Tales of Ambivalence. Stories of Acceptance and Rejection among Swedish Expatriates in Poland

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Tales of Ambivalence

Stories of Acceptance and Rejection among Swedish Expatriates in Poland

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Abstract

Stories about another country and others often contain moral and ideological tensions and ambivalences. This report analyses and interprets work-related stories among Swedish expatriates in Poland in order to highlight that aspect. The stories are told in interviews. When telling stories of their arrival in Poland, the expatriates may be seen as negotiating the juxtaposition of the Polish scenery and surroundings, various surprises or sudden changes in their impressions, the difference in the novel or the unexpected. In and through citations, the expatriates also engage in struggles with themselves.
Throughout the history of economics, the stranger everywhere appears as the trader, or the trader as stranger. As long as any economy is essentially self-sufficient, or products originate outside the group. Insofar as members do not leave the circle in order to buy these necessities – in which case they are the "strange" merchants in that outside territory – the trader must be a stranger, since nobody else has a chance to make a living.

(Georg Simmel 1950/1964, p. 403)

An additional variation of Georg Simmel’s stranger seems to exist today’s economic and working life: the company expatriate. To live and work abroad during a certain period of time is in some contexts common and highly praised, especially among privileged groups in Western societies. Working abroad is associated with learning, personal development and intercultural meetings bringing new insights. It is perhaps also associated with a particular lifestyle and a particular point of view. Expatriates are neither local inhabitants nor tourists, neither completely at home or away in foreign territory, and to turn one’s understanding into a quality or asset of one’s self and one’s world view.

One might even say that narrating is a central point of being an expatriate. Without narration a crucial goal seems unachievable: to form experiences from abroad. Some authors claim that experiences are not only shaped by but also presuppose a narration, that they hardly exist autonomously (Chase 1995, p. 31; Angr 1997, p. 193; Sacks 1972, vol. II, p. 248; Dyer & Keller-Cohen 2000, p. 248; Migliore 1993, p. 354). In any case, to relate

One’s experience to someone is not just emptying out the contents of one’s experience to someone else, but also creating something new. Without narration a crucial goal seems unachievable: to make new experiences from abroad.


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head but organizing a tale that is told to a specific recipient by an author-ized narrator. It is not only the entitlement of having experiences that contains an aspect of social order but also the ... seen as “extraordinarily carefully regulated sorts of things” (Sacks 1992, vol. II p. 248; cf. Silverman 1998, p.13).

The position of expatriates as strangers brings a certain quality to their stories and storytelling. These are not only formed in the context of social particularities of being an expatriate but ... that respect the empirical source of this report, Swedes working and living in Poland, appears to be a significant example.

From some Swedish points of view Poland is more or less regarded as having been rediscovered in the last ten years. Since the fall of communism a wide range of political, economic and ... mainly official – for instance the project “Poland in Focus” that was arranged during 1999 by the Swedish government – a considerable part appears to be taking place in private arenas (e.g. in tour-

2 According to the Swedish Trade Council there are now between 800 and 1000 Swedish companies in Poland.

3 My focus is however not on business or economics as such but on wider sociological and social psychological problems. One background to these prob-lems consists of the traffic of resources, ... and nationalities are being assimilated, modified or rejected in everyday and pro-fessional practice (Herzfeld 1997).

4 Experiences of others are being shaped in relation to historical categorizations and generalisations. Within these experience-shaping processes, scholars often ... identity-constructions. In broad terms, Westerners are occasionally seen as engaged in a sort of practical Occidentalism, in a striving to celebrate and spread Western ideas and life styles (Sampson 1998). They are seen as elevating some experiences or perceptions and reject-ing others, thereby implying or announcing a quintessential and expanding West, obtaining shape in relation to the perceived East (Carrier 1996). For instance, Kelly-Holmes (1998) argues that Western marketers and advisers in Eastern Central Europe play a key role in the production of Westernization and advise in consumer-related matters. This problem appears to a considerable degree in relation to the consumer (Carrier 1996). For

In my view, Billig’s arguments may serve as empirical sociologist’s inspiration or challenge. They may encourage a pursuit of other analytical tools than (merely) categorizations, ... about Eastern Central Europe might in this respect be informative. Also in more official arenas, for instance in the EU enlargement negotiations, highly ambivalent attitudes towards this region are, to all appearances, ubiquitous. It is accepted but must change, it is wanted but also not wanted.
In this report I try to view stories and storytelling among Swedish expatriates in Poland as such sites for social tensions and ambivalences. My purpose is to describe and interpret some of the ways in which the expatriates' experiences are articulated. This is done by focusing on the relation between the meaning of objects and events described and the ways in which these meanings are produced and reproduced.

I try to fulfill this purpose in two ways. First, I analyse arrival stories, that is, stories about how the expatriates arrived in Poland in the first place and the circumstances surrounding this arrival. These stories are a significant part of the expatriates' understanding of their experiences in Poland. They are used to construct a scheme of meaning, either implicitly or explicitly, for organizing and understanding the relation of objects and events described. Second, I analyse oral quotations, that is, passages that are portrayed as recited or reported in the expatriates' stories and conversations (chapter 3). Especially when the expatriates are talking about problematic experiences in Poland they use such quotations to describe other Swedes, Poles and themselves in vivid ways. This could be seen as a way to comprehend others and position oneself in relation to them.

These two approaches focus seemingly crucial aspects of expatriate life, to arrive and to get involved, to cross a border and to start working, and their associated meanings seem to be kept alive...
Methodological remarks

Since some reflections on the concrete interview situations are incorporated in the analysis I do not include a separate section on methodology in this report. Some overall remarks may be made here. The interviews took place in Poland (Warsaw and Gdansk) and in Sweden (southern part). Some of the interviewees were contacted through a club for Swedish expatriates in Poland, others were part of a network of Swedish colleagues, friends or acquaintances. The material has in other words partly been gathered through a snowball sample.

The interviews were between one and two hours long and conducted in Swedish. A few interviews were carried out with two interviewees who are working together. Some of the themes in the interviews were questions on working experiences, everyday life and experiences of crimes, bribery and risk taking. However, other themes came up within the interviews. The conversations were shaped in a way that allowed the interviewees to elaborate and change topics and the interviewer to interrupt and interfere on selected occasions (cf. Holstein & Gubrium 1997).

My methodological approach implies several weaknesses. The diversity in the interview conversations makes a more systematic investigation difficult. My varying participation in the conversations...
Beginnings in stories are important, but also stories of beginnings. To tell stories about how something began or got started may not only clarify fundamental meanings of crucial events but also help in the diagnosis and that the parents’ insights have ultimately triumphed over medical professionals (Engel 1993, p. 821). In the latter study, David M. Engel labels these stories “origin stories”; stories that transcend time and reorganise the earliest and most basic set of oppositions in an event. Retelling such stories may have emotional effects on the teller, as well as on the audience. These stories may influence how we understand our past, present, and future. They may help us make sense of our experiences and shape our identity.

In this chapter, I try to analyse and interpret various arrival stories among Swedish expatriates in Poland, focusing on the narrative compositions and their linkages to the narrator’s self.

The expatriates’ arrivals may be seen as beginnings in several senses: a new job or a new assignment may have been accepted, a new company might be started, a new lifestyle may be adopted, and so on. Questions or visions about one’s future may be put forward, as well as doubts or expectations.

Where the heck have we ended up?

My first example is an extensive one and may to some degree be seen as a complex model for arrival stories, filled with details from the setting and an expression of a number of opposing moral and emotional statements of a rather exact time of arrival, as well as of a place.

Speaking to a Swedish small entrepreneur, here called Jonathan, I ask if he remembers the first time he came to Poland:

Yes, I remember that. And it was the first week in March ‘97, it was, and we were driving down and there weren’t any leaves on the trees, so the countryside looked a mess, coming down, it was just like twenty, twenty-five ((Swedish)) miles from the Swedish border and maybe just five miles to Swinoujscie, which is at the border to Germany. But still such a big contrast.

This excerpt shows some characteristics in the expatriates’ origin stories: a statement of a rather exact time of arrival, as well as an expression of the contrast between the two countries. Jonathan’s story reflects a sense of disorientation and confusion, as well as a sense of surprise and wonder.
Germany but still characterized by such a "big contrast". Further on, Jonathan explains his own conclusions at the time of his first arrival:

"Then coming down, meeting this terrible road and this boring landscape, the first you do, so you get yourself a little... I thought that 'if it's looking like this, if they cannot build roads, if they cannot build houses, can they really like supply these things on time?'.

"These things" refers to the products that Jonathan and his colleagues were planning to buy in Poland. Jonathan is thus not only presenting a way to construct knowledge about people's abilities out of his impressions of roads and houses, he is also presenting an excuse for doing this. This excuse is achieved partly by a comment on the difficulty of avoiding jumping to conclusions, partly by a quotation. Jonathan is... into the report – the former Jonathan – whose prejudices are fit for use in the perspective of the present Jonathan – that is the narrator.

In another part of our conversation Jonathan reconnects to this feature of his origin story and illuminates his changed attitude:

"But then you're coming down, meeting the people and then you notice, well, they're not different from us. They've got... ((in Sweden)), it's looks almost as rotten there, ((in Poland)) there are a few more ((such holes)).

Jonathan tries to moderate the significance of his initial impressions and evens out the absolute differences between... tolerant "they're not different from us". This depiction also includes a distinction towards other Swedes. Jonathan says: "And also here in Sweden, I've got the impression that people consider Poles and Poland, it's like, well 'they're gathering strawberries'. And they're people that are coming here in the summer, trying to get money for themselves and stealing and messing around, so that is, so to speak, the image of..."

The distinction between the narrator's former and present self as well as between the narrator and other, prejudiced... origin stories, not only in their established and static sense but also in their sense of being redrawn and reproduced.

Jonathan's last expression above, "the image that I had of Poland before", is a useful verbal tool in manufacturing new images and manufacturing the image of having get rid of false images. This procedure resembles some story patterns that Hunt and Benford (1994, p. 5) are portrayed as conscious or aware. This type of tale thus follows a formula of "once I was blind, but now I can see".

Sure it was grey, concise, tight thought.

And...
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Gdynia, you’re driving through an industrial area and it simply looks damn boring, you know, there—there you got this image ‘oh, what kind of country is this?’. And I remember we arrived at this...and I had, and Simon, had been offered. And it was completely unbelievable, how it looked, I thought that this won’t ever be fixed. And when we had, when we were going to inaugurate the office one month later, I think it was six or eight weeks or something, I thought...transform this into something we’re interested in’. But it did work and we’re still there in these premises.

By mentioning other Swedes’ “image” of Poland and suggesting a distance from this image as a point of departure (lines 17-18), Paul retells his hesitation and pessimistic conviction. The fact that everything did work out is Paul’s point so far (line 19). He is not only puncturing his own historical conclusions, he is also implying another recurrent feature of the expatriates’ origin stories: the struggle to carry out your work and business ideas despite all obstacles.

Many elements in Paul’s depiction are similar to Jonathan’s story above. Paul’s question, “oh, what kind of country is this?” (lines 11-12) has for instance quite the same rhetorical function...the simplified versions of the conventional Swedish images of Poland (I am not prejudiced), to some extent there really is a reality behind them (I am a realist), and I am not the one who are going to pretend the opposite (I am not a hypocrite). A safe way to ventilate this is to quote yourself as you were...are made into an object for the present narrator, an object to wonder at, perhaps regret and mock or merely investigate.

Furthermore, the expatriates’ origin stories tend to organise certain biographical and societal developments into a coherent entity, emphasizing that the most important things in Poland actually arrived. Further on in my interview with Paul, when he returns to his origin story, this tendency becomes evident:...during these years that I’ve been involved since—, the first time I went down there was in the beginning of 1994, a...eh the quality of food was like, when you were going out to eat, it was always, all the menus in Polish, it was like—and now it’s like any tourist country at all. I would say that supplies in the shops in Poland are better than in Sweden. There...you may enter shops where they cannot speak anything but Polish and really don’t welcome you but—but there has been an enormous change. People are realising ‘if I don’t do a good job towards a customer who walks right in then I probably cannot keep my job’, you know. That—that has, the mentality, the treatment of people when you’re entering as—as a Swede has changed very much, I think.
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Polish

Paul's arrival most likely had a minimal effect on the Polish societal development – it is probably well established in everyday conversations. Paul is pointing out what Harvey Sacks (1992, vol. I p.36-37) has observed: that the initial impressions in the indicated arrival story are not provided with any relativistic markers. When used in this way, the impressions are not associated with an "image".

Paul's last-mentioned remarks on being a customer in Polish shops may be worth an excursion. Some episodes in my material, such as Paul's comments above, indicate that Swedish expatriates in Poland may look for a proof of an improving level of service in general or a proof of a (still) inferior level of service compared to Swedish or Western equivalents. The expatriates are reporting this event and transforming it into a significant examination in the presence of another Western foreigner in Poland, for instance me.

In a conversation (not recorded) with a Swedish expatriate, this reported cultural litmus test was conspicuous. This particular expatriate, who lived and worked in Warsaw, was confidently praising the latest economic changes in Poland and among the Poles in general. He was pointing, though, to his recurrent visits in a small shopping center in Warsaw. "The people there are friendly, helpful, and the shops are clean and well-organized," he said. He felt humiliated. He presented this experience as a proof of lingering communist features in contemporary Poland.

My point is neither to cast doubt on nor confirm the contents of this kind of reports. My point is instead to reflect on the significance of retelling them. As in the case of Paul's comments above, although he on the contrary perceives an improved level of service when entering Polish shops, an evaluation of customer service seems to be a rather stable cornerstone in the expatriates' storytelling. Moreover, the outcome of this evaluation may make them proud or offended. The narrators thus repeatedly create opportunities to portray themselves as sensitive customer service evaluators, implying an ability to survey and judge commercial situations in Poland with the help of a few glances in shops and supermarkets.

Objectifying the change of perception: Colouring the images

The co-existence of a perception change and a change in what is being perceived in the expatriates' origin stories has been observed. The determinant factors that influence the change of perception have been identified.

The co-existence of perception change and change in what is being perceived in the expatriates' origin stories has been observed. The determinant factors that influence the change of perception have been identified.
In this arrival story, Frank is highlighting the effects of climate and weather – the fog, the temperature, the grey daylight, the leafless trees – in his effort to make his initially bad impressions of Poland understandable and accountable. These seemingly unquestionable facts are used together with an aesthetical statement – “it’s not a beautiful city, Warsaw” (lines 9-10) – to make a sort of caricature of the conventional Swedish or Western image of Poland. His evaluation is laconic: “I thought it was...” he may consider the story too good to be true. Poland was, so to speak, scrutinized during the worst possible conditions.

Despite the detailed and evocative descriptions, Frank’s explanations make it clear that he is telling his story entirely from his present position. When he says “I mean, no place looks nice...” than authentic information. This is also made obvious when Frank later reassures me that his image of Poland has “completely” changed (line 16), a change that is symbolized by colours versus greyness. The reported social climate is the story’s major counterbalance: “a very good atmosphere down there, a very positive working spirit, working climate” (lines 12-13). This is said to have affected Frank in a... rational reason for accepting the job and signing the contract, in spite of his terrible view on arrival in Warsaw.

As a whole, Frank’s arrival story may illustrate the significance of nuances and self corrections in the narrator’s performance (laughs and reflective comments) as well as the significance of... story would perhaps become conspicuously blunt and direct, and its turning point (the changed perception) hard to grasp.

A similar version of Frank’s story, a condensed or concentrated version, might even appear to be something which could not be said:

Frank (altered version):

... I went down, it was a dark, grey day in January. It—it was terrible. It was awful. It was terribly cold and it was ten degrees below zero and it was foggy. It was very grey. It isn’t a beautiful city, Warsaw, it’s terrible...

Alone with your brief-case

Feelings of being chosen and thrown into an adventure sometimes emanate from the expatriates’ arrival stories. In the excerpt below, Tommy tells me about his career and business considerations concerning his move to Poland. Then he picks up an earlier question:

Tommy:

So that was my reasons, but—but what did it feel like? Well, it felt like great fun, exciting, a feeling of dizziness, to come here alone with your brief-case and trying to do something and run a business and, it feels, for me things like that feel very challenging and interesting and—

David:

—Mm yeah, it must have been special anyway—

Tommy:

—And then I had never been in Poland before did I know, it felt like...
When you come to Poland the first time, you know...
Interpreting arrival stories: A play of utterances

According to David M. Engel, an origin story deals with how something was produced or began to be, if information becomes known and communicators were produced of origin stories are a form of myth making in everyday life. As myths they not only reflect and weave meanings around interactions but also establish models to express the narrative landscape. Such a landscape may, as Chris indicates, be quite boring to visit even if invited. Engel even suggests that stories of this kind constitute a form of myth making in everyday life. As myths they not only reflect and weave meanings around interactions but also establish models to express the narrative landscape. Such a landscape may, as Chris indicates above, be quite boring to visit even if invited.

Chris: No, I did not know the name of Poland at the airport before.

David: But you knew you had to go to Poland before.

Chris: Yes, I knew.

David: Then why were you surprised when you arrived in the airport?

Chris: Well, I was staying there for two weeks. You know, I cannot believe it.

David: How long have you been there?

Chris: Well, we have been there for two weeks. You know, I cannot believe it.

David: Who took you there? I mean, I want to get ahead.

Chris: No, I knew they were going to be there. You know, I cannot believe it.

David: Could you tell us "short story?"
As has already been indicated, parts of Engel's conceptual framework may be useful when the expatriates' arrival stories are to be interpreted. Yet details in such an interpretation remain unclear. If the expatriates' selves are regenerated in and through the stories, then how is this regeneration accomplished? What, more specifically, do the interviewees do when they tell arrival stories?

In order to discuss these questions I review some passages in the above excerpts, using some of Michail Bakhtin's key concepts. Certain aspects in the above analyses are addressed once again ... is therefore to some extent summarizing. All nuances and details mentioned above are not taken into account.

My suggestion is that the expatriates fulfill their self-regenerations by means of dialogising different types of utterances, or "languages". Simultaneously, they are dialogising some corresponding points of view. "Dialogisation" is Bakhtin's term for verbal processes that relativise and de-privilege a word, discourse, language or culture. An undialogised utterance is authoritative and absolute whereas a dialogised utterance may be questioned and challenged. Consequently, the other - meanings in the text. The interplay of their meanings is dialogisation. An undialogised utterance is authoritative and absolute whereas a dialogised utterance may be questioned and challenged.

In order not to misinterpret this, some remarks might be appropriate. A "dialogue" is not necessarily something harmonious; it may very well be characterized by a conflict or polemic. As a... utterances and languages a "struggle" (Ibid., p. 292, 331, 342, 354). Further, a "language" is not necessarily equal to a national language, it might also refer to social languages – the language of a profession or an age group, etc – or simply another's language, that is a language that does not belong to the speaker in question (Ibid., p. 271-272, 291, 430).

Additionally, all languages are not merely linguistic phenomena, they also contain specific points of view, or forms for conceptualising the world in words (Ibid., p. 289, 291-292, 411). When talking about the expatriates' arrival stories, these points of view are very important. The stories are not merely a reflection of the expatriates' experiences; they are also a means for constructing new representations of the world. The stories are a means for dialogising different types of utterances, or "languages". Simultaneously, they are dialogising some corresponding points of view.

If Bakhtin's perspective is taken into consideration, a certain collection of "dialogues" may be identified in the expatriates' arrival stories. The most fundamental one is obvious: the dialogue between the narrators and their interlocutors. The narrators are not simply recording their experiences; they are also engaging in a dialogue with their interlocutors. This dialogue is not merely a reflection of the narrators' experiences; it is also a means for constructing new representations of the world. The narrators are not merely recording their experiences; they are also engaging in a dialogue with their interlocutors. This dialogue is not merely a reflection of the narrators' experiences; it is also a means for constructing new representations of the world.

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It isn't a beautiful city, Warsaw. There are parts that are beautiful but as a whole it's terrible… (Frank).

…it felt strange with these vast buildings and things like that… (Tommy). …God I hated it. I thought that it was terrible. It was so grey and appalling and people looked sad and depressed and terrible clothes… (Maria).

…it was like grey and dark and snowy and cold and there weren't any shops… (Chris).

Taken out of their conversational contexts, these utterances all seem to convey feelings of something strange or odd, as if the interviewees wanted to say: I was not used to Poland and did not like it. …in themselves seem to be critical toward the perceived Poland. The scenery and the surroundings are somehow dismissed.

Further, the arrival stories seem to contain utterances that verify some kind of positive surprise or sudden change. Some of these utterances appear to reconnect to the utterances above in a polemic or reversed way:

I thought 'this will never work, you cannot transform this into something we're interested in'. But it did work and eh eh we're still there in these premises. (Paul).

But then, when I met some colleagues, future colleagues, then you got a completely different image (…) it has completely changed, you know, it has become much less grey [laugh] and more colourful, definitely. (Frank).

…it's looking like this, if they cannot build roads, if they cannot build houses, can they really supply these things on time?' (…) So that eh, of course you see here now that it's shabby and that kind of thing, but if you go there ((in Poland)) there are a few more ((such holes)). (Jonathan).

…we said that 'this is unbelievable', if you look at how people are dressed in restaurants, you know, good lord, they are more modern here… (Jonathan).

…here in Sweden, I've got the impression that people consider Poles and Poland, it's like, well 'they're gathering strawberries'. And they're people that are coming here in the summer, trying to get money for themselves and stealing and messing around… (Jonathan).

…this image you've got of Poland as a Swede today (…) that certainly it's a big country and the economy's growing well but just this thing that it's grey and boring and dirty and and not many goods in the shops… (Paul).

I had the same image of Poland as everybody else, you know. (Chris).

Such utterances, once again taken out of their conversational contexts, dismiss other Swedes' utterances that at least somehow evaluate (or indicate an evaluation of) Poland, Poles or "the interviewees seem to convey a distinction, as if they wanted to say: I am not like other Swedes in relation to Poland.

This, however, does not mean that they want to present themselves as opposite in relation to "other Swedes". In that case, the interviewees would have been unequivocally celebrating Poland from the very beginning. The very combination with the first type of utterances … They both complain about the Polish scenery and surroundings, and complain about other Swedes' utterances on Poland, which often actually deal with the scenery in just that way they themselves initially did (as something more or less inferior, appalling or indifferent). In addition to this, they include utterances about a positive
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... surprise or sudden change. When these utterances are being juxtaposed – joined or contrasted, merged or independently displayed in animations, mixed in various and individual ways – a space seems to be opened up for particular points of view, the “mentality”... against unchangeability and lack of surprises in one's own first impressions and against other Swedes' opinions.

If the arrival stories are to be seen as self-regenerating, this could be seen as a site for the regeneration. The expatriates are not to be found solely in the language that dismiss Polish scenery and 15 other Swedes' similar evaluations or in the language of positive surprises and sudden changes. They are to be found in between those languages. To renew oneself, these types of utterances may be played out so that the speaker may carve out a position in relation to them. In analogy with Bakhtin's depiction of a novelistic author, ... utilizenow one language, now another, “in order to avoid giving himself up wholly to them” (Bakhtin 1981/2000, p. 314).

That is not to say that the expatriates are neutral in relation to these types of utterances. Some may tend to identify more closely with one type, someone else with another type. However, many seem to strive to appear neutral, as if eager to manifest individuality. Yet they are using these types of utterances and thereby reproducing them, even if they are used as targets for minor narrative disputes.

The utterances may be seen as standing for particular points of view which the expatriates have to take into consideration: their own first point of view, the “surprising” point of view and other Swedes' point of view. According to Engel, when people are telling origin stories they may imply that the ending in these stories will be achieved again. The stories are thus pointing forward as well as backward; they ... This remark touches upon a commonly emphasized aspect of everyday storytelling; stories are not just told, they are also enacted and performed on various platforms, such as blogs or social media. To tell a convincing arrival story and play out utterances that one needs to position and construe oneself as an arriving individual – in this case a constructed autonomous, unprejudiced, tolerant, open and realistic arriving individual – seems to mean that this positioning and construing is looked upon as possible and desirable to repeat, when or if another border is crossed.

Such a readiness might perhaps be crucial for expatriates. One day they may choose to, or be expected to, live and work in another more or less unfamiliar country, and consequently once again... been working in other countries and express an ambition to go to some other place when their period in Poland is over.

A readiness like this is sometimes seen as a contemporary ideal. Zygmunt Bauman (1998) argues that “being local” is becoming a sign of social deprivation while “being on the move” is a sign of social mobility. For they are entering those types of spaces that promise a new social position, and that promise a new social identity. Moreover, these spaces are not just geographical; they are also temporal, allowing for the possibility of change and adaptation.
Presumably this is reflecting the social character of man's becoming. According to George Herbert Mead (1934/1967), taking into one's conduct the attitudes of others, especially in and through language, is necessary for the appearance of a self. It is by employing others' attitudes towards oneself that the self is created and defined.

The significance of reciting in everyday speech may be intensified as social life differentiates. The importance of attaching one's own words to another's increases as the importance of the very recited text to the reciter increases. This is one of Mikhail Bakhtin's central ideas. He argues that the transmission of other people's words, opinions, stories, and judgments by other people is the basis of their everyday, communicative, and interpretative activities. The act of quoting or referring to another's words is not only a human habit but also a necessity.

We can go so far as to say that in real life people talk most of all about what others talk about – they transmit, recall, weigh and pass judgment on other people's words, opinions, stories, and judgments. At every step one meets a 'quotation' or a 'reference'... (Bakhtin 1981/2000, p. 338).

By 'quotation' and 'reference' Bakhtin is however not talking about literal quotations or authentic references but quotations and references that first and foremost are presented or understood in such a way that they are not simply copies or literal representations of other's utterances or earlier utterances (Holsárová, 1998, p. 116-117).

Further, even if a speaker were actually to present a correct quotation, the act of quoting or referring to another's words is always subject to changes. Even the most literal utterance may for instance, as a result of different context, easily become comical (Bakhtin 1981/2000, p. 340). Although this observation may look trivial, it has profound significance. Mimicry is sometimes identified as a vital way in which people relate to so-called late modern discourses, a way that may end up throwing the discourse mimicked into question (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999, p. 129).

The latter aspect is one of my themes in this chapter. When Swedish expatriates in Poland tell stories about their work and everyday life their speech is full of other people's words. Citations of other people's words are also present in the Swedish text in this chapter. The very act of appropriating another's word may thus loosen its control. In that sense mimicry is providing a basis for ideological struggle (Ibid.).

Still these inserted words do not always fit into the accounts in a completely smooth way. Inserted rejoinders may not only convey a consent in relation to the speaker's explicit statements but also a supplement or additional problem. This is to say that besides using citations as a way to express a certain position (Sacks, 1992, vol. II, p. 310; Holsárová, 1998, p. 105) a speaker may also elaborate such a positioning as the other is taken into account and through citations. To listen carefully to citations may therefore make audible the narrators' struggle to understand and handle, no matter how accurately or proficiently, the perceived novelty or otherness that the particular utterance is said to represent. The latter aspect is one of my themes in this chapter.
We're not sufficiently clear.

As mentioned above, the expatriates' storytelling include a number of citations and voices that display a range of nuances and implications that are not always being explicitly stated. Citations ... each other well) to tell me about their specific work. After a while, they started to talk about their jobs in general.

John: …I think one of the biggest problems is that we're a bit soft. So that, a classical example is that if you're in a meeting, some Swedes and some Poles, so, yeah, one finishes the meeting saying ... (NO VOICE CHANGE) 'one could do like that' and then we'll do so, you know. So that they are used to a completely—

Larry: —We're not sufficiently clear.

John: No.

Larry: We don't have that authoritative, dictatorial way of giving instructions, you know. Like (VOICE 4) 'you'll do that, you'll do that, that must be ready tomorrow, that must be ready this ... is not like they're taking care of it, (NO VOICE CHANGE) 'we'll do it as fast as possible' and then they come back with it—

They didn't do that. If you ask them after two days (VOICE 5) 'eh what happened to that?'. (VOICE 6) 'Well, you didn't say it should be finished today'.

John: No, it's an endless (process).

Larry: [laugh]

John's statement that Swedes are "a bit soft" is followed by a couple of quotations that seem to make this statement vivid and dramatic. These animations have some distinguishable characteristics. ... Poles are portrayed as saying one thing (VOICE 2) but thinking another (VOICE 3) while the Swedes say and think the same.

Thus, John is achieving this point by citing an earlier constructed citation, namely citing "the Swedes' talk" when talking about what they think. The fact that he avoids changing tone could also be ... or rational. This transparency is attained since the recited characters' tone equals the narrator's (who, of course, is a Swede). The Poles, on the other hand, appear as playing a double game, hiding their views.

Still, the discussion has begun with a statement in which the Swedes are given a certain feature; they are described as "a bit soft". In itself, this description portrays the Swedes as ... to be seen as problematical, it might as well be the Poles rather than the Swedes. To some extent, however, the Poles are also put into an understanding context – they are also recited – albeit that this understanding hitherto is less sympathetic.
...backpack. A culturalizing frame is introduced in which the speakers may interpret the

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...they are told to do that, you'll do that, that must be ready tomorrow, that must be ready this afternoon'. Further on, this is contrasted with a lack of voice change and a higher speed when Larry illustrates the Poles' behaviour in the same way, that is when he is explaining what they do not do (or say):

"then it is not like they're taking care of it, 'we'll do it as fast as possible'...". Thus, Swedes are portrayed through a contrasting parody of order-giving while the Poles are portrayed through a contrasting depiction of assumed normal acting.

Subsequently, Larry's recited question 'eh what happened to that?' is put in a slightly critical way (VOICE 5), while the Poles' answer has the tone of somebody being baffled, somebody who is too surprised: 'Well, you didn't say it should be finished today' (VOICE 6). This animation could be seen as a way to portray stupidity. In this context, a person who says 'well, you didn't say it should be finished today' discloses the fact that he or she has not understood that the Swedes actually wanted it to be finished today (or earlier), even if they did not say so explicitly. And why did the Swedes not say so explicitly? Larry's suggestion is clear. They do not want to become living caricatures of persons who give orders.

Although this avoidance could be seen as quite the same argument as John's statement "we're a bit soft" and Larry's "we're not sufficiently clear", it implies a different evaluation. Whereas it... intelligence. This interaction allows the narrators to teach a narrative's special wisdom (Bakhtin 1981/2000, p. 403-404).

Seen in this light, also the initial recitation of the Swedes ('one could do like that or what do you think?') acquire a shade of foolishness. It portrays the Swedes' lack of awareness of the... citations not only illustrate and exemplify John's and Larry's storytelling, they also add new elements to it.

John's and Larry's discussion then continues at another level, without citations. The excerpt below starts where the former one ended.

John: But we're raised in different ways, we're probably not different as individuals, I don't think so but everyone gets influenced by one's environment. And there we go with the backpack again.

Larry: Yeah, the one you're carrying around on your back.

David: The backpack?

Larry: Yeah, the one you're carrying around on your back.

John: Yeah, we're talking about our experience. I mean they're a different culture, different social habits.

John: Yeah.

David: Yeah, mm. But eh—

John: —That is really I think the big difference between Poles—

Larry: —Yeah, that is perhaps the most difficult thing too, when you're coming here and you're totally new and you don't have any experience, that is to understand how differently we function, you know, to be able to function together. They also think that, you know, the Poles, they often think that we Swedes are very—

Larry: Dry and kind of, entirely too effective, we, if you—

John: Yeah, at best—

Larry: —At best, you know.

David: —[Laugh] But what do you do then, like, do you adjust yourself so that you become a bit, or you ( ) on your side?

Larry: —A bit.

John: Yeah, we're trying to adjust ourselves at our best, they get used to us being that way, it's not like we're being stuck-up or something like that, but C. ((John's and Larry's company)) is a bit boring.

Larry: Yes.

John: We don't talk so much with each other and so on. Many probably think they adjust more to us than we do—

David: —[Laugh] to them, I mean.
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To depict relations between oneself and others using citations may not only be integrated in a collaborative project to comprehend these relations, citations may also be used when a more...
and that's just because they're kind. It's just because they're not given the opportunity to be extremely detail-oriented, that they don't have all the time they would have otherwise. And you know, when you think about it, it's clear, some people who are really good at detail-oriented work, they get really good at it because they have the time and they can devote the time to it. But the Poles, they don't have that luxury. They're just not given the time, so they have to do it in a more rushed way. And that's why they seem to be less detail-oriented, I think.
“Tales of Ambivalence: An Anthropological Perspective on Interpreting the Meanings of Polish Working Hours”

Kate: …here (in Sweden) you can be rather relaxed but there (in Poland) you’ve got to be rather tough. They take every chance they get to run away but it’s—

David: —How, I mean, like how? I mean, could they for instance—

Kate: —Well, they can, they can, the first day they can ask (NO VOICE CHANGE) ‘I have, I need to get something done, I need to go an hour earlier’. (VOICE 15) ‘Sure, of course you can do that’ … I have to do my job, while it is happening that, well, now I speak about those people I’ve seen and worked with, you know. They don’t have the same feeling here, instead they can come (VOICE 16) ‘well, okay, it worked this day, then I’ll ask tomorrow too’. So you’re—

David: —Whereas here in Sweden it would be like, how?

Kate: Well, then I know, if somebody came asking me here (NO VOICE CHANGE) ‘can I go?’, (NO VOICE CHANGE) ‘yes, of course you can’ because I know that they’re doing their job anyway, or … on, and there, I don’t think that the Swede is asking three days in a row. But they do, which is, well [laugh].

David: Mm, what do you, I mean, what do you do? As a manager?

Kate: Well, then you have to say that we’ve got fixed working hours.

David: Mm. /// But that you’d never have to do in Sweden, I mean—

Kate: —No, that you’d never have to do, never.

When Kate is staging her answer to the correspondingly staged Polish question her voice is high and light (VOICE 15), conveying a nice attitude. This answer contains two instances of something … Kate, ultimately provoking the manager to set up fixed working hours, or to point out that the working hours are fixed.

Subsequently, when Kate is citing the Poles’ reaction to her nice attitude her voice is slightly laughing. This citation does not illustrate what the Poles say but what they think: ‘well, okay, it worked this day, then I’ll ask tomorrow too’ (VOICE 16). The Poles are in other words not only depicted as abusing trust, they are also portrayed as having fun while doing it. Their manner of playing a double game is pointed out as a consciously irresponsible lack of understanding whereas Kate is portrayed as prudent and responsible. The manager of Polish origin is portrayed as having a promise to do, whereas the manager of Swedish origin is portrayed as having the obligation to do.

Revealing the “mentality”: An ambiguous need

Kate: …when you’re doing your work, you’re doing your work and that’s it. When you’re doing your work, you’re doing your work.

When we learn to be proficient in language, we learn to be proficient in understanding. This means that we learn to be proficient in understanding the expressions of other people’s speeches, their non-verbal expressions as well. And when we learn to be proficient in understanding, we are able to understand other people’s speech. This is a considerable step forward. When we learn to be proficient in understanding, we are able to understand other people’s speech.

David: When you’re doing your work, you’re doing your work.

Kate: …when you’re doing your work, you’re doing your work.

When Kate is stating her answer to the correspondingly staged Polish question her voice is high and light (VOICE 15), conveying a nice attitude. This answer contains two instances of something … Kate, ultimately provoking the manager to set up fixed working hours, or to point out that the working hours are fixed.

Subsequently, when Kate is citing the Poles’ reaction to her nice attitude her voice is slightly laughing. This citation does not illustrate what the Poles say but what they think: ‘well, okay, it worked this day, then I’ll ask tomorrow too’ (VOICE 16). The Poles are in other words not only depicted as abusing trust, they are also portrayed as having fun while doing it. Their manner of playing a double game is pointed out as a consciously irresponsible lack of understanding whereas Kate is portrayed as serious and honest. Her laugh may be looked upon as expressing an awareness of the coexistence of these contradictory frames (cf. Katz 1999, p. 92).

If seen in this light, Kate’s self-citation in the beginning (VOICE 15) is still revealing the “mentality”: An ambiguous need. As I have tried to show above, the stories by the expatriates in question and the manager of Polish origin are not portrayed as prudent and responsible. The manager of Polish origin is portrayed as having a promise to do, whereas the manager of Swedish origin is portrayed as having the obligation to do.

Revealing the “mentality”: An ambiguous need

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When Kate is stating her answer to the correspondingly staged Polish question her voice is high and light (VOICE 15), conveying a nice attitude. This answer contains two instances of something … Kate, ultimately provoking the manager to set up fixed working hours, or to point out that the working hours are fixed.

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If seen in this light, Kate’s self-citation in the beginning (VOICE 15) is still revealing the “mentality”: An ambiguous need.
one should have about others’ thinking. In this particular context, the latter is sometimes explicitly talked about as knowledge about people’s “mentality” (cf. Herzfeld 1997, p. 78–79). In my field work, I have recorded an excerpt from a Moroccan-Swedish-Polish woman, who has been living in Sweden for many years and who speaks both Swedish and Polish. In the excerpt below I ask him what kind of help she offers:

Yeah, translation and telling me how their mentality actually works for me who doesn’t understand certain things (NO VOICE CHANGE) ‘how the hell could one do it this way?’ (VOICE 17) ‘Well, it’s because one thinks so and so.’ The general form of the answer is that one should know and understand the mentality of others, which the woman describes as offering several and shifting answers, not possible to articulate once and for all and consequently not possible to know in advance. These circumstances build up the irritation in Peter’s narrative. The “mentality” is the answer – but what is the answer?

Thus, although knowledge about this “mentality” is highly praised among expatriates, and continually evokes lively discussions in interviews, it is also sometimes met with delicately demonstrated annoyance. Comprehending and controlling: Ideological encounters

I suggested above that citation and animated voices may be viewed as sometimes not only as strategies of controlling and commanding ideology, but also as means for reconstructing oneself. Bakhtin’s ideas might be applied here. The “mentality” is the answer, but what is the answer?

This implication seems to contribute to the tiring and demanding tone that Peter is using. No matter which other specification, all those answers, the implication seems to contribute to the understanding and confronting one’s own understanding.

Comprehending and controlling: Ideological encounters
does not renounce itself, its own place in time, its own culture; and it forgets nothing" (Bakhtin 1981/1984, p. 34). It is important to note that in the context of a Bakhtinian view, understanding is grasped not as a common sense work, as in most of the text, but as an accomplishment (Garfinkel 1967/1972). Further, understanding is grasped not as a common sense work, but as an accomplishment (Garfinkel 1967/1972). If this image of understanding is taken as a point of departure, a kinship with the expatriates' use of quotations seems to be clear. By using quotations the expatriates are assimilating others' words as if they were their own words. Also, they are assimilating others' words as if they were their own, as well as plausible words or virtual words belonging to collectives (the Poles, the Swedes, the body) and alternative social dramas (we never say...). "Assimilating" should in this context most likely be understood in a very concrete way. The expatriates are taking the words of another (as they construe these words), uttering them "again" and arranging them at their pleasure. As-narrators, they are not returning to Bakhtin's term, "recontextualisation", by which he is referring to a "second" or "new" context in which the words are used. The expatriates are taking the words of another (as they construe these words), uttering them "again" and arranging them at their pleasure. As-narrators, they are not returning to Bakhtin's term, "recontextualisation", by which he is referring to a "second" or "new" context in which the words are used.

Consequently, by changing voice and presenting quotations the expatriates are not only illustrating but also expanding their messages, displaying them in understandable ways and infusing fresh life into them. It is clear that this "creative understanding" is taken as a point of departure, and that understanding is grasped not as a common sense work, but as an accomplishment.
about Westerners’ depictions of and/or relations to Eastern Central Europe (or other regions): an ambition to invoke and maintain a Western order. It may be worth mentioning again, however, that the voices and citations are not only thought to be representing Poles but also other Swedes or the narrators themselves in this very encounter. These figures may also at least in some degree be portrayed as deviant and stupid: thoughtless, naïve, credulous, excessively worried and so on. As one visitor to Poland put it: “... with the Poles, it is a shame to make a face.” (chapter 4.2). Such an attitude towards the country which is not only perceived as different but also seen as inferior, is a frequent feature in the expatriates’ stories. It is clear that there exists a certain level of discrimination against Poland and its people, which is often expressed in a negative way. However, this negative perception may also be seen as a necessary step in order to maintain a positive self-image and to avoid being perceived as an outsider. The narrators’ ability to be on the move is conveyed through their ability to adapt to new environments and situations. This ability to adapt is an important factor in the process of becoming an expatriate, as the narrators are constantly faced with new challenges and obstacles.

To conclude this report, I would like to reiterate two additional and possibly more focused interpretations of the above presented illustrations of the expatriates’ narratives. First, the narratives are not just a way of expressing the narrators’ own experiences and opinions, but also a means of influencing others. The expatriates’ narratives are often used to influence the perceptions of others, such as their employers or colleagues. This influence is often achieved through the use of powerful and emotive language. Second, the narratives are not just a way of expressing the narrators’ own experiences and opinions, but also a means of gaining a sense of control over their own lives. The expatriates’ narratives are often used as a way of gaining a sense of control over their own lives and to assert their own power and influence in the new environment. The narratives are also often used to gain the support of others, such as their employers or colleagues, in order to achieve their goals.

4 Conclusion remarks

In conclusion, it is clear that the expatriates’ narratives are not just a way of expressing the narrators’ own experiences and opinions, but also a means of influencing others. The narrators’ ability to adapt to new environments and situations is an important factor in the process of becoming an expatriate, as the narrators are constantly faced with new challenges and obstacles. The narratives are often used to influence the perceptions of others, such as their employers or colleagues, and to assert their own power and influence in the new environment. The narratives are also often used to gain the support of others, such as their employers or colleagues, in order to achieve their goals.

In this conclusion, I would like to emphasize the importance of the expatriates’ narratives in the process of adapting to a new environment. The narratives are not just a way of expressing the narrators’ own experiences and opinions, but also a means of gaining a sense of control over their own lives. The narrators’ ability to adapt to new environments and situations is an important factor in the process of becoming an expatriate, as the narrators are constantly faced with new challenges and obstacles. The narratives are often used to influence the perceptions of others, such as their employers or colleagues, and to assert their own power and influence in the new environment. The narratives are also often used to gain the support of others, such as their employers or colleagues, in order to achieve their goals.
In so Doing, I try to indicate some further themes in my material that I have not explicitly touched upon yet. At the same time, some overall themes in the report are revisited.

The first point reconnects to my introductory comments on expatriates as strangers. Focusing on their storytelling, what kind of strangers could the expatriates be said to resemble?

The second point reconnects to several of my remarks on the links between the expatriates' selves and the narrative components they use to depict experiences from Poland. This time, my point is that there is a recurring color: the color grey. What does it mean when the expatriates repeatedly use this narrative ingredient when describing Poland?

Expatriates as self-styled anthropologists

One aspect in Jonathan Friedman’s perspective on globalization concerns a supranational identification process. According to Friedman, globalizable identities emerge when...
and his wife have to go to if they not are to lose an opportunity. Chris is, so to speak, a quite reluctant anthropologist. This pragmatic account could be compared to enthusiastic ones that clearly point out missions and ideological projects. Tommy is depicting his arrival with words like "great fun, exciting,...". His notes from his office in Warsaw captured the following: "After I have turned off the tape recorder Tommy starts to talk about more personal and existential things. "What's the... to "help". But Sweden "feels as if it's finished". Tommy is nodding at me and says: "if you exist or not doesn't change a thing". Here in Poland it is different. Here "you're creating something". Tommy explains that he would like to stay in Poland for a long time to see the country develop although he is not sure that his wife wants to stay as long as he. To stay in Poland should be... comparing his feelings towards Poland and Sweden: it is like getting a model railway in separate parts (Poland) or getting it unpacked and ready to play with (Sweden) – "it’s more fun to build it". That’s why he is in Poland. Tommy explains. His Swedish friends definitely do not understand this. They just say (Tommy is now animating his story) "why do you go to Poland? Everything is worse there".

In the expatriates’ storytelling some instances of iconicity seem to be present. One of these involves colours, or more specifically one particular colour (or absence of colour): grey. In the... clothes...". Also Chris, although hesitant, is referring to grey: "No, it was the grey and dark and...ערות יוצאים. Tommy’s work in Poland is construed as revitalizing. In... motives. His motives are actually presented in terms of an ambition to return to modernity: to create, build and act like a progressive giver. He wants to be seen as global and modern, as if being global allows him to be modern.

One rhetorical force within the construction of a nation-state could according to the anthropologist Michael Herzfeld be called iconicity. The notion is derived from "icon", that is an image or symbol that is culturally and socially constructed and that... image) has completely changed, you know, it has become much less grey [[laugh]] and more colourful..."

One theoretical force within the construction of a nation-state could be... "grey".
in relation to empirical observations these signs are used:

- **[laughter]**[[laughter]]
- one second of silence
- exchanged pass
- introduced or overlapping speech in dialogue
- self-interruption
- uncertainty function
- researcher's comment
- speaker's emphasis
- (in Sweden)
- "what" (in Swedish)

**Appendix: Transcription Key**

- **Italic** speaker's emphasis
- **(in Sweden)** researcher's comment
- **( )** uncertain transcription-self-interruption
- — interrupted or overlapping speech in dialogue
- (…) excluded passage/one second of silence
- [laugh] laugh
- in relation to analysed quotations these signs are also used: (VOICE 7) prosodic change
- >then it's not like...< words said with increased speed

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This paper focuses on the possibility that how we experience things are shaped by our expectations of how things are expected to be. It explores the idea that our perceptions of the world are influenced by our own assumptions and biases, which can affect our ability to accurately interpret situations.

In these cases there seems to be an instance of iconicity. As a word, "grey" is after all just referring to a visual impression, a colour. To resist "grey" in a very concrete sense – that is as a colour or visual impression and not as a symbol – might in this context be the same as being captured by its iconicity. The expatriates may treat "grey" as a sign that is not seen as a sign at all.

Following this line of interpretation, some questions may be relevant. Why do the expatriates bother to highlight the greyness in one's own and others' eyes? Why do they bother to reflect on, and oppose, these clichés? The expatriates are also reflecting on and opposing the idea that they are associated with the idea of "grey," and not as something that is a part of their own experience. This is associated with the idea of "grey," and not as something that is a part of their own experience.

In this context, moreover, the connotations of grey take the form of a narrative task for Swedish expatriates. When reflecting on and opposing these clichés the expatriates are also reflecting on and opposing the idea that they could be associated with them. Since they have ended up or chosen to work in Poland they are probably eager to avoid being portrayed as having ended up or chosen something that is perceived as underground, disengaged, and socially isolated.

In more general terms these remarks may legitimate and presuppose a shift in perspective and consciousness. The idea that other people are shaped by their own expectations and biases, which can affect their ability to accurately interpret situations, is an important starting point for understanding the complexity of how we perceive the world.

In conclusion, this paper aims to explore the ways in which expectations and biases shape our perceptions of the world and to encourage critical reflection on how these processes operate in our own experiences.
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Endnotes

1 This rhetoric is not only frequently used in media but also within organizations. For instance, when a Swedish association for economists are providing advice for potential expatriates among its members a slogan like "If you are willing to become an active part of the world change you!" (quoted from the website www.civilekonomerna.se/nyttigheter/utlandet/tips.html, my translation).


3 This figure does not include Swedish entrepreneurs working in close cooperation with Polish companies or other semi-structured collaborations.

4 Cf. Wästerfors 2000a.

5 An instance of the way Swedes and Poles often are said to view each other is found in the Swedish magazine Affärsvärlden ("Business World") No. 5, 2000. The article begins by stating that Swedes and Swedish companies are becoming more and more common in Poland and that this country is turning "more and more like the West" but there are several traps that an unprepared Swedish may fall into. Two tools are presented to guide Swedes through this new world: know the language and importance of being a reliable partner.

6 Some of these themes are given a preliminary description and analysis in Wästerfors 2006.

7 In some respect, however, one particular structural fact is taken into consideration, the societal position of the expatriates. It is their storytelling and their views that are analysed and consequently some of their legitimising strategies in relation to the host society are made clear that the interchanges between people with different occupations, different educational levels, different ages and so on might be the key to such an approach.

8 As will be clear further on, some of these views correspond to my question on the differences between Swedes and Poles, which is: who are in charge of the story, the narrator, the audience, or both? And how does this affect the way the story is told and listeners’ reception of the story?

9 Jonathan here refers to a category that has been used to identify Swedes with seasonal workers in agriculture in some parts of Sweden.

10 To be engaged in creating distinctions between a tolerant self and intolerant others – although both in other respects are treated as belonging to the same group, defined in relation to “the other” toward which the very tolerance is directed – has been described and analysed by Andersson (1994, p. 28-31, 95, 139, 200) and Herzfeld (1997, p. 158), who comments on how Swedes are supposed to take care not to seem to be avoiding physical contact with black (or poor, or disabled) people.

11 This possibility would certainly depend on contexts – the social context of the narrator as well as the immediate context in which the story is told and its context within the speech. The visualized option is to be seen simply as my way to highlight the significance of subtle ingredients in Frank’s actual story.

12 This is indicated in some beginnings in the previously quoted arrival stories, for instance when Frank answers my question by starting to tell his story: “Yes, I remember that and at that time I had...” The textual presentation then is not to say that these types of utterances in their own right would amount to a separation of the narrator, the audience, and the story but rather that they depend on a specific textual context within which they take place.

13 Further, everyday speech is not only characterised by some kind of creativity, it is also (as far as it may be viewed as verbalised discourses) characterised by dialogism. The dialogical orientation of discourse is a phenomenon that, according to Bakhtin, is a property of any discourse, not just novelistic discourse (Bakhtin 1981/2000, p. 279).

14 Whereas these utterances are mixed in the stories and overlap each other, in the storytelling we may speak of a composite discourse that is a phenomenon that is a property of any discourse, not just novelistic discourse (Bakhtin 1981/2000, p. 279).

15 Such a negative dependency and its characteristics are touched on in the previously quoted arrival stories, for instance when Frank answers my question by starting to tell his story: “Yes, I remember that and at that time I had...” The textual presentation then is not to say that these types of utterances in their own right would amount to a separation of the narrator, the audience, and the story but rather that they depend on a specific textual context within which they take place.


17 In rhetoric the manner of letting somebody else utter one’s speech is called domino (Latin). Such because of the way such expressions are supposed to reflect the other person’s ethos.
and authority. A speech may also be delivered with a historical person's voice; then it is called ethopoeia (Greek). If the speaker lets a country, a virtue, an idea or inanimate things speak it is called prosopopeia. These rhetorical figures are not to be seen as merely artificial tricks but as latent possibilities in language in general (Johannesson 1991, p. 151-154).

18 Whereas the focus of this chapter is restricted to quotations and their contexts, such a struggle could of course also be found in a wide range of other utterances. Bakhtin underlines that “within the arena of ... word is being waged, a process in which they oppose or dialogically interanimate each other” (Bakhtin 1981/2000, p. 354).

19 Prosodic phenomena include accent, intonation, length and rhythm (Sigurd 1991, p. 41).

20 A quick, summarizing look at the citations in John’s and Larry’s conversation seems to indicate this. Their speech contains an examination of several different speaking positions:

One (we) say: ‘one could do like that or what do you think?’

they say: ‘yes, that would perhaps work’

they think: ‘damn we’ve not taken any decision, what shall we do’

we think that we said: ‘one could do like that’

we never say: ‘you’ll do that, you’ll do that, that must be ready tomorrow…’

they never say: ‘we’ll do it as fast as possible’

we say: ‘eh what happened to that?’

they say: ‘well, you didn’t say it should be finished today’

21 Bakhtin describes this phenomenon as common, general and concrete: “Were we to eavesdrop on snatches of raw dialogue in the street, in a crowd, in lines, in a foyer and so forth, we would hear how ... of people in a crowd, everything often fuses into one big ‘he says…you say…I say…’” (Bakhtin 1981/2000 p. 338).

22 This is not to say that John and Larry are succeeding in their effort to understand, or that they act in a reasonable or good way. My point is not to evaluate their conversation. Rather, my point is to highlight the significance of bringing in others’ voices.

23 In rhetoric such exclamations and questions are regarded as a way to expand the dialogue, a way to invite other voices. The speaker may say, ‘how do you feel about this?’ The speaker may use a rhetorical question and say, ‘do you really mean that?’ The speaker may say, ‘what do you think about this?’ These are all ways to invite others to speak and to expand the dialogue. These are all ways to bring in others’ voices. These are all ways to make the dialogue more inclusive and more engaging.

References


