quality demanding subjective acceptance and not only passive allegiance from the audience. In addition, this activity applies to everything that has been said about modern communication theories (see the discussion of the concept of **my understanding**).

In this respect, it would be too much to expect full-blown stories, complete plots and developed characters at the stage of political narratives. In most cases they introduce a crucial theme, sketch out a hero figure, or reveal a villain. The narratives, when actually uttered, offer material to the audience, who may arrange and complete the fragments as they see fit. Only there, at the level of the

audiences'⁵⁸ reception, will the narratives finally be completed and transformed into political narratives, vehicles of political argumentation.

Bennett and Edelman follow this line of reasoning when stating that "most political narratives provide only the sketchiest details of the who, what, where, when, why, and how that establish a narrative model for an action" (1985, 164). They conclude: "The richness of the dramatic experience is often left to the imagination of the audience, whose members can complete the outline based on their own fantasies, emotional circumstances, and ideologies as expressed through well-known narrative themes" (ibid.).

On the other hand, they maintain that "although the genres of fact and fiction are blurred in storytelling practice, there remains a popular belief that agreeable political stories are rooted in fact" (Bennett & Edelman 1985, 163).

Although facticity plays a role in the acceptance of policies, most probably there is no direct connection between 'facts', political narratives, and the credibility of these narratives. Consider the following example:

- IR2: Let's go from Russia to another neighbouring country, Sweden. Do you remember who is Sweden's foreign minister?
 IE: It is this, er, fem...female. Unfortunately I don't remember her name.
 IR1: [Woman]
 IR2: What about Norway's foreign minister?
 IE: I don't remember even him, it waaas he who had these great...great tasks in the direction of Israel. Well, I'll remember tomorrow.
 IR2: Well, do you recall...recall any other country's foreign minister?
 IE: Gozyrev, for instance, in Russia. Er, I've got evidently such warm feelings toward Russia that Gozyrev, for example...Kindel, the German-
 IR2: [Kinkel]
 (41)⁵⁹

Such an oral examination is an exception in the material. In the ensuing exchange the IR, when underlining the IE's role as a member of the board of the foreign issues of the Parliament, obviously hints at the IE's lack of competence or even at his ignorance. The IE notices the strategy and tries to omit the topic with a sarcastic remark **Well, I'll remember tomorrow**.

Another example of television quiz questions:

- IR1: Now, who has said that a country with a woman as her minister of defense cannot be independent or deserves no independence?
 IE: Well, that's Zhirinovsky, the friend of us all.
 IR1: What do you think about him?
 (42)⁶⁰

58 Audience or audiences: television interviews technically have only one audience, those watching television at the time of the interviews. However, when apprehending the reception process one notices that the plural form is required to express the various ways in which the messages, including narratives, can be received. It is obvious that such narratives can be interpreted in versatile ways.

59 The IE is Mr. Sulo Aittoniemi, an independent candidate.

60 The IE is Elisabeth Rehn, the candidate of the Swedish People's Party.

Testing the IEs' cognitive capacities seems to point in different directions. In the case of (41), the questions simply seem to test whether the presidential candidate recognizes familiar role-keepers in the international arena, supposed to be the president's main stage. Failing to pass the test, the IE promises to recall the names **tomorrow**, thus attempting to ridicule the IRs' implicit suggestion of incompetence.

In citation (42), the question serves as a personal TCU introducing once again the gender issue, a prevailing theme in the interview. The point is not whether the IE happens to know who has given such a statement, but how the IE reacts to the statement which openly challenges her competence. Recognizing the source of the statement, the IE evidently displays her familiarity with current topics, but, what is more essential, the IE is offered an opportunity to discuss her exceptional role as a female minister of defense.

The IE seizes the opportunity and introduces the author of the statement as **the friend of us all**, an expression whose irony was not left unnoticed. Zhirinovsky, assigned an archetypical role of the Threat in the interview series, is recognized as a genuine actor in the game by such a phrase. In addition to such a recognition, the gesture also belittles Zhirinovsky's alarming importance, indirectly stressing the IE's own competence and dimensions.

Rhetorically, the IE makes use of epideictic devices. The strategy of amplification is executed by the IE when she compares herself to Zhirinovsky. The comparison is made by characterizing him as **a friend of all of us**. According to Zhirinovsky, the IE, as a minister of defense, is a completely impossible phenomenon as a minister of defense of an independent country; her country does not deserve independence. Calling a man who gives such statements a friend means fixing a vertical glance at him from above. Sharing a reciprocal despise with Zhirinovsky, the IE also displays her assumed supremacy over her target of despise, only in a much more subtle manner than his male 'colleague'.

In this manner, simple do-you-know questions appear to be only material for political narratives, whose scope mainly consist of various emotions of participation (like support, fear, rejection, pride, shame, honour, gratitude, etc), not so much of facticity. Both facts and one's capacity to deal with them serve mainly as material for miniature narratives, because they appear as attitudes and relations, not as pure facts and capacities.

Such announcements always represent more or less personal relations to certain claims. The manner in which one constructs such relations demonstrates one's political face, and, finally, one's political character. In this process, facticity and factual claims are often of essential importance, but they are still servants rather than masters of the activity.

"... there remains a popular belief that agreeable political stories are rooted in fact" (Edelman & Bennett 1985, 163). The next citation is seemingly based on facticity at two levels: what the IRs cite as the IE's statement is correct, because the IE verifies the statement at the level of citation, and, what is important, also at the level of emotion.

IR1: Now let's go on to another issue. Are you afraid of something?

IE: Well, everybody may be afraid of something. I think that a human being for instance hopes that he's healthy, is afraid of sickness or something like that.

In the war times I was afraid that Finland would lose her independence and that we'd lose our right to act as a free people.

IR1: Well, we were struck by a statement of yours concerning fear in which you say that when moving in a department store among glassware you feel fear. Why?

IE: It's not actually fear but is linked with the idea that if I drop something, what happens, who will pay, me or an insurance. It was more like a joke.

IR1: Do you fear the same thing in society or in the communities in which you move?

IE: [No ... no] Actually, I'm quite a fearless man.
(43)⁶¹

Besides the verification of the citation, at issue is the facticity of the emotion. While the IE introduces the statement as a joke, he admits the fear underlying the statement, that of becoming responsible for possible damages in the case of dropping glass items. Such an emotion is clearly experienced at the level of **my understanding**, out of reach of other persons' judgement.

Such emotions "are rooted in fact" but can be verified only by identification by members of the audience. No philosophical theories of correspondence between statements on the one hand and states of affairs on the other can explain the accuracy of such statements. Their test is a practical one and made by the members of the audience.

Regarding case (43), one may recognize a similar fear in oneself, one may recognize other, structurally similar fears, or one may find the case completely unfamiliar. In each case, no immediate political conclusions can be made concerning the relationship between the state of one's recognition of such emotions and the states of one's political attitudes toward the candidate. While the self-identification of similar emotions may increase one's inclination to vote such a person, no direct dependence can be shown to exist between these two activities.

Imprecise discussion of facticity seems barren at several levels. Cases (42) and (43) display two typical examples where the actual focus lies elsewhere. Case (42) introduces the issue of credibility, case (43) the veracity of a strong emotion. In both cases, the questions have an element of truthfulness at the surface, but the main goal behind the surface points in other directions. In the exceptional case of (41), commanding the facts play a dominant role, but in this case, too, the implication is largely directed to credibility.

To make sense of the statement that "agreeable political stories are rooted in fact" one should reinterpret it by emphasizing the special nature of facticity. The issue is familiarity and similarity at the level of **my understanding** between the IEs and the audience, especially considering the crucial issue of making the narratives compatible with each other. Consequently, only a broad interpretation of the notion "fact" allows an understandable view of the statement.

The problem of facticity in political utterances may also be considered at another, purely theoretical level. Then, the problem of facticity is discussed in terms of rhetoric and its possible epistemic nature. The issue is where the meaning of rhetoric actually lies. Among alternative solutions are epistemic foundations,

61 The IE is Raimo Ilaskivi, the candidate of the National Coalition Party.

hermeneutic, pragmatic and aesthetic dimensions. Roughly speaking, the three last-mentioned options suggest a performative role for rhetoric, the first-mentioned an epistemological role.

Expressions like 'rooted in fact' seem to favour the epistemic treatment of political narratives. Facticity appears to be a firm ground for understanding the meaning of political narratives. On the other hand, performative alternatives suggest other mechanisms of legitimating the narratives. These measures are practical and occasional devices whose authorization is weighed by their practical ability to persuade or convince the audience situationally.

From the performative perspective, the controversy may be defined as follows. Epistemological pursuit concerns universal truths. It is a crusade to locate and describe epistemic conditions applicable to all situations at all times. On the other hand, political influence is performative, being located in specific historical and cultural situations. Consequently, political rhetoric should not be established on the abstract and totalizing assumptions of epistemology.

The recent theoretical discussion stresses the performative alternatives instead of the preceding epistemic trend. The variety of performative alternatives is large, ranging from discussions of 'human inquiry' (Nelson, Simons) and the role of rhetoric in unmasking political pursuits (Wilson, Lakoff) to anthropological discussions (Rorty). The dispute is complicated and cannot be followed in this study further. Of these elements, see, e.g., Norris (1983) and Cherwitz & Darwin (1995), the first discussing the rhetoric of deconstruction, the second highlighting the maturing of the dispute.

One essential detail should still be considered. From the perspective of politics, the issue is what devices will lead to the desired results in political activity. In this respect, the role of facticity most probably varies largely from virtually non-existent to decisive. The perspective of persuasion and convincing, the basis of political rhetoric, is crucial. This view implies that both the extreme alternatives, that of rejecting the role of facts and that of heralding the role of facts as grounding, should be rejected as misleading.

It is assumed here that political narratives are the main tool of persuading and convincing the audience. Consequently, the problem of the facticity of political utterances should be regarded as only subordinate to the realm of narratives. The practical uses of narratives in specific situations, their specific receptions, will determine the nature and interpretations of facts. The narratives are the frame for politicians' expressions, facts are included among the material to shape the narratives' course.

In political narratives, facticity consists only marginally of dealing with pure facts and mainly concentrates on the familiarity of attitudes and emotions between the IE and the audience. Facticity will be constructed or declined in the practical reception of the IE's narratives at the level of each spectator's **my understanding**. Once those experiences broadly coincide and even unite, the result may be a durable expression, phrase, or even a narrative beyond disposable utterances. Whether the **PresiTentti** series includes such lasting material, is one of the issues to be returned to in the concluding section. Suffice it to say here that while memorable utterances are largely absent, very effective narratives are included in the conversations.

Finally, assuming a slightly more technical approach to the notion of narrative, one may analyze classic models of narrative. Their common feature is the equilibrium prevailing in a community, or polity, under discussion. Suddenly, the state of balance will be broken due to the activities of villains. What results is a confrontation between positive and negative forces. The plot mainly consists of efforts to restore the balance. However, even supposing a happy end, a new balance, once strenuously reached, is not the same as the old order but contains new dynamics, leading again toward new crises. While new crises are latent and hidden, normally their existence is not explicitly denied.

The interpretation emphasized the dynamics of narratives. Similarly, one may concentrate on the structural features of narratives by analyzing the division of roles. Inspired by Propp and/or Greimas, one may produce in the narrative a number of detailed characters whose functions range from heroic to evil, from assistants to observers. In such narratives, a hero has a task to be fulfilled. Several personal and structural obstacles make it hard to succeed in the mission. But normally, the tale has a happy end, since the hero has won with her/his supporters.

Here we have an example showing how nuanced such a narrative can be in a political interview:

- IE: Now I don't happen to know him personally, so... I am unwilling to pass judgements on persons whom I haven't met but I remember that when he three and a half years ago uttered this, among other things, I warned about him and said that he is a noteworthy factor that we should not underrate. Then I was, once again, blamed for fuelling fear in the Finns to get higher defense appropriations and that this in general was quite...quite thoughtless speaking and –
- IR2: [But Elisabeth] Rehn –
- IE: [And] I was right.
- IR2: Isn't it quite a wild situation if the future would-be president of Russia openly scorns you?
- IE: But certainly –
- IR2: [Can] you have an equal position in negotiations?
- IE: Certainly, yes, because he has not met me either. We will certainly reach a considerably –
- IR2: [You] think your charm will work on Zhirinovsky, too?
- IE: [Not charm] but my command of facts and...and in general my firm knowledge of the issues about which I talk with the representatives of foreign countries. It is certainly sufficient for this. Now, we, er, shouldn't start speculating. Er, Zhirinovsky was successful in the election –
- IR1: Twenty-five percent –
- IE: Yes...
- IR1: He is dangerous, isn't he?
- IE: He is ... worthy of attention. I can't comment on a democratic result of elections in a for...another country by saying that the result is dangerous. I have no right to do so, and I'm not going to choose that path, but he is worthy of attention. He has, by the way, had so...so different ideas about many countries that if they were to be realized, Russia certainly would have difficulties to manage.
- (44)

The case shows the classic progress of narratives. The citation is a direct continuation of citation (42), where the IRs asked whether the IE knows who has rejected female ministers of defense in independent countries. The IE recognized

Zhirinovskiy as the source and here, in case (44), she also tells when the statement was given. Thus, the villain and the threat were introduced.

Independence is a key word when considering the nature of balance in the narrative. The Finns had strived for recognition of their neutrality from the Soviet Union for decades, but before Gorbatshev the Soviet Union had recognized only a "pursuit toward neutrality⁶²", not the position of neutrality as such. A new balance was reached when Jeltsin confirmed Gorbatshev's policy in the name of Russia. In this respect, Zhirinovskiy in the narrative represents a new threat for Finnish independence. In addition, Zhirinovskiy is actively introduced as the Threat by the IRs.

As the president plays a role of the hero in the narrative, the IE's position is delicate. The threat should be met not only by an institution but also by a female minister of defense whom the villain had declared incompetent to play any main role in the narrative because of her gender. Obviously, a right to participate is a fundamental issue in the narrative. No role in the narrative was to be delivered arbitrarily but was to be based on public opinion. In some cases, as in the election of the hero, the president, the choice was more formal and structured; more cognitive processes were at play in other cases, as in naming the villain.

In case (44) the IE is faced with a double task. First, she should meet the challenge posed to the presidency by Zhirinovskiy, who openly had declared to remove the border between the two countries. Second, she has to cope with the personal challenge emerging from her gender and position.

Citation (44) includes four phases of self-identification by the IE. She begins as a person who does not want to characterize persons whom she has not met. At this level, no political implications are necessarily included, but the statement is meant to characterize the candidate herself.

Second, beginning with ... **I remember** ..., the IE defines the context of Zhirinovskiy's statement mentioned in citation (42), noting that she had immediately warned about Zhirinovskiy. According to the IE, she was accused of collecting more money for her ministry with her warnings about Zhirinovskiy. The position of the IE in the part of the interview is that of the minister of defense.

Third, the IE naturally plays the role of a presidential candidate. The section beginning with IR2's question **Isn't it quite a wild situation** ... opens this stage in the citation. The issue is whether the IE can be a credible candidate in the circumstances where the threat may play the role of president of Russia. Declining the role of charm, the IE appeals to her competence in factual issues that should also assure any representative of foreign powers. The personal traits of the candidate are at stake in this phase.

Finally, giving her last statement in citation (44), the IE identifies herself with the role of the president. The IE, no more a candidate in charge of maintaining credibility, identifies herself as the presidential hero in the narrative. In this role, a candidate's narrow range of problems has been changed into assessing the relations between independent nations, a typical task for presidents. A final

62 As one knows, the complex history of Finno-Soviet declarations and communiqués is full of subtleties and intricate turns but the main issue is whether Finnish neutrality was unambiguously recognized or not. This was finally done by Gorbatshev.

gesture comes in the last sentence where the problems, first considered only in the Finnish context, appear to be more crucial in Zhirinovsky's own context, in Russia. The problem, emerging first in the IE's own narrative, is transformed into a disruptive component in the villain's camp.

The fourth phase is offered to the IE by IR1, who returns to the prevailing mood of threat and crystallizes the plot of the narrative in plain words, calling the potential threat **dangerous**. The word, never used publicly in the Finnish politics about any Soviet leader or political phenomenon during the post-war Soviet Era, gives the IE an opportunity to explain the villain's role from a presidential point of view, which does not allow any direct intervention in another country's internal affairs, but which, on the other hand, obliges the president carefully to observe incidents that are **worthy of attention** anywhere.⁶³

Returning to Zhirinovsky, the IE maintains that he will cause problems to Russia with his programmes. In this way, the IE offers a solution to the narrative's main problem. The narrative itself will be safe and its threat will wither away while the Threat must take care of his own backyard. In a classic manner, the solution offered stresses weaknesses in the Threat's own position, possibly finally leading to his collapse.

Citations (42) and (44) took two minutes in total. In this time, the IE is able to present her four-phase development from a citizen to a president in a narrative where a threat is presented in a clear manner. In addition, the IE succeeds in offering a solution to the problem the narrative deals with.

In this respect, the situation is ambiguous. If the problem was to be considered a real one, i.e. if Zhirinovsky was to be seen as a potential risk to Finland in the narrative, no straightforward solutions might not have been immediately visible, because the solution to the problem is not in the hero's capacity alone. Instead, the hero would need to introduce logical ways out of the problem. Maintaining that the Threat's own activities involve a considerable risk disordering the Threat's capacities, the IE offers a traditional solution.

The suggestion is not a detailed one but rather implies the Threat's self-suffocation. Such narratives, considering the time limits only, cannot concentrate on detailed analyses. Their main role is to sketch the main lines, leaving the details to be fulfilled by the audience. The crucial feature of the narratives is whether the audience is familiar with the schemes developed and realizes what sort of policy is suggested by the would-be heroes to solve the problems discussed.

Many times, as in case (44), the policies leading to solutions of the problem have been sketched at a logical level promising no permanent solution. Yet case (44) is an exceptionally mature and completed narrative in the circumstances of the interviews. Its length, complexity of character building and importance for the presidential election strongly suggest that the narrative most probably has no par in the **PresiTentti** series.

And still, strictly limiting one's analysis to the material actually offered by

63 The IE maintains a good eye contact with the IRs. From the words **It is certainly ...** the IE directs her words to IR1, who accordingly gives the next question, immediately linked with what the IE has just said. This is a good example of paralinguistic devices utilized in the construction of TCUs in an intuitively favourable manner.

the conversation, only very modest conclusions can be made about the building of traditional narrative models. The main lines are apparent but the narrative remains relatively scanty in cognitive and emotional details.

What nevertheless makes narratives in my view a very powerful device of political persuasion is the active role of the audience. Having been offered sufficient structural grounds and suitable historico-political guidelines the audiences activate the narrative in themselves, initiating innumerable details and interpretations from their own political, historical, aesthetic and psychological capacities, to name only most evident fields of interpretation. A common feature of the interpretations is that they are formed in the area of **my understanding**. Without anchorage in one's experience, the narrative cannot attract large-scale adherence.

In this manner a narrative may be empowered and become a common political experience. Compared to narratives in their literary forms, like books, comics, or papers, the television narratives have two remarkable advantages for themselves. First, the narratives are short; second, they have been experienced at a time by a nationwide audience. In combination, the impact of these features on such narratives is potentially a lot stronger than that of any Gutenbergian counterpart.

In addition, the sketchy format of such narratives may refresh the audiences' imagination. As incomplete and open tales in many crucial aspects, the narratives at their best mesmerize large audiences to reformulate the same narratives as their own experienced narratives, invoking also political activities. Thus, 'I have a dream' may be transformed into 'we did it'.

In the harsh conditions of ordinary political interviews, however, the IRs usually prevent such highlights. Due to the competitive nature of the conversation, the IRs even are obliged to doubt any positive hero narratives. Had they sometimes assisted in the creation of such narratives, most probably the effects would have been artificial and non-adhesive due to the lack of genuine controversial conditions.

Normally, the IRs' role largely spoil the possibilities of larger epideictic narratives. Consider case (43) where a theme of fear emerges. The topic should be ideal for creating epideictic values and narratives. Fear, an emotion familiar to everybody, requires no introduction as such but calls for personal commitment and history. This is what the IE seeks by opening the topic (43):

IR1: Now let's go into another issue. Are you afraid of something?
(43, a part)

Seemingly a very good question for any IE, who is now offered a welcome opportunity to reveal his/her emotions, commitments, fragile and firm aspects of his/her self-portrait. Yet the openness of the question implies two risks: the IE is on his/her own when really opening up; moreover, if the openness is only to be identified with a pejorative topic, the impression may turn out to be negative – which is to be avoided for characterological reasons. In case (43) the IE wanders into the open air of intimate considerations:

IE: Well everybody may be afraid of something. I think that a human being for instance hopes that he's healthy, is afraid of sickness or something like that. In the war years I was afraid that Finland would lose her independence and that we'd lose our right to act as a free people.
(43, a part)

In the two first sentences the IE defines the situation, in the third he offers a personal account on the topic. The treatment is slightly conventional, because the IE takes an example from 54 years ago and which also by no means represents a personal fear unique to the IE. Evidently, taking the war times as his point of departure, the IE attempted to find a common stand to be shared by as many citizens as possible. However, most Finns have no personal experience of such fears for the good reason that most of them were not born at the time. Thus, the answer only partly suits the question about personal fears.

This was not left uncommented by the IRs who had prepared a continuation to their open question.

IR1: Well we were struck by such a statement of yours concerning fear where you say that when moving at the department store among glass wears you feel fear there. Why (43, a part)

Now the IE suddenly hovers on the brink of derision. Epideictic memories of the war times are replaced by worry about breaking glassware in a department store. The theme, not farcical as such, turns slightly derisive when paralleled to the statement just heard. At least, the IR's statement is strongly detrimental to the IE's efforts to retain epideictic tones. The IE solves the problem by abandoning the topic of epideictic tenors and concentrating on the IR's new question of glasswear. The treatment continues in a very deliberative⁶⁴ mood:

IE: It's not actually fear but is linked with an idea that if I'll drop something so what happens who will pay, me or an insurance. It was more like a joke
(43, a part)

The original narrative in which the IE was fearing for his country is broken into two subthemes only connected by fear. That one loses independence is a different fear to that of becoming responsible for dropping glass items. The narrative collapses, leaving only the question of why compare so completely different cases with each other. As always, the IE assumes the responsibility after having subsumed such remote cases under the same emotion, fear.

Case (43) also demonstrates the extensive control of the IRs over narratives. Although it is the IEs who promote narratives, the IRs decisively impact on the conditions under which the promotion may take place. Here the IE had no precognition that the IRs would repeat one of the IE's previous statements about the topic under discussion. The consequence was a failure to fabricate an effective narrative. This is a serious loss, because the series included only a few opportunities for narratives per each IE.

64 In the Aristotelian sense of the word.

IV POLITICAL CHARACTER

Introductory remarks

The concept of political character has already been preliminarily discussed in Chapter II. The concept was introduced in connection with the individual's political face. The political face consists of the IE's appearance and his/her strategies on the spot. Political character, in turn, is gradually shaped in a myriad of events to which a politician contributes publicly in one way or another.

The preceding chapter introduced political narratives as they emerge in political interviews. Evidently, the core of every narrative consists of the personal roles of those involved. The roles of hero, villain, etc. display human characters and qualities in concordance or contradiction with each other within practical activities that are guided by the plot.

The political face, on the one hand, and the political narrative, on the other, are the basis for treating the issues surrounding a person's political character. The former accomplishes immediate elements for a person's political character. The political face is an immediate demonstration of one's political character and at the same time it produces new material for its continuing history and existence.

Thus, a person's political character is by no means is a rigid structure whose features could be defined in isolation from several diverging possibilities for interpretations. The nature of one's public appearance, changes in one's formal career, scandals and other incidents, major changes in political conditions – shortly, countless things – may cause transformations in the interpretation of an individual's political character.

However, empirically one may notice that certain common labels often follow certain politicians when their political characters are discussed. One is defined as 'cool', another as 'slow', still another as 'unpredictable', and so on. Such characterizations imply a need to search for more permanent qualities in politicians.

The quality of 'unpredictable' is a critical one. Such a depiction may be targeted at a politician's activities and stands, or it may be considered an immediate feature in his/her character. Being 'unpredictable' implies at least two things. First, the person to whom this characteristic is attached is estimated to be inclined to change his/her behaviour or policies frequently. Whether the changes concern personality more than activities, or vice versa, makes no major difference here. However, the difference in the focus should be noticed.

Second, asserting that someone is 'unpredictable' implies a certain horizon of expectations on the part of the definer. Such definition can also always be understood as an expectation of permanence, a quality on which other, more minute expectations and suppositions may be built. Politics, traditionally defined as activities directed at the future, may be comprehensible only if a certain continuity can be expected. Even discontinuities make sense only in relation to this background.

Consequently, 'unpredictable' also involves a regularity on which judgements of each party's policies may be based. These assumptions may be of practical nature, not so much characterological but rather concerned with the possible conditions and consequences of political actions.

Under contingent circumstances (i.e. under political circumstances) any future-oriented activity requires that one considers the more permanent features of the political characters involved. That one can anticipate political characters' activities has both cognitive and political repercussions. "Knowledge and power – they meet in one" (Bacon).

The next citation is connected with one of the IEs' typical characterological feature: criticism. As usual, the case is built around earlier statements made by the IE. The IRs have chosen a sharp critical formulation as their point of departure.

IR2: Besides MPs you have criticised the political elite in general –

IE: [And with] full reason.

IR2: and u...used quite hard language, you have stated that we have in the key political positions persons who would sell even their grandmothers to a soap factory provided that the price was appropriate. Whom did you mean?

IE: Uh ... it was a bit vivid a formulation.

IR2: [This] was an exact quotation from your speech.

IE: Yes. But it was still a vivid formulation. I don't mean anybody in particular, I mean specifically that there was born an attitude within us, an attitude which in my opinion manifests the birth of a sort of dwarfs' society. I'm interested in this phenomenon as a historian, too, and I think it will arouse interest among future historians, but at the moment it is much more than history, it is hard reality for us.

IR2: Now would you consider yourself a giant in the dwarfs' country?

IE: No.: by no means, but I want that these matters are discussed.

(45)

Beginning with the IE's last statement, criticism appears as a demand of conversation on issues. The IE contributes to the conversation with his sharp metaphor, but what he does not maintain is that he deserves the role of the Giant in the narrative. Taking seriously the closing statement of case (45), one can notice that the IE is sketching a variant of public opinion.

According to Delli Carpini and Williams (1994), the relationship between television and politics has always been shaped by certain prominent metaphors. Among them, a metaphor of citizens as political consumers has dominated public opinion research. This branch of research actively reinforces the metaphor, implicitly assuming that the role of the audience is relatively passive.

This view is criticised by Delli Carpini and Williams. They suggest another metaphor – that of conversation – as a basis for describing the relationship between citizens and television. Thus, viewers are treated as participants in an ongoing conversation. They make empirical contributions to the event.

The authors target their criticism at the conception of an opinion. The traditional survey methods naively assume that everybody has an opinion on a given subject, or she or he does not have any. While more sophisticated techniques have been introduced, the main weakness in the approach lies in the assumption of “a political consciousness wherein opinions are stored in long-term memory as fixed, freestanding bits of information that can be easily retrieved” (Delli Carpini & Williams 1994, 784–785).

The material of the **PresiTenti** series offers a perspective on the question of metaphors. Due to its nature as a conversation in itself, the series naturally entails discussion about the conditions of the event itself. The IEs sometimes ask what are the interaction traffic rules under which the conversation is to take place, often promoting alternative procedures (see e.g. case 27, where it is the IRs who try to redirect the discussion, and case 32, where the IE tries to change the topic by appealing to the circumstances).

Besides this internal debate on the conditions of conversation, the material contains reflections on the conversational nature of politics and media politics in general. Such sections of discussion are largely indirect and implicit, without detailed argumentative contents in the general framework of politics.

Reflecting on conversational conditions in politics implies strong characterological consequences. Politics, consisting of utterances and of their interrelated nets, unfolds only in a public series of utterances in an endless succession. Consequently, politicians openly pondering upon the conditions of the essence of politics deeply formulate their own characters as politicians.

Consider the next example, where the IE questions the sense of public treatment of political issues. The citation follows a discussion where the IE explains the Finnish government’s recommendation that the cabinet members should refrain from giving comments on the internal affairs of Russia. Russia had just had a parliament election in which Mr. Zhirinovskiy and his party had succeeded.

- IR1: Germany said that he is a dangerous man whom (...) to allow enter the country. Are you ...can you agree even on –
- IE: Well, his speeches are of course unpleasant and and make me worry as I believe many others –
- IR1: Why is it that in Finland one can’t call a spade a spade?
- IE: One can do that but is it necessary to talk about everything...

IR1: Now why ... why can't one talk?

IE: Yeah, this is what one may ask. In my opinion one can talk.

(46)⁶⁵

The IE's first reaction to the requirement for "calling a spade a spade" is revealing. Asking whether it is necessary to speak about all things, the IE happens to compress a typical attitude into one word. This attitude revolves around the idea of necessity. Using the word necessity, the IE introduces the problem of standpoints. What is necessary from one standpoint appears to be disastrous from another. Eventually, only those who have access to and are allowed to regulate the agenda of politics may define what is necessary. In this respect, the IE recommends a policy that is contradictory to that advocated by Delli Carpini and Williams. True, the IE tones down his first statement, but the first spontaneous opinion is more convincing than the correction stated after the IR's question.

Case (46) appears to be a unique instance of a candidate supporting the possibility to maintain areas of silence in politics. On the other hand, there are relatively few cases where the conversational nature of politics is discussed explicitly from the personal viewpoint of the IEs. There are, nevertheless, such conversations in the series.

Character building: a modified Toulminian model

Aristotle remarked that rhetors must make their "own character look right" and persuade their "hearers, who are to decide, into the right frame of mind" (Rhetoric 1377b). In demonstrating one's ethos, the speaker is expected to display good sense, good will, and good moral character (Rhetoric, 1378a). The process of exhibiting these qualities will be discussed next.

For Aristotle, the problem of the orator's ethos is crucial. He emphasizes its importance in political speeches (1377b), where a proper combination of the politician's character and of the right frame of the audience is required to produce the result expected by the speaker. In the process of persuasion, this factor is one of the three main lines of argumentation. The other two elements are substantial arguments for the case (logos) and the emotional appeals for the case (pathos).

In the Aristotelian system, the three modes of persuasion should assume a logical mode of proof. Being a typical Aristotelian conception, rhetoric as well should follow logical demonstration. However, the third mode of persuasion, based on one's character, has mainly not been treated as an independent mode of proof with an essential effect on the audience's judgements. Rather, ethos has been interpreted as an ethical background providing a normative frame for fair argumentation.

According to Gronbeck (1993), such uses of ethos may be explained by an equation of ethos with the 'ethical'. This translation fails to grasp the independence of ethos and reduces it to an auxiliary conception surrounding or

65 The IE is Toimi Kankaanniemi, the candidate of the Christian League and the minister for development cooperation.

preceding the process of argumentation. The examples of argumentation textbooks he uses (Herrick 1991, Vancil 1993, Warnick and Inch 1989) all agree in this respect, emphasizing logical modes of argumentation, such as sound reasoning, avoidance of inconsistencies, uses of acknowledged sources, etc (Gronbeck 1993, 1–2).

Gronbeck argues for the original independence of ethos in political argumentation. He discusses the problem in the light of a Nixon example. In 1968, an anti-Nixon partisan wore a button which asked: “Would you buy a used car from this man?” The direct target of the button is Nixon’s character. The message implied that if you wouldn’t trust him enough to buy a used car from him, you wouldn’t elect him president. The argument is based on a claim about Nixon’s character. The character is a central issue in one’s voting decision, not an auxiliary construction paving the way to immediate political decisions.

Another example. In 1968, a Finnish presidential candidate, the conservative Matti Virkkunen ran for the office with the slogan **The nation needs a President**. Posters displaying only the candidate’s face and name with the slogan also included a strong characterological element. The message implied was twofold. First, it presented the candidate as the most suitable candidate to the office. Second, it also implied that the present state of things was less than satisfactory. No wonder, the incumbent, Urho Kekkonen, was said to have been enraged for the implication. In this case, the argument was strictly based on characterological estimations on the candidates’ persons.

Calling such arguments ‘ethical’ would be misleading. Instead, following Gronbeck’s suggestion, they should be called characterological. At the heart of such arguments lies an assessment of the actor’s character in relation to the environment. In political circumstances, characterological features cannot be analyzed in isolation but should be interpreted in connection with assumptions about the citizens’ activities at large.

Gronbeck defines characterological arguments as follows: “Characterological arguments are those claims, with their supporting evidence and inferential processes, that describe, evaluate, and suggest courses of action consequential to an assessment of an individual’s character” (Gronbeck 1993, 2). The politician’s character does not emerge as an isolated entity but only in relation to such consequential assessments.

This is the message of Virkkunen’s slogan, too. Seemingly displaying a triviality – it was self-evident that a president was to be elected – the ad simply displayed the incumbent’s character as unsuitable for the office. The incumbent was presented as neither unethical nor incompetent; no substantial characterization of his person was given. Yet the characterological implication was a very clear one within the presidential context. The actual content was left to the imagination of the audience.

In a positive sense, the Virkkunen ad also depicted the candidate’s character in a *croquis* manner, simply assuring that the candidate would pass the presidential test. Evidently, such an ad requires a certain background from the candidate. The candidate was an eminent figure in economic circles, the manager of a leading bank in Finland. Here, the characterological argument told the audience: the country urgently needs a good president and here is one. In this

case, the ad was a major device in the campaign. Thus, Virkkunen's entire campaign relied strongly on characterological reasoning.

Such argumentation cannot be replaced by logical or emotional argumentation. In the presidential context, characterological argumentation will gather even more momentum because the office is a one-person office; a voter can just take or leave a candidate. As Gronbeck (1993, 3) notes: "I have become convinced that, more and more, they [characterological arguments] are a major or even the primary ground on which voters make their electoral decisions."

Gronbeck follows the original Aristotelian line of reasoning in introducing a two-phase logical model of characterological argumentation. In the first phase, some of the characterological arguments may assume standard propositional forms:

Data: John Smith has done x, y, and z.

Warrant: Because x, y, and z are construed as acts of 'good' people in this society,

Claim: John Smith is a good person.

A recognized history of John Smith's behaviour, including verbal acts, is the ground for the claim. The claim becomes political when extended by another argument:

Data: John Smith is a good person.

Warrant: Because goodness is a necessary quality in a president,

Claim: John Smith ought to be elected president.

In practice, these two argument often melt into one, assuring the audience that JS has done x, y, and z, and, because the presidency requires public servants who value the related attributes, JS should be elected president. (Gronbeck 1993, 3-5)

It is evident that these models are simplified and offered mainly for illustrating the Aristotelian line of logic. The next phase discusses the narrative forms of characterological reasoning. The assumption of narratives is crucial, as seen in Chapter III, where the televisual conditions are discussed. Here the modified Toulminian model begins with a narrative:

Data: A story about a person in question.

Warrant: Because a person's past actions are likely to be repeated in the future, or, because the motives behind a person's past actions are likely to guide future action, or, because the person's character traits have proven valuable for other persons' activities,

Claim: The person ought to be elected president.

As already mentioned, narratives have several advantages in introducing personal qualities in politics. Based on simplified plots, they describe clearly profiled characterological qualities and motives, show who are enemies and friends, and in most cases also offer relief to emerging problems. Thus, while the narrative offers a sound basis for conclusions, the promotion of argument requires

special attention. The warrant is essential, as it bridges the gap between the data and the claim. The narrative, no matter how convincing it may be, is not sufficient in itself.

The warrant initiates three alternatives. The claim may be grounded in the person's continuity in the candidate's activities. The claim may also be grounded in the stability of the candidate's motives. Finally, it may be the person's character traits that will continuously cause valuable effects in society or polity. In each case, the common feature is the expectation of stability and continuity in a person's activities at large.

However, the expectation of stability should not be identified as a simple assumption of repetition of substantial qualities. Especially when discussing the characterological traits, one's political judgement is of great importance. In an individual's political judgement, an expectation of stability concerns its quality and inventiveness, not any substantial and constant quality of political action that could be labelled 'conservative', 'liberal', 'cautious', etc. On the contrary, political judgement requires a certain amount of unpredictability (see p. 135) due to the contingent nature of political activities. In turn, each action by the candidate appears to be a personal product of political judgement.

Riesman's and Payne's models of characterological qualities

The Aristotle-inspired formulas of advancing the argumentation for a person's election are void in a sense that they do not suggest **any** substantial feature for a candidate's character. They only display the chain of reasoning in advancing one's case in the framework of characterological argumentation. The question whether there are constant substantial qualities to be revealed, utilized and displayed has naturally received a lot of attention. Thus, the Aristotelian demand of making one's own character "look right" has been transformed into questions like 'Are there constant substantial qualities of character which are typically successful in achieving one's political goal?'

At first sight, the temporal factor should be taken into account. No claim on the permanent human nature and consequent fertile political character qualities seems sound. Contextual conditions at the macro and the micro level are to be considered before even judging whether the question of substantial qualities has any sense at all.

The following analysis, indirectly and with reservations, gives an affirmative answer to the problem of substantial qualities. Modifying the treatises by Riesman (1950) and Payne (1991), the ensuing section first shapes a model of characterological qualities and then tests the model in the empirical material of the **PresiTentti** series. The model is developed by analyzing the concepts used by Riesman and Payne; however, their interpretations of the contexts of these concepts will not be followed.

Riesman identified historical shifts between cultures of a tradition-directed, inner-directed, and other-directed character. Each of these modes of character has an equivalent counterpart at a macrolevel, as a cultural phase, and also a counterpart as the leading behavioural disposition guiding each character. The

dispositions are *shame* (traditional-directed character), *guilt* (inner-directed character), and *anxiety* (other-directed character). Character, in this view, is a kind of least common denominator of all socializing forces in a culture. The disposition, or rather symptoms of the dispositions, is the *Leitmotif* of human conduct.

Payne makes an important reinterpretation of Riesman's sociological model. According to him, all three dispositions characterize each individual, depending on occasional contextual conditions. No generalizing labels are required or invited to interpret a rhetor's situation; only a thorough analysis of the situation will reveal to what extent and with what emphasis these social backgrounds emerge when characters are being built. (Payne 1991, 226)

Another important reservation needs to be made concerning the status of the three dispositions. Shame, guilt and anxiety do not mean here experienced emotions but rather suggestions of the consequences of certain political actions. Certain actions will cause those responsible for the actions to get into a position where they are guilty. In addition, the position of being guilty is a suggestion or a demand, not any objective state of affairs in politics.

Consider the example series (28–32), where the IE is accused of having intrigued with a representative of a foreign power. The IR claims that the IE is guilty. The issue of guilty *of what* is discussed next in order to display the nature of the three dispositions. A part of the case will illustrate the situation:

- IE: ... and could have given documents showing how this witch-hunt once started by Jukka Tarkka was altogether senseless, because he tried to maintain that I had tried to get support to Ahti Karjalainen from the Soviet Union, while the situation was for years quite the opposite. So the Soviet Union tried to press me to support Karjalainen and when I was not so enthusiastic about the matter, people whispered around the city that I have bad relations with the East and ... a lot of similar arguments were made. This is the truth that Jukka Tarkka and others have maintained is a lie.
- IR1: Now you presumably understand. Was this the worst gaffe in your career?
- IE: What was?
- IR1: This, er, Vladimirov affair and the fact that...
- IE: [It was not my] gaffe but Jukka Tarkka's gaffe when he blundered himself when trying–
- IR2: [Paavo Väy]rynen–
- IE: ...to label me guilty of such activities I was not guilty of.
- IR2: [This letter of yours to] Ahti Karjalainen clearly indicates that you entered into discussions with Vladimirov in favour of Ahti Karjalainen against other candidates. This (laughing) is a completely clear issue.
- IE: No, this is not the case, but I've written tens of pages about the matter in my book and explained what was at stake.
(30–31)

The ambiguous nature of being guilty is clearly present in the example. First, the case (30–31) does not include any experience of being guilty on the part of the accused, the IE. Second, the issue of being guilty was introduced and denied by the IE himself. Third, despite the efforts to define it, the problem of the exact nature of guilt is left somewhat obscure.

That the problem – guilty or not – is crucial is admitted by the IE when he utters the problem aloud. Had he evaluated the situation and the attack it included as unimportant, he most probably would not have talked anything about

being guilty but reduced the conversation to what it was, an issue of admitting or denying an error or a gaffe. However, the introductory phase of the conversation, presented in the examples (28–29), expresses the IRs' claim that the IE had intrigued with a Soviet official to influence an earlier presidential election.

In the context of Finnish politics in the post-Soviet era, the accusation is lethal and should accordingly be treated with a paramount care by the accused. Thus, the problem of guilt is introduced aloud by the IE himself, who explicates the situation using a term that lets the audience know that he, while denying his supposed contribution to the case, acknowledges the seriousness of the accusation.

Interestingly enough, the exact character of the IE's alleged actions are never explicated. The IR, referring to a letter from the IE to Vladimirov, relies on a contextual condition, according to which all the citizens know what was written in the letter, and, moreover, what in the letter is aggravating to the IE. This is a typical feature in expressing one's guilt: it is a matter of endless disputes concerning both the frame and the substance of the case.

Consider the case of shame next. Example (42;44) depicts a situation where shame is implied as a main situational determinant. Although not pronounced aloud, the implication is clear enough:

IR2: Isn't it quite a wild situation if the future would-be president of Russia openly scorns you?
(44, a part)

Again, shame creates a social background against which the discussion becomes reasonable. It is not an experienced and confessed state of mind or emotion. As in case (30–31), the IE neither acknowledges any experienced shame nor shows any sign of it.

On anxiety, consider case (23), where the IE is tied up with her former statement, according to which 'life has lost its meaning and people feel bad'. As in the two preceding cases, the IE simply denies her personal experience of such an emotion but emphasizes that there are such moods in society.

In sum, the role of shame, guilt, and anxiety is to serve as a possible social context, mostly emerging in strategically important situations. The IE, whose character is at stake in the conversation, normally rejects those qualities as his/her personal commitments or states of mind but recognizes these qualities as proper interpretations of social backgrounds, prevailing either in society or in the interview situation. On the last mentioned case, see example (23), especially the end.

Although Payne reinterprets the Riesmanian characterological qualities in a non-epochal manner, he follows the epochal analysis in another respect. He parallels Riesman's three epochs with Walter Ong's primary oral, literal and secondary oral epochs. Ong's division of periods is based on the changes in the information technology, but also includes other issues, especially modes of human expression, and, accordingly, human character.

The primary oral culture evidently displays the role of a tradition-directed culture. In such circumstances, tradition maintains the stability of community and

is renewed and repeated by oral rhetoric carrying the traditional characterological signs.

The parallels between an inner-directed culture and literature are also evident but much more nuanced and complicated than in the case of tradition. The permanence of the written word and the emergence of "The Word" promote the development of one's inner, privately experienced character. In Western culture, literacy culminates in one's immediate access to sacred as well as profane texts, inducing experiences of independent moral character, and, consequently, responsibility for one's actions.

The third phase, the modern world defined through the emergence of television, witnesses a return of the oral in a new manner. In the culture of anxiety, people turn toward an external standard of judgment, the variable standards of other people. The television-dominated culture creates an intense and close-up language of interaction such that citizens are trained in every nuance of anxiety, its performance and evaluation.

Thus, the return of oral culture is accomplished in an interactive manner which on the one hand conditions the individual's independent contribution to guaranteeing authenticity, but on the other hand treats all contributions as voices in a chorus, insignificant as such but substantial as contributions to the larger discussion of the modern, televisually determined oral culture. (Payne 1991, 227–228)

The Ongian perspective, presented here in a very short form, serves as a departure in analyzing three important cases in the material. The cases are (17; 19), where the IE, Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, talks about his literary production and his home comforts; (28–32; 38), where the IE, Mr. Paavo Väyrynen discusses his claimed guilt and his unerringness; and (44!), where the IE, Mrs. Elisabeth Rehn gives her four-phased narrative.

Citation (38) displays a typical situation of anxiety. The IR maintains that many people are terrified when meeting a person who always declares himself to be right. The IE admits this and continues the topic in presenting a short narrative describing his discussion with his own campaign staff. There, a member suggested to the IE that he should sometimes admit his error. The IE's response was: "one should first err so that one could admit to have erred."

The IE treats anxiety with joking. Finally, considering the more serious part of the accusation of never admitting to make mistakes, the IE appeals to the role of **all others**. They have already whipped the IE enough, so that the IE finds it immoderate to "begin to whip myself publicly". The IE recognizes the existence of the general public, and its role is exhibited to him as a destructive chorus of heavy criticism.⁶⁶ In this way, the IE acknowledges the external influence of characteral assessments but still finds his own judgment totally moderate and correct.

In this respect, the IE belongs rather to the second category in the Ongian perspective, that of the modern televisual condition. That the IE indeed displays

66 The same IE had a television ad, in which he says that "... I have got more shit up into my eyes than all the others together". The theme, a sharp division between the IE himself and **the others**, constituted an important motif in the IE's campaign.

a political character typical of the literary period can be confirmed by studying cases (28–32). The whole line of argumentation that the IE presents for his case is based on literary arguments, strictly referring to his own books where he discusses the topics raised by the IRs.

At the crucial moment of the attack, the IE carefully parallels the truth with literal texts, contrasting the truth with an oral expression. When wrong information was available, it was **whispered around the city** and **maintained** in debates. Once the truth was to be exhibited, the seekers of truth should have open the IE's books, where he had **written tens of pages about the matter [...]** **explaining what was at stake**.

The firm egocentrism and the literarism coincide, displaying a pure character of the Gutenbergian period. In the Ongian perspective, the IE at least risks failing to convince the audience on the spot of his characterological advantages, mostly of his intimacy in the situation as a delicate and care-taking party in mutual interaction. Thus, the candidate displays a strong political character from the preceding political and communicative period, that of the pre-television period.

Typical of such a political character is in practice to disregard the interactive situation characterized by Payne as "social antenna" (1991, 226). Although such a political character is fully aware of trends and the pressures of the discussion, and, accordingly, the need of situational ethics, the character still does not make any concessions but follows his/her own path, come what may. In the televisual democracy, the result is one confrontation after another, resulting in a deep and permanent feature in one's political character, a feature which may be characterized in many ways but which in all cases includes a powerful dimension of conflict.

In this essential respect, the two other series of examples are of a different nature. Both of them strongly rely on oral expressions in the situation as well as in larger contexts. In both cases, the political reality consists of oral utterances and is surrounded by oral utterances. The literary reality is almost non-existent in these interviews.

The Ongian Perspective

The opening part of Mr. Ahtisaari's interview is illuminating from the Ongian perspective. Case (17) presents most of it. The IR's question **...can't you write or are you simply indolent** offers the IE an opportunity to display his ideas about the relation between oral and literal expressions in politics. Although the IE is not very precise in details, he in any case maintains that around 90 % of his public exhibitions are on a purely oral basis, only sometimes supported by a short written outline.

Consequently, the strategy adopted by the IE has its influence on the political character of the IE. He introduces **a big crowd of people** participating in the birth of the politically most important product, namely the speeches of the IE. As a striking difference to the case of another IE, Mr. Väyrynen, here the IE recognizes the political process as a product of interaction from the very beginning. The IE lets the audience understand that the entire process of making

stands is an interactive group process, orally developing via drafts to the final product of the IE's oral speech.

This may be the best example of other-directness in the **PresiTentti** series. The viewpoint assumed by the IE has its disadvantageous features, already referred to on page 39. Yet the explanation given by him is profound, because it is based on displaying the whole political process as oral from its early vibrations to the final products. Utilizing the present medium, television, which is also the leading scene of modern politics, the IE introduces his interactive manners as a politician.

Here the question of authenticity suggests itself. When the process of creating ideas takes the form of team work, and when the rhetorical devices in the presentation are also largely determined in advance, where does the personal and characterological authenticity of a politician lie? In the Gutenbergian realm, the solution is clear. There, an individual, omnipotent within himself, determines his fate, including the ways of representing it. The authenticity comes from this activity, which is clearly distinguishable from other similarly authentic individual activities.

Within the televisual conditions, dominated by secondary orality with its complicated relations between orality and literacy,⁶⁷ authenticity assumes a different mode of individualism. Individualism is the key concept but now in the mode of **presentation**. Authenticity is created at the unique moment of presenting one's stands. Political characters are presented, unfolded and folded again within the seconds and minutes that the interview lasts.

Such presentations are unique. In most cases the IE cannot take back and modify what has been said (as an individual writing a book can do); instead, they create their immediate authenticity. Credible or not, the solution is immediate. When repeating utterances over and over again, the political character is gradually formed and *trans*-formed as a historico-political creature with a first and a family name.

The closing phase of the interview under consideration goes as follows:

IR1: One last thing. Your image is quite obscure at the moment. Surveys show it, why is it, people are disappointed. Have you noticed this yourself?

IE: If I'd interpret for instance people's reactions when I was yesterday giving a speech in the Workers' House in Kokkola, I don't think it was left unclear to them who Martti Ahtisaari is. I was met with a warm ...reaction by them and they were assured that the person who spoke to them that night was honest, just and able.

IR1: This was in a Workers' House and in Kokkola?

IE: In Kokkola.

IR1: All right. Thank you.

IR2: Good. Thank you for the interview.

IE: Thank you.

(46)

67 With no possibility to discuss details here, I'd like to refer to texts like Ong (1982) and Bauman (1986) which promote a profound analysis of the conditions of oral and literal expressions in human communication.

The IE is asked directly about his image after being told that it is unclear. The IE, in a fashion typical of a story-teller, does not diagnose the claim as such but presents a short narrative of his experiences yesterday in a campaign event, emphasizing its positive emotional elements in interaction. The IR notices a possibility to modify the IE's political character and asks the IE to repeat the venue.

The IE claims that he was seen as honest, just and able in a specific place and time. Keeping in mind that the interview is about to end, the IR cunningly aims to point to the local and ideological limitations of the narrative. Of the two limiting repetitive questions, the IE accepts the name of the province capital, Kokkola. Leaving aside the **Workers' House**, the IE again aims to generalize his experience as not only dedicated to, or originating from, workers or left-wing supporters. In this way, the IR could slightly devaluate the IE's narrative. However, the IE gets the last word in the situation.

Although also dominated by orality at several levels, the case of Mrs. Elisabeth Rehn displays a somewhat different characterological strategy.⁶⁸ The opening section begins with characterological comments by the IRs (see case (10–11)). That **smile** and **glint in your eyes** are attached to the IE's political character becomes very clear when the IRs link these qualities to political and social realms.

While the case of Mr. Ahtisaari is characterized by the dominance of the ear in its focus on the construction of speeches and narratives, the case of Mrs. Rehn is dominated by the eye. **Smile** and the **glint in your eye** are visual phenomena which are given political interpretations.

The issue of **greed** is directly connected with the IE's smile. Although the question **Does the smile hide a woman greedy for power?** apparently is neutral in itself, the set of which the question is a part obviously aims to create a cliché to be responded to by the IE.

The picture which the IRs display, opening the interview and the entire **PresiTentti** series at the same time, depicts the IE as a flirting and smiling woman whose glint hides a constant feature in her political character, her greed for power. The three features – flirting, smile and glint – are experienced visually, with no words playing a primary role. Hence the primacy of the eye in the building and interpretation of such a political character.

Asking if there is a greedy **woman** behind the visual signs, the IR introduces the gender issue. Evidently, the IE might have discussed the issue as a gender topic even without the IRs' introduction, but the fact that it is the IR who opens the topic "politics–ambition–woman" clearly strengthens the IE's case when she rejects the claims.

The seemingly insignificant detail of who opens a topic proves important again. Introduced by the IRs as specifically a **woman** greedy of power, the IE may immediately concentrate on representing half of the potential audience. The

68 The notion 'strategy' has traditionally implied a high level of consciousness. The emphasis here is not on the level of consciousness but on the promotion of political character. Especially in this case, the interview being the first in the series, no detailed prefabrications could have been made. The issue is immediacy and intuitive promotion of discussion, not consciousness.

difference becomes more evident when the alternative question is considered: **Does the smile hide a politician greedy for power?** "Politician" might also be replaced by some other gender-neutral expression like "candidate". After such a modification, the IE would have needed to introduce the theme of being a female politician herself. The process would have been normative, bound to stimulate both strong support and opposition in the audience.

In addition, the process of introducing one's gender in politics is asymmetrical. Most often expressions like "politician", "candidate", or "president" that in themselves are gender-neutral tend to imply a male subject, if not otherwise stated.

Such expressions may also display expectations of human dispositions, behaviour and character that are typical of male citizens to the extent that expressions like "male politician", "male candidate", or "male president" do not normally give any additional substance to the basic expressions.

The asymmetry comes from the fact that inserting the term "female" makes a remarkable substantial difference. In normal political conditions, a female presidential candidate is still an exception and thus a piece of news. On the other hand, the fact that most candidates and politicians are male, arouses no nationwide astonishment and so the prefix "male" provides no additional information.

Attaching the status of being a **woman** to the IE, the IRs made it unnecessary for the IE to define herself specifically as a woman candidate. The difference is important: in opening the topic, the IRs allow the IE to handle the issue without claiming the role of an initiator. In an issue that regularly provokes deep-rooted disputes, the IEs as a rule had better not handle the matter of their own initiative but only as a response to the IRs' claims.

Had the status of **woman** been missing from the question, the IE should have taken the gender topic into consideration herself, or at least she should have made a conscious decision to raise or not to raise the subject. Most probably, after a gender-neutral introduction the latter decision could not have been made; the IE would have felt to be forced to open the topic.

V THE PRISM OF ISSUES: Self-identification, Finns, Finland

Introductory remarks

Several important factors suggested that the issue of self-identification would emerge as an important topic in the presidential campaign, and, consequently, in the **PresiTentti** series as well. The institution of presidency, due both to the considerable powers invested in it and its status as a symbol of the whole nation, has offered a natural opportunity to discuss national matters, to ponder upon international relations, and to consider personal and collective identifications at several levels.

In addition, the political context was determined by Finland's decision to apply for the membership of the European Union. Although the matter was not formally solved, the political élite had determined to steer Finland to the European Union. The scale of attitudes among the candidates toward the issue varied from warm support to bitter resistance.

Third, the new election method was to stir fresh discussion about national matters and identities. The party élite had largely failed to control the nomination of the candidates, and instead had had to give way to citizens' choices. Therefore, the new direct election method was to awaken new trends of political identifications, unfamiliar in the former era of the presidential elections.

Finally, the emergence of several eminent female candidates was to launch the gender issue and consequential political identifications into the campaign in a manner not seen before. If the next president, "the Father of the Nation", could for the first time be a female politician, there was an evident need for reapprehending the political scene.

Moreover, the concept of self-identification is considerably fertile for research purposes. It offers a view to look how a candidate discloses her or his self-portrait in an authentic political situation. In this respect, the concept also

serves as an important prism for examination purposes, not only as an essential piece of the political agenda.

However, the four factors – the institution itself, the future European Union membership, the new election model and the gender issue – suggesting intense discussion of national identification, provoked, after all, only minor and relatively dispassionate contributions. Although some of the candidates offered much room for the topic, the ‘main candidates’, those assigned by major parties, passed by the topic or handled it with a low profile.

The following rhetorical analysis is based on a quantitative survey of the words ‘Finland’ and ‘Finns’ in the interviews. When connected with national identification at any level, the expression ‘we’ has also been taken into consideration. After the quantitative and preliminary analyses, the analysis distinguishes between Finland, the nation or the institution, and the Finns, the citizens, analyzing the main qualities attached to them.

As a rule, the terms ‘Finland’ and ‘Finns’ are supposed to demand less commitment than using the terms together with the expression ‘we’. However, this rule has its exceptions. The term ‘we’ may be used in an inclusive manner, i.e., the rhetor is included in the expression ‘we’. On the other hand, however, the term may be used in an exclusive manner, excluding the rhetor from the assembly of denoted by ‘we’. Then, the use of the term may be ironic or include other *Entfremdungseffekte*.

Therefore, the rule has several exceptions. Generally speaking, the term ‘we’ seems to operate at several levels, of which the reference to Finn-terminology is only a part. The variety of ‘we’ ranges from a two-person-relation to the humankind. Regular connotations include the IE’s party community and the citizens of Finland as the IE’s targets of identification.

The context of the expressions is significant. Situational uses of ‘we’ in the very interview context are excluded. The same applies to the technical uses of ‘we’ by the IRs referring to their own pursuits on the spot. On the other hand, one focus of research is on the modal conditions of the uses of the term. Activity vs. passivity; promise vs. threat; and necessity vs. possibility are dimensions to be explored. Such dimensions entail questions like “What is happening to ‘us’?”, “Is the group of ‘us’ open or closed?”, “Are ‘we’ bound to certain futures?” and “Are ‘we’ haunted by certain threats?”

The term ‘we’ mainly serves as a vehicle of adherence, which is one of the main pursuits for a rhetor. The issue is not about accepting or rejecting the claims made by the rhetor. What is crucial is the rhetor’s ability to elicit and increase the adherence of the audience to the person and to the case (Perelman 1982, xii). In this respect, extending one’s scope and discussing ‘we’ and in the name of ‘we’, the rhetor aims to intensify the audiences’ adherence both personally and in terms of the issue on the agenda. The pursuit mainly calls for inclusive uses of the term, the exclusive uses being reserved for ironic statements.

The sole instance of using irony and the exclusive manner of ‘we’ can be found in case (42), where the IE defines Zhirinovskiy as “a friend of us all”. In this case, the exclusive use of the term ‘we’ is complete, evidently suggesting that the content of ‘we’ is void, not including any person in the context. The scope of ‘we’ remains obscure, possibly containing all the Finns, but the theoretical reference is

not as important as the ironic exaggeration leading to a void group. This is also an extreme example of the exclusive uses of the term.

A notable feature is the flexibility of the use of the term 'we'. While only occasionally used, it often assumes versatile references. Consider the following example:

IE: The Swedish People's Party has long discussed joining the European Union, so it was quite an old issue for us. Then I estimated very clearly the question, as did Finland and our administration, whether it may cause troubles to our security policy if we apply for the membership.
(47)

In case (47), one may distinguish four different we-identifications in a short fragment. The first sentence introduces **we** as the members of the IE's own party. **Our administration** implies one's identification with the political élite; **our security policy** refers to Finland's more or less official foreign policy but also to its legitimacy in the eyes of the IE due to the very **we**. The last appearance of **we** concerns the citizens of Finland on the brink of an important political decision. In that case **we** consists of a politically discussing entity.

National identifications

Typically, the candidates only seldom use the expressions **Finland** and **Finns**. An exception is Pertti Virtanen, the variety of whose expressions clearly exceeds other candidates' contributions. Virtanen uses the word **Finland** six times, the term **Finnish-Swedish** people once, the term **Finno-Ugrian** twice, the word **Finns** (in several modes) four times, and, finally, the word **Finn-Maiden** five times. More important than the exact figures is the varied manner of using the Finn-terminology.

The rhetorical figure of **Finn-Maiden** is familiar to every Finnish citizen. The maiden has enjoyed a multipurpose career, ranging from displaying the geographical area of Finland to school-children to business purposes as an advocate of the sales of Finnish products. In earlier times, the figure was limited to political uses, including comics. Recently the maiden has somewhat changed her focus of interest, devoting her activities mostly to commercial uses.

Introducing the Finn-Maiden in the recent political discussion as a figure with substantial qualities, the IE introduces a novelty. For him, the Finn-Maiden is politically a living creature, a vivid element in his political rhetoric. The definition of the Finn-Maiden can be found in the citation below. However, the background should be mentioned first. The IRs mention that the IE has said that young women display a prejudiced and narrow-minded attitude toward the IE, asking him to explain the statement.

IE: ... one feels that old retired elder women indeed are the best stuff in this country.
IR1: [Yes]
IE: On the contrary, one gets an incredibly warm response from them.
IR1: So the more mature women understand you better?

- IE: Yes. Interruption of puberty here in Finland is a real professional disease and many older women realize how incomplete life is. Just the same thing annoys the Finn-Maiden. Today the Finn-Maiden has become one of those being taught from the outside, just like these crazy election polls of yours. **THEY ARE TRYING TO SAY TO YOU AT THE MOMENT THAT...**
- IR2: [Pertti] Virtanen, let's move on...
(48)

The ensuing discussion deals with the Finn-Maiden's situation more precisely. The Maiden is being offended, and, consequently, democracy in Finland has been offended by continuous brainwashing and public opinion moulding.

Personifying the Maiden to a limited extent, the IE aims to utilize a well-known and beloved symbol in a concrete way. While no opinion about the success of the strategy at an empirical level can be given, the method at least displays the IE's conscious effort to make use of an important national symbol. In this respect, the other IEs were more modest, voluntarily restricting their message to deliberative levels.

Traditionally, deliberative rhetoric thematizes future prospects. In the **PresiTentti** series, the Aristotelian conception is handled from another viewpoint. Here the portrait of Finland and Finns essentially relies on quite a dark comprehension of the state of things. In most cases, the national concepts emerge in the context of threats and other negative issues. Even in neutral cases, latent threats are looming above the poor Finns, who will not find peace in the world if the presidential candidates are to be trusted.

The following section analyses several IEs' stands in detail. Although not giving a complete record, those candidates who most regularly utilize Finn-terminology are dealt with. The cases are Pertti Virtanen (already discussed), Elisabeth Rehn, Raimo Ilaskivi and Keijo Korhonen. The case of Paavo Väyrynen is included for comparative purposes: unlike the other four, he almost totally omits Finn-terminology. The sample covers the variety of opinions well enough in national topics, ranging from the supporters of EU membership (Ilaskivi, Rehn) via somewhat double-edged attitudes (Virtanen, Väyrynen) to the opponents of membership (Korhonen).

Rehn's discussion of Finland and the Finns only partly concerns public issues. Her target is mostly private, in the sphere of morality and attitudes rather than politics. Her references to Finns are an interesting collection of claims and attitudes. In her interview, she mentions **Finland** and **Finns** eight times. Of these eight cases, three treat **Finland** in connection with the membership of the European Union (twice) and the NATO (once). The Union connection is accepted, while the NATO connection is regarded as irrelevant, at least at the moment.

The rest of the cases provide a spiritual portrait of the Finns in the IE's eyes. Some of the cases discuss the sexual inclinations of the Finns. The topic was triggered by a question referring to an earlier statement by the IE allegedly accepting "paid love, or brothels". (see case (39))

The IE explains that she gave an ironic statement on issues like sexual harassment and marital rape, laughing at those who criticize sex bars. "... if this is what the Finns want, go ahead, I am a liberal". She now notices that "the sarcasm

went too far" and that the expression was one of those "spontaneous statements that I sometimes should avoid".

The second case discusses the possibility that fear is being fuelled among the Finns to get more money for defense purposes. Unlike in the previous case, here the threat is external, embodied by Zhirinovsky. The citation is presented in its context (case (44)).

The third case discusses the IE's possibility to be elected. "According to the polls, you have no chance to be elected", IR2 argues. IR1 adds: "Nine passes by". The IE responds: "What a claim. For the first, two million Finns have not yet made any decision. That is half of the electorate. In addition, we have still three weeks, or twenty days, to go."

In a sense, all these cases delineate "personal" solutions. These solutions are mostly reactions to expected threats to an equilibrium. Understandably, the exception is the possible election of the IE, the positive element in an otherwise negative scheme.

Ilaskivi's case consists of nine remarks on Finland or the Finns. The leading theme is whether the Finns need "a determined and strong leader", implying rather the IE's allegedly hard practices in high posts than a general discussion of presidential leadership. The IE partly admits his pursuit toward a strong leadership but only in the context of democracy. According to him, "the Finns are seeking a safety choice".

Second, the Finns are discussed in two personal contexts. First, the IE says how he had been afraid that Finland would lose her independence in World War II. Second, the IE is asked about the Finn's attitudes towards the candidates' extra-marital relations. Again, the question includes a personal implication, to be discussed openly a little later.

Keijo Korhonen's case differs from the above two ones in that the IE uses Finn-terminology solely at public and institutional levels. The main theme is the IE's claim that Finland will lose her independence if she becomes the member of the EU. The topic is discussed from several points of view, including the incumbent's activities, the Parliament's choice which differs from the IE's taste, and the history of Finland and its lessons in the current situation.

However, the tone is essentially similar to the preceding contributions: threats and negative alternatives dominate the experienced political situation. In Korhonen's case, threats are mostly external and objective, concerning every Finn regardless of his or her experiences. In the two previous cases, negative interpretations of situations are largely based on moral menaces. Yet the difference is not absolute but rather lies in a different emphasis. Rehn and Ilaskivi also pay attention to institutional issues, and Korhonen once discusses himself in the context of Finn-terminology. The last case is presented with the identifier *we*.

Finally, Paavo Väyrynen represents candidates who exhibit very few examples of Finn-terminology. In his case, Finland and the Finns are mentioned five times, of which the IRs' share is three and the IE's only two times. The IE treats **Finland** in terms of NATO's initiative for the Partnership of Peace and the issue of EU membership. In both cases, Finland's fortune is in question, and the IE's attitude towards such arrangements is either reserved (the EU) or negative (NATO).

The IRs' three references to Finn-terminology are exhibited in a morally questionable context. **Finland** emerges in the discussion when the IE, directly or indirectly, is suggested to have intrigued with the representatives of a foreign power, opposed the dismissal of an MP who was accused of and condemned of having asked for bribes, and finally, asked whether a sex scandal could destroy a politician in Finland. None of these themes is presented without hidden implications toward the IE's political character.

There are few promises and plenty of threats in the Finnish presidential candidates' speech acts. To explore this, a further look at the uses of the term **we** is in order. In many cases, the expression **we** occurs in the context of Finn-terminology. However, it is by no means the only context where **we** is used.

We-identifications

In citation (45) the IE displays a short narrative with a notable possibility of identifying with **us**. The exchange began in a harsh manner, the IRs quoting a statement by the IE according to which there are top Finn politicians who would be eager to sell even their grandmothers to a soap factory if the price was appropriate. The IE goes on to explain the statement:

I don't mean anybody in particular, I mean specifically that there was born an attitude within us, an attitude which in my opinion manifests the birth of a sort of dwarfs' society. I'm interested in this phenomenon as a historian, too, and I think it will arouse interest among future historians, but at the moment it is much more than history, it is hard reality for us.

IR2: Now would you consider yourself a giant in the dwarfs' country?

IE: No:: by no means, but I want that these matters are discussed.
(45, a part)

Talking about a prevailing attitude among **us**, the IE seems to suggest another negative interpretation about the Finnish situation. IR2's question points at the interpretation of the identification: should one count the IE among **us**, or is he the sole giant in the dwarfs' country? The IE denies the exclusive interpretation of the identification. The question no doubt leaves little room for other tactics.

However, it is interesting to consider for a moment the other alternative, that of concluding the case logically and affirming the megalomaniac interpretation of the identification. What if the IE had answered "Oh yes, I'm the one. Let the nation prosper under my leadership"? The whole interview would have assumed a completely new tenor, possibly with large-scale effects on the presidential campaign.

Refusing to play the megalomaniac role of an imperator, the role which he nevertheless implicitly plays, the IE restricts himself to repeating a familiar theme in the process of identification: he confirms that the Finns and Finnish society lack something important (like independence and self-esteem), or are under several threats (external, political as well as internal, moral ones). For a moment the IE joins the chorus lamenting the condition of the nation.

The common trend of the **we** identification eventually emphasizes negative features. The following summary shows the context in which the term is used as well as its tone. The sample of the IEs is the same as in the case of Finn-terminology.

Ahtisaari

Number of **we** cases: 4

Contexts:

- 1) “**we** have travelled 15 000 kilometers on a bus”; a response to a question concerning his health
- 2) “I find it more important that **we** presuppose an independent defense, and a strong one”; a response to a question about the term ‘neutrality’
- 3) “Well of course I’m a leftist in the sense that if one divides the parties in **our** country, the Social-democratic Party is on the left”. A response to the question: “Are you a leftist?”
- 4) “There are different politicians in the same way as there are different human beings among **us**”. A response to the question: “You don’t seem to appreciate much Finnish politicians and parties. Why is that?”

Status:

The expressions of 3) and 1) are neutral, even if case 1) also implies some negative aspects on the part of the IRs. Case 2) is neutral, too, defining **our** situation toward the term ‘neutrality’ in a new manner. Case 4) requires further analysis.

The fourth case is interesting in many respects. First, it contains a differentiation between politicians and **us**, human beings. The topic is to define what is the role of politics in society. The topic was opened by IR2 asking if the president should be a professional in politics. The IE denies the demand, appealing to the public opinion, which does not support the statement.

The discussion continues:

IR2: And in your opinion?

IE: Er ... in my opinion ... the situation is quite simple, at the moment citizens are looking for a person whose main proficiency is not in politicking.

IR2: But polit...politicking is another matter than familiarity with politics

IE: H’m...

IR2: You don’t seem to appreciate much Finnish politicians and politics. Why is that?

IE: Well, I appreciate, er, certain politicians and parties too. I’ve never imagined that Finland could manage without parties. But there are different politicians in the same way as there are different human beings among us.

(49)

The citation shows a latent rejection of politics by the IE. While the IE finds parties necessary, he shows his distance to politicians and politicking in citation

(49). The crucial information is contained in the last sentence, where the IE displays his identification by making two differentiations (politicians vs. human beings, and, more strongly, **we** human beings vs. politicians). Evidently, the IE's strategy to reach the office is to omit politics and to make use of other resources. In this respect, case 4) includes a hidden but strong negative aspect in its identification process.

Ilaskivi

Number of **we** cases: 4

Contexts:

- 1) "... that we'd lose **our** right to act as a free people". A response to a question: "Are you afraid of something?" The total statement can be found in citation (43).
- 2) "... the route without alternatives has been the biggest problem for **us** here in Finland". A part of the response to a question whether the IE accepts conversation that might be harmful to the country.
- 3) "... none of **us** candidates has held the presidential office". A response to the question: Now the fact is that you have little experience in foreign policy. How are you going to compensate for this lack of experience?"
- 4) "Iiro Viinanen is a good minister of finance, although **we** don't agree completely on national economic policy". The question asked about the IE's relations with other top names of his party.

Status:

Cases 1), 2) and 3) display a negatively conditioned identification. In each case, the assembly of **we** is shown to be in trouble. In the first case, the nation seems to lose her independence, in the second case only one political tenor has dominated in Finland, and in the third case every candidate lacks presidential experience. The fourth case is somewhat more neutral but still refers to a well-known dispute between the two gentlemen concerned.

Rehn

Number of **we** cases: 7

Contexts:

- 1) Moral issues (case 40)
- 2) Characterological issues (cases (42), (44))
- 3) Political issues (case (47)).

Status:

- 1) Moral issues. The assembly of **we** is expressed in the discussion of sexual relationships between parents and their grown-up children. A negative context.
- 2) Characterological issues. Once the assembly of **we** is void (see page x), at other times the problem of facing the Zhirinovskiy threat is discussed. A negative context, although the I indirectly promises lasting solutions to problems.
- 3) Political issues. The context is neutral and the conversations concern the membership issue and the campaign situation.

Väyrynen:

Number of **we** cases: 3

Contexts:

- 1) Moral issues. The IE discusses these in two interrelated cases. First, he is asked why he defended the dismissed MP "so spectacularly". Second, the IE is asked about the state of morals among politicians in Finland.
- 2) Political issues. Once the IE remarks that ".. we have to remember all the time that our neighbour is the superpower Russia". This is a part of the response to a claim: "One gets an impression that you are quite reluctant to do anything in connection with the West".

Status:

Both cases appear in negative contexts. The moral issue is interestingly tangential to case (49), that of Ahtisaari. The interview with Paavo Väyrynen went on as follows:

- IR1: Now do Finnish politicians have high moral standards ... in general?
 IE: We certainly have equal moral standards to other Western countries but there are differences between individuals, of course. We have both good and bad politicians and certainly also with respect to moral standards better ones and worse ones.
 (50)

While Ahtisaari distinguishes politicians as a special category of human beings, Väyrynen discusses the situation of politicians. Consequently, the process of identification is different. Speaking of **we**, Väyrynen refers to Finnish politicians, those being at the same level as in (other) Western countries. The second appearance of **we** refers to the Finnish political scene in general rather than to Finnish politicians in particular, but the view is again internal, unlike in the case of Ahtisaari (49), whose view is clearly external with regard to politicians. In terms of the political characters, the difference is natural in view of the different careers

of the IEs, Väyrynen being a professional politician and Ahtisaari a professional diplomat.

To conclude the analysis of the **we** identification, a considerable tendency of negativism strikes one immediately. In an overwhelming majority of the cases introducing **we** in the political or a more private scene, the context is negative. The negative aspects include experienced threats both in foreign policy and in more intimate issues. Many other problems are also presented as various kind of annoyances for the assemblies of **we**. The nature of the assemblies varies from an occasional comparison of two persons to estimations of the permanent qualities in humankind.

Dark background

In two senses, it is only natural that negative assessments occupy a large share in the interviews. First, the role of the IRs strongly influences the IE's possibilities to discuss positive affairs. The IRs do their best to dig into difficult matters both at a personal and a collective level. Second, a dark background may give a welcome contrast even for modest positive contributions by the IEs. The former aspect has been treated from various points of view in the study. It belongs to the structural and permanent struggle of topics, initiatives and turn construction mechanisms between the IRs and the IEs in political interviews.

The second aspect is unique to the **PresiTentti** series. The Finnish presidential candidates mostly seem to avoid positive scenarios and, instead, to emphasize the dark sides of issues. Threats abound, while promises are thin or almost non-existent. The whole material of the series does not include a single speech act that could be interpreted as a promise to offer a solution to a defined nation-wide problem. The orientation is strictly defensive. One could also say that the potential presidents do not make empty promises.

In my view, the trend produces a disadvantageous effect. Giving an unbalanced view of the nation's fate and conditions in the world of politics and also in more spiritual realms, the politicians risk their credibility. The trend is all the more risky when it is so unanimously shared among the candidates. It becomes a general mood in politics.

If politics in itself is regarded as a cluster of mentalities and activities bound together mainly by negative rhetoric toward a nation's fate – past, present and future – the domain of politics as a whole loses its enchantment. Accordingly, citizens are invited to concentrate on other activities, psychologically more promising and rewarding, whose satisfaction is not denied *per se*. Thus, business, sports, arts, etc. may satisfy the need of a communitarian pride among citizens, leaving politics in the morass of negativity.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

1.

The **PresiTentti** interview series appears to become a political debate between two rivalling parties. Both of the participating teams, the IE and the IRs, try to advance their case by making use of, and – no less importantly – re-interpreting the conversation traffic rules. While accepting common rules to a certain extent, both of the parties strive to test opportunities of breaking the given rules of conversation.

In political science, as well as in communications studies, these actors have mainly been treated separately. They have been seen as fulfilling their different aims in a common situation. In this study, the two parties constitute a political and communicational net. Their strategies of advancing their intentions vary, but their aims can be understood only as interactive moves in a political game, the rules of which are also continuously under conscious moulding.

The document material shows both successful and less successful cases concerning how to understand and apply the basic rules of conversation. The IRs, largely bound to their role of interrogating, aim to intensify their action primarily by asking questions with sharp implications. The IEs, who in principle enjoy a wider choice of strategies, either invest in their command of issues or favour the display of political character.

Theoretically, an ideal combination would connect these strategies, resulting in a powerful and attractive political character with a profound mastery of the given political agenda. In practice, the material examined here shows no such figure but displays a variety of IEs stressing either characterological or substantial features. While in some cases these qualities are considerably balanced, usually the debate tends to stress one of the two features in the IEs.

In a number of cases, the traffic rules are stretched to their limits, over which no interactive discussion is possible. The IEs' role seems to allow them a more flexible strategy of responding to such situations. The IRs are responsible for promoting the debate as the hosts of the interactive situation, but the IEs may test alternative interpretations of the traffic rules. They test the rules by their own will,

jeopardizing their face in a situation where they might not be able to handle the ensuing exchange in a credible manner.

At the core of the debate lies the possibility of producing narratives. Even this option is asymmetrical, tending to apply to the IEs rather than the IRs. Producing narratives is in principle allowed to both of the parties; it is even encouraged. Short narratives may be used as characterological elements by IEs as well as by IRs. But the object of a narrative can only be the character of the IE.

Therefore, the IRs' narratives always more or less directly concern the IEs' character. In many cases, implicative techniques are utilized to prevent the IE from immediately rejecting the message implied. Implicative techniques are also used to entice the IE into the characterological topics chosen by the IRs. Had these topics emerged surprisingly, the effect would often have been devastating or at least harmful to the IE. The **PresiTentti** series includes several cases where considerable pressure is exerted on the IE's character (see e.g. cases (26) and (43)).

As regards the IE, she or he must put forward characterological arguments in a more complex manner. Powerful characterological arguments seem to require a multi-levelled structure where the IE at the same time displays his or her characterological features but also maintains distance to the characterological narrative. When regulating his or her distance to the narrative just told, the IE allows him- or herself to consider the nature, credibility and importance of the characterological narrative. While delivering the narrative in itself, the IE nevertheless sheds some crossing light onto the narrative, thus indirectly making the audience realize that there are alternative views of the situation.

A special case of such a reconsideration appears in case (38), where the IE delivers a joke as a crucial part of an important characterological narrative. Contrary to the normal strategy of distancing oneself from one's own narratives, the IE insists on confirming the suspect characterological feature. As a result, an amusing narrative remains an amusing narrative without positive attachments to the IE's political character. Paradoxically, the lacking distance between the narrator and the narrative generates the break between the two.

Without the possibility to create narratives, political interviews would be events displaying polito-technical agenda-setting and agenda-dissolving with minimal connections to the persons involved. As we know from the theory of rhetoric since Aristotle, fixing the audience's interest to the event also entails fixing their attention to the *ethos* of those participating. Characterological narratives serve precisely this intention.

2.

The material on which the study is based is fairly narrow. It consists of 11 interviews which together constitute the **PresiTentti** interview series. The series was broadcasted as an epilogue to the prime time news programme by the channel FBC 1, traditionally considered the leading source of political programmes in Finland.

The series is explored here as one totality. The method adopted is by no means the only possible one. It was determined by the research interest. The aim

was to examine the interview process as an essential means to produce and display public political meanings and references. This is done in a complex and conflicting situation where both parties present – the IRs and the IE – follow their own strategies, react to each other's moves, and pursue their characterological aims. The phenomenon of interview is considered the main research object. While the argumentation by the IEs has been given a lot of scope in the analysis, this is done mainly in the context of exploring the political nature of such interviews.

On the other hand, the analysis of the IEs' argumentation has mostly not intended to display their individual differences and references in terms of their parties, etc. Evidently, the material and the method would allow one to make certain conclusions in this respect, too, but more research material and additional methods are needed for a full-scale interpretation of the IEs as presidential candidates. In addition, the research method demonstrates certain remarkable and constant features in the IEs' political faces and political characters, thus facilitating the sketching of their portraits as presidential candidates. However, the difference should be kept in mind.

The narrowness of the material has its advantages. It allows a thorough analysis and encourages the researcher to seek several alternative views of the phenomena explored. The possible risk is that the material chosen is not representative enough. In this case, the representativeness should concern both political interviews and the presidential candidate race. In the latter case, a restricting note has already been made. While the study depicts the presidential campaign and its central figures of 1994 in Finland, its methodological core lies in exploring the political interaction process under competitive circumstances. In the former case, the series chosen simply is the most important single media event in the presidential candidate race.

A final note on the uses of the material. As has been said in the opening passages, paralinguistic features are largely left aside in the analysis. In certain cases (e.g., (21)), the discussion appears incomprehensible if limited to the textual surface. When this happens in the analysis, it is pointed out. Yet paralinguistic features influence one's interpretations of the arguments. Eye contact, reserve, hand movements and so on have their own vivid message to tell. While such messages may be given anything but one 'proper' interpretation in the argumentation context, *some* attention must be paid to them. In evident cases (e.g., (8–9)), these factors are mentioned.

3.

Following Riesman's and Payne's analysis, the study suggests that three behavioural dispositions may be used to characterize the IEs' situation in the interview. These dispositions are shame, guilt, and anxiety. Unlike in the original contexts, the study depicts these dispositions basically as typical situations reserved for the IEs, not as broad epochal generalizations or as individuals' states of mind.

Each of these dispositions displays the IE's mode of defensive attitude in the situation. The question is: Where do such negative conceptions come from? In this

analysis, the tripartite disposition model suggests itself when exploring the manner in which the IEs display their self-identifications. Evidently, those self-identifications do not match literally the above-mentioned triple. However, the general tone of negative characterizations by the IEs concerning their we-conceptions and understanding of wider Finnish political situations justifies the use of the three concepts.

When discussing the three concepts in the study, it is vitally important to remember this: they refer to typical (but not the only) situations in which the IEs find themselves in the course of discussion. The study does not maintain that the IEs are ashamed, guilty, or anxious in themselves. What it reports is that the IEs often end up in situations where they are suspected of one of these alternative positions, and for reasonable grounds presented by the IRs.

In a somewhat astonishing manner, most of the IEs are driven to such situations in the series. They are found in a situation discussing one of the three possible dispositions. Normally, the IE rejects suspicions of belonging to one of these categories. Still, the very fact of being under suspicion affects the political character of any IE. The result depends on the actual conversation. The IRs naturally try to lure the IE deeper into the jungle.

Yet the most important element of the IEs' dark passage is in their own hands. Considering the wider political environment, *every* IE emphasizes threats and difficulties. If one listens to the IEs as the Finnish presidential candidates of the 1994 election, the country faces many uncertainties or is possibly moving towards grave difficulties. In the series, openly positive reflections on the country's possibilities to strengthen its position are almost completely absent.

This strategy is a strange choice by the IEs, especially due to its unanimous nature. Normally, positive and courageous messages concerning the future are demanded from a presidential candidate in order to display a credible national leader character. This block of eleven do not follow this rule, but lament the circumstances. This strategy strongly entices the IEs toward dispositions with a negative tenor.

Another element still adds negativity. The characterological discussions largely concern possible weaknesses in each IE's political face and character. As relatively soft political faces, most of the IEs let the IRs lead the discussion onto thin ice, simply trying to cope with the ensuing annoyances one by one. A couple of IEs adopt a tougher political face, actively resisting the negativity policy adopted by the IRs (see e.g. cases (28) and (33)). In case (28), at least, the active resistance provokes the IRs to continue at the level of the IE's suspect political character.

The IRs also strengthen the strategy of negativity. In addition to the IRs' characterological strategy, their issue agenda includes threats but not opportunities or promises. A silent agreement between the IRs and the IEs prevails on the dark accent when setting the agenda of the discussion. This may be a typically Finnish political feature: to identify, assess and even value political threats, instead of emphasizing opportunities and promises in politics.

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APPENDIX A

The result of the Finnish presidential election in 1994:

I Round

Martti Ahtisaari	25,9 %
Elisabeth Rehn	22,0 %
Paavo Väyrynen	19,5 %
Raimo Ilaskivi	15,2 %
Keijo Korhonen	5,8 %
Claes Andersson	3,8 %
Pertti Virtanen	3,0 %
Eeva Kuuskoski	2,6 %
Toimi Kankaanniemi	1,0 %
Sulo Aittoniemi	1,0 %
Pekka Tiainen	0,2 %

II Round

Martti Ahtisaari	53,9 %
Elisabeth Rehn	46,1 %

Mr. Ahtisaari was elected the tenth President of the Republic of Finland.